

Challenges Affecting Resource Mobilization in Local Government: Evidence from Sefwi Wiawso Municipal Assembly, Ghana

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Abstract

Despite fiscal decentralization reforms aimed at enhancing local autonomy and promoting grassroots development, many local governments in developing countries continue to face challenges in revenue mobilization. In Ghana, fiscal decentralization has transferred significant expenditure responsibilities to local governments without a corresponding expansion of their revenue-generating capacity, thereby constraining effective service delivery. Against this backdrop, this study examines the key challenges affecting revenue mobilization at the local government level, using the Sefwi Wiawso Municipal Assembly as a case study. The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional research design to assess conditions influencing local revenue mobilization at a specific point in time. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to 83 municipal staff drawn from departments directly involved in revenue administration and financial management. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including frequencies, percentages, and mean rankings, to identify institutional, administrative, political, and technological constraints. The findings indicate that institutional and administrative weaknesses constitute major impediments to effective revenue mobilization. Inadequate logistics, including limited transportation and insufficient revenue collection tools, reduce the efficiency and coverage of revenue collection. Weak enforcement of revenue by-laws enables tax evasion and revenue leakages. Low taxpayer compliance, driven by inadequate public education, perceptions of poor service delivery, and limited trust in local authorities, significantly undermines internally generated revenue. Political interference, particularly in enforcing sanctions against defaulters, weakens the authority of revenue officials and accountability mechanisms, thereby fostering non-compliance. Technological constraints also pose challenges, as reliance on manual systems limits efficiency, accurate data management, and transparency, while facilitating revenue leakages. The study concludes that improving local revenue mobilization requires institutional reforms, strengthened enforcement mechanisms, reduced political interference, enhanced administrative capacity, and the adoption of digital revenue collection systems. Improved taxpayer education and service delivery are also essential for building public trust and enhancing voluntary compliance.

Keywords: Resource Mobilization Challenges, Local Government Finance, Fiscal Decentralization

Introduction

Effective resource mobilization remains a central concern within contemporary debates on fiscal decentralization, local governance, and public financial management in developing countries. Across the social sciences, scholars increasingly question whether decentralization reforms genuinely enhance local autonomy and service delivery or simply transfer responsibilities to subnational governments without adequate fiscal capacity or institutional support (OECD, 2023; UNDP, 2023). Within this debate, the ability of local governments to generate internally sourced revenue has emerged as a critical determinant of fiscal sustainability, institutional legitimacy, and development outcomes. Despite reforms aimed at strengthening subnational governance, many local authorities continue to struggle with persistent revenue constraints, raising important questions about the institutional, political, and socio-economic factors shaping local fiscal performance (World Bank, 2024).

Fiscal decentralization is premised on the assumption that local governments, being closer to citizens, are better positioned to mobilize resources efficiently and allocate them in ways that reflect local priorities (OECD, 2023). However, recent empirical research across developing contexts demonstrates that decentralization outcomes remain uneven, often constrained by weak administrative capacity, political interference, limited taxpayer trust, and inadequate technological systems (Amoako & Frimpong, 2023; UNDP, 2023). These findings have intensified scholarly debates regarding the conditions under which decentralization improves accountability and revenue performance, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where local governments frequently depend on intergovernmental transfers to sustain operations (World Bank, 2024).

In Ghana, Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) are constitutionally mandated to mobilize internal revenue to complement transfers such as the District Assemblies Common Fund and other statutory grants. Internally Generated Funds (IGF) are expected to provide flexible financing for local development initiatives and recurrent expenditures. Yet, empirical evidence indicates that many Assemblies consistently fall short of revenue targets, creating fiscal gaps that constrain effective service delivery and undermine decentralization objectives (World Bank, 2024). The persistence of low internally generated revenue has intensified policy debates about whether existing institutional arrangements adequately support local fiscal autonomy or reinforce dependency on central government transfers.

Recent empirical studies highlight that local revenue challenges extend beyond technical deficiencies to encompass broader governance and institutional dynamics. Weak enforcement of local by-laws, inadequate logistics, political interference in revenue administration, and low taxpayer compliance often shaped by limited public trust and perceptions of poor service delivery continue to undermine local fiscal systems (Khan & Nartey, 2024; Amoako & Frimpong, 2023; UNDP, 2023). Additionally, the slow adoption of digital revenue technologies and fragmented administrative processes further constrain efficiency and transparency (World Bank, 2023). While existing research provides valuable insights into national-level fiscal reforms, there remains limited empirical understanding of

how administrative, institutional, political, socio-economic, and technological factors interact at the municipal level within specific local governance contexts in Ghana.

This study responds to this gap by examining the challenges affecting resource mobilization at the Sefwi Wiawso Municipal Assembly. By focusing on a municipal-level case study, the research contributes to current social science debates on decentralization effectiveness by providing context-specific empirical evidence on how governance conditions and institutional capacity shape local revenue outcomes. By extending recent empirical work on local government finance, the study highlights how administrative practices, political dynamics, taxpayer behavior, and technological readiness jointly influence fiscal sustainability within decentralized systems. Understanding these dynamics is particularly important for informing policy reforms aimed at strengthening local fiscal capacity and improving development performance within Ghana's decentralized governance framework.

Objectives and Scope of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to examine the key challenges affecting resource mobilization at the local government level, using the Sefwi Wiawso Municipal Assembly as a case study. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- Identify administrative and institutional constraints influencing revenue mobilization;
- Assess the role of political and governance factors in shaping revenue performance;
- Examine socio-economic and compliance-related challenges affecting taxpayer behavior; and
- Evaluate technological limitations influencing efficiency and transparency in revenue systems.

The study adopts a quantitative cross-sectional approach based on data collected from municipal staff involved in revenue administration and financial management. Its scope is limited to identifying and analyzing prevailing challenges rather than evaluating policy interventions over time. By clearly outlining the study's objectives and analytical focus, the research provides a structured examination of local government resource mobilization challenges and generates policy-relevant insights for strengthening fiscal decentralization in Ghana.

Literature Review

Challenges in Local Government Resource Mobilization

Challenges in resource mobilization refer to a range of institutional, administrative, political, socio-economic, and technological constraints that limit the capacity of local governments to generate adequate and sustainable revenue to finance development activities (World Bank, 2024). These challenges undermine fiscal autonomy, weaken local accountability, and increase excessive dependence on intergovernmental fiscal transfers, thereby constraining the effectiveness of decentralized governance systems.

From an institutional perspective, weak legal and regulatory frameworks often constrain local governments' revenue-generating capacity. In many developing countries, including Ghana, local governments possess limited discretion over tax rates and revenue bases, while enforcement mechanisms for existing by-laws remain weak. Inadequate institutional coordination and unclear roles among revenue-collecting agencies further contribute to

inefficiencies and revenue leakages. As a result, local governments struggle to fully exploit their legally assigned revenue sources. (Bahl & Bird, 2018; Smoke, 2015)

Administratively, resource mobilization is hindered by capacity deficits within local government structures. These include insufficiently trained revenue staff, inadequate logistics such as vehicles and collection tools, and weak monitoring and supervision systems. Poor record-keeping and reliance on manual revenue collection processes reduce efficiency and transparency, making it difficult to track revenue flows and curb leakages. Such administrative weaknesses directly affect the effectiveness of revenue collection and management. (Fjeldstad & Moore, 2008)

Political factors also play a significant role in shaping local government revenue performance. Political interference in revenue administration, particularly during election periods, often leads to the relaxation of enforcement measures and the granting of informal tax exemptions. Local political leaders may resist strict revenue collection for fear of losing electoral support, thereby undermining compliance and weakening the authority of revenue officials. This politicization of revenue mobilization erodes fiscal discipline and accountability at the local level.

Socio-economic challenges further constrain local revenue generation. High levels of poverty, unemployment, and informality reduce the taxable capacity of residents and businesses, while low levels of taxpayer awareness and trust in local authorities discourage voluntary compliance. Where citizens perceive limited returns in the form of public services, willingness to pay local taxes and fees tends to decline, creating a cycle of low revenue and poor service delivery.

Technological constraints have also emerged as a critical challenge in contemporary local government finance. Limited adoption of information and communication technologies (ICT) for revenue assessment, billing, and collection increases transaction costs and exposes systems to fraud and leakages. The absence of digital databases for taxpayers and revenue sources hampers effective planning and forecasting, while weak integration of technology reduces transparency and accountability in revenue administration.

Overall, these interconnected challenges highlight the complexity of local government resource mobilization in decentralized systems. Addressing them requires comprehensive reforms that strengthen institutional frameworks, build administrative capacity, insulate revenue administration from political interference, improve socio-economic engagement with taxpayers, and modernize revenue systems through technological innovation.

Administrative and Institutional Challenges

Administrative and institutional challenges constitute some of the most critical constraints to effective resource mobilization at the local government level. Recent studies indicate that inadequate logistics, poor record-keeping practices, and weak monitoring and supervision systems significantly undermine revenue mobilization efforts in decentralized governance systems (Amoako & Frimpong, 2023). These challenges reduce collection efficiency, increase revenue leakages, and weaken accountability mechanisms within local government administrations.

Inadequate logistics remain a persistent problem for local revenue authorities.

Revenue collectors often operate without essential tools such as reliable transportation, digital devices, standardized receipt systems, and adequate office infrastructure. The absence of vehicles and motorbikes limits the geographic coverage of revenue collection, particularly in peri-urban and rural areas, while the lack of digital tools forces reliance on manual collection methods. This not only slows down the collection process but also increases opportunities for misreporting, under-declaration, and diversion of funds. Poor record-keeping systems further compound administrative inefficiencies. Many local governments lack comprehensive and up-to-date databases of taxable properties, businesses, and individuals. Manual record systems are often fragmented, poorly maintained, and vulnerable to manipulation, making it difficult to track payments, identify defaulters, and conduct accurate revenue forecasting.

Weak documentation also hampers transparency and limits the ability of management to make evidence-based decisions regarding revenue administration. Weak monitoring and supervision mechanisms exacerbate these challenges. In many local governments, supervisory oversight of revenue collectors is inadequate due to limited staff capacity and ineffective internal control systems. The absence of regular audits, performance evaluations, and field supervision allows revenue leakages and unethical practices to persist. Institutional weaknesses, such as unclear reporting lines and overlapping responsibilities among departments, further reduce operational efficiency and weaken enforcement of revenue by-laws.

Institutional constraints also include limited staff capacity and inadequate training in modern revenue administration techniques. Many revenue officials lack the technical skills required for effective assessment, billing, and enforcement, particularly in the context of emerging digital revenue systems. Without continuous capacity-building and institutional support, local governments struggle to adapt to evolving revenue mobilization demands.

Overall, administrative and institutional challenges significantly constrain the revenue-generating capacity of local governments. Addressing these challenges requires deliberate investment in logistics and infrastructure, modernization of record-keeping systems, strengthening of monitoring and internal control mechanisms, and sustained capacity-building for revenue staff. Such reforms are essential for improving efficiency, transparency, and accountability in local government resource mobilization.

Political and Governance Challenges

Political and governance challenges play a significant role in shaping the effectiveness of local government resource mobilization, particularly within decentralized systems. Political interference remains a major constraint in local revenue administration, as the involvement of political actors and influential local elites often undermines the enforcement of revenue by-laws and weakens institutional authority. Empirical evidence indicates that such interference discourages compliance, distorts revenue policies, and compromises the professionalism of revenue administration at the local level (Khan & Nartey, 2024).

In many local governments, elected officials and politically connected individuals exert pressure on revenue officers to grant informal exemptions, delay enforcement actions, or overlook non-compliance, especially during election periods. This politicization of revenue

collection is often driven by electoral considerations, as local leaders seek to maintain political support by avoiding unpopular tax enforcement measures. Consequently, revenue officials become reluctant to apply sanctions against defaulters, leading to selective enforcement and reduced revenue performance. (Prichard, 2015)

Weak governance and accountability systems further exacerbate these challenges. Inadequate transparency in revenue assessment, collection, and utilization fosters public perceptions of mismanagement and corruption. Where citizens lack access to information on how locally mobilized funds are used, trust in local tax systems diminishes, resulting in lower willingness to comply with tax obligations. Weak internal controls and ineffective oversight institutions also limit the ability of local governments to detect and address revenue leakages and misconduct.

Additionally, limited citizen participation in local decision-making processes weakens social accountability mechanisms that could otherwise enhance compliance and oversight. When taxpayers feel excluded from budgetary and planning processes, they are less likely to perceive local taxes and fees as legitimate or beneficial. This disconnect between revenue mobilization and service delivery outcomes creates a cycle of low trust, weak compliance, and poor revenue performance.

Overall, political interference and weak governance structures significantly constrain effective local government revenue mobilization. Addressing these challenges requires strengthening accountability and transparency mechanisms, insulating revenue administration from undue political influence, and promoting inclusive governance practices that enhance citizen trust and participation. Such reforms are essential for fostering a culture of compliance and improving the sustainability of local government finance systems.

Socio-Economic and Compliance Challenges

Socio-economic conditions and taxpayer compliance behavior significantly influence the effectiveness of local government resource mobilization, particularly in developing country contexts. Low levels of taxpayer compliance have been widely linked to limited public awareness of tax obligations, negative attitudes toward local taxation, and persistent perceptions of poor service delivery by local authorities (OECD, 2023). These factors reduce voluntary compliance and weaken the revenue base of local governments. (Torgler, 2007; Ali et al., 2014)

Limited public awareness remains a major constraint to effective compliance. In many local jurisdictions, taxpayers lack adequate knowledge of local tax laws, rates, and payment procedures. Weak taxpayer education and communication strategies contribute to misunderstandings and misinformation, leading to unintentional non-compliance. Where public engagement is minimal, local taxes and fees are often perceived as arbitrary or unfair, further discouraging compliance.

Negative attitudes toward taxation are also shaped by citizens' perceptions of governance and service delivery outcomes. When taxpayers perceive that locally mobilized revenues are poorly managed or do not translate into visible improvements in public services and infrastructure, their willingness to comply declines. This weak fiscal social contract between

local governments and citizens reinforces resistance to taxation and encourages deliberate tax evasion.

Socio-economic constraints such as poverty, unemployment, and income instability further limit the capacity of individuals and businesses to meet their tax obligations. In low-income communities, local taxes and fees may be viewed as burdensome, especially when basic livelihoods are insecure. As a result, compliance becomes irregular or selective, reducing the predictability and sustainability of local revenue flows.

The dominance of informal economic activities presents an additional challenge to revenue identification and collection. In many developing countries, a large proportion of economic activities operate outside formal regulatory and taxation frameworks, making it difficult for local governments to accurately identify taxable entities and assess their revenue potential. Informal businesses often lack fixed locations, proper records, or legal registration, complicating monitoring and enforcement efforts. This informality narrows the tax base and increases administrative costs associated with revenue collection. Socio-economic and compliance-related challenges significantly constrain local government revenue mobilization by weakening voluntary compliance and limiting the effective expansion of the local tax base. Addressing these challenges requires strengthening taxpayer education and public engagement, improving service delivery to enhance trust, and adopting innovative approaches to integrate informal economic actors into local revenue systems in a fair and sustainable manner.

Technological Challenges

Technological innovation has increasingly been promoted as a key solution to addressing revenue mobilization challenges at the local government level, particularly through the adoption of digital revenue management systems. Such systems are expected to enhance efficiency, improve transparency, reduce revenue leakages, and strengthen accountability in local revenue administration. However, recent studies indicate that the effectiveness of digital revenue systems in many developing country contexts remains constrained by limited adoption, inadequate technical capacity, and persistent infrastructure gaps (World Bank, 2023).

Limited adoption of digital revenue systems is often linked to institutional resistance to change and the continued reliance on traditional manual collection methods. In many local governments, revenue processes such as assessment, billing, collection, and reporting remain largely paper-based, limiting the potential benefits of automation. Where digital systems have been introduced, their use is often partial or fragmented, with poor integration across departments and revenue sources. This reduces system efficiency and undermines accurate revenue tracking and data consolidation. Inadequate technical capacity among local government staff further constrains the effective use of digital revenue technologies. Many revenue officials lack the requisite skills to operate, maintain, and troubleshoot digital systems, resulting in underutilization or system breakdowns. The absence of continuous training and technical support limits staff confidence and reduces the sustainability of technology-driven reforms. Without sufficient human capacity, digital systems become ineffective tools rather than catalysts for improved revenue performance.

Infrastructure gaps also pose significant challenges to technological modernization. Unreliable electricity supply, limited internet connectivity, and insufficient ICT equipment hinder the smooth operation of digital revenue systems, particularly in peri-urban and rural areas. These infrastructural constraints increase downtime, disrupt data transmission, and discourage consistent system use by revenue collectors and taxpayers alike.

Moreover, technology investments that are not accompanied by broader institutional reforms often fail to deliver meaningful improvements. Digital systems introduced without aligning legal frameworks, enforcement mechanisms, and administrative processes tend to replicate existing inefficiencies in electronic form. As a result, technology alone cannot resolve systemic revenue mobilization challenges without complementary capacity-building, organizational restructuring, and change management initiatives. Technological challenges significantly limit the transformative potential of digital revenue systems in local government finance. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that combines investment in ICT infrastructure with sustained capacity-building, institutional support, and policy alignment to ensure that technology adoption translates into tangible improvements in revenue mobilization outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Fiscal Decentralization Theory, complemented by insights from Institutional Theory, the Fiscal Social Contract framework, and Public Financial Management (PFM) modernization theory, to explain the factors influencing local government resource mobilization. Fiscal Decentralization Theory posits that devolving fiscal authority to subnational governments enhances efficiency, accountability, and responsiveness in public service delivery, as local governments are closer to citizens and better positioned to identify and respond to local needs (Oates, 1972; Smoke, 2015). The theory assumes that local governments possess adequate administrative capacity, effective enforcement mechanisms, and sufficient autonomy over local revenue sources to mobilize resources efficiently. Where these conditions are present, fiscal decentralization is expected to strengthen local revenue performance and reduce dependence on central government transfers. However, in contexts where administrative capacity is weak, enforcement mechanisms are ineffective, or political interference is prevalent, fiscal decentralization is expected to yield suboptimal revenue outcomes (Bahl & Bird, 2018).

Institutional Theory provides further explanatory insight by emphasizing the role of formal rules, organizational structures, and informal norms in shaping public sector performance. From this perspective, effective resource mobilization is expected to depend on the strength of institutional arrangements, including the availability of logistics, robust record-keeping systems, effective monitoring mechanisms, and consistent enforcement of revenue regulations (North, 1990). Weak institutional capacity is expected to reduce compliance, increase revenue leakages, and undermine accountability, thereby constraining local governments' ability to fully exploit their legally assigned revenue sources. The Fiscal Social Contract framework explains taxpayer compliance as a function of the perceived relationship between citizens and the state. The framework posits that taxpayers are more willing to comply with tax obligations when they perceive government institutions as legitimate, transparent, and responsive, and when tax payments are visibly linked to improved service delivery (Torgler, 2007). Conversely, low trust in government, perceptions of political

interference, and dissatisfaction with service delivery are expected to reduce voluntary compliance, weaken the local revenue base, and reinforce cycles of low revenue and poor public services (Ali, Fjeldstad, & Sjursen, 2014).

The study also draws on Public Financial Management modernization theory, which conceptualizes digital technologies as instruments for improving efficiency, transparency, and accountability in public revenue administration. From this perspective, the adoption of digital revenue systems is expected to reduce transaction costs, minimize revenue leakages, and strengthen monitoring and reporting. However, PFM literature emphasizes that the effectiveness of digital technologies depends on complementary institutional capacity, staff skills, and supporting infrastructure. In the absence of these enabling conditions, technology adoption is expected to yield limited improvements in revenue performance (Andrews, Pritchett, & Woolcock, 2017). Drawing from these theoretical perspectives, this study conceptualizes local government resource mobilization as an outcome influenced by the interaction of administrative and institutional capacity, political and governance conditions, socio-economic and compliance factors, and technological readiness. These theoretical expectations inform the selection of variables, guide the empirical analysis, and provide a coherent foundation for interpreting the study's findings and deriving policy implications for improving resource mobilization at the Sefwi Wiawso Municipal Assembly.

Conceptual Framework

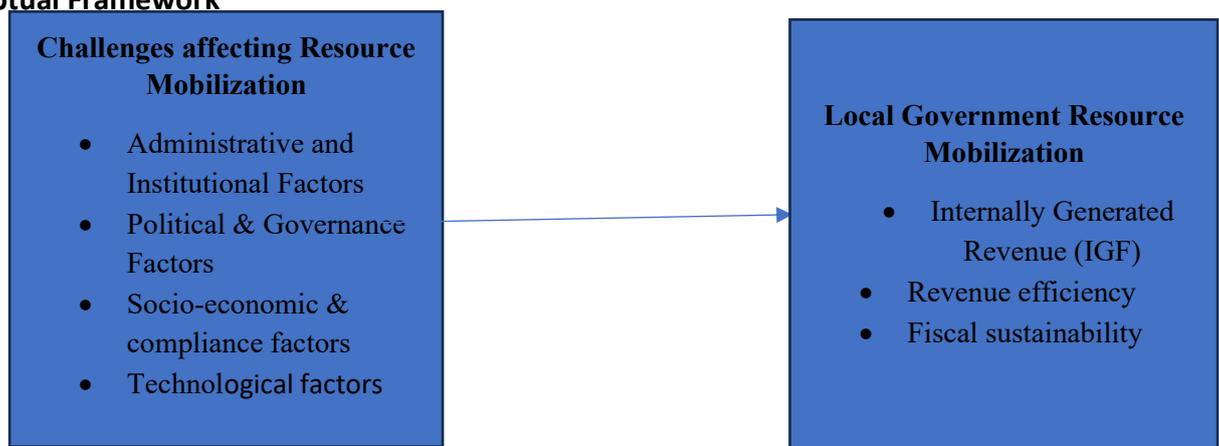


Fig.1. Conceptual framework

Source: Author's Construct

The conceptual framework illustrates how local government resource mobilization is influenced by the interaction of administrative and institutional capacity, political and governance conditions, socio-economic and compliance factors, and technological readiness. Administrative and institutional factors shape the operational effectiveness of revenue collection, while political and governance conditions influence enforcement and accountability. Socio-economic and compliance factors affect taxpayers' willingness and ability to pay, whereas technological factors determine efficiency, transparency, and control within revenue systems. Collectively, these factors determine the level and sustainability of internally generated revenue at the local government level.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative cross-sectional research design to examine the perceived challenges affecting resource mobilization at the local government level. This design involves the collection of data from a defined population at a single point in time, making it appropriate for assessing prevailing conditions, opinions, and institutional practices related to revenue mobilization within the study area. A quantitative approach was adopted to enable the systematic measurement and analysis of respondents' perceptions regarding administrative, institutional, political, socio-economic, and technological challenges influencing resource mobilization. The use of structured instruments allowed for the generation of numerical data that could be subjected to statistical analysis, thereby enhancing objectivity, reliability, and comparability of findings.

The cross-sectional nature of the design was particularly suitable given the study's objective of identifying and describing existing challenges rather than examining changes over time. It facilitated the efficient collection of data from municipal staff involved in revenue administration and financial management, providing a snapshot of current resource mobilization constraints within the Assembly. The quantitative cross-sectional research design was considered appropriate for achieving the study objectives, as it allowed for the identification of key challenges, the assessment of their relative significance, and the generation of evidence-based insights to inform policy and institutional reforms aimed at improving local government resource mobilization.

Population and Sample

The target population for the study comprised all 130 staff members of the Sefwi Wiawso Municipal Assembly who are directly or indirectly involved in revenue mobilization, financial administration, and related managerial functions. This population included staff from key departments such as the Finance Office, Budget Unit, Internal Audit, Revenue Unit, and Administration, whose roles provide relevant insights into the challenges affecting local government resource mobilization. A probability sampling technique was employed to ensure that each member of the target population had an equal and known chance of being selected for the study, thereby enhancing the representativeness and generalizability of the findings. Based on the sampling procedure, questionnaires were administered to selected respondents, resulting in 83 valid responses used for the final analysis. This sample size was considered adequate for descriptive statistical analysis and provided a reliable basis for assessing prevailing challenges within the Assembly.

Data Collection and Analysis

Primary data for the study were collected using structured questionnaires designed to capture respondents' perceptions of the challenges affecting resource mobilization at the municipal level. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended items organized around key thematic areas, including administrative and institutional constraints, political and governance challenges, socio-economic and compliance issues, and technological limitations. The use of structured questionnaires ensured consistency in responses and facilitated quantitative analysis. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistical techniques, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. These methods were employed to assess the prevalence and severity of the identified challenges and to rank them

according to their perceived impact on resource mobilization. The results were presented in tables to enhance clarity and interpretability.

The data collection and analysis procedures provided a systematic and objective means of examining the challenges confronting resource mobilization at the Sefwi Wiawso Municipal Assembly, thereby supporting evidence-based conclusions and policy recommendations.

Results

Descriptive Analysis of Resource Mobilization Challenges

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Resource Mobilization Challenges

Challenge	Mean	Std. Deviation
Inadequate logistics for revenue collection	3.89	0.61
Weak enforcement of revenue by-laws	3.82	0.65
Low taxpayer compliance	3.76	0.69
Political interference	3.71	0.73
Limited use of information technology	3.64	0.77

The results indicate that inadequate logistics and weak enforcement mechanisms constitute the most severe challenges affecting resource mobilization, followed closely by low taxpayer compliance and political interference.

Discussion

The findings of the study confirm that resource mobilization at the local government level is constrained by a complex interplay of administrative, political, socio-economic, and technological challenges. This multidimensional nature of the constraints underscores the reality that local revenue mobilization problems cannot be attributed to a single factor but rather reflect systemic weaknesses within decentralized governance structures. The prominence of logistical inadequacies and weak enforcement mechanisms highlights persistent operational and institutional capacity gaps within local governments, a pattern that is consistent with recent evidence from decentralized systems across sub-Saharan Africa (Amoako & Frimpong, 2023). (Smoke, 2015; Bahl & Bird, 2018)

Administrative challenges, particularly inadequate logistics and weak enforcement of revenue by-laws, emerged as some of the most significant constraints. The limited availability of transportation, revenue collection tools, and supervisory mechanisms reduces the efficiency and coverage of revenue collection activities, while weak enforcement encourages tax evasion and revenue leakages. These findings reinforce the argument that fiscal decentralization reforms have not been adequately matched with investments in administrative capacity at the local level, thereby constraining effective resource mobilization.

Political interference was also identified as a critical challenge affecting revenue performance. The findings indicate that political pressures from elected officials and local elites undermine accountability and weaken enforcement, particularly against influential defaulters. This corroborates the findings of Khan and Nartey (2024), who argue that political interference significantly reduces local tax compliance by distorting enforcement practices and weakening

institutional authority. The politicization of revenue administration erodes the credibility of local tax systems and discourages voluntary compliance among taxpayers.

Socio-economic and compliance-related challenges further compound these constraints. Low levels of taxpayer compliance, driven by limited public awareness and negative perceptions of service delivery, weaken the local revenue base. These findings align with the broader literature emphasizing the importance of trust and reciprocity in local taxation, where citizens' willingness to pay taxes is closely linked to their perceptions of government performance and accountability.

Technological challenges were found to pose a moderate but significant constraint on resource mobilization. While digital revenue tools and systems are increasingly available, their utilization remains suboptimal due to limited technical capacity, inadequate infrastructure, and partial system integration. This finding supports the World Bank (2023) assertion that technology investments alone are insufficient to improve revenue outcomes without complementary capacity-building and institutional reforms. The persistence of manual processes alongside digital systems limits efficiency gains and reduces the potential impact of technological modernization. The discussion highlights that improving local government resource mobilization requires a holistic approach that addresses administrative capacity deficits, strengthens enforcement and accountability mechanisms, mitigates political interference, enhances taxpayer engagement, and ensures effective utilization of digital technologies. These findings provide important policy-relevant insights for strengthening fiscal decentralization and improving local development outcomes in Ghana and similar contexts

Conclusion and Policy Implications

This study concludes that resource mobilization at the Sefwi Wiawso Municipal Assembly is constrained by a combination of interrelated administrative, institutional, political, socio-economic, and technological challenges. Key among these are inadequate logistics and operational support for revenue staff, weak enforcement of local revenue by-laws, low levels of taxpayer compliance, persistent political interference in revenue administration, and the limited and suboptimal use of information and communication technologies in revenue collection and management. These challenges collectively undermine the Assembly's ability to generate sufficient internally generated revenue to finance public services and local development initiatives.

The findings suggest that fiscal decentralization reforms, while granting local governments greater responsibilities, have not been adequately supported with the institutional capacity and resources required for effective revenue mobilization. As a result, the Assembly remains heavily dependent on central government transfers, which limits fiscal autonomy and exposes local development efforts to funding uncertainties.

Policy Implications

First, there is a critical need to provide adequate logistics and operational support for revenue staff. This includes investment in transportation, standardized collection tools, monitoring equipment, and office infrastructure to enhance the efficiency, coverage, and supervision of

revenue collection activities. Improved logistics will reduce operational bottlenecks and minimize revenue leakages.

Second, strengthening the enforcement of local revenue by-laws is essential for improving compliance and revenue performance. This requires clearer legal frameworks, consistent application of sanctions against defaulters, and improved collaboration between revenue units, legal departments, and enforcement agencies. Strong enforcement mechanisms will reinforce the credibility of local tax systems and deter tax evasion.

Third, enhancing taxpayer education and public engagement is vital for improving voluntary compliance. Local authorities should invest in sustained public education campaigns to raise awareness of tax obligations and communicate the link between tax payments and service delivery. Greater citizen participation in budgeting and planning processes can also strengthen trust and reinforce the fiscal social contract between local governments and residents.

Fourth, reducing political interference in revenue administration requires the establishment of institutional safeguards that protect revenue officials from undue political pressure. This may include clearer separation between political leadership and revenue administration, strengthened oversight mechanisms, and the enforcement of professional standards and accountability frameworks within local government institutions.

Finally, expanding and effectively utilizing digital revenue systems should be prioritized alongside sustained technical capacity-building. Investments in digital platforms for revenue assessment, billing, and collection must be accompanied by training for staff, reliable ICT infrastructure, and system integration to ensure sustainability and impact. When properly implemented, digital systems can enhance transparency, reduce leakages, and improve revenue forecasting and accountability. Addressing these challenges is essential for improving fiscal sustainability, strengthening local governance, and enhancing service delivery outcomes at the municipal level. The policy implications of this study provide practical insights for policymakers, local government practitioners, and development partners seeking to strengthen resource mobilization within Ghana's decentralized governance framework.

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