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PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

A Survey Report

Summary

The 1992 Constitution enjoins Parliament to enact laws and constitutional instruments to govern the country. In addition, Parliament is empowered by the Constitution to act as a check on the excessive powers of the Executive. To ensure that the right calibre of people are elected into Parliament, Chapter 10 of Ghana's 1992 Constitution sets out the eligibility criteria to become a Member of Parliament (MP), the roles of MPs, the privileges, immunities, and emoluments, among others.

This paper presents the findings of a follow-up survey on Public Perceptions of Members of Parliament conducted in November/December, 2015 across the 10 regions of Ghana. The overall objective of the survey was to seek the views of Ghanaians on how they perceived the roles and responsibilities of Members of Parliament (MPs). The survey focused on: (i) the interaction between MPs and their constituents; (ii) electorates' voting considerations; (iii) educational qualifications of MPs; (iv) performance of MPs; and (v) ex-gratia payments to MPs. In order to address the issues emerging from the survey, proposals are outlined for the consideration of policy makers.



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The Editor, The Institute of Economic Affairs, P.O. Box OS 1936, Accra.

Tel. +233-302 244716/226333/226359/226388, 030 7010713/4. Fax: +233-302-222313.

Email: iea@ieagh.org. Website: www.ieagh.org. Facebook: www.facebook.com/ieagh.

Twitter: www.twitter.com/IEAGhana

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LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

“A” Level	Advanced Level
EA	Enumeration Area
FWSC	Fair Wages and Salaries Commission
IEA	Institute of Economic Affairs
JHS	Junior High School
JSS	Junior Secondary School
MLSC	Middle School Leaving Certificate
MMDAs	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MPs	Members of Parliament
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NPP	New Patriotic Party
“O” Level	Ordinary Level
PPMPs	Public Perceptions of Members of Parliament
PPS	Probability Proportional to the Size
PSUs	Primary Sampling Units
SEGS	Socio-economic and Governance Survey
SHS	Senior High School
SSSCE	Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The 1992 Constitution enjoins Parliament to enact laws and constitutional instruments to govern the country. In addition, Parliament is empowered by the Constitution to act as a check on the excessive powers of the Executive. To ensure that the right calibre of people are elected into Parliament, Chapter 10 of Ghana's 1992 Constitution sets out the eligibility criteria to become a Member of Parliament (MP), the roles of MPs, the privileges, immunities, and emoluments, among others.

Consequently, after the 4th Republic had operated uninterruptedly for 18 years, the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) carried out a survey on “Public Perceptions of Members of Parliament” (PPMPs) across the 10 regions in May/June 2011. The overall objective of that survey was to get the views on how the roles and responsibilities of Members of Parliament (MPs) were perceived by Ghanaians.

This paper presents the findings of a follow-up PPMPs survey conducted in November/December, 2015. The 2015 PPMPs survey focused on: (i) the interaction between constituents and MPs - given that this relationship is an integral aspect of democratic governance; (ii) electorates' voting considerations; (iii) educational qualifications of MPs; (iv) performance of MPs; and (v) ex-gratia payments to MPs.

Methodology

A representative sample of 1,500 individuals aged 18 years and above was randomly selected in three (3) stages from across the 10 regions of the country. The background characteristics of respondents including age, sex, educational level, occupation and marital status were measured.

Key Findings

The results show that about 77% of respondents know their MPs. Females and urban dwellers are less likely to know their MPs; about a third of respondents in the Greater Accra Region and the Ashanti Region did not know their MPs. However, over 80% of respondents had never contacted their MPs. For respondents who had contacted their MPs, almost half (47.4%) did so to discuss development projects in their constituencies, while 24.4% sought financial assistance. Less than 10% contacted their MPs to discuss proposed or enacted legislation.

The survey findings suggest respondents have misconstrued the primary role of MPs. This is because 7 out of every 10 of the respondents were of the view that the MPs role is either to undertake development projects (43.1%) or assist their constituents (31.7%).

On the issue of electing representatives, voting along party lines for MPs is still a key consideration. However, about 75.8% of respondents in the Brong Ahafo, 72.3% in the Greater Accra and 67.5% in the Central Region (all swing regions) considered the personality of the prospective candidate over the candidate's political party. Moreover, an overwhelming majority of the respondents (8 in 10) thought that the minimum educational qualification for MPs should be tertiary education.

A third (33.8%) of all respondents considered their MP's performance to be poor. The perception was highest in Western Region (44%), Northern Region (43.3%), Greater Accra (38.3%), Upper West (36.9%) and Ashanti (34%) regions.

The survey findings further suggest that ex-gratia payments continue to be a controversial issue. It is worth pointing out that respondents were not totally against its payment, as opinion was split between those in favour (43.4%) and those against (45.9%) the payment of ex-gratia to MPs. However, about (61.4%) of the respondents indicated the amount of ex-gratia paid to MPs is excessive.

Recommendations

Proposals are outlined to address the issues emerging from the survey. These include a call for a national debate on education criteria for MPs. This owes to the fact that a significant proportion of respondents – cutting across all educational backgrounds – indicated the minimum qualification for MPs should be tertiary education. Also, the misconception that the role of a parliamentarian is mainly to undertake development projects or assist their constituents could be attributed to the campaign promises made by MPs. In this regard, MPs may need to discontinue making developmental promises to the electorate during campaigns, as this may serve as a distraction from concentrating on their core function of making, scrutinising and passing legislation, as well as holding the Executive accountable. Citizens should also be educated on the core role of MPs. Finally, given the public perception that the levels of the ex-gratia payments are excessive, this matter needs to be re-considered by both Parliament and the Executive.

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The important role of the Legislature in Ghana's current democratic dispensation cannot be overemphasized. The 1992 Constitution enjoins the Legislature and her members to enact laws and constitutional instruments to govern the country. In addition, the Legislature is empowered by the Constitution to act as a check on the excessive use of Executive powers.

To ensure that the right calibre of people are elected into the Legislature, Chapter 10 of Ghana's 1992 Constitution sets out the eligibility criteria to become a Member of Parliament (MP), the roles of MPs, the privileges, immunities and emoluments, among others.

Consequently, after 18 years of uninterrupted constitutional rule under the 4th Republic, the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) carried out a survey on "Public Perception of Members of Parliament" (PPMPs) across the 10 regions in May/June 2011. The overall objective of that survey was to test Ghanaian public opinion on Parliamentarians with regards to their functions and emoluments, among others. A follow-up PPMPs survey was carried out in November/December, 2015. The 2015 PPMPs survey focused on: (i) the interaction between constituents and MPs given that this relationship is an integral aspect of democratic governance; (ii) respondents' voting considerations; (iii) educational qualifications of MPs; (iv) performance of MPs; and (v) ex-gratia payments to MPs.

1.2 Survey Methodology

Sample Design

The survey provides a regionally disaggregated representative data for the 10 regions of Ghana. The survey used a probability sample design where each person aged 18 years and above in Ghana has a known non-zero chance of being included in the sample.

Sample Size and Allocation

A total of 1,500 individuals aged 18 years and above were selected in three (3) stages from across the 10 regions of the country. In the first stage, 100 primary sampling units (PSUs) also called enumeration areas (EAs) obtained from the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) were selected with probability proportional to size (PPS). Fifteen (15) households were then systematically selected as the target sample (secondary sampling units) in each selected PSU. At the third stage, the Kish Grid was applied to the selected households in each of the selected PSUs visited from among all household members aged 18 years and above for the selection of the eligible respondents. The selection of households and individuals within the PSUs and households respectively, followed the strict sampling procedures recommended by the United Nations (2005).

PART TWO: RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

2. Background Characteristics of Respondents

Many factors such as region, ethnicity, gender, locality of residence, age, educational level, occupation and marital status of respondents influence one's perception of Members of Parliament (MPs). For this reason, these background characteristics of the respondents were solicited.

2.1 Regional Distribution of Respondents

The regional distribution of respondents is depicted in Table 1. The results mirror closely the 2010 Population and Housing Census (PHC) figures. The region with the highest proportion of respondents is Ashanti (18.0%) and Upper East/West Regions have the least (7%).

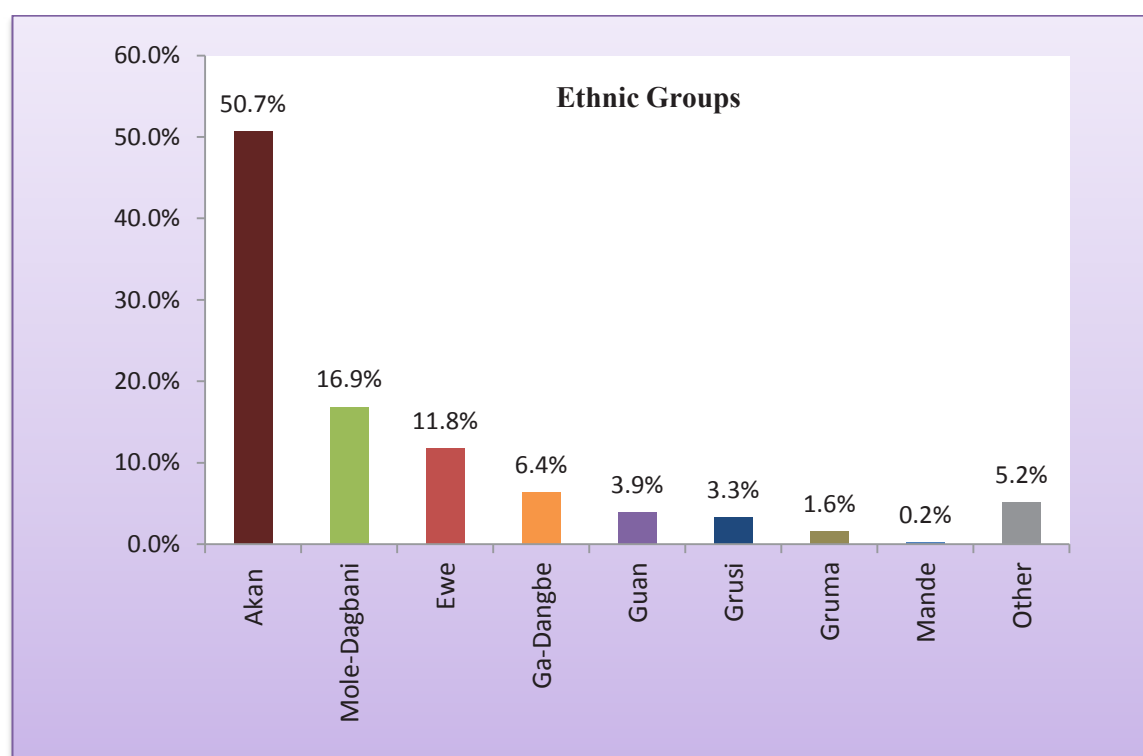
Table 1: Regional Distribution of Respondents (18 years+)

Region	IEA Survey		2010 PHC
	Number	Percent	Percent
Western	135	9.0	9.5
Central	120	8.0	8.7
Greater Accra	225	15.0	18.6
Volta	120	8.0	8.6
Eastern	150	10.0	10.6
Ashanti	270	18.0	19.5
Brong Ahafo	135	9.0	9.0
Northern	135	9.0	8.9
Upper East	105	7.0	4.0
Upper West	105	7.0	2.6
Total	1,500	100.0	100.0
Source: 2015 IEA Survey			Source: Ghana Statistical Service, 2010 Population and Housing Census

2.2 Ethnic Composition of Respondents

The Akan group constitutes slightly more than half (50.7%) of the respondents followed by the Mole-Dagbani Group (16.9%) and Ewe (11.8%) (Figure 1) The least proportion of respondents came from the Mande Group (0.2%).

Figure 1: Ethnic Group Composition of Respondents



Source: 2015 IEA Survey

2.3 Distribution of Respondents by Sex, Locality, Age Group, Educational Level, Occupation, and Marital Status

Table 2 shows the background characteristics of the respondents. Of the 1,500 persons interviewed, six out of ten were females while four out of ten were males. Urban respondents constituted 48.1% while 51.9% resided in the rural areas. The youth (18-24 years) constituted 24.6% of the respondents and the aged (60+ years) were 13%. Those without any formal education were 17.6% while Primary/JSS/MSLC/JHS were 48.3%. Tertiary respondents were 10%.

Three out of every five respondents were self-employed (59.8%), 6.1% were civil/public servants, 5.9% were private sector employees and 16.3% indicated they were unemployed.

More than half (54.9%) of the respondents were married (includes those living together or cohabiting) and those who had never married were 29.5%.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents

Background Characteristics		Percent	Number
Sex	Male	39.9	599
	Female	60.1	901
Locality	Urban	48.1	721
	Rural	51.9	779
Age Group	18-24	24.6	369
	25-59	62.4	936
	60+	13.0	195
Marital Status	Never Married	29.5	442
	Married (includes Living Together or Cohabiting)	54.9	824
	Separated/ Divorced	7.6	114
	Widowed	8.0	120
Educational Level	None	17.6	264
	Primary	12.6	189
	JSS/MSLC/JHS	35.7	536
	Secondary/SHS/'O'-Level/'A'-Level	19.5	293
	Vocational/Commercial/Technical/Cert.A/Post Sec/Nursing	4.3	64
	Tertiary (any formal education after SHS or SSSCE)	10.0	150
	Others(Specify)	0.3	4
Occupation	Civil/Public Servant	6.1	91
	Private sector employee	5.9	89
	Self-employed	59.8	897
	Unemployed	16.3	244
	Other (specify) e.g. full time student, retired/aged, etc	11.9	179
Total		100	1500

Source: 2015 IEA Survey

3. Interaction between Constituents and MPs

Although democracy essentially means government by the people, it is practically impossible for everyone to directly take part in the process of governance. Therefore, the election of representatives to take decisions on behalf of the people is a key feature of a democratic system. In Ghana, MPs are elected as representatives of their constituents. In order to effectively champion the cause of their constituents, it is expected that the MPs interact constantly with their constituents to find out their needs and opinions on issues of national importance. This engagement enables MPs to take decisions reflective of the views of their constituents. The survey, therefore, sought to find out whether the electorate know and interact with their MPs.

3.1 Constituents' Knowledge of their MPs

The results of the survey show that almost a quarter (23.1%) of respondents do not know their MP. The highest proportion of respondents who did not know their MP came from Greater Accra Region (37.3%). This is followed by Ashanti (30.5%), Brong Ahafo (29.1%) and Central (28.3%) regions. On the contrary, about nine out of ten respondents in the Upper East know their MP (Table 3).

Table 3: Percentage of Respondents who know their MP by Region

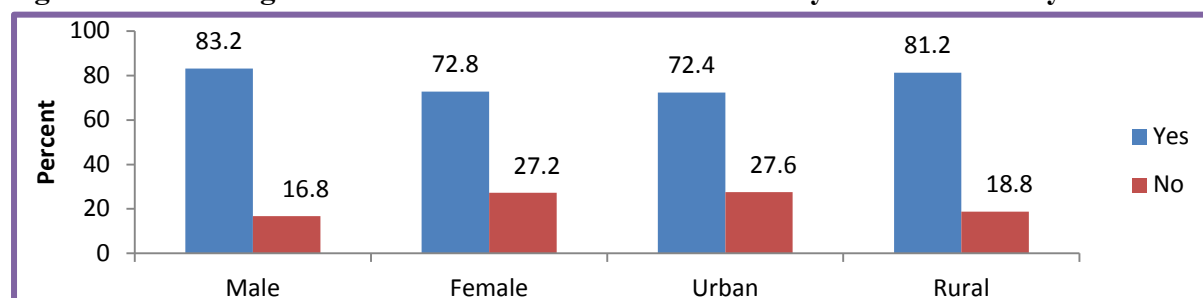
Region	Yes	No	Total	Number
Western	79.3	20.7	100.0	135
Central	71.7	28.3	100.0	120
Greater Accra	62.7	37.3	100.0	225
Volta	86.7	13.3	100.0	120
Eastern	88.7	11.3	100.0	150
Ashanti	69.5	30.5	100.0	269
Brong Ahafo	70.9	29.1	100.0	134
Northern	87.4	12.6	100.0	135
Upper East	90.3	9.7	100.0	103
Upper West	82.9	17.1	100.0	105
Total (Overall)	76.9	23.1	100.0	1496

Source: 2015 IEA Survey

More females and urban dwellers did not know their MPs

The results further show that 27.2% of females did not know their MPs compared to 16.8% of males. Also, 27.6% of urban dwellers did not know their MPs compared to 18.8% of rural dwellers (Figure 2). One plausible explanation from the above findings is that females are less inclined towards politics. The rural-urban gap may be due to the relatively stronger sense of community in the remote (rural) regions of Ghana than the more urban regions (such as Greater Accra and Ashanti). Due to the sense of community, elected representatives tend to be more widely known in rural localities.

Figure 2: Percentage of Constituents who know their MP by Sex and Locality



Source: 2015 IEA Survey

3.2 Constituents' Contact with their MPs

Over eighty percent of respondents had never contacted their MPs

Constant interactions of MPs with their constituents are encouraged because that is the surest way the MP can get to know the concerns and opinions of his constituents on important national issues. Aside from the normal general interactions, some constituents go a step further to contact their MPs at a personal level to discuss various issues. In order to assess respondents' relationship with their MP, respondents were asked whether they had contacted their MP. The results are shown in Table 4 and Figures 3, 4 & 5.

On the whole, eight out of ten respondents had never contacted their MPs. However, 18.3% of respondents indicated that they had contacted their MP. Between 81% - 89% of respondents in Western, Upper West, Brong Ahafo, Volta, Ashanti and Greater Accra regions had never contacted their MPs (Table 4).

Table 4: Percentage of Constituents who had contacted their MP by Region

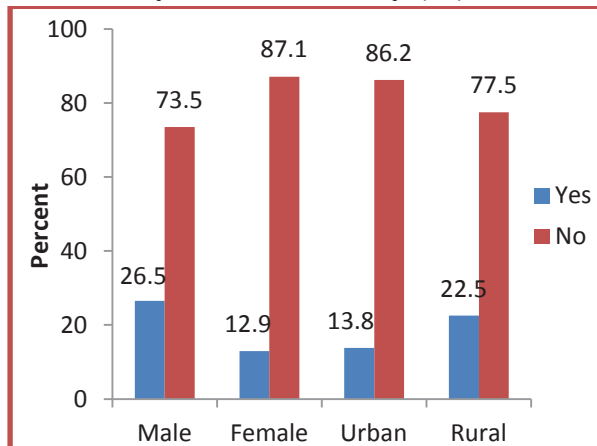
Region	Yes	No	Total	Number
Western	18.9	81.1	100.0	132
Central	25.8	74.2	100.0	120
Greater Accra	10.3	89.7	100.0	223
Volta	15.8	84.2	100.0	120
Eastern	21.5	78.5	100.0	149
Ashanti	14.4	85.6	100.0	270
Brong Ahafo	16.5	83.5	100.0	133
Northern	29.1	70.9	100.0	134
Upper East	23.3	76.7	100.0	103
Upper West	18.1	81.9	100.0	105
Total (Overall)	18.3	81.7	100.0	1489

Source: 2015 IEA Survey

A higher proportion of males (26.5%) than females (12.9%) had contacted their MPs. Furthermore, 22.5% of rural residents compared to 13.8% of urban residents had contacted their MPs (Figure 3).

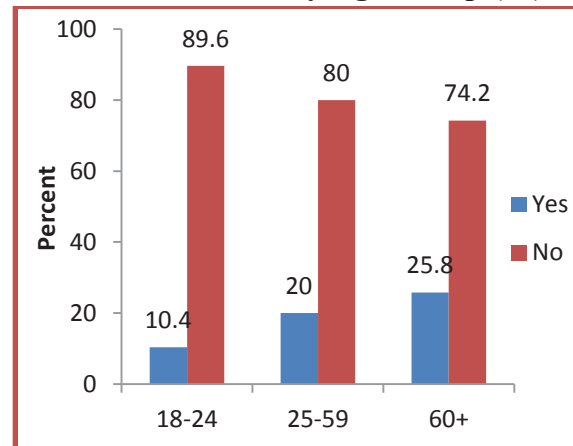
A closer analysis by age revealed that the highest proportion of persons who contacted their MPs came from the aged (25.8%), followed by the adults (20.0%) and the youth (10.4%) (Figure 4). Contacting MPs was not significantly influenced by the educational level of the respondents as depicted by Figure 5. The proportion of persons who contacted their MPs and had no education was 19.9%, JSS/MSLC/JHS (19.3%), and Tertiary (18.7%). The highest proportion was those with Vocational/Commercial/Technical/Cert.A/Post Sec/Nursing where 28.1% contacted their MPs.

Figure 3: Constituents who had contacted their MP by Sex and Locality (%)



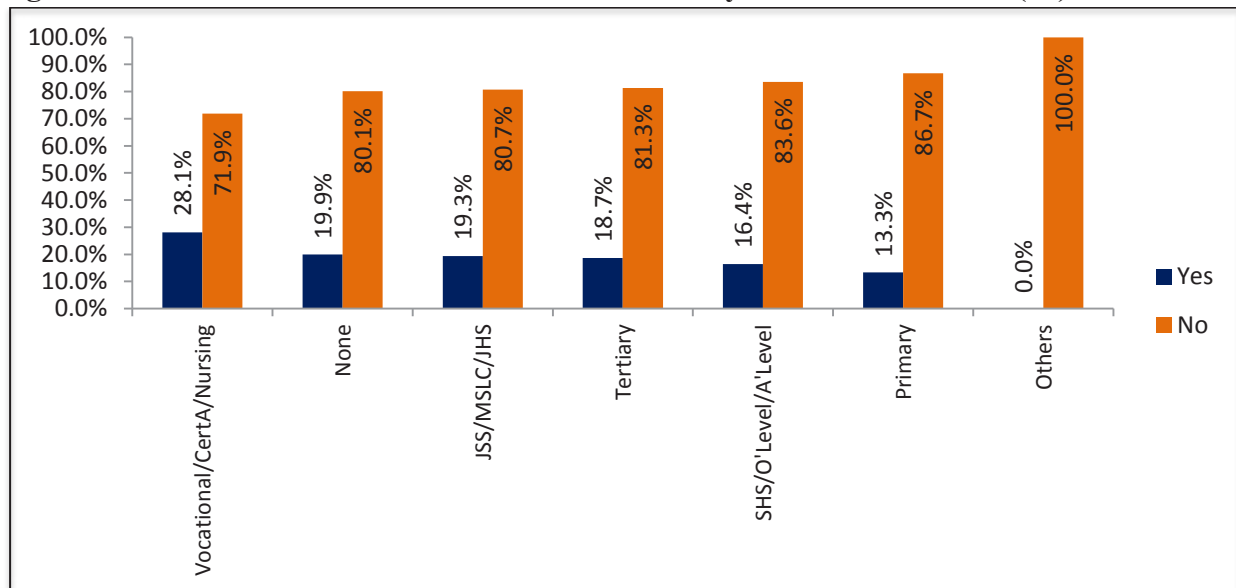
Source: 2015 IEA Survey

Figure 4: Constituents who had Contacted their MP by Age Group (%)



Source: 2015 IEA Survey

Figure 5: Constituents who had contacted their MP by Level of Education (%)



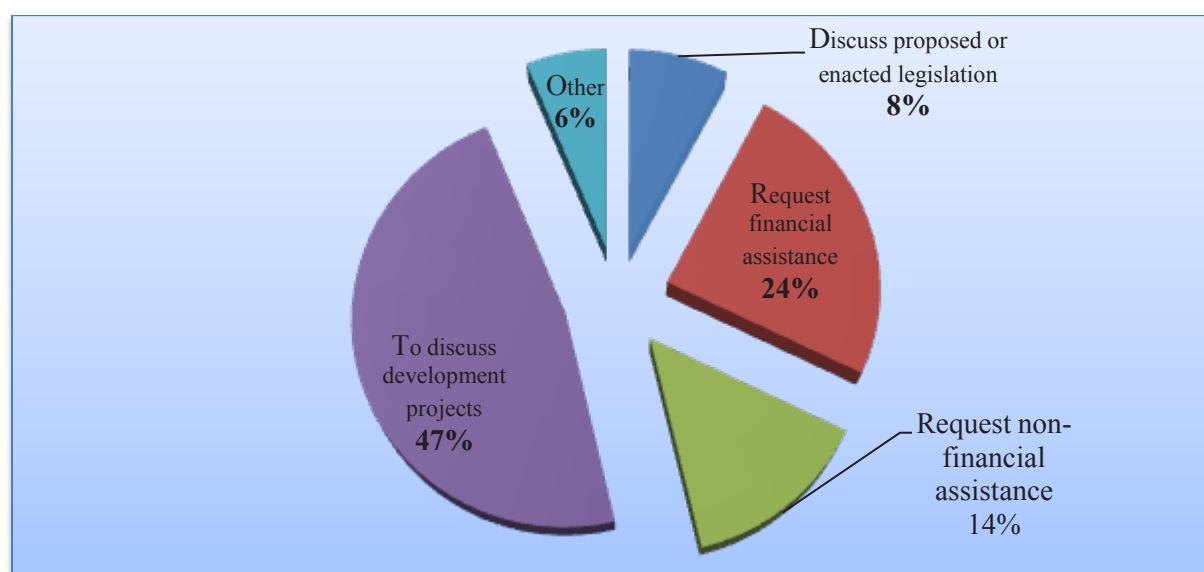
Source: 2015 IEA Survey

3.3 Reasons for Contacting MP

Constituents contacted their MPs for various reasons. Among the reasons given were: to discuss a proposed or enacted legislation; to request financial assistance; to request non-financial assistance and to discuss development projects in their constituency.

Almost half (47.4%) of the respondents who contacted their MPs did so to discuss development projects in their constituencies (a function which is supposed to be undertaken by Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs). Only 7.8% of respondents contacted their MP to discuss proposed or enacted policies. A significant proportion of respondents (24.4%) contacted their MP to seek financial assistance, while about 14% did so to seek non-financial assistance (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Reasons why Constituents Contacted their MP (%)



Source: 2015 IEA Survey

A closer analysis of responses, broken down by region is shown in Table 5 below. More than half of respondents in five out of ten regions of Ghana indicated that they contacted their MP to discuss development projects in their respective constituencies; These include Central (51.6%), Western (52.2%), Volta (55.65%), Northern (56.4%) and Upper East (60%) regions.

At the regional level, the highest proportion of respondents who contacted their MP to seek financial assistance came from the Upper West (38.9%), Central (38.7%) and Ashanti (34.2%) regions. The highest proportion of persons who contacted their MPs to discuss proposed or enacted legislation came from the Greater Accra Region (33.3%). Surprisingly, no respondent from Western, Central, Volta and Upper West contacted their MP to discuss proposed or enacted legislation.

Table 5: Reasons for Contacting MP by Region (%)

Reasons for Contacting MP	Western	Central	Greater Accra	Volta	Eastern	Ashanti	Brong Ahafo	Northern	Upper East	Upper West	Overall
To discuss proposed or enacted legislation	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	19.4	10.5	4.3	2.6	4.0	0.0	7.8
To request financial assistance	26.1	38.7	8.3	16.7	22.6	34.2	13.0	20.5	20.0	38.9	24.4
To request non-financial assistance	17.4	6.5	8.3	5.6	9.7	18.4	30.4	12.8	16.0	16.7	14.1
To discuss development projects in the constituency	52.2	51.6	37.5	55.6	41.9	34.2	43.5	56.4	60.0	44.4	47.4
Other	4.3	3.2	12.5	22.2	6.5	2.6	8.7	7.7	0.0	0.0	6.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number	23	31	24	18	31	38	23	39	25	18	270
<i>Note: Out of the overall sample, only 270 respondents had contacted their MPs and provided reasons for doing so.</i>											

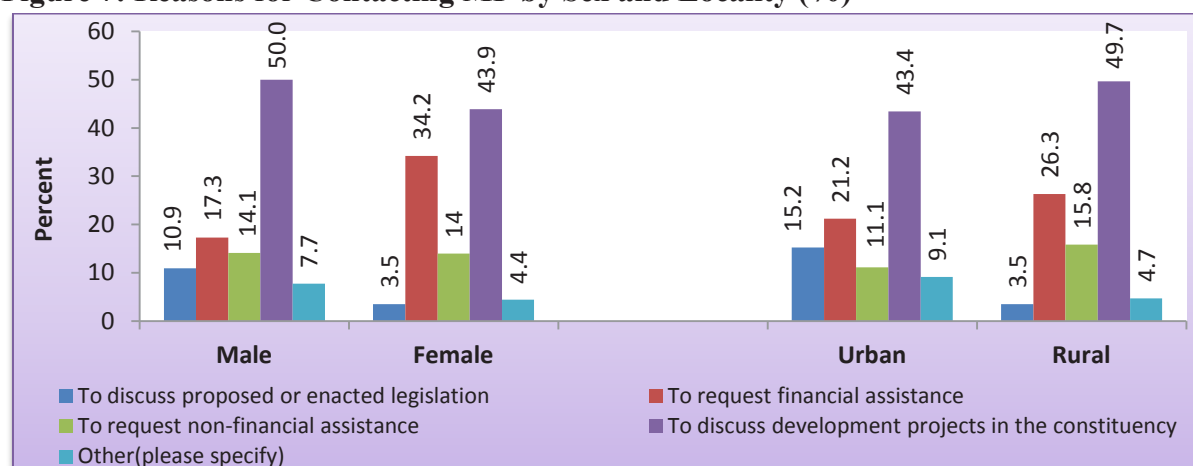
Source: 2015 IEA Survey

The picture is the same regardless of sex, place of residence, age group, educational level and occupation of the respondent. Overall, the significant role of 'development projects' as a key factor for contacting MPs may be due to the campaign promises made by the MPs during elections and the 'mixed messages' conveyed by the MPs common fund. Through this fund, MPs receive a small proportion of the District Assemblies' Common Fund to undertake development projects in their constituencies. It may therefore be possible that an MP will receive more 'local' attention due to the manner in which he or she spends the fund, rather than the role they play in the parliamentary process.

Higher proportion of females, rural dwellers and the unemployed seek financial assistance from MPs

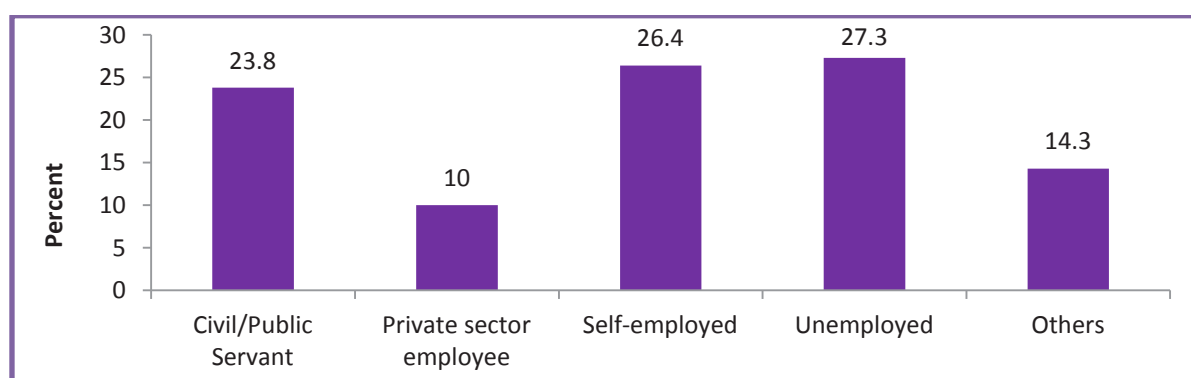
The results revealed that a higher proportion of females (34.2%) compared to males (17.3%) who contacted their MP did so to seek financial assistance. Additionally, more rural dwellers (26.3%) contacted their MP to seek financial assistance when compared to their urban counterparts (21.2%). Similarly, a slightly higher proportion of the unemployed compared to the employed contacted their MP to seek financial assistance. It is important to note that these sections of the population (i.e. females, rural dwellers and the unemployed) are the most economically vulnerable in our society (Figures 7 and 8).

Figure 7: Reasons for Contacting MP by Sex and Locality (%)



Source: 2015 IEA Survey

Figure 8: Respondents who Sought Financial Support From MP by Occupation (%)



Source: 2015 IEA Survey

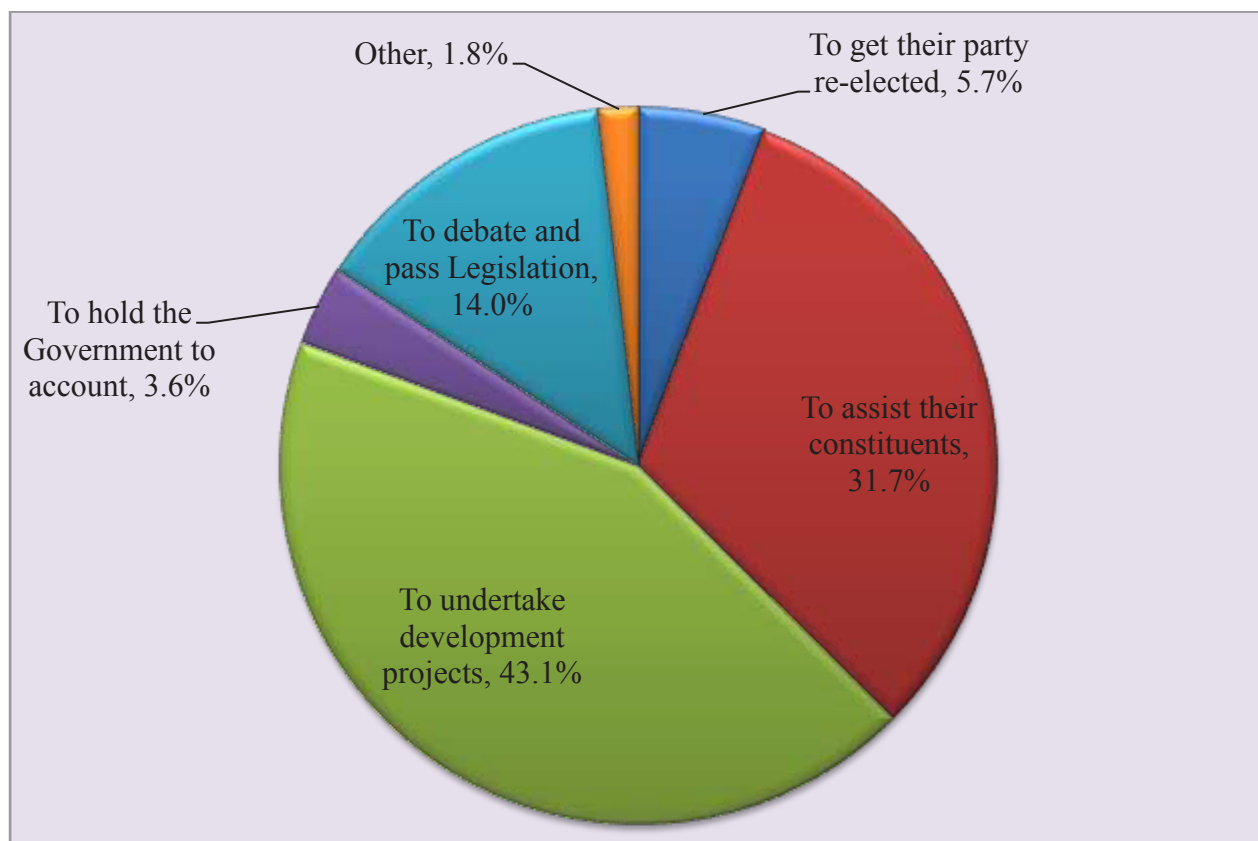
3.4 Role of MPs

The perception that the MPs role is either to undertake development projects or assist their constituents could be attributable to the campaign promises made by MPs and the 'mixed messages' conveyed by the MPs common fund

Although the core duties of MPs are to debate and pass legislation, as well as hold the Government to account, the proportion of respondents who cited these functions when asked about the primary role of MPs were only about 14% and 3.6% respectively. Majority of respondents indicated that the role of the MP is either to undertake development projects (43.1%) or assist their constituents (31.7%). About 5.7% of respondents indicated that the MP's role is to get their political party elected (Figure 9).

From the foregoing results, it can be deduced that respondents did not see their MPs as lawmakers or agents of oversight on the Executive. Rather, they perceived them as agents of development. It is therefore not surprising that only 7.8% of respondents who contacted their MP did so to discuss proposed or enacted legislation whiles 47.4% of them did so to discuss development projects. (Table 5)

Figure 9: Role of MPs (%)



Source: 2015 IEA Survey

The perception that the MPs role is to undertake development and assist his/her constituents cuts across all regions, locality of residence, age group and educational level. Majority of respondents in the Eastern (85.4%), Volta (81.2%), Central (78.4%) and Brong Ahafo (74.2%) regions held this view (Table 6).

A closer analysis of the responses by education reveals that there exists a positive relationship between educational level and proportion of respondents who knew the mandate or role of an MP. Thus the higher the level of educational attainment, the higher the proportion of respondents who indicated that the MPs role is to debate and pass legislation or to hold the government accountable.

From Table 7, the education category with the highest proportion of respondents who knew the role of an MP was tertiary education. About 24.7% of those with tertiary education indicated that the role of the MP is to debate and pass legislation. This was followed by those with vocational education (17.2%), secondary school education (15.8%) primary education (14%) and people with no education (11.7%). Those with JSS/MSLC/JHS recorded the least proportion of respondents who knew the core functions of MPs. It is however noteworthy to indicate that even among the educated, only a small proportion knew the role of the MP as enshrined in the 1992 Constitution.

Table 6: Role of MPs by Region, Sex, Locality and Age (%)

Background Characteristics		To get their party re-elected	To assist their constituents	To undertake development projects	To hold the Government to account	To debate and pass Legislation	Other	Total Percent	Number
Overall		5.7	31.7	43.1	3.6	14.0	1.8	100.0	1482
Region	Western	4.5	31.6	34.6	3.0	26.3	0.0	100.0	133
	Central	6.7	31.7	46.7	4.2	6.7	4.2	100.0	120
	Greater Accra	7.2	26.6	48.2	3.6	11.7	2.7	100.0	222
	Volta	9.4	25.6	55.6	0.0	1.7	7.7	100.0	117
	Eastern	2.7	38.7	46.7	6.0	6.0	0.0	100.0	150
	Ashanti	4.1	34.9	36.4	3.7	20.1	0.7	100.0	269
	Brong Ahafo	1.6	23.4	50.8	3.1	19.5	1.6	100.0	128
	Northern	3.0	36.1	33.8	3.0	22.6	1.5	100.0	133
	Upper East	4.8	32.4	41.0	4.8	16.2	1.0	100.0	105
	Upper West	17.1	35.2	41.9	3.8	1.9	0.0	100.0	105
Sex	Male	6.2	27.8	45.2	3.0	16.4	1.3	100.0	593
	Female	5.4	34.3	41.7	3.9	12.5	2.1	100.0	889
Locality	Urban	5.9	32.4	41.7	3.5	14.6	2.0	100.0	717
	Rural	5.6	31.1	44.4	3.7	13.5	1.7	100.0	765
Age Group	18-24	6.3	34.7	43.7	3.8	10.1	1.4	100.0	366
	25-59	5.3	30.2	43.2	3.7	15.6	2.1	100.0	924
	60+	6.8	33.3	41.7	2.6	14.1	1.6	100.0	192

Table 7: Role of MPs by Education (%)

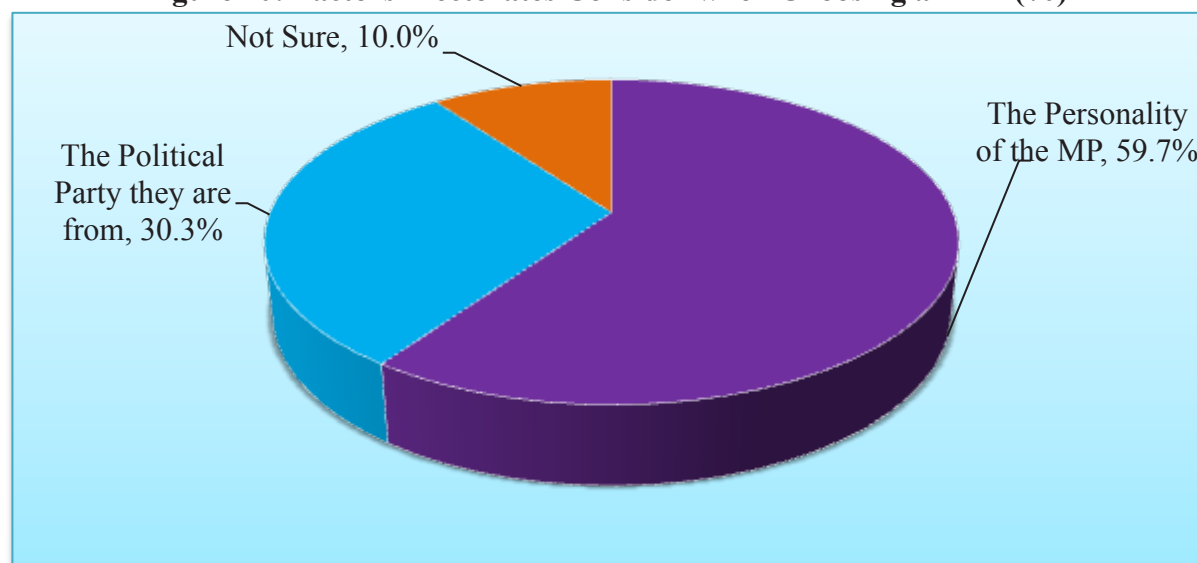
Educational Background	To get their party re-elected	To assist their constituents	To undertake development projects	To hold the Government to account	To debate and pass Legislation	Other
None	5.1	35.8	40.1	4.3	11.7	3.1
Primary	8.6	29.6	42.5	3.2	14.0	2.2
JSS/MSLC/JHS	6.1	32.4	47.5	2.3	10.6	1.1
Secondary/SHS/'O'Level/'A'Level	4.1	32.3	40.5	5.5	15.8	1.7
Vocational/Commercial/Technical	7.8	25.0	43.8	3.1	17.2	3.1
Tertiary	4.7	28.0	38.0	4.0	24.7	0.7
Others(Specify)	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	33.3	16.7
Total (Overall)	5.7	31.7	43.1	3.6	14.0	1.8
Source: 2015 IEA Survey						

4. Electorate Voting Considerations

The quality of debates in Parliament together with legislation approved can point to the efficiency and effectiveness of the House. The checks and balances on the Executive are also, to a large extent, influenced by the capabilities of elected MPs. Notwithstanding the fact as to whether or not the electorate has been sensitized enough on this, the survey asked respondents about their top considerations when choosing to vote for an MP.

The results show that a majority - about six out of ten respondents - consider personality more than political party when voting for an MP. Voting along party lines is still significant, as 30.3% of respondents indicated they consider political party over the personality of a Parliamentary candidate. (See Figures 10 and 11)

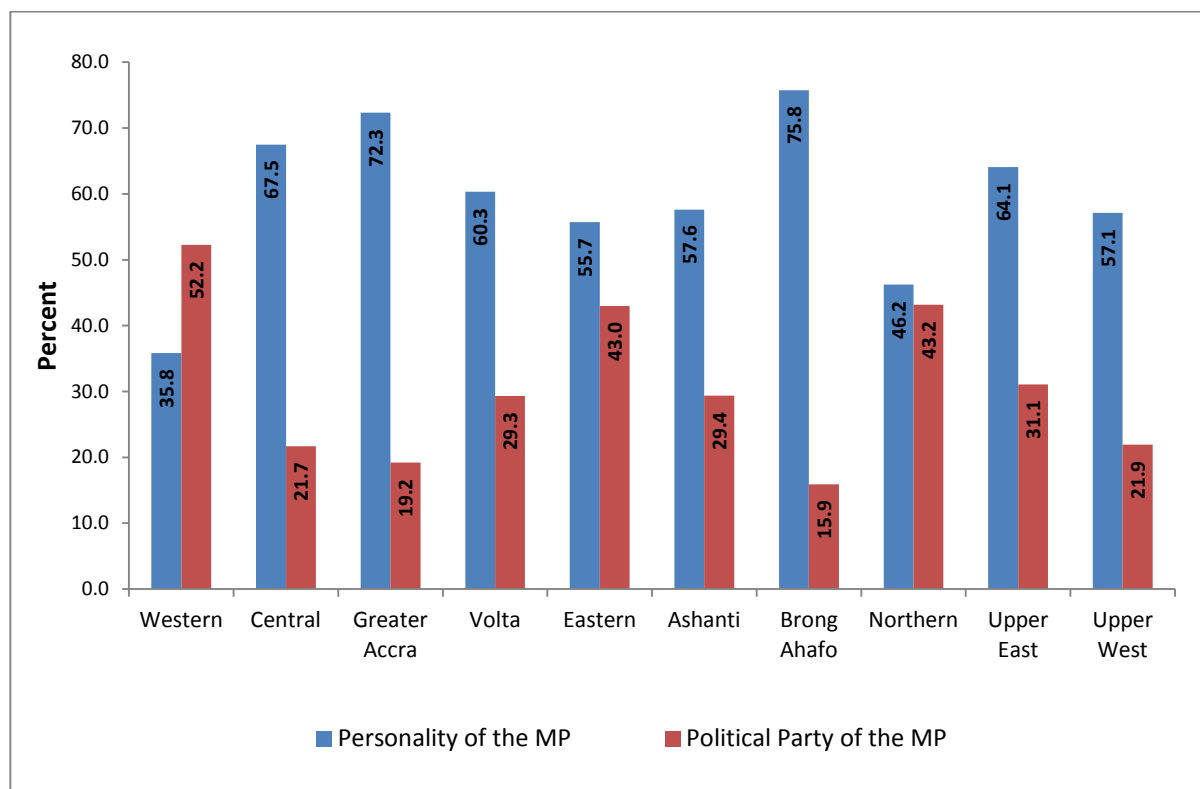
Figure 10: Factors Electorates Consider when Choosing an MP (%)



Source: 2015 IEA Survey

When analysed by region, the results show that the majority of respondents from all regions, with the exception of Western region, indicated they consider the personality of the MP over the political party of the MP (Figure 11). The top three regions with the highest proportion of respondents who consider the personality of the MP over political party were Brong Ahafo (75.8%), Greater Accra (72.3%) and Central (67.5%). It is important to note that these three regions happen to be swing regions in Ghana's electoral history and have changed hands between the two major political parties, NDC and NPP, between 1992 and 2009. Majority of respondents from the Western region (52.2%) considered the political party of the MP over the personality of the MP.

Figure 11: Factors Electorates Consider when Choosing an MP by Region (%)

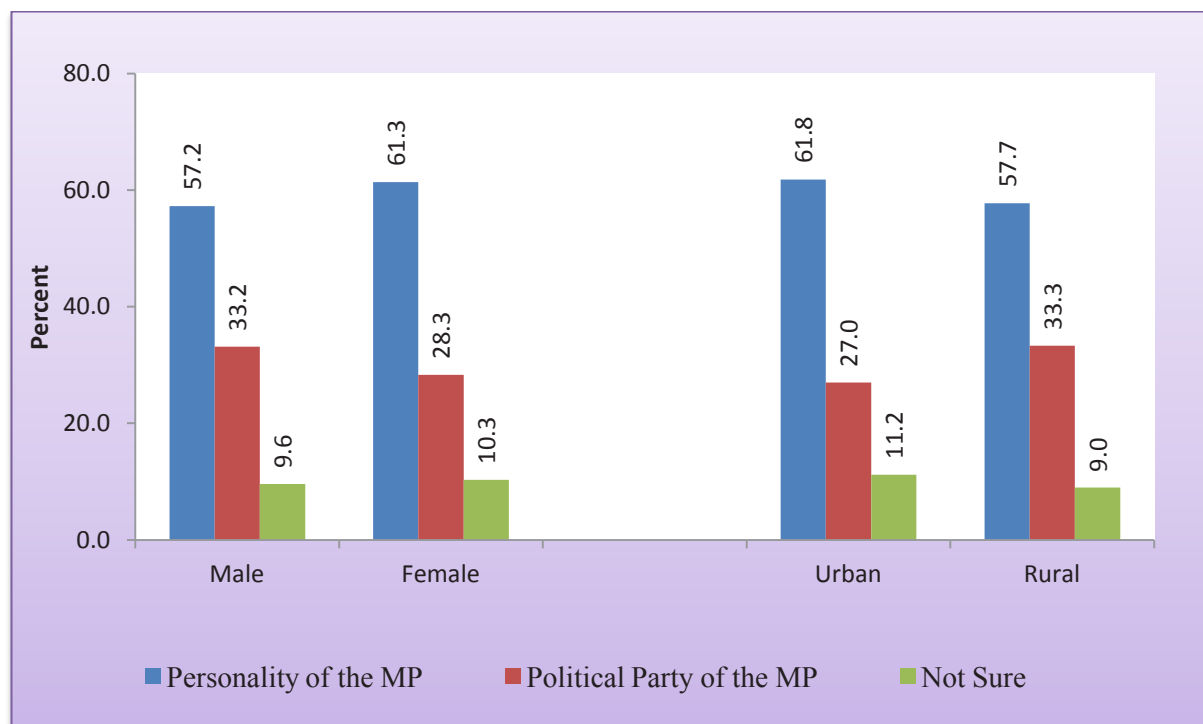


Source: 2015 IEA Survey

Disaggregating the data by sex and locality, it was observed that the results mirrored that of the overall outcome. For all categories, majority of respondents indicated that they consider personality more than the political party of an aspiring MP when voting (Figures 12 and 13).

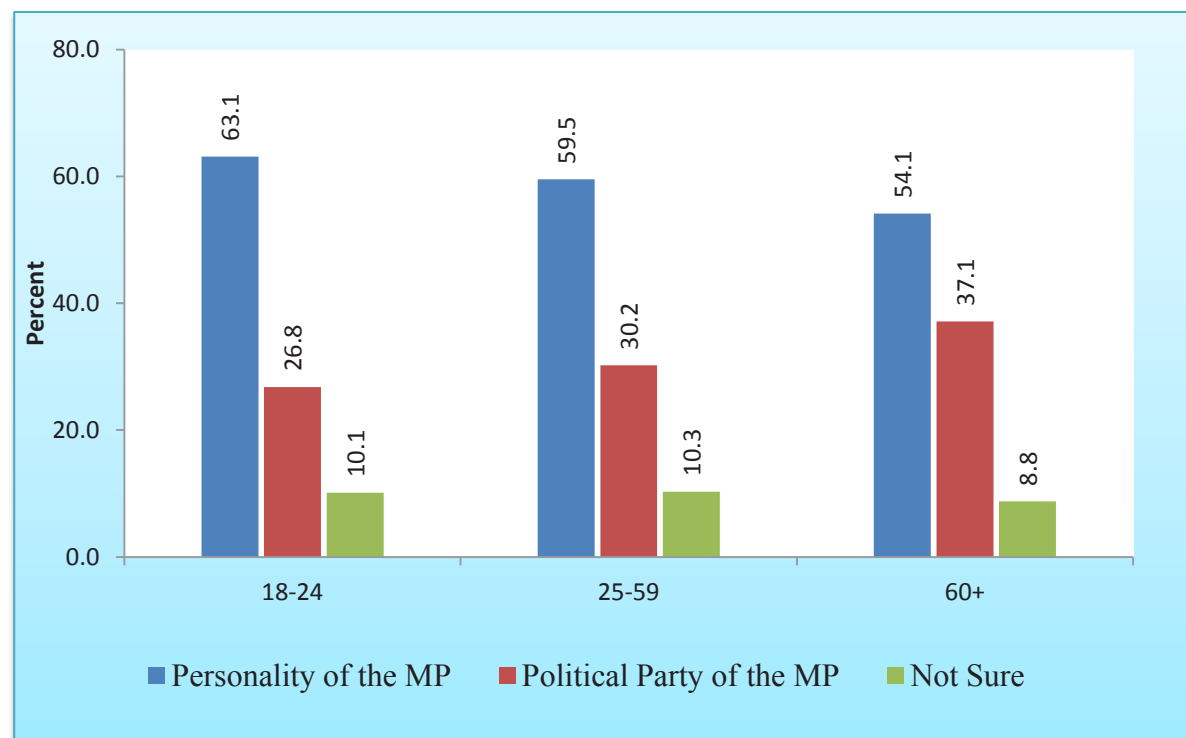
The results revealed that majority of respondents who considered the personality of the candidate before choosing an MP across the 18 to 24 years age group recorded 63.1%, followed by respondents aged 25 to 59 years (59.5%) and finally 54.1% of respondents aged 60 years and above indicated that they consider the personality of a candidate before choosing an MP. On the other hand, a lower percentage of respondents aged from 18 to 24 years (26.8%) indicated they consider the political party a candidate belongs to before choosing an MP, whereas respondents from 25 to 59 years recorded 30.2%, and respondents aged 60 years and above recorded the majority of 37.1%.

Figure 12: Factors Considered in Choosing an MP by Sex and Locality (%)



Source: 2015 IEA Survey

Figure 13: Factors Considered in Choosing an MP by Age Group (%)



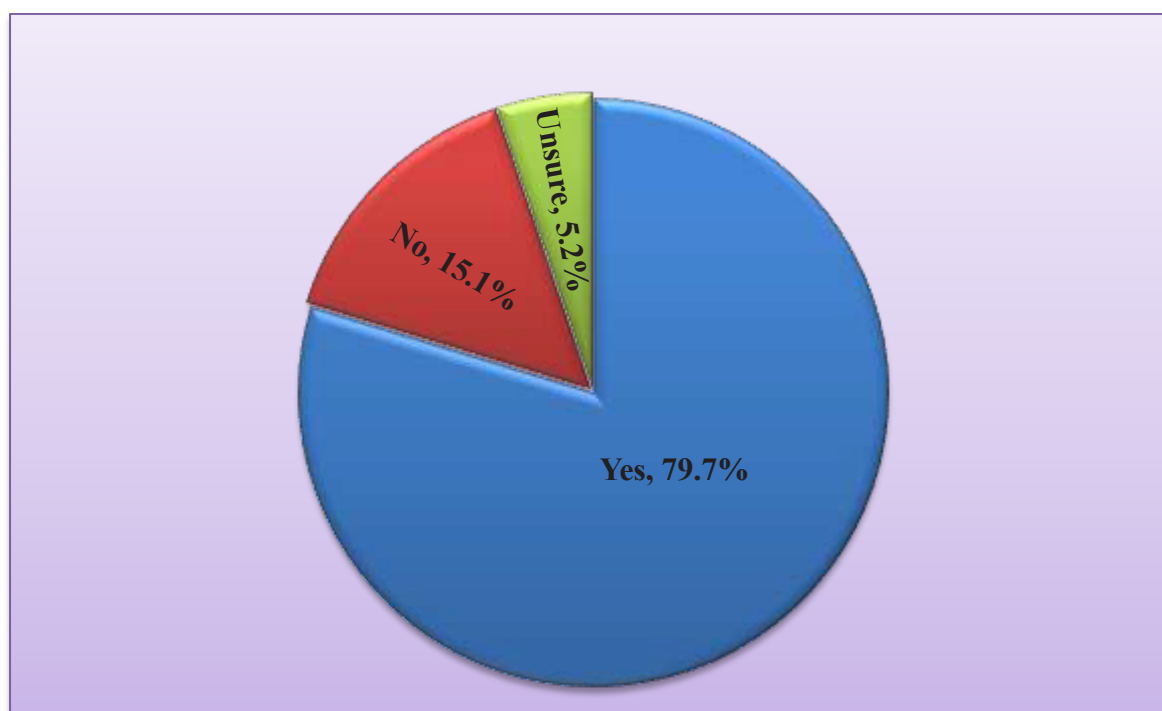
Source: 2015 IEA Survey

5. Minimum Educational Qualifications for MPs

Considering the critical role of Parliament, one issue that has been widely debated is whether there should be a minimum educational qualification for MPs. Indeed, Article 94 (1) of the 1992 Constitution, which specifies the qualification and eligibility criterion for MPs, is silent on educational requirements. Thus, one can be a Member of Parliament irrespective of the level of education, ability to read, write or even understand the language used in Parliament.

The survey solicited the views of respondents on whether or not there should be a minimum academic qualification for MPs. An overwhelming majority of respondents (79.7%) declared that there should be a minimum entry qualification for MPs (Figure 14). The majority view was regardless of region, sex, locality of residence, age and educational level. Only in the Greater Accra and Eastern regions were the responses less than 70% but even so, two-thirds (69.2% and 68.5%) respectively of the respondents stated that there should be a minimum qualification for MPs (Table 8).

Figure 14: Should MPs have Minimum Qualifications?



Source: 2015 IEA Survey

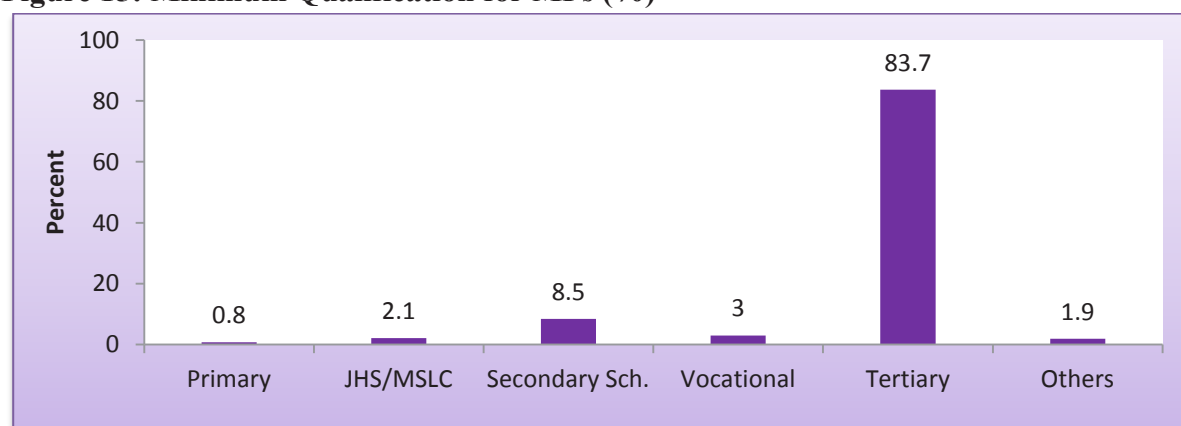
Table 8: Should MPs have Minimum Qualification by Region, Sex, Locality, Age and Education ? (%)

		Yes	No	Unsure	Percent	Number
Region	Western	87.4	11.1	1.5	100.0	135
	Central	84.9	10.9	4.2	100.0	119
	Greater Accra	69.2	15.6	15.2	100.0	224
	Volta	86.7	11.7	1.7	100.0	120
	Eastern	68.5	26.8	4.7	100.0	149
	Ashanti	70.7	26.7	2.6	100.0	270
	Brong Ahafo	85.8	11.2	3.0	100.0	134
	Northern	85.9	9.6	4.4	100.0	135
	Upper East	97.1	2.9	0.0	100.0	104
	Upper West	84.3	4.9	10.8	100.0	102
Sex	Male	81.5	14.4	4.0	100.0	596
	Female	78.5	15.5	6.0	100.0	896
Locality	Urban	76.3	17.8	5.8	100.0	718
	Rural	82.8	12.5	4.7	100.0	774
Age Group	18-24	84.0	13.9	2.2	100.0	368
	25-59	79.4	15.1	5.6	100.0	930
	60+	73.2	17.5	9.3	100.0	194
Education	None	78.5	13.1	8.5	100.0	260
	Primary	75.3	15.6	9.1	100.0	186
	JSS/MSLC/JHS	82.1	14.6	3.4	100.0	535
	Secondary/SHS/'O'Level/'A'Level	78.2	17.4	4.4	100.0	293
	Vocational/Commercial/Technical	76.6	17.2	6.3	100.0	64
	Tertiary	84.5	13.5	2.0	100.0	148
	Others	50.0	33.3	16.7	100.0	4
Total (Overall)		79.7	15.1	5.2	100.0	1492

Source: 2015 IEA Survey

On what should be the minimum academic qualification, 83.7% of respondents who indicated that there should be a minimum academic qualification for MPs were of the view that tertiary education should be the cut-off point (Figure 15). About 14.4% (total) of respondents thought that the minimum formal education qualification for MPs should be vocational/commercial (3%), secondary (8.5%), JSS/MSLC/JHS (2.1%) or primary (0.8%).

Figure 15: Minimum Qualification for MPs (%)



Source: 2015 IEA Survey

However, a fifth of the respondents in the Central Region thought that the minimum qualification should be secondary/SHS/"O"-Level/"A"-Level. This was followed by Greater Accra (12.8%), Western (11.7%) and Upper West (10.6%). (See Table 9)

Table 9: Minimum Qualification for MPs by Region, Sex, Locality and Age (%)

Background Characteristics		Primary	JSS/JHS	Secondary Sch.	Vocational/ Technical	Tertiary	Others	Total	Number
Region	Western	0.8	3.3	11.7	0.8	82.5	0.8	100.0	120
	Central	1.9	4.7	22.6	7.5	61.3	1.9	100.0	106
	Greater Accra	0.0	1.1	12.8	2.8	79.3	3.9	100.0	179
	Volta	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.9	95.3	2.8	100.0	106
	Eastern	0.9	0.9	8.2	0.9	87.3	1.8	100.0	110
	Ashanti	0.5	1.0	8.3	1.0	88.6	0.5	100.0	193
	Brong Ahafo	0.0	3.3	1.7	4.2	88.3	2.5	100.0	120
	Northern	0.0	0.8	2.5	0.8	91.6	4.2	100.0	119
	Upper East	1.0	1.0	4.0	5.0	89.1	0.0	100.0	101
	Upper West	4.3	6.4	10.6	8.5	70.2	0.0	100.0	94
Sex	Male	0.6	2.2	8.5	2.2	85.0	1.6	100.0	505
	Female	0.9	2.0	8.5	3.5	82.9	2.2	100.0	743
Locality	Urban	0.7	1.9	9.7	1.7	83.4	2.6	100.0	580
	Rural	0.9	2.2	7.5	4.0	84.0	1.3	100.0	668
Age Group	18-24	0.6	1.3	8.5	4.1	83.2	2.2	100.0	316
	25-59	0.9	2.2	7.7	2.8	84.8	1.5	100.0	775
	60+	0.6	3.2	12.1	1.3	79.6	3.2	100.0	157
Total (Overall)		0.8	2.1	8.5	3.0	83.7	1.9	100.0	1248

Source: 2015 IEA Survey

6. Performance of MPs

A third of respondents consider their MP's performance to be poor

The survey findings revealed that 33.8% of respondents were of the view that their MPs performed poorly, while 26.5% ranked them as “good” and 8.4% ranked them as “excellent”. About 22.2% of respondents also ranked their MPs performance as average. As shown in Table 10 below, a greater proportion of respondents in the Western (44%), Northern (43.3%), Greater Accra (38.3%), Upper West (36.9%) and Ashanti (34%) regions ranked their MPs performance as “poor” when compared to the overall average of 33.8%.

Table 10: Performance of MPs (%)

Region	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Don't know	Total	Number
Western	8.2	20.9	20.9	44.0	6.0	100.0	134
Central	7.6	29.4	24.4	31.9	6.7	100.0	119
Greater Accra	6.8	21.2	18.9	38.3	14.9	100.0	222
Volta	5.9	33.1	25.4	28.8	6.8	100.0	118
Eastern	19.3	29.3	18.7	26.7	6.0	100.0	150
Ashanti	7.9	29.4	15.1	34.0	13.6	100.0	265
Brong Ahafo	7.4	26.7	23.0	25.2	17.8	100.0	135
Northern	8.2	22.4	20.1	43.3	6.0	100.0	134
Upper East	4.0	39.4	32.3	24.2	0.0	100.0	99
Upper West	6.8	15.5	39.8	36.9	1.0	100.0	103
Overall	8.4	26.5	22.2	33.8	9.1	100.0	1479

Source: 2015 IEA Survey

7. Ex-Gratia Payments to MPs

Opinion of Ghanaians on whether MPs should receive ex-gratia were split between those who were in favour (43.4%) and those who were against (45.9%). However, a significant majority of respondents thought that the amount paid is excessive.

The payment of ex-gratia to Article 71 office holders, especially MPs, is a thorny issue. Ghana's former President, John Agyekum Kufuor, who was in office between January 2001 and January 2009 set up the Chinery-Hesse Committee in October 2004 to deal with the issue comprehensively. Unfortunately, instead of resolving issues surrounding ex-gratia payment, the Chinery-Hesse Committee report stirred up more controversy. As a result, President John Evans Atta Mills set up the Professor Ewurama Addy Committee to address the issue of emoluments for Article 71 office holders. The Ewurama Addy Committee sought to establish a salary structure for the Article 71 public office holders with clear and justifiable relativities. The Committee adopted a points system in which the President was used as the anchor with 100 points. In descending order, the Vice President, Speaker of Parliament and the Chief Justice became the anchor for the Executive, Parliament and the Judiciary respectively¹.

The Prof. Francisca Edu-Buandoh Committee set up by former President John Dramani Mahama later recommended a formula that sought to link the ex-gratia to the general performance of the economy. The formula incorporated Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita and inflation rate. However, the Committee's recommended formula for determining ex-gratia awards for the various categories of public office holders has also been rejected. In its place, all qualified officers are to receive 4 months' salary for each year of service. This means an MP who has served 4 years will receive 16 months pay as ex-gratia².

There have been calls from the public and some key opinion leaders for the scrapping of ex-gratia payments – particularly due to the size of emoluments paid to ex-presidents and other Article 71 office holders. Opponents of the payment of ex-gratia are of the view that, in the spirit of equality and fairness, the salaries and other benefits of Article 71 office holders should be determined by the Fair Wages and Salaries Commission (FWSC) - just like all other public sector workers.

The next two sub-sections look at respondents' opinion on ex-gratia paid to MPs and, also, whether the current levels are considered excessive, sufficient or insufficient.

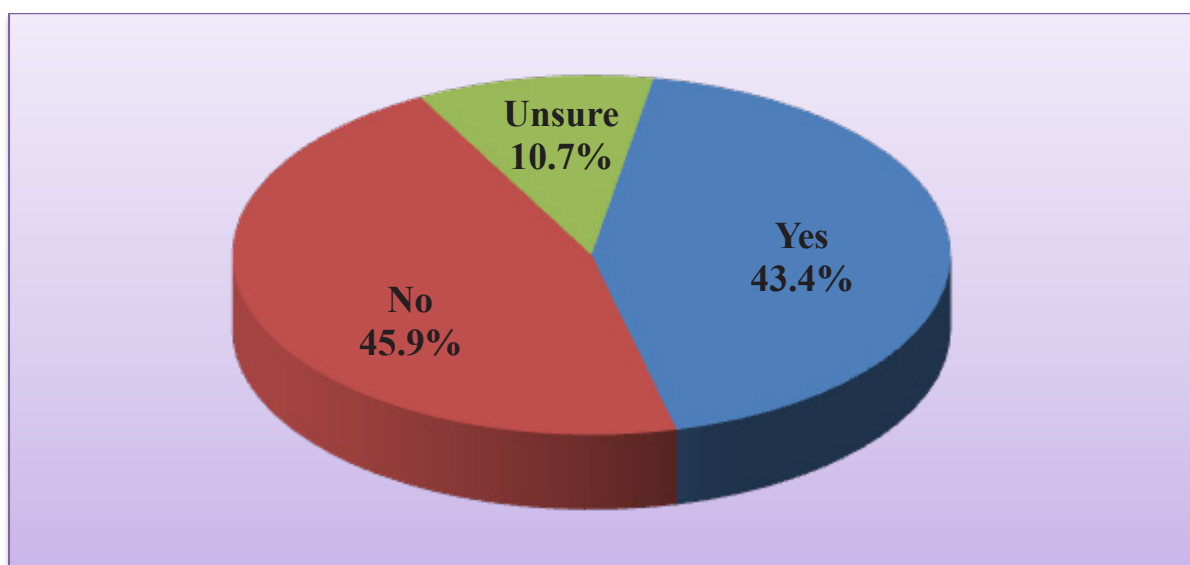
¹ <http://citifmonline.com/2017/01/11/emoluments-of-article-71-office-holders-what-the-real-figures-are-article/#sthash.sBzOBr20.dpuf>

² <http://citifmonline.com/2017/01/11/emoluments-of-article-71-office-holders-what-the-real-figures-are-article/#sthash.sBzOBr20.dpuf>

7.1 Payment of Ex-Gratia to MPs

Figure 16 and Table 11 presents information on whether Members of Parliament (MPs) should receive ex-gratia. About 45.9% of respondents were of the view that MPs should not receive ex-gratia as compensation after their tenure of office, while 43.4% thought they should be paid ex-gratia. The remaining 10.7% of respondents were indecisive.

Figure 16: Should MPs Be Paid Ex Gratia?



Source: 2015 IEA Survey

In the regions, more than half of respondents from the Greater Accra (52.0%), Brong Ahafo (51.5%) and Western (51.1%) regions thought that MPs should not receive ex-gratia. A high proportion of respondents in the Volta (56.3%) and Northern (54.8%) regions thought that MPs should receive ex-gratia.

In terms of locality, a good proportion of both urban (48.8%) and rural (43.2%) respondents thought that MPs should not receive ex-gratia. With regards to the various age groups, 48.7% of the elderly, 60+ years, followed by age group 25-59 (46.4%) and 18 to 24 years (43.1%) did not want MPs to receive ex-gratia. On the contrary, 44.0% of the 18-24 age group, followed by 43.9% of the 25-59 age group and 39.7% of the 60+ years group want MPs to receive ex-gratia payment.

Table 11: Respondents View on Whether Ex-Gratia Payments should be made to MPs by Region (%)

Background Characteristics		Yes	No	Unsure	Total	Number
Region	Western	44.3	51.1	4.6	100.0	131
	Central	38.5	50.4	11.1	100.0	117
	Greater Accra	37.8	52.0	10.2	100.0	225
	Volta	56.3	31.1	12.6	100.0	119
	Eastern	37.0	47.1	15.9	100.0	138
	Ashanti	47.4	48.9	3.7	100.0	270
	Brong Ahafo	44.0	51.5	4.5	100.0	134
	Northern	54.8	37.8	7.4	100.0	135
	Upper East	41.7	44.7	13.6	100.0	103
	Upper West	29.1	33.0	37.9	100.0	103
Sex	Male	43.3	49.6	7.2	100.0	587
	Female	43.5	43.5	13.1	100.0	888
Locality	Urban	42.6	48.8	8.7	100.0	705
	Rural	44.2	43.2	12.6	100.0	770
Age Group	18-24	44.0	43.1	12.9	100.0	364
	25-59	43.9	46.4	9.7	100.0	922
	60+	39.7	48.7	11.6	100.0	189
Total (Overall)		43.4	45.9	10.7	100.0	1475

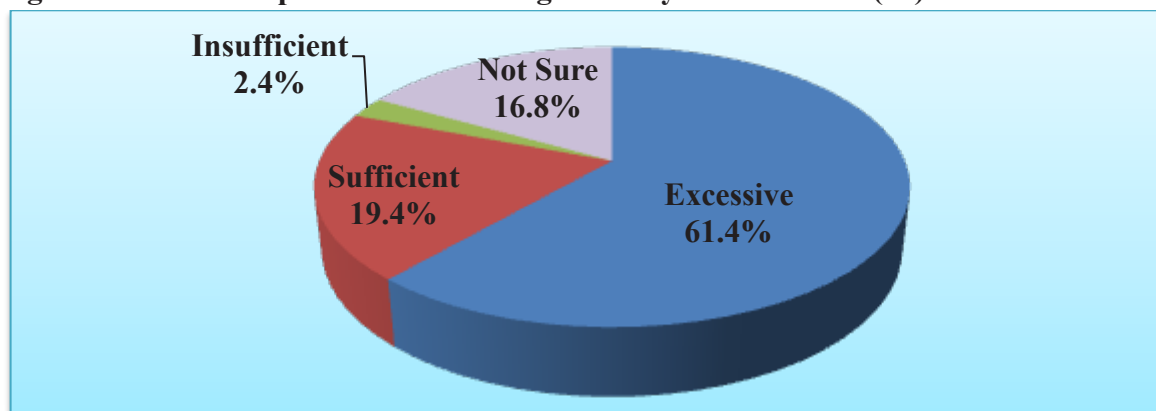
Source: 2015 IEA Survey

7.2 Amount of MP's Ex-Gratia

Amount of ex-gratia paid to MPs is excessive

Figure 17 indicates about six in ten respondents were of the view that the amount of ex-gratia paid to MPs is excessive; 19.4% felt it is just sufficient while 2.4% felt it is insufficient.

Figure 17: How Respondents View Ex-gratia Payments to MPs (%)



Source: 2015 IEA Survey

With the exception of the Upper West Region, more than half of the respondents in the regions considered MP's ex-gratia payments as excessive. The Western Region (77.0%), Brong Ahafo Region (69.7%), Ashanti Region (67.9%) and Greater Accra Region (62.1%) reported the highest proportion of respondents who were of the view that MPs are paid excessive ex-gratia. Similarly, the majority of male (65.1%) and female (58.9%) respondents reported that MPs are paid excessive ex-gratia (Table 12). Further, across all age groups, respondents were of the view that MP's ex-gratia payments were excessive. On the whole, the findings from the different aspects of the ex-gratia question suggest the concern of respondents is not whether MPs should receive ex-gratia or not, but rather the amount paid is the issue.

Table 12: Respondents view of MPs' Ex-Gratia by Region (%)

Background Characteristics		Excessive	Sufficient	Insufficient	Not Sure	Total	Number
Region	Western	77.0	9.6	0.0	13.3	100.0	135
	Central	51.7	25.0	5.8	17.5	100.0	120
	Greater Accra	62.1	18.7	3.3	15.9	100.0	214
	Volta	58.3	22.5	0.8	18.3	100.0	120
	Eastern	58.2	25.3	0.7	15.8	100.0	146
	Ashanti	67.9	21.6	1.9	8.6	100.0	268
	Brong Ahafo	69.7	18.9	3.0	8.3	100.0	132
	Northern	54.8	22.2	4.4	18.5	100.0	135
	Upper East	60.2	15.5	2.9	21.4	100.0	103
	Upper West	41.0	9.5	1.9	47.6	100.0	105
Sex	Male	65.1	18.5	2.0	14.3	100.0	593
	Female	58.9	19.9	2.7	18.5	100.0	885
Locality	Urban	62.0	20.3	3.1	14.6	100.0	705
	Rural	60.8	18.5	1.8	18.9	100.0	773
Age Group	18-24	57.0	21.5	1.7	19.8	100.0	363
	25-59	62.1	19.7	2.6	15.6	100.0	923
	60+	66.1	13.5	3.1	17.2	100.0	192
	Total (Overall)	61.4	19.4	2.4	16.8	100.0	1478

Source: 2015 IEA Survey

8. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The effective role of Parliament in a democratic system, such as Ghana's, is crucial. Further, as the relationship between MPs and their constituents remains an integral aspect of governance, this survey paid particular attention to the level of engagement. It is encouraging to note that a majority (76.9%) of respondents know their MPs (Table 3). However, about 80% of people had never contacted their MP. Of those who made contact, 86% did so mainly to either discuss how the MPs could facilitate development projects in their constituencies or to solicit some assistance (financial and non-financial) - but not to discuss proposed or enacted legislation (Figure 6).

The survey has brought to the fore the lack of knowledge of many Ghanaians about the constitutional roles and responsibilities of MPs. About seven out of ten respondents indicated that the role of a Parliamentarian is either to undertake development projects (43.1%) or assist their constituents (31.7%); this view cuts across all regions, localities of residence, age groups and educational levels.

Legislating and holding the Executive branch in check is seen as the least significant role of MPs - even among the highly educated. The mistaken notion of MPs core role could be attributed to campaign promises made by Parliamentary candidates and the 'mixed messages' conveyed by the MPs common fund. Through this fund, MPs receive a small proportion of the District Assemblies' Common Fund to undertake development projects in their constituencies.

The survey findings also suggest that the era where constituents chose their MPs strictly on party lines appears to be shifting. About 60% of respondents were of the view that the personality of a candidate was more important than the political party the MP belongs to. Also, to effectively play the role of an MP, as required by the 1992 Constitution, a sizeable majority of respondents indicated that the minimum qualification for an MP should be a tertiary degree. Finally, the payment of ex-gratia to MPs is still a controversial issue. Respondents were not totally against its payment; the amount paid was rather the main issue.

Policy Recommendations

1. An important finding to emerge from this survey is the overwhelming support for a minimum education level as a prerequisite for becoming an MP. Significantly, this is a majority view that is held irrespective of the respondents' own education level. One possible explanation for this may be that the wider Ghanaian population recognizes that the role of Parliamentarians (whatever that may be perceived to be) is a challenging one and, therefore, an education threshold needs to be set for a person to be eligible to stand. A national debate on what informs this view is required to further interrogate the educational background concern as a first step in charting reform on this issue.

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2. As a majority of respondents are not aware of the principal role of MPs, public education campaigns on the functions and responsibilities of MPs need to be intensified. The misconception of MP's core functions may stem from pre-election promises, hence MPs need to be sensitized on desisting from making development related promises during campaigns, as this may distract them from concentrating on their core functions.
 3. Building the capacity of less experienced MPs should also be a priority for Parliament. Indeed, such an approach will enhance the capabilities of MPs in debating and passing legislation, as well as holding government to account.
 4. As this survey's findings show, the current levels of ex-gratia payments are widely perceived as excessive. While the CRC Report and the subsequent White Paper both point to a review of emoluments for Article 71 holders, the quantum of ex- gratia should be given strong consideration in the constitutional reform process by both the Executive and Parliament.

The IEA Public Perceptions of Members of Parliament Survey Report was prepared by The IEA research team, comprising Dr. Michael Ofori-Mensah (Senior Research Fellow), Mr. Samuel B. Manu (Research Officer), and Mr. Evans Nelson-Dziwornu (Research Officer).

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THE INSTITUTE OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
A Public Policy Institute
P.O. Box OS 1936, Osu, Accra, Ghana.
Tel. +233-302 244716 / 0307010714
Email: iea@ieagh.org. Website: www.ieagh.org.
Facebook: www.facebook.com/ieagh.
Twitter: www.twitter.com/IEAGhana