

Factors Inhibiting the Promotion of Democracy and Good Governance in Ghana: The Role of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

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Abstract:

The objective of the study was to examine the challenges that face NGOs in promoting democratic good governance in the Sunyani Municipality in Ghana. A qualitatively, interpretative design was adopted to evaluate challenges that face NGOs in promoting democratic good governance in the Sunyani Municipality in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. Purposive sampling technique was used to select all the twenty-four (24) respondents. The main instrument used for data collection was open-ended interview guide. The study concludes that the role NGOs play be exercised with caution since a good number of the sampled respondents claimed they had never heard about the activities of these NGOs. The study also revealed that, NGOs could have done better in covering a wider scope of the Municipality but they are limited by finances, human resource capacity, logistics and misappropriation of funds on the part of the leadership. It is therefore recommended that, NGOs to adopt more pragmatic methods and approaches to raising funds and mobilising resources both internally and externally to effectively undertake their activities. Internally, NGOs may involve themselves more in income generating activities such as farming, running of restaurants, internet services and retail outlets, the profit of which should be used to finance NGOs activities. It is also recommended that, NGOs must deploy staff with the requisite skills as well as having a good public reputation to raise funds. The expertise is needed to plan when, where and how to seek for funds from corporate bodies as well as international institutions.

Keywords:

Challenges, Democracy, Good Governance, Non-Governmental Organisations, Ghana

1. Introduction

The task of any society is to restructure and strengthen itself by building the capacities of its citizens through education, organisation and mobilisation for them to achieve their aspirations. In the words of Wolfomitz, the achievement of these aspirations is what is termed good governance [1]. Since the 1990s, the concept of good governance has attracted the attention of many all over the world. However, the optimism held about NGOs is not universal. Contrary to views of these optimists, there exist schools of thought who share an entirely different view. Such schools of thought argue that the contribution of NGOs to democracy and good governance are exaggerated and that the actual roles performed by these NGOs are not clearly understood yet. The critics further assert that the views shared by the optimists are based on normative assumptions rather than empirical evidence [2]. A study argues that, those assumptions and logic should not be extended to the southern NGOs which originated from a different background (history, traditions and customs) from those of the western countries [3]. A researcher therefore challenged that, unless the traditions, culture and the context of a particular society is critically considered, any assertion that the increased number and activities of NGOs is more favourable to democracy and good governance would be pointless [4].

Ever since Ghana returned to constitutional rule in 1992 after the various military interventions since independence, the country has undergone various developments in terms of democracy and good governance. These developments have been associated with different institutions and organisations. While others associate the progress towards democratic good governance with the effectiveness of political institutions in the country, some link it to the work of NGOs [5,6,7]. However, the actual role of NGOs in enhancing democratic good governance is not known yet. Though many studies have been carried out on the activities of NGOs in relation to democratic good governance, such studies have been characterised by some weaknesses. Of particular interest is the fact that those studies have tended to focus on the western ideas and theories to the neglect of the history of that state. This view is well articulated Tyedt when he emphasised that the culture and tradition that shaped a particular country's political institutions and the people's behaviour are ignored in those researches [3]. This study therefore, is structured, taking into account the context within which these NGOs originated.

Currently, Ghana has over 5000 registered NGOs that claim to be involved in one way or the other in promoting democracy and good governance [8]. However, this claim needs to be backed by empirical evidence if it is to be accepted. Otherwise it will be risky to assume that the mere presence of numerous NGOs in a country like Ghana automatically suggests the consolidation of democracy and good governance. According to the 2012 General elections and per the results declared by the electoral commission, as many as 251,720 rejected votes were recorded. This can be attributed largely to lack of political education. The Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) has also raised concerns about the large number of rejected ballots in the previous general elections and in their view, this situation makes emerging candidates win by a very small margin which is a dent on the absolute majority as preached by democracy. A study posits that, high rate of electoral malpractice, an unbalanced government policy as well as high rate of injustices against some individuals of the state due to weak governmental institutions does affect democracy and good governance [10]. In spite of these weaknesses, there has been considerable growth in Ghana's democracy and good governance since 1992 to date [10]. The purpose the study was to examine the

challenges that face NGOs in promoting democratic good governance in the Sunyani Municipality in Ghana. The study sought to answer the research question- What are the factors that tend to inhibit NGOs in promoting democratic good governance in the Sunyani Municipality?

2. Materials and Methods

The study adopted qualitative research approach. The population of the study includes NGOs, electoral commission, political parties, department of social welfare and the electorates. Purposive sampling technique was used to select all the eighteen (18) officials working for four (4) NGOs in Sunyani (based on their specific role with regards to the topic), the Electoral Commission, political parties (party executives), the Department of Social Welfare and one beneficiary (Mr. A.) of NGO (CHREP-Aid) access to justice provision. As shown in table 1 below:

Table 1. Sample Size Distribution Based on the Target Institutions/ Organisations.

NAMES OF INSTITUTIONS/ORGANISATIONS/ INDIVIDUAL	UNIT OF ENQUIRY	SAMPLING DISTRIBUTION
NGOs	World Clock	6
	CODEO	7
	Women and Youth in Development	2
	CHREP-Aid	3
Political Parties	NDC	1
	NPP	1
	CPP	1
Electoral Commission		1
Department of Social Welfare		1
Individual (Mr A.)		1
TOTAL		24

Source: Author's Construct

The main instrument used for data collection was open-ended interview guide. Qualitatively the data was categorised, coded and interpreted depending on the content and purpose of the data collected using content analysis. Interviews were transcribed, read, ordered, summarised and analysed according to the topic under discussion. Conclusions were drawn and recommendations made based on the findings.

3. Results and Discussions on Factors Affecting the Effective Operations of NGOs

This section presents results and discussions on factors affecting the effective operations of NGOs. The study revealed that NGOs faced with daunting challenges. affecting their performance. The respondents were interviewed on what they believed are these challenges in order to know the way forward. By so doing, the NGOs themselves were the first to be interviewed on the challenges they face in carrying out their activities. This was followed by the views of the other sampled respondents as well as the political party executives used in the study. Finally, the two main institutions (Department of Social Welfare and Electoral Commission) all in the Sunyani Municipality were interviewed on what they perceived to be hindering the

effective operations of NGOs. These issues are clearly discussed under two broad themes below.

3.1. Challenges Identified by NGOs

In their pursuit to perform their functions effectively to achieve their expected impact, the NGOs are faced with a number of challenges that should not be underestimated. From the study, the NGOs respondents identified various challenges affecting the effective operations of NGOs. These factors include; limited funding, human resource capacity constraints, inadequate logistics, and lack of collaboration among NGOs and between NGOs and stakeholders, and problems of conflict of interest.

3.2. Financial Constraints

The findings of the study revealed that all the 18 NGOs' staffs interviewed mentioned financial constraint as their major challenge. In their view, financial constraints tend to have multiple effects on their activities including the inability to invest in capacity strengthening of NGOs human resource, particularly in the area of research, skills and technical knowledge necessary to undertake projects. The views expressed by a staff of CHREP-Aid were that:

“The effectiveness of our activities is largely dependent on the availability of funds. But the funds we receive from individuals and private institutions are not enough to effectively undertake our activities. Even those funds we receive are not regular. As it stands now, we need a staff capacity of at least ten but where is the money to pay their salaries or allowances? Even with the three people we are working with now, at times it becomes very difficult to pay them their monthly salaries. Then again, like every progressive organisation which needs to catch up with new technologies and development trends require regular training of staff on the job. How do we fund these activities when we can barely afford to pay staff salaries? At times, we receive a lot of cases that demand our immediate assistance but due to financial problems we are unable to effectively handle them all with the kind of attention and urgency that they need. The issue of funds greatly influences our activities to the extent that we are unable to adopt very effective long-term plans (A staff of CHREP-Aid)”.

When we asked the staff of CODEO why all of them are stressing on the issue of inadequate funds, one of them had this view:

“It is so because with enough funds, majority of the challenges we face will not be there. As I speak, we need to train a lot more people who will go to the interior part of the Municipality to educate and also monitor the upcoming district assembly elections but where are the funds to undertake such an important activity? Due to financial constraints, we are unable to effectively monitor the local elections but rather would wait and monitor the general elections. Meanwhile, both elections form an important aspect of our democracy and good governance and would need equal monitoring of elections. Even with the general elections, we are unable to cover all the polling stations in the Sunyani Municipality as we should have. Though we are doing our best to ensure fair elections, the issue of finance in one way or the other still limits our efforts greatly (A staff of CODEO)”.

To this end, the respondents emphasised that without the regular supply of funds to the NGOs, all their activities will come to a halt, thereby forcing NGOs to fold up. The results of this study are consistent with the previous findings that, the continuity and effectiveness of NGOs activities largely depend on regular and secured source of funds. However, NGOs in the development sphere continue to lack this stable financial base [10,11,12]. Further studies conducted found that, without the continuous supply of funds to NGOs, they will wither and die. Turary therefore, argued that “the continuity of NGOs is the continuity in raising money” [13].

3.3. Human Resource Capacity Constraints

Related to limited funding is human resource capacity constraints as identified by 11 NGO respondents. The NGOs respondents noted that they are limited in terms of staffing and skills to effectively undertake their activities. One of them raised an issue on human resource capacity constraints:

“As an NGO we are understaffed. Currently, our staff capacity is only six as against eleven which would allow us work in our full capacity. This goes a long way to negatively affect our activities. Sometimes, we are forced to close our office to attend programmes or undertake our activities because of lack of personnel to stay behind and oversee the work at the office. Equally important is the issue of in-service training for staff. Ever since I joined this organisation in 2013, I have attended workshop only once and even that was early this year when my senior colleague could not participate due to family issues and I was called to attend on his behalf. This is not because we are not allowed to participate but the resources are not readily available to convey all of us to Accra for a three-day workshop on our job. All these greatly affect our activities (A staff of World Clock)”.

NGO’s inability to employ more staff and provide regular in-service training to staff has become a great challenge to their effectiveness. Even though the study revealed that majority (14) of the NGOs staff have completed the tertiary level of education, many of them seem to lack the necessary skill and knowledge to undertake their activities effectively and efficiently. This issue is worsened with NGOs inability to provide regular in-service training to staff to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills on the job. This finding supports the studies conducted in Kenya and Zambia, that the limited human resource capacity of NGOs often causes NGOs failure to deliver on their commitment and hence, become ineffective in their activities [14]. This was further supported by a similar study that, local NGOs lack the required human resource to effectively and efficiently undertake their activities [15].

3.4. Inadequate Logistics

The study indicated that 11 NGOs respondents posits that inadequate logistics greatly affect the effectiveness of NGOs in the Sunyani Municipality. A staff of Women and Youth in Development intimated that they are limited in terms of vehicles, office space and technical equipment like computers, printers, power plants etc. to effectively undertake their activities. According to him:

“In this time of frequent power cuts, we lack basic equipment like power plant, computers, printers, and a comfortable office. The vehicle we are using now is worn out and can hardly travel 70km without breaking down.”

These issues and many more have impeded our effective operation (A staff of Women and Youth in Development) ”.

However, the effectiveness and efficiency of NGOs is greatly dependent on the availability and adequacy of logistics to undertake their activities [15]. A number of studies have established that NGOs in developing countries including Ghana are under-resourced in terms of logistics which often limit their ability to effectively function to promote democracy and good governance [10]. Findings from the study confirmed this situation with information from the staff of NGOs attesting to the fact that they woefully lack the necessary logistics to effectively and efficiently undertake their activities to promote the democratic good governance agenda.

3.5. Lack of Collaboration and Cooperation

Lack of collaboration and cooperation among NGOs and between NGOs and their stakeholders was also identified as a major challenge to NGOs effective operation. From the study, about 13 NGOs respondents mentioned the lack of collaboration and cooperation among NGOs and between NGOs and their stakeholders as one of the factors hindering NGOs effectiveness. This is how one of them perceived the collaboration among NGOs and the cooperation between them and their stakeholders:

“Instead of NGOs to come together to be a force to reckon with in terms of pushing forward the demand of the citizens, these NGOs hardly meet to share ideas on how best to undertake their activities. This is especially with NGOs who share the same or similar objectives. In the Municipality for instance, we see different NGOs undertaking political education at a particular locality at the same time resulting in duplication of function and waste of resources (A senior staff of CODEO) ”.

The NGO respondents revealed that owing to competition over influence and funding, NGOs fail to pool their resources and knowledge together to undertake more effective programmes but rather work separately. This they explained leads to waste of resources resulting from duplication of functions. Though there is an association of NGOs in the Sunyani Municipality called the Brong-Ahafo Association of Non-Governmental Organisation (BANGO) which is to serve as an umbrella organisation to these NGOs where they will meet and share ideas pertaining to development initiatives and new strategies of sourcing funds, their activities are seen not to be very effective in this process. This was further revealed from the survey where a respondent from the Women and Youth in Development explained that:

“We have never been invited to any of their meetings or been involved in their activities even though BANGO is aware of our existence. The last time we learnt they were holding a meeting was about some seven months ago. We were hoping to be officially invited to such meeting but nothing like that came. Now we have resorted to minding our own business until such a time that BANGO will be ready to invite us to be part of their activities (A staff of Women and Youth in Development) ”.

The views of another staff of CHREP-Aid suggest that there is not a strong collaboration among NGOs. Her view gives further credence to the earlier claim of the staff of Women and Youth in Development that NGOs are unable to meet as one group to share ideas about their activities. Her view is presented below:

“This organisation has been in existence since 2012 but not for once have we been invited by other NGOs or even BANGO to talk about how best we can improve on our activities in terms of skills, activities or finance. Rather than pull our resources together to undertake more rigorous activities, we see each other as competition. This is especially with NGOs performing similar activities. This goes a long way to negatively affect our activities (A staff of CHREP-Aid)”.

Contrary to the views shared by Women and Youth in Development and CHREP-Aid, CODEO and World Clock intimated that they have been participating in the activities undertaken by BANGO. However, they added that their activities have not been frequent and very effective.

3.6. Public Suspicion of NGOs

It was revealed from the study that the perception of the general public about the work of NGOs affect their credibility and integrity. Among the issues raised by NGOs include the public suspicion that i) NGOs owned by individuals are doing businesses with those NGOs ii) some NGOs are funded by political parties. To deal with the first issue, the views of NGOs were sought about why the general public believe they are running a business with the NGOs. From the survey, this was what one of the staff of the NGOs had to say:

“As an organisation, we need regular supply of funds to sustain our activities especially when the funds from donors and private individuals and institutions are not forthcoming. To this end, majority of us engage in other economic activities like farming, running of restaurants, internet services among others to generate funds to undertake our activities. However, the public misconstrue this act of engaging in economic activities to mean that we are doing businesses to enrich ourselves. This therefore gives us a negative image in the sight of the public which negatively affect the extent to which they cooperate or relate with us (A senior staff of World Clock)”.

To confirm this, the views of the general public were sought about the belief that NGOs owned by individuals are doing business with the organisations. The views of one of the respondents summarises the opinion of the public:

“We have seen a lot of NGOs who are supposed to be a non-profit organisation engaged in various economic activities ranging from operating internet services to consultancy services all in the name of raising funds to undertake their activities. We see them all the time riding luxurious cars and living luxurious lives yet complain of inadequate funds to undertake NGOs activities. As far as I am concerned, these individuals hide behind the name NGO to make profit (Participant D)”.

Another suspicion of the public against NGOs was the claim that they are partisan in their activities. According to one of the staffs:

“It has been alleged by the general public that NGOs are influenced by political parties to push forward their political agenda. According to them, NGOs rely on funds from some political parties and in turn promote their political agenda. It should be noted that the basis of non-governmental organisation is to be a neutral body to articulate the needs and interests of the citizens. But as a human organisation there are influences from people in

power because they hold the money to assist you achieve your objectives as an NGO. However, I do not think an NGO would deliberately allow itself to be influenced by a political party all in the name of funds as against the interest of the citizens (A staff of CODEO)”.

The study further sought the views of the general public on the partisan role played by some NGOs. The views of one of the respondents encapsulate the views of the general public:

“Some NGOs are seen to be speaking in favour of a particular political party and from sources we are told those NGOs are sometimes funded by some political parties. How can NGOs who are supposed to be neutral in promoting the democratic good governance course be effective in this process when they are partisan in their activities? Well, like I said, I do not have evidence to support this claim but this is what we hear all the time and if you decide to follow the trend with which such NGOs carry out their activities, there are reasons to believe that their interests are directed towards a particular political party (Participant)”.

These comments by the general public confirm the challenges NGOs face pertaining to their integrity and credibility. Yet the public do not seem to have evidence to support their claim. However, this appears to be a widely held view among the public and this perception appears to negatively influence the manner with which majority of the citizens relate with the NGOs.

3.7. Challenges Identified by Other Respondents

The views of the other sampled respondents comprising the constituents (ordinary citizens), the political party executives and the officers of both the EC and the Department of Social Welfare all in the Sunyani Municipality were sought on what they perceived to be hindering the NGOs from working effectively as expected. The major factors identified are discussed below.

3.7.1. Misappropriation and Misallocation of Funds

All the respondents held that misappropriation and misallocation of funds has been one of the major factors that hinder the effective operation of NGOs. For example, one of the respondents said:

The bulk of funds these NGOs receive go into paying the salaries and allowances of their staff and since there is no effective regulatory body to effectively audit the accounts and the actual activities undertaken by these NGOs besides their donors, a lot of the funds are being embezzled by their senior staffs in charge of projects. This has been the cause of NGOs inability to widen their scope to reach out to rural communities who may even need their services the most (Participant A).

To confirm the assertions made by the respondents (ordinary citizens), the views of NGOs were sought on the issue of misappropriation and misallocation of funds. The views of the staff and founder of CHREP-Aid sum up the views of the NGOs. According to him:

Well, we have been hearing from rumours that some NGOs, especially with the directors in charge of projects, squander funds meant to undertake projects. For instance, we learnt that some NGOs receive funds based on a

particular budget they prepared to train a number of people on a particular field but end up training very few people in order to keep the rest of the money. But as I said, I cannot say with evidence since I am not in those organisations. Pertaining to the issue of misallocation of funds, I think it is dependent on how much money staffs receive as salary as against the funds the NGOs receive in general. For me, the payment of salary to staff is as important as the activities we undertake as an NGO. We need the staff to keep the NGOs running and one cannot afford not to pay the staff just anything because the funds for running the NGOs are not forthcoming. So we try as much as possible to balance them both so that we do not lose our skilled staff to other competitive organisations (A staff of CHREP-Aid).

Though the funds for running NGOs are not that frequent and regular, it has been revealed from this survey that some senior officers of these organisations are used to embezzling funds meant for projects due to the absence of a strong and effective regulatory system to check and audit the accounts and actual activities of these NGOs. The results of this study confirms the works of Ng'oma that some local NGOs in Zambia have been accused of maladministration, financial mismanagement, and the misuse of donor and public funds majority of which were used for their personal aggrandisements. This account for projects not effectively carried out or covering only a small section of society hence yielding limited results. To this end, the Director of the Department of Social Welfare intimated that:

“We are supposed to look at their financial reports (audited reports) annually and give a recommendation to the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection and a copy to the National Association of NGOs. But you see, the NGOs do not adhere to this and we do not even see them until they are coming to renew their certificate of registration. This greatly affects our work in effectively regulating them in terms of how they manage their funds. Based on this, I will not challenge the view that some NGOs are mismanaging funds that are supposed to be used for undertaking NGOs activities (Municipal Director for Social Welfare)”.

The views expressed by the Director of the Department of Social Welfare indicate that even though they are supposed to go through their financial accounts, majority of the NGOs do not bring their reports for scrutiny. It can therefore be deduced from the above that some NGOs' failure to submit their financial reports to the Department of Social Welfare may be due to their misallocation and misappropriation of funds which they intend to hide. It was further revealed by the Director of the Department of Social Welfare that even with respect to the financial reports of the NGOs; they are limited in terms of what to look out for with regards to the spending of funds. This limitation placed on the Department would give some NGOs room to misappropriate and misallocate funds.

3.7.2. NGOs inability to identify their Real and Target Group

In addition to misappropriation and misallocation of funds is NGOs inability to identify their real and target group where their impacts would greatly be felt. From the study respondents maintained that, NGOs fail to identify their real targets in their bid to achieve their democratic good governance objective. One of the sampled respondents explained that:

“Though NGOs in general concentrate their activities in the rural areas, NGOs that are involved in activities such as election monitoring, political education, etc tend to concentrate their efforts in the cities leaving the rural communities to their fate. These rural folks are the very people who are mostly not aware or sometimes completely cut off from hearing issues pertaining to their rights, where and when to defend them, and would need the help of these NGOs. Yet, these NGOs work in areas where majority of citizens do not participate or benefit much because they are already aware of their rights partly due to their level of education or the myriad of information available through the media and many other sources in the cities (Participant B)”.

To validate this claim by the respondents, the study further sought the views of the NGOs about the extent to which they are able to reach out to those in the rural communities. A staff of Women and Youth in Development explained that:

“Indeed, we have not been able to cover the entire Municipality especially the rural communities. But as earlier on indicated, our challenge with finance is the cause of our inability to cover those in the interior part of the Municipality. But we are trying our best to cover the entire municipality to reach out to all though this will be done gradually (A staff of Women and Youth in Development)”.

It was clear from this study that NGOs in the Sunyani Municipality are not able to make great impact due to their inability to reach out to those in the rural communities who may need their activities the most.

3.7.3. Lack of Collaboration among NGOs and stakeholders

Equally important is the lack of collaboration among NGOs as well as NGOs and their stakeholders (citizens). The respondents indicated that, NGOs view themselves as competitors instead of partners working together to achieve a common goal. This affects their work negatively due to their inability to pull their resources together to undertake more effective activities and even share ideas pertaining to new ways of enhancing their activities to promote democratic good governance [16]. This view was also shared by the Director of the Department of Social Welfare. According to him:

“NGOs in this Municipality hardly come together to undertake a common programme. This lack of collaboration among them has led to duplication of functions and waste of resources since different NGOs engage in the same activity at the same locality separately. This affects their effectiveness (Municipal Director, Department of Social Welfare)”.

Effective collaboration and cooperation is one of the watchwords preached by NGOs but are seldom practised. A study pointed out that, inter-NGOs collaboration and cooperation is limited. This has led to a lack of clear understanding of the democratic culture and government policies and programs among NGOs [17]. The findings of this study revealed that NGOs in the Sunyani Municipality lack a strong and effective collaboration and cooperation among them. Respondents further argued that NGOs fail to seek their views (constituents) on issues affecting them for redress and even when they do, they do not get the feedback from them. These results support the findings of a study that, lack of local involvement in the activities of NGOs is a major cause of their ineffectiveness [18]. The study conducted on “Administration of

Development Initiatives by NGOs: A Study of their Sustainability in Bangladesh” further buttresses this result and emphasised that, the involvement of the local people allows them to take advantage of their traditional organisations and indigenous practices which they are familiar with [19].

3.7.4. Inadequate Media Coverage

Moreover, inadequate media coverage by NGOs was identified as one of the factors that hinder their effective operation. From the study, four (4) respondents stated that they have not heard from the NGOs existence while majority of the respondents who were aware of these NGOs indicated that they do not hear of any information pertaining to their activities on the media or the time and venue of their meetings. The views of one of the participants are explained that *“I am unable to participate or seek help from most of the NGOs through their activities because I do not get to hear much information or announcement about their specific activities (Participant C)”*.

A discussion with the Municipal Electoral Officer also revealed that the activities of the NGOs are not well communicated to the people in the Municipality. In his view:

“The voices of these NGOs are not often heard to make their activities known to the citizens. The best way for NGOs to disseminate information about their programmes and activities is through the media yet they hardly use that medium. I believe this is one of the major reasons people do not know or participate in their programmes and activities (Municipal Electoral Officer)”.

The views of NGOs were sought on why majority of the citizens are not informed of their activities on the media. According to a staff of Women and Youth in Development:

“We do communicate with the general public about our activities and programmes through the radio stations we have in the Municipality. Through this medium, information is able to reach the majority of people. But you see, the frequency of such announcement is based on the NGOs ability to pay. In most times we use other medium like posting notices at vantage points and giving out leaflets to individuals other the media to communicate with the general public about our activities (A staff of Women and Youth in Development)”.

NGOs inability to advertise their activities limit their work since their ultimate goal may not be achieved due to non-participation by the majority who were unaware of such gatherings.

3.7.5. Conflict of Interest

Lastly, the Director of the Department of Social Welfare identified the issue of conflict of interest as another challenge facing NGOs. According to him:

“Since the supply of funds is a great determinant of NGOs sustainability, NGOs tend to move their activities to areas where funds are readily available. For instance, most NGOs whose original objectives were political education and policy advocacy have now turned their attention to areas such as HIV/AIDS awareness, malaria prevention, provision of educational materials to students just to mention but a few (Municipal Director, Department of Social Welfare)”.

To confirm this claim, the views of NGOs were sought whether they are faced with the challenge of conflict of interest. The opinion of a staff of CHREP-Aid sums up the views of NGOs as:

“We have a lot of NGOs who have moved from one activity to the other or add on other activities because of the easy access to funds from those areas. As an NGO, there are times we are tempted to add on other activities just to enable us access more funds to undertake our activities more effectively. But doing this would not allow us give the needed attention that each of them deserves (A staff of CHREP-Aid)”.

The results of the study indicated that conflict of interest is a challenge to NGOs effectiveness. The study alluded that, a lot of NGOs who were originally into areas like political education, election monitoring, policy advocacy and access to justice have moved to areas where funds are readily available. This findings of the study were supported by previous studies that the issue of conflict of interest is a great challenge to NGOs activities as it forces them to either abandon their original activities or tend to be ineffective in those areas [10,20].

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study revealed that NGOs play a significant role in promoting democratic good governance at the local and national level but their activities have been bedevilled with a number of challenges such as Financial Constraints, Human Resource Capacity Constraints, Inadequate Logistics, Lack of Collaboration and Cooperation, Public Suspicion of NGOs, Misappropriation and Misallocation of Funds, NGOs inability to identify their Real and Target Group, Lack of Collaboration among NGOs and stakeholders, Inadequate Media Coverage, and Conflict of Interest. It is recommended that the various media as part of their social responsibilities should assist the NGOs by giving them slots on their platform to talk/discuss about their activities. The media should also ensure that NGOs programmes are covered. This would increase the citizens’ awareness of NGOs in order to seek help or participate effectively in their activities to promote democratic good governance as a whole. It is also recommended that, the general public should show more interest in the work of NGOs. Individual citizens should realise that the NGOs exist to protect their interests against the unfriendly policies of the government and its institutions. As such, citizens should be willing and ready to communicate their needs and interests to the NGOs. This would enable the NGOs to become aware of their needs to adequately deal with them.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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