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**INCLUSION, POLITICS AND GENDER: THE FATE OF FEMALE CANDIDATES IN  
THE 2020 ELECTIONS**

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**DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own effort. Sources to which I am indebted are duly acknowledged in the references. I further declare that this work has never been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to God almighty who gave me the strength and the resources needed for this course, to Percy Nii Wiabo Nunoo whose continued support were unfailing during this period. Lastly I equally dedicate to my parents most especially the memory of my late father Mr. Lambert Kwaku Amegede who had encouraged me to be educated and to be what I am today academically.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study explored the factors that influence women's participation in the Ghanaian political setting. The study was specifically set-out to identify the determinants of voters' choice of candidates in Ghanaian elections, to examine the voters' perception on women's participation in politics and to assess the strategies that will enhance women's political representation in general elections. Quantitative research design was adopted for the study. A structured questionnaire was administered to collect data from the respondents. The sample size of the study was seventy-three (73) valid voters within the Ablekuma South Constituency. The sampling technique used was convenient sampling. The findings of the study indicated that the lack of an affirmative action bill, political factors, public initiatives and socio-economic factors accounted for low representation and participation of women in politics. Also, political parties were found to have done little in ensuring women's participation in areas of national development and politics. The study recommended that stakeholders with focus on women empowerment and inclusive governance should ensure that initiatives and intervention are developed and implemented to address the barriers to women's political participation. The study concluded that the passage of the proposed Affirmative Action Bill into law will make a difference and contribute to enhancing women's political participation and representation.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **1.0 Background of the Study**

Gender equality and empowerment have received significant attention over the years, becoming a global goal. Members of the international community, educators, researchers, Civil Society Organizations (CSO's) among others, are consistently finding ways to address gender inequalities that persist despite some national and international efforts. Due to the limited participation of women in political governance, issues of women's rights have gradually gained significance in governmental policy discussions, civil society advocacy, and academic literatures.

The inequalities that exist between men and women are often seen across the world as a 'democratic deficit', given that about fifty (50) percent of the world's population comprises women (Schwindt-Bayer & Mishler, 2005 as cited in Stockemer, 2015). Similarly, the main argument advanced by the United Nations (UN) is that the existence of gender inequalities suggests a lack of fundamental human rights. There has been some emphasis on a need to ensure equal rights of men and women as countries have signed and consented to various internationally recognized agreements and frameworks towards gender equality (UNDP; UN, 2018). Ever since gender issues were incorporated into the domain of policy, efforts have been made to monitor the progress of these interventions (Charmes & Saskia, 2003).

Despite the global progressive endeavor to improve women's development, the scourge of gender discrimination and marginalization, which is an unhealthy reality in most developing nations, has barred women from full participation in society (Kurz & Johnson-Welch, 2000). According to a report published by the global inter-parliamentary institution as of 1st November 2018 based on

information provided by national parliaments, revealed that about 23.7 percent make up women representation in national parliaments worldwide, highlighting a grave injustice in consideration to the number of men and women in the world (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2018).

In every society, women have been a vital source of support for the establishment and enthronement of political leaders. This is also evidenced by the number of women in political parties globally, however equal political and civil rights are not granted to women even after how instrumental their role in politics has been. As stated in The Universal Declaration of Human rights, women and men have the same civil and political rights and thus a democracy that doesn't include gender parity in its political parties is not a democracy (UN, 2018).

Consequently, data suggests that women's participation in politics can improve the efficiency and stability of governments. It can also lead to the provision of more inclusive and responsive policies to the varied needs of citizens (Clayton & Zetterberg, 2018). Women's participation might help parties reach out to new demographic groups and motivate social change advocates (Casas-Arce & Saiz, 2015).

Political participation is regarded as a necessary condition for any country's democratic growth (Diamond & Morlino, 2004). Every society's strong political process may then be traced to the widespread engagement of its inhabitants (Norris, 2013). As a result, one of the most fundamental goals of democracy is to preserve and enhance the dignity and human rights of all people, which is reflected through democratic participation (Inter Parliamentary Union, 1997). Over the years, increasing women's participation in various parts of life has been a recurring theme in the development debate. Several international organizations have stated that women's concerns are taken into account in the economic and social processes. Which is one of the precepts of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that everyone has the right to participate in

the governing of his or her country (UN, 1945). Improvement in the political status and representation of women in decision-making is considered a vital step in the development of democracy and sustainable development (United Nation Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995).

Despite the progress made by women, they still have a hard time participating in the political process globally. According to research conducted by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) in 2005, the global rate of female representation is at 16% and the main factors that prevent women from participating in the political process are the existing social and economic structures. Ghana is no exception to this norm, because despite the number of women advancing in politics and public life, they are still underrepresented in most sectors of the economy. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), Ghanaian women constitute about 51.2 percent of the national population. These figures do not in any way reflect the power distribution between men and women especially in political governance. Both formal and informal barriers remain in the way of women's participation in politics. Party structures can be opaque and often have hyper masculine cultures, with women often left with no other choice than play supporting roles or otherwise sidelined in the process. Some parties have structures in place to prevent this but to a large extent majority fall short of implementation when really needed (Sacchet, 2005).

Prior to colonial times, women were engaged in politics but not exclusively engaged in decision-making process according to Yahaya and Umar Kari (2018), and this was entrenched by gender bias colonial administration's policies. They also noted that women's participation in political life has become an essential aspect of modern governance. Women's equal participation in political life is also a fundamental right (Mlambo & Kapingura, 2019).

Women's participation in the decision-making process has increasingly been placed in the global arena (Matland, 2004). Besides, increasing democratic consolidation in Africa has further propelled women in their political representation and participation. Contributing to this debate, Ballington (2008) noted that spanning gender equity and the full participation of women in every decision making are major creeds of democracy. Additionally, Agbalajobi, (2010) states that the advancement of democracy and its corresponding prosperity will be ruined if a large chunk of our population continues to remain helpless to political, economic, legal and social downgrading.

In spite of all the negatives and other stumbling blocks, a lot has been achieved in the advancement of gender equity and women empowerment in the various recorded policies in Africa and the world. In essence, the new wave of political trend in Africa has paved way for opportunities for women to take up political leadership positions. Extensive works (Sanbonmatsu, 2006; Agbalajobi, 2010; Allah-Mensah, 2005; Anigwe, 2014) on increasing women's political participation and representation have been carried out in Africa, and Ghana is no exception. Evidence worthy of citing include Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, former Liberian president, Joyce Banda of Malawi and a host of others across Africa. More so, in recognition, Malawi, South Africa, Senegal, Mozambique, Uganda, and Angola all have been ranked for their levels of women's representation in parliament and other elective offices. Even though Ghana and other African countries have performed poorly, however, statistics show that there is an improvement (Ocran, 2014). Most nations today extend voting rights to women, but women's election to national office and other major components of full political citizenship, varies widely (McDonagh, 2002). Across the globe, research continuously shows that women still remain on the peripheries of the political sphere (Ogbogu, 2012).

Further, the new trend of democratic consolidation in Africa has witnessed an upsurge in improvement in women's political participation and representation. In response to this trend, women have sprung up in almost all the political parties in leadership roles in Africa and Ghana. Thus, for proper inclusion of women in political governance, they must be elected to participate in political affairs.

### **1.1 Problem statement**

Ghana is considered one of the buoyant democracies in Africa, having consolidated as a democratic society after almost three decades of political instability as a result of military interference (Ayee, 2017). Since 1992, Ghana has made giant democratic strides on the continent by holding seven peaceful elections generally considered to be free, fair, peaceful and transparent by domestic and international observers with three smooth alternation of power (2001, 2009 and 2017) from one political party to the other (Alidu and Aggrey-Darkoh, 2018).

Political parties have been instrumental in all the seven elections thus helping in the process of putting Ghana on the path of representative democracy (Agomor, 2015). This affirms a pioneering view by Robert Dahl (1967) that the presence or absence of competing political parties can be used as a litmus paper test for democracy in a country. Therefore, it will not be out of place to argue that political parties have been central in the organization of Ghana's Fourth Republican political polity (Agomor, 2015). According to Whitfield (2009), the institutionalization of political parties have contributed to democratic consolidation in the country.

In spite of the progress made by the political parties in strengthening democracy, they pose a particular challenge for women, who continue to be underrepresented in their leadership and decision-making ranks (Brechenmacher & Hubbard, 2020). In their assessment of the quality of

democracy in Ghana, Abdulai and Crawford (2010) complain that “one area where political parties in Ghana have palpably failed is in enhancing the political participation of women” both within the political parties and at the national level.

Women's political participation has been identified internationally as an important indicator of the political and socio-economic status of women (Shvedova, 2005, Bari, 2005, Dahlerup 1988). As a result, individuals and world organizations have been making efforts to empower women to achieve adequate representation in mainstream politics. According to an Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) report (2021), world democracies have made substantive progress in promoting the number of women in national parliament, increasing the global average from 11.3 percent in 1995 to 25.5 percent in 2020. While the level of progress world-wide is slow, some countries have really increased the presence of women in formal politics.

The Ghanaian government has also taken steps in recent years to provide women with opportunities to take on the challenges of leadership. Odame (2010) notes that, the efforts of Ghanaian women themselves towards participation and greater representation cannot be overshadowed as they have formed groups and organizations over the years to fight for the rights of women. She cited examples of active women organizations such as the Federation of International Women Lawyers (FIDA), Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) and the 31st December Women’s Movement (DWM), which advocate for the enactment of laws to protect the rights of women in the country and help improve the living standards of women.

Notwithstanding the substantial international progress and development efforts toward the advancement of women in all societies, a large number of women in developing countries, including Ghana, continue to be victims of gender inequality and underrepresentation (Kurz & Johnson-Welch, 2000). These have arisen the curiosity of scholars to investigate and understand

the reasons why despite the provisions of constitutional support to every citizen to freely engage in politics women are still underrepresented at the national level. The research sets out to explore the reasons for the low representation, inclusion, and participation of women, looking at factors that contribute to voters' choice of candidate in elections in Ghana and additionally to examine the voters' perception of women's participation in politics in Ghana.

Complementarily, several works literature can be cited on women political participation and representation in Ghana, and across the globe. Some of which are Ocran (2014), Musah and Gariba (2013), Shiraz (2015), Ogbogu (2012), Kassa (2015), Agbalajobi (2010), Kasomo (2012) and Kivoi (2014). These authors have enumerated the challenges hampering women's political participation in Africa and the factors that encourage women's political participation and representation in Africa with Ghana inclusive. Therefore, this research also builds on existing studies that focus on women's participation within Ghanaian political parties and identify the factors that restrains women from occupying leadership positions.

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

Characteristically, the study aims:

- To identify the determinants of voters' choice of candidates in elections in Ghana.
- To examine voter perception on women's participation in politics.
- To assess the strategies that will enhance women's political representation in general elections.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

1. What are the factors that affects the voters' choice of a candidate in an election in Ghana?
2. What is the voters' perception on women's participation in politics?

3. What are the strategies that will enhance women's political representation in general elections?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The participation of women in politics is said to be an important governance and gender equality issue. This is because of the perceived and acknowledged potential contribution of women to democracy and democratic development. This study is vital to policy makers in formulating and implementing policies that would consequently contribute to promoting women's political participation in general.

Findings from the study informs the constituents of civil society, donor partners and government about the state of affairs of women who are already engaged in politics and the support required to help them remain in politics and contribute to socioeconomic and political development in Ghana and beyond.

The study also contributes to the advancement of knowledge on the determinants of women's participation in political leadership in Ghana. The study forms a base on which other studies can be conducted on women's participation in political leadership.

### **1.6 Scope of the study**

Political participation covers a wide range of activities and engagements. These include voting, standing for office, membership in political party and taking part in the political campaigns of the political parties. This study is conducted in the Ablekuma South Constituency, which is one of the constituencies hotly contested in the country. Ablekuma South Constituency was selected in this study due to the low participation of women in that particular constituency. This study mainly focuses on the female representation and participation in the 2020 parliamentary elections.

## **1.7 Organization of the study**

The study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter is the introductory chapter. It comprises the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, the scope of the research, and the organization of the study. Chapter two, the literature review, provides a broad background for the subsequent chapters and an extensive review of existing research on the concepts and theories that better understand the subject matter. Chapter three encompasses the methodology of the study. It provides the research design, procedure and method, the population covered by the study, description of the study area, sampling techniques, instruments, data collection procedure, and analysis. Chapter four focuses on data analysis and interpretation of the results and discussions. In contrast, Chapter five embodies the conclusions drawn based on the study's findings on recommendations and directions for future research on the subject.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter reviews theories, existing literature and discusses concepts related to the study. The study adopted the Social Role Theory and the Role Congruity Theory. Empirical literature related to the study was also discussed together with definitions and explanations of concepts related to women's participation.

#### **2.1 Theoretical review**

##### **2.1.1 The Social Role Theory**

The Social Role Theory, presented by Eagly (1987), is an updated and expanded socialization stereotypes theory. The theory claims that the behavioral disparities between men and women are due to men and women being assigned to different societal roles. In other words, people's beliefs about a certain sex are based on their observations of persons of that sex doing that sex's role. As a result, women and men fulfil specific gender and societal roles, and the stereotypes they associate with these positions shape their views and behaviors (Franke et al., 1997 as cited in Wood & Lindorf, 2001).

Social roles, according to Eagly (1987), are socially shared expectations that apply to those who hold a specific social position or belong to a specific social group (Biddle, 1979; Sarbin & Allen, 1968 as cited in Eagly & Karau, 2002). Gender roles, on the other hand, are concerned with what men and women do and should do.

The Social Role Theory states that people tend to act differently in social settings due to the expectations of society. In order to function properly, both individuals must share the expectations associated with their social roles. (Biddle, 1986; Jackson, 1998 as cited in Eagly & Karau, 2002).

There are two types of gender roles in this theory: injunctive and descriptive. Injunctive norms are expectations regarding what people should or should ideally do. Expectations regarding what people really do are described as descriptive norms. The distinction between these two types of gender roles explains why gender roles have the ability to influence behavior in general. Injunctive norms evoke feelings that are highly linked to disapproving emotions, whereas descriptive norms elicit emotions that are more strongly linked towards 'surprise' emotions. This explains why not all female leaders are disliked and revered equally.

The majority of people's expectations-based beliefs are on communal and agentic qualities (Bakan, 1966; Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Agentic characteristics such as aggressiveness, ambition, dominance, forcefulness, independence, self-sufficiency, self-confidence, and proneness to act as a leader are ascribed more strongly to men, whereas communal characteristics such as being affectionate, helpful, kind, sympathetic, interpersonally sensitive, nurturing, and gentle are ascribed more strongly to women. Carpenter (2001) found that when women in leadership posts were expected to display communal qualities, they obtained higher ratings. This suggests that expectations placed on women cause them to be evaluated as good leaders and not the actual behaviors they display or the traits they possess. Thus, the evaluations of women according to this theory may or may not be biased depending on whether they conform to societal expectations or not.

### **2.1.2 Role Congruity Theory**

The role congruity theory proposed by Eagly and Karau (2002) is similar to Heilman's (1983; 2001) theory and the social role theory (Eagly, 1987), but it more directly addresses bias against women as leaders by arguing that communal attributes associated with stereotypic perceptions of the female gender role are inconsistent with agentic qualities generally believed to be required for leadership success. Eagly and Karau (2002) proposed the Role Congruity Theory to explain why women are still excluded in leadership positions. Role congruity theory, like social role theory, is based on the examination of gender role content. However, it goes beyond the social role theory by considering the congruity between gender roles and other roles, especially leadership roles. It also specifies key factors and processes that influence congruity perceptions and their consequences for prejudice and prejudicial behaviors (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The basic principle is that perceivers blend the information associated with a gender role and a leader role. As a result, when viewing someone in a leadership position, one's expectations of him based on his gender compete with expectations of him based on his position as a leader. When there is a misalignment between the two roles, two types of prejudice emerge (or expectations of the roles).

The first type of prejudice against women is the belief that women are less suitable for leadership positions than males. Because of the incongruence between their gender roles and leadership positions, women candidates, despite their qualifications, are denied the opportunity to become leaders. There is evidence that women believe they are regularly passed over for promotions unfairly. Women's hopes and expectations for advancement into leadership roles are lowered as a result of this (Bellamy & Ramsay, 1994). According to one study, female managers are less likely than their male counterparts to aspire to a job in senior management and less likely than their male counterparts to aspire to a position in senior management. This first type of prejudice against

female leaders is based on a discrepancy between the descriptive content of a female gender role and a leadership function, which results in the prejudice being eliminated or reduced. This occurs because the incongruity is either weak or non-existent (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The masculinity of the leader role, the sex of the perceivers, cultural milieus, and specific feminine personal features (pregnancy, feminine clothes and grooming, among others) are thought to influence this type of prejudice.

The second type of prejudice women confront is the negative assessment of behavior that satisfies the requirements of a leadership post when performed by a woman. According to a survey, women felt overlooked since senior men in the business would not want to report to a woman (Bellamy & Ramsay, 1994). According to certain empirical data, management roles are viewed as male areas. Schein & Mueller, 1992; Orser, 1994). This has forced some women into service industries in order to fulfill the responsibilities expected of them, which, according to Still (1993), satisfies rather than maximizes their job objectives. Furthermore, some people have been discovered to oppose women's authority.

Perceivers' personal endorsement of these norms, especially depending on the definition of the leader role, the weight given to the female gender role, and personal approval of traditional definitions of gender roles, is a moderating condition that affects the second form of prejudice, which is as a result of reactions based on the incongruence between the injunctive aspects of the gender role and the leader role. Specifically, the more agentically a leader role is defined or the more completely women fulfil its agentic requirements; the more likely such women are to elicit unfavorable evaluation because their behavior deviates from the injunctive norms of the female gender role (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The role congruity theory of prejudice is important because it

describes in depth the various parts of stereotypes and social roles, with a particular focus and analysis on leadership, which is particularly pertinent to this study.

## **2.2 Women and pre-colonial politics**

In Africa, women and political engagement predate the introduction of contemporary political systems during colonialism. There were certain duties assigned for women in traditional political systems, which also indicated the authority they wielded in society (Arhin, 1985). Sweetman (1984) contends that anthropologists and historians recognized the political role of women leaders in ancient kingdoms when they highlighted women in their normal write-ups as legendary founding progenitors of their societies. This idea which placed women as leaders of earlier societies were referred to as the “Golden Age of Matriarchy” which was the era where the political powers of women were felt in pre-colonial Africa. Although this position was not enjoyed for long since they were gradually replaced by men, the activities and achievements of Hatshepsut of Egypt, Yaa Asantewaa of Ghana, Candace of ancient Meroe and Nzinga of Angola stands out in the case of Africa (Sweetman, 1984).

Africa is currently hailed as a "global leader" in the representation of women in parliament (Badri and Tripp, 2017). Ghana received international acclaim and accolades for becoming the first African country to declare quotas in favor of women in 1960, under Nkrumah's leadership (Tamale, 1999). Ghanaian women have always been involved in the political process of their societies, regardless of social organization or historical perspective, since the pre-colonial era (Prah, 2004). According to Arhin (1985) women contributed to the cause of war by nursing the wounds of injured soldiers, passing water and arms to the soldiers and also led battles on some occasions in the pre-colonial era. This implies that women of the Gold Coast were not homebound during war times but were also on the battlefield playing equally important roles.

According to Aidoo (1995), a number of factors influenced how men and women shared resources, authority, rights, and responsibilities in traditional African communities, including inheritance, economic potential, succession, affiliation, paternity, and residence laws, among others. This is shown by the Asante matrilineal system of succession, which placed women in a complementary position to men who enjoyed considerable economic and legal freedom (Aidoo, 1995). Oppong (1974) mentioned, that the Asante queen mothers are responsible for the making of Asante kings because the tradition mandates them as the sole producers of the kings which puts them in a peculiar position of power. Hence, the survival and continuity of the kingdom largely depended on them. Odotei (2006) goes on to say that the queen mother had a lot of control over different parts of the country and could preside over cases and make decisions.

According to Odamten (2012), the Ga society creates gender equity of both men and women by spiritually referring to their Supreme Being which is God as “Atta Naa Nyonmo” (father-mother God). This is a reflection of how the Gas give equal respect to both genders. For example, Odamten (2012) exemplifies that before colonization, women even had more power politically because of phrases that had become accepted into the Ga language such as “aya bi yoomo” which means (let’s ask the old lady). Old women were believed to be the fountain of wisdom and had the final say when issues were escalating at meetings. Young girls who had not yet menstruated were required to join the fetish priestess to bath and consecrate the spiritual stools without which the king could not come out to perform his civic duties (Odamten, 2012). Such events established the involvements of women in public spaces and decision-making right from their infancy to old age. In describing the status of women around the coastal areas, Aidoo (1985) accounts that in the pre-colonial period Fante women were part of the “Asafo Companies” which were the military arm of the Fante political leadership. They had a special wing for women that was called “Adzewa”.

Aidoo goes on to suggest that they supplied ammunition to men and were occasionally given titles that made them captains and they fought just as men during battle.

It is important to recognize that women's participation was not universal in all territorial boundaries that later became known as Ghana because some societies were holistically patriarchal (Prah, 2004). Aidoo (1995) asserts that based on their societal organizations, other ethnic groups such as the Dagombas, the Gonjas, and Konkombas that had patrilineal systems of an inheritance had women being subservient to men because their culture accepted male dominance. The strong presence of Islam and its doctrines in places where these ethnic groups found themselves also explains why women were subordinate to men in such places (Aidoo, 1995).

### **2.3 Women and colonial politics**

In many sections of pre-colonial Ghana, women were not only observers, but active participants in their cultures' socio-political processes. Comprehending the impact of colonialism on Ghanaian women's political lives necessitates an understanding of this argument. This is because the tragedy of the colonial experience for African women at the time was that she was pushed backwards and forced to function in the twenty-first century as if on the backs of colonial and post-colonial men, both European and African (Aidoo, 1995).

With the arrival of the Europeans into the Gold Coast came the advent of formal education of which the missionaries or churches played a major role (Graham, 2013). They established schools, brought in teachers from the West and eventually trained some Gold Coasters as teachers, continuously encouraged more indigenes to send their children to school among others (Graham, 2013). The idea of schooling taught children to read and write which was a necessity for

communicating with the British and participating in all aspects of the colony. However, formal education in itself side-lined women.

Odamten (2012) argues that before colonization, women and men played complementary roles in educating the younger generation informally. In this regard, they inculcated the social values of Ga society through oral means. This mode of transmission or education was significantly altered by the appearance of a different system of education in which men and missionaries were the sole transmitters and boys the major recipients (Odamten, 2012). This consciously or unconsciously created an impression in the minds of the people that formal education was for males and not females creating a foundation for few girls to be interested in formal education.

Manuh (1991) also claims that even after the necessity for females to be transported to school became more widely recognized, the number of girls enrolled in schools did not significantly increase. This is because many parents still believe that women belong in the kitchen and that they will eventually be married off to men. As a result, there was no need to subject them to formal education. Manuh goes on to exemplify that even the few privileged girls who were taken to schools, were introduced to courses such as life skills and other vocational skills including cooking, sewing among other domestic areas while the boys were introduced to courses such as the sciences and other professional courses that gave them spaces to work after school.

As a result, the imperialists' earlier exclusion of women from formal education hampered women's participation in politics and other decision-making spaces because they couldn't even communicate in English and lacked the training that would have qualified them to be in positions that could influence public policy.

According to Aidoo (1995), the societal orientation of the British was one that did not encourage women in public spaces. Thus, their societies put men at the central role of nations building, economic development and the likes while women were relegated to the background and put in very private spaces making them invisible in public spaces. Aidoo (1995) recalls that the Europeans were surprised to see the queen mother and the Asante chief sat together at durbars to make decisions together. Hence, the British looked down on the culture of the people because they did not regard it as an appropriate and, therefore, imposed their Victorian values which largely constituted patriarchy on the colonial Ghanaian society (Manuh, 1991). Such cultural pressure, combined with changes to the existing one, was a huge blow to women at the period, as their typical role of participating in public life was taken away from them. Similar British measures eventually shifted the Gold Coast's societal orientation to a patriarchal one that mirrored that of the United Kingdom.

As people who were culturally alien to male dominance, women at the time did not sit down quietly to be relegated to the background. Women continued to sell their farm produce in order to put themselves in financially independent positions that could make them take decisions on their own to promote their general welfare (Aidoo, 1995).

Women also contributed greatly to the cause of self-government to ensure that their freedoms have also been restored. There is evidence to support the claim that women played enormous roles in the events that led to the independence of Ghana. The presence of women was felt in their unflinching support given to the Convention People's Party. Women devoted themselves to organizing cocoa hold-ups, giving out food for political activities throughout the country, and serving as foot soldiers who urged more people to join the nationalistic movement at the time, according to Adomako Ampofo (2005).

On some occasions, women were daring enough to boycott taxations that have been implemented by the colonial government (Peprah, 1993). In confirming this, Manuh (1991) identifies women such as Mabel Dove Danquah and Akua Asabea Ayisi as people who joined President Nkrumah in writing the Evening Newspaper and other political pamphlets. Such political activities exposed them and other women alike to the dangers of arrest and even imprisonment. Allah-Mensah (2005) also records that some market women used their personal money as funds to support C.P.P's rallies. The women's section of the C.P.P. diligently took responsibility for the creation of women's wings of the party and the organization of the youth wing (Tsikata, 1999). These efforts made by the women were duly acknowledged by the party (Manuh, 1991). Women's ability to organize large crowds at rallies even on the latest notification helped them to achieve many feats for the C.P.P. (Manuh, 1991)

Allah-Mensah, (2005) identifies these organizing qualities attributed to Ghanaian women as being essential in the political experiences of women during Nkrumah's rule, which lasted from 1957 to 1966.

#### **2.4 Women and post-colonial politics**

With their evident role played in the prelude to independence, it was expected of the first government to give women a place in politics (Allah-Mensah, 2003). The expectations from social observers were met as the C.P.P. government made policies that encouraged women's participation which resulted in women holding public offices such as members of parliament, deputy ministers, district commissioners among other public appointments (Fallon, 2003).

Ghana experienced challenges in the political arena between 1966 and 1992 as the military kept interrupting civilian governments which saw a decline in women's political participation (Pepera, 1993). According to Prah (2004), the various military regimes are:

1966-1969: The National Liberation Council (NLC)

- 1972-1979: The National Redemption Council (NRC) which later became the

Supreme Military Council (SMC)

- 1979: The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC)

- 1981-1992: The People's National Defence Council (PNDC)

It is crucial to note, however, that during these extended periods of military rule in Ghana's political life, the country also had the second and third republics, led by Prime Minister Busia and President Liman, respectively, from 1969 to 1972 and 1979 to 1981. (Prah, 2004). This time period is being examined in order to provide a description of women's political engagement from the commencement of the present fourth republic, which has remained democratic to this day.

According to Fallon (2003), out of 140 parliamentarians in both republics, only one woman was a member of the second republic while only five women were members in the third republic. The political period between 1966-1981 is described by Tsikata (1989) as the "apolitical phase" of women's activities in Ghana with little records to demonstrate the visibility of women in politics at the time. This period also saw women using collective action to be more involved in socio-economic activities as well as the formation of women professional activities but not political (Prah, 2004). This patriarchal governance continued until Gloria Amon Nikoi got the opportunity

to serve as Commissioner of Foreign Affairs in 1979(Adams et al, 2015). The absence of women under the military governance in Ghana could be explained by Mama's (1985) assertion that military regimes validate patriarchy and male dominance in all aspects of a state's life of which politics is included.

Under the PNDC dictatorship, women were subjected to severe abuse and accused of defrauding the state (Fallon, 2003). According to Fallon, the majority of women were publicly beaten and their assets were seized as punishments. Due to the high costs of commodities and the economic difficulties at the time, a group of market women were forced out of the army barracks in Kumasi in an attempt to greet the new military rule and were labeled as corrupt (Manuh, 1993). According to Prah (2004), women were associated with corruption because of their relationship with the Acheampong led SMC regime which favored patronage of which women were very much involved in order to survive.

Interestingly, Allah-Mensah (2005), highlights that more than any other military regime, women were allowed to participate more under the PNDC especially through the establishment of the 31st December Women's Movement (DWM). Whilst its members claim that the organization was politically neutral, it had clear similarities with "supposed" neutral women organizations that had alliances with the C.P.P. under Nkrumah because some key leaders were members of the PNDC (Prah, 2004). The 31st (DWM), on the other hand, was dedicated to putting women in positions that would allow them equal access to economic and political spheres. They distributed gari processing equipment, built daycare centers, and reached out to a large number of other women in rural areas in an effort to encourage local governance (Allah-Mensah, 2005).

According to Prah (2004), the PNDC switched from socialism to market-oriented economic policies in 1983, responding to requests from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programs

such as the women in development agenda. In order to get financial aid, the Rawlings government reacted to calls from various international and donor agencies to include more women in politics and other public areas (Prah, 2004). Under this administration, women comprise 6 per cent of the committee of secretaries and three per cent of the PNDC secretaries, women had 10 per cent representation in the judiciary according to Fallon (2003).

Therefore, the activities of the 31st DWM coupled with the pressure from donor countries created a conducive atmosphere for more women to participate in politics under the PNDC until the fourth republic finally started in 1992. As a result, women were involved in the formulation of the 1992 constitution, which serves as the framework for the fourth republic. Women were included in the committee of experts that were considered, according to Allah-Mensah (2005), and the involvement of women's groups such as the 31st DWM, hairdressers, dressmakers, and chop bar operators' associations is ample evidence of the Ghanaian government's support for women, particularly under a military regime.

It is obvious that right from pre-colonial Gold Coast to present-day Ghana, women have politically participated and struggled for spaces of participation historically. With the return to democracy and its anticipated liberation and respect for all humans, it was well anticipated that a continuous increase in women's political participation especially in national offices would steadily increase (Prah, 2004).

Women are still underrepresented in the presidency, legislature, judiciary, and many other nonpartisan national offices nearly thirty years after the fourth republic was founded. Only two women have been selected as Chief Justices, and out of the twelve Speakers of Parliament, only one woman, Mrs. Joyce Bamford Addo, who was appointed in 2009, has served as Speaker (Ghana Parliament, 2019).

**Table 2. 1 Representation of Women in Parliament**

Year	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
2021-date	85.5	14.5	100
2017-2020	80.77	19.23	100
2013-2016	82.14	17.86	100
2009-2012	81.65	18.35	100
2001-2008	88.57	11.43	100
1993-2000	85	15	100

Source: Ministry of Information, 2017, Institute of local government (ILGC) and Friedrich-Erbert-Stiftung Report, 2018, IPU, 2021

The two largest political parties, the NDC and the NPP, have been blamed as major contributors to the problem because they have had the opportunity to lead the country's political leadership since 1992 (Abdulai & Crawford, 2010). As a result, they are in the best position to appoint women to positions in the legislature, as well as to choose women candidates for election. Despite the large numbers of women sympathizers and massive support from women, both parties are yet to choose a female flagbearer since its inception. It is therefore not surprising that in their internal leadership structures, none of them have elected a woman to serve in any of the high executive offices.

## **2.5 Overview of Parliamentary Elections in 2020**

The COVID-19 outbreak wreaked havoc on the 2020 elections, causing delays and cancellations, logistical issues for candidates and election administrators, and low turnout. During the pandemic, women's leadership was regularly highlighted. Citizens faced complex and highly gendered difficulties as a result of the pandemic, which made it difficult for MPs to relate and engage directly with their people. It revolutionized how parliaments functioned by adding flexibility and new technologies. A substantial number of MPs across the globe were infected, many lost their lives (Inter-Parliament Union, 2021).

In 2020, women's participation increased by 0.6%, exceeding the 25% mark for combined upper and lower/single chambers for the first time in the globe (+0.7 points for lower/single chambers and +0.2 points for upper chambers). This is a similar growth rate to the previous decade. Several parliaments, including Mali's and Egypt's, have overcome significant obstacles to implement or increase election quotas. One of the year's significant losses was Burkina Faso's easing of quota regulations and subsequent rollback of advances. Kuwait likewise suffered a setback, with no woman elected, despite the fact that one woman had previously been elected (Inter-Parliament Union, 2021). Despite political turmoil and change in Latin America, women's representation has remained stable, and women's activity and participation in reform may signal future progress. In the same year that the United States elected its first female vice president, the country continued to grow incrementally and made significant progress in narrowing partisan divides and increasing legislative diversity. New Zealand's elections also heralded an era of unprecedented women's representation and diversity as a whole, in the legislature. Syrian women overcame extraordinary challenges to participate in constitutional reform (Inter-Parliament Union, 2021).

Women's violence in politics, including various types of online harassment and abuse, remained a major impediment. While quotas averted backsliding, several quota-holding countries failed to make considerable progress beyond their quota levels by 2020. Nations with majoritarian election systems were significantly less likely to implement gender quotas, but those that did had similar success as countries with proportional and mixed electoral systems (Inter-Parliament Union, 2021).

## **2.6 The 2020 Elections in Ghana**

In Ghana, Jane Naana Opoku-Agyemang was nominated on 6 July 2020 as the presidential running mate for the National Democratic Congress (NDC) for the December 2020 general elections. She became the first female running mate among Ghana's two major political parties. The NDC lost to the incumbent New Patriotic Party. According to a recent report by the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), 66 percent of voters would vote for a female presidential candidate, and 76 percent for a female member of parliament (Inter-Parliament Union, 2021). However, the lack of political will on the part of major parties to pass the Affirmative Action bill (after nearly ten years of debate), as well as a 59 percent rise in the cost of running for political office between 2012 and 2016, has posed an additional barrier for women attempting to break through (Inter-Parliament Union, 2021). Women in politics are frequently subjected to harassment and abuse, which includes insults, contempt, and rumors.

According to Allah-Mensah (2004), women's political roles in Ghana have grown and expanded steadily since the drafting and launching of the 1992 constitution but whether this is effective in terms of women's substantive representation is a matter that needs to be analyzed. Statistical data from the IPU (2021) shows that there are currently 40 women in Ghana's parliament out of a total of 275 parliamentarians.

## **2.7 The Concept of Participation**

Participation is described as efforts carried out by private persons with the goal of influencing the government, its personnel decisions, or the decisions made by government workers (Verba & Nie, 1972; in Teorell, 2006). Gyampo (2013) defined participation as citizens' active involvement and exercise of influence at all levels of decision-making to shape and determine the outcome. The idea is that if an individual or a group of individuals can or participate in a variety of activities in a state, they have a good possibility of influencing decisions. According to Teorell (2006), participation is an instrumental act in which citizens strive to compel the political system to comply to their wishes.

### **2.7.1 Women's Political Participation**

The term "participatory development" is used to emphasize the importance of participation, but the study's focus is on political engagement, which is even older than the general concept of participatory development. Despite the fact that the concept of political participation acquired traction in the 1970s thanks to the work of Verba and Nie, according to Binder (1976), its relevance for democratic philosophy is not new. Binder (1976) points out that political involvement was a focus topic in the examination of liberal regimes' democratic claims as well as attempts to formulate a non-Marxist theory of political democracy long before researchers began to emphasize it.

Given these assertions, it means that women's political participation should not be in doubt. This is because the involvement of women in voting process has long been recognized in both law and practice. At least in Ghana, women have participated in voting since 1992. But the pervasive concerns of women's political exclusion are far from being narrowed to just voting. Otherwise,

the issue of participation will not arise. While it is just one form of political participation, there are other types of political participation which the next discussion will address.

Women's participation in politics, according to House-Miamba (1990), is not limited to election campaigns. Their invincibility in Ghana, she claims, can be documented at all levels of government. The executive branch, with all of its dispersed departments and agencies, the legislative, and the judiciary are all referred to as tiers of government. Women's political underrepresentation in Ghana, according to House-Miamba, has two causes. First, she argues that politics is viewed by most people including women as a typical male sphere of action where, women are both unwelcome and ineffective. Secondly, she sees most politically active women to be members of the elite group who are wealthier and better educated. This elitism in her view pushed women to pursue a political agenda that reflects their class rather than their gender interests.

### **2.7.2 Participation in Political Party Activities**

Political parties play a vital role in multiparty democracy. They have a significant impact on governance, particularly when they are elected to power. In some nations, individuals may be dissatisfied with political parties and their actions, yet the parties remain the primary agents of representation and, in some cases, the only actors with access to elected seats in democratic politics, according to Mainwaring (1999). While in government with legitimacy bestowed on them by the citizens, they have access to state power and can affect policy, processes and implementation. In the context of Ghana where there is not a national development plan, political party manifestoes become the primary short to medium term development frameworks which are translated into policies for national development efforts (Allah-Mensah, 2001).

Allah-Mensah concisely advances the power and influence of political parties in igniting women's participation in politics or political governance (2001). According to her, belonging to a political party can improve a woman's chances of winning elections because it has been argued that women running on the ballots of ruling parties have a better chance than those running on the ballots of opposition parties, and that their chances are far better than those running without a party affiliation. In other words, party affiliation helps to identify women with the major players in the political game who control large following.

Affiliation to political parties can be done in different forms. Women can register to obtain membership identity status with political parties but the chances on winning an election or gaining political appointment with just membership status is insignificant. Members are expected to play active roles such as participating in political discourses, party electioneering campaigns, involvement in processions or demonstrations amongst others. But most importantly, women can participate in the governance of political parties by contesting for party executive roles. According to Allah-Mensah (2001), political parties in Ghana have established women's wings within their governing structures in order to encourage more women to participate in politics and political party activities. However, he says, the goal of political parties in creating these executive roles for women is to avoid being characterized as gender insensitive, not to encourage women to participate. In the view of Allah-Mensah, this is a tokenistic approach being adopted by political parties and that single act of creating women wings neither makes them gender sensitive nor gender friendly. Chigudu and Tchigwa (1995) revealed a more self-centered agenda of political parties in creating these wings. In their view, the creation of women's wings is just a way of legitimizing the existence of political parties and serve as the party's leadership acknowledgement of the need to secure electoral victories by capturing women's votes.

Ghanaian women's involvement in political party activities can be traced to the struggle for political independence. Women played the roles of financiers and even took part in processions and boycotts led by the Convention People's Party (CPP) and also in the general strike of 1948 (Arhin, 1991). Arhin argued that women's role was so powerful that the leader of the CPP, Kwame Nkrumah pointed out so clearly that "the degree of a country's revolutionary awareness may be measured by the political maturity of its women". As Nkansah noted (2009: 33), women were instrumental in organizing both the youth and women's wings of the CPP.

### **2.7.3 Participation in Electoral Processes**

Participation in electoral processes is likely the most well-known kind of political participation. Women's participation in the political process will be investigated in two ways: their voting participation and their election participation. In current democratic practice, citizens' fundamental rights are guaranteed by their Constitutions and/or Constitutional Instruments. Article 42 of the Ghanaian Constitution (1992) for instance specifically states that "every citizen of Ghana of eighteen years of age or above and of sound mind has the right to vote and is entitled to be registered as a voter for the purposes of public elections and referenda". The only conditions for exclusion in this article are age and the state of mind of citizens which cut across both sexes.

On the issue of seeking elective positions, history has demonstrated that women have always shown their interest in politics and indeed have participated in political activities during pre- and post-independence. This has been highlighted in the activities of the CPP in pre independence struggle. Yet, no woman was elected in the 1957 National Assembly (Nkansah, 2009:34). Their active roles were not rewarded by the electorates. This necessitated the introduction of a quota system through the Representation of the People Act (No.8, 1960) by the CPP government. With this Act, in 1960, 10 women were elected through a special ballot to the National Assembly

(Nkansah, 2009). The quota system was to recognize the support CPP enjoyed from women's activism and financial support as pointed out by Allah-Mensah.

After Nkrumah's government, it has been observed that no deliberate attempt has been made by successive governments to improve women's role in politics. Out of 140 members of Parliament who were elected in the 1969 election, only 1 member was a woman. This number increased to 2 through a bye election in 1970 (Nkansah, 2009). Although the number of women representatives improved in the 1979 elections, the proportion was still less than 5 percent. Out of 140 parliamentarians elected, only 5 were women.

Since 1992, women's representation in Ghana's Parliament has always been less than 12 percent. Meanwhile, Allah-Mensah (2005) argued that the presence of significant number of women in parliament can help improve the quality of debate and policymaking. Women have demonstrated their strength in the past when given the opportunity. Women played key roles in the economic, social, educational, and political development of traditional African communities, according to Afisi (2010). In addition to that Afisi (2020), went on to say that gender inequality did not exist in traditional Africa; rather, gender complementarities existed since both men and women performed complementary roles in society's growth.

While agreeing with Allah-Mensah that political party affiliations could boost the chances of women during elections, political parties themselves need to adopt deliberate policy measures such as affirmative action bill especially in constituencies that are considered their strongholds. Such deliberate policies, if well-crafted will further encourage more women to contest for elective post especially those who have harbored intentions of contesting but unwilling to do so due to the unfavorable nature of the political terrain to women.

## **2.8 Factors contributing to low representation of women in politics**

### **2.8.1 Political Factors**

The electoral system, progressive gender policy measures, and the role of political parties are often cited as political causes for women's low representation in politics. Political parties are frequently portrayed as gatekeepers in political appointments and elections, despite the fact that electoral systems are said to be one of the most important elements determining admittance into politics (Dahlerup, 2013; Norris & Lovenduski, 1995). Kittilson & Schwindt- Bayer (2013) argue that inclusive electoral rules such as proportional representation and gender quotas play significant roles in the level at which women are visible in society's daily decision-making processes. Norris (2000) points out that some electoral systems constitute institutional barriers that impede on women's ability to become active participants of political processes.

#### **2.8.1.1 Electoral system**

According to Myers and Ann (2016), there is a general consensus that one of the most important political institutions to affect the nature of political representation and democratic governance is the electoral system. This is because the electoral system often plays a significant role in determining the level at which certain interest groups are represented within society. Two general distinctions of electoral institutions have been identified by prominent theories as stated by Kittilson & Schwindt- Bayer (2013). While they identified these institutions as more inclusive and more exclusive, they pointed out how Bingham Powell (2000) identified them as proportional and majoritarian visions of democracy whereas Norris (2008) refers to them as a power-sharing and power- concentrating (Kittilson & Schwindt-Bayer, 2013). Using these theories, this paper employs the terms: majoritarian and proportional representation as the two types of democratic

institutions that determine the rules of politics. To Norris, electoral systems allow for easier implementation of policies like affirmative action for women within parties (Norris, 1997).

Available scholarship on the relationship between electoral systems and political representation revealed that countries with proportional representation tend to promote a significant number of women in legislative bodies as compared to those with a single-member district system (Lijphart, 1994; Myers & Ann, 2016; Rule, 1987; Norris, 1997). Proportional representation systems such as mixed member proportional (MMP) and parallel systems are said to often provide women with better political opportunities while electoral systems that rely on First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) systems often fail to yield women any substantive opportunity for greater representation (Myers & Ann, 2016).

Though a multi-party democracy, Ghana uses the plurality voting system based on the single member district or first-past-the-post (FPTP), in electing members of parliament. Electorates are allowed to vote for a single candidate and the candidate who polls the most votes is declared the winner. Research has clearly shown that single-member district plurality systems (like the US and the UK) provide few incentives for women's representation within political parties whereas proportional representation systems promote it (Duverger, 1955; Norris, 1985, Rule, 1987.) The FPTP system practiced in Ghana limits the number of women candidates that parties put forward, thereby leading to a low number of women elected to the legislature. Inferring from the host of arguments against this system, one will not be wrong to assume that, the existing gender gap in Ghana's political system has roots attached to the nature of the country's electoral system.

#### **2.8.1.2 Affirmative action: quotas**

Following the 30% target set by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (1990), in promoting women in decision-making positions, world economies began to adopt affirmative

gender policies aimed at achieving this goal. Dahlerup (2013) however notes that this target was far from being met. In 1995, only 10% of the world's parliamentarians were women, in 2005, only 16%, still far from one-third. She indicates that this led to many countries seeking "fast track" policies like quotas to achieve this goal as they have proven to be very useful mechanisms for increased representation of women in decision-making processes. Gender quotas are institutional mechanisms designed to "fast track" more women into elected offices to attain the goal of women's equal representation in decision-making processes (Dahlerup, 2013).

While a shift is taking place from demands for 30% representation of women in all electoral bodies to 50% (IPU, 2019), and countries like Rwanda are making headlines for promoting women's political representation using affirmative action policies like quotas, Ghana has still not achieved the 30% target. Whereas women in Rwanda make up 61.3% of seats in the lower house, women in Ghana constitute only 14.5% of seats in parliament (IPU, 2021). According to Myers & Ann (2016), critical mass theorists often argue that women are considered token participants when their political participation amounts to less than 15% of the total population and this is a challenge to their effectiveness in governance and decision-making processes. In effect, women in Ghana's parliament are but token participants.

Studies show that the CPP government developed policies that encouraged the representation of women in politics and public life (Allah-Mensah, 2004; Nkansah, 2009). Nkrumah introduced an affirmative action Bill which was passed into law in 1960. However, research shows that this bill took a nose-dive following the overthrow of Nkrumah and has since not taken effect (Tsikata, 2009). Allah-Mensah (2004) states that the affirmative action Bill has to date remained the first and ever quota system in the history of Ghana to have allowed for 10 women to be elected unopposed as Members of Parliament.

It is worth noting that aside the 1959 quota implemented by Nkrumah, Ghana has failed to implement an affirmative action policy directly aimed at increasing women's political representation. Following the overthrow of the CPP government, Ghana was characterized by political instability due to a series of coups d'état (Allah-Mensah, 2005; Debrah, 2005; Tsikata, 2009). Subsequently, the 1959 quota was abandoned. In 1998, Cabinet issued a White Paper on an affirmative action policy, calling for 40% quota for women's representation on all governments bodies (Tsikata, 2009). However, this policy has failed to receive legislative approval to date. Owusu-Mensah (2017) also affirms that the NDC government led by the late Prof. Evans Atta Mills pledged a 40% quota of women in government, but like Krook (2010) explains, party quotas often turn to be inactive since they are voluntary mechanisms without formal sanctions. Consequently, Ghana currently has no quota towards increasing the number of women in politics. Adopting affirmative action policies such as quotas for female enrolment in tertiary education and putting in place institutional frameworks aimed at promoting gender equality are plausible. However, they are ineffective without a quota sanctioned purposely towards increasing women's presence in politics. Should Ghana consider adopting a serious electoral quota system like Rwanda did, women in Ghana's parliament may no longer have to be token participants. This will not only promote women's effectiveness in governance and decision-making processes in Ghana but aid in correcting the imbalances in political representation.

### **2.8.1.3 Political parties**

Political parties are often referred to as "gatekeepers" when it comes to political appointments and elections (Norris and Lovenduski, 1993; Lovenduski, 2005; Paxton et al, 2007). As gatekeepers, political parties are very instrumental in selecting candidates including women to run for political offices. The nature of political parties, therefore, has implications for women's presence in politics.

As observed by Paxton et al. (2007), “leftists’ parties” like the Democratic Party in the US are likely to promote traditionally under-represented groups such as women than right-wing parties like their Republican Opponents. Additional research shows that the composition of a political party also has implications for women’s presence in politics (Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Paxton et al, 2007). When women occupy top positions in political parties, they are likely to advocate the selection of more women to run for political positions. They are also likely to support women candidates in various ways such as pushing for affirmative action policies for women.

Political parties have been known to cause barriers to women’s representation in politics (Lovenduski, 2005; Norris and Lovenduski, 1993; Shvedova, 2005). According to Lovenduski, voters do not determine the composition of elected bodies rather, political parties do this. This is because, in most democracies, voters choose among menus of candidates offered by political parties (Lovenduski, 2005). Electorates do not have power over who is elected to run on the ticket of a political party, but vote based on the limited options offered them by political parties.

In Ghana, where little priority is placed on party ideology or nature, political explanations for women’s low representation in politics often focused on the composition of political parties and its implications for women’s access to political networks, and financial support for women candidates. Despite the fact that women play vital roles in campaigning and mobilizing support for their political parties, they barely occupy decision-making spots in these structures due to institutionalized gendered discrimination within most political parties. Gretchen Bauer (2017) explains that, in Ghana, just as in many other African countries with plurality majority systems, party primaries become the critical moment for women because primaries are especially costly for women who are likely to have fewer resources and for whom fundraising is much more challenging.

## **2.8.2 Cultural factors**

Customary cultural barriers such as misogynistic norms and patriarchy have been pointed out by scholars as one of the major obstacles to women's representation in politics (Ginwala, 2005; Shvedova, 2005). In Africa, culture plays a significant role in determining the levels at which women are involved in politics (Peprah et al, 2018). The socialization process of women has made most of them believe that they are subordinate to men and that their place is in the domestic arena and even within the home, their place is in 'the kitchen' (Eyinde, 2010). This has greatly affected their ability to confidently step out of their traditional comfort zones into the public domain. According to Paxton et al. (2007), the private-public dichotomy and the idea that women are incapable of participating in politics have dominated political theory for a very long time. They state that it took until the twentieth century for feminist political theorists to challenge these notions, arguing for women's activities in the private sphere to be treated as political issues (Paxton et al., 2007).

This would have been a comforting justification for their political participation, but this is not the case: women's domestic activities are still considered apolitical in many societies. Thus, most of the traditional explanations for women's (lack of) presence in politics and public life suggest that various cultural beliefs, practices, values, norms, religion and other cultural traits characterizing a society affect women's recruitment into public offices (Bari, 2005; Peprah et al, 2018; Lawless & Fox 1999, 2010; Shvedova, 1998).

### **2.8.2.1 Gendered proverbs**

Proverbs are often a medium for the expression of gendered norms and practices across Ghana. Research on the characterization of men and women in a peasant society in Northern Sweden, for instance, shows that the gendered perspectives found in proverbs often form a system of gender

hegemony that supports masculine superiority and feminine subordination (Anderson, 2012). In Ghana, Asimeng-Boahene finds that, the use of proverbs has become the tool through which men control positions of social and economic influence by limiting women's participation to domestic spheres (2013). In support, Diabah & Appiah-Amfo (2015) add that, Akan proverbs are often gendered, mostly presenting women in a stereotypical way, which can be interpreted as derogatory, negative or subservient. They argued that the consequence of these cultural perspectives on women's roles and image in Ghanaian societies is that, women become non-productive dependents on men, which then weakens their bargaining power both at home and within larger society (Diabah & Appiah-Amfo, 2015). This basically means that, cultural perceptions on women have the power to affect their effectiveness in decision-making processes including mainstream politics.

#### **2.8.2.2 Patriarchy**

Research shows that patriarchy is very much institutionalized in most democracies thereby impacting on women's political representation (Sossou, 2011). One study shows that, "the seed of democracy lies in the principle that the legitimacy of the power to make decisions about people's lives, their society and their country should derive from a choice by those who will be affected" (Ginwala, as quoted in IDEA, 2005, p.12), and democracy is known to have historically favored men than women, enforcing the private-public dichotomy as a foundation for most forms of contemporary democracies. Women must therefore be allowed to make decisions or partake in making decisions that affect them as a unit.

The Ghanaian society is deeply entrenched in the concepts of hegemonic masculinity and femininity, promoting the man as the head of the home. In effect, the woman's private sphere where she may assume some autonomy is as well controlled by the man in the person of either her husband or father. To Connell (1995), hegemonic masculinity is the configuration of gender

practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy. Thus, hegemonic masculinity guarantees the acceptance and compliance with patriarchy. Corresponding to the wider understanding of this concept, women in Ghanaian societies (be they patrilineal or matrilineal), often tend to be subjected to male domination. In most circumstances, men determine if a woman will be active in politics or not. Even when women turn to be active in politics, their choices or decisions are often influenced by those of men. Men sometimes exert pressure on their wives, influencing their decisions to join a political party, contest elections and the candidates they vote for. In a study, one participant said, “Our husbands will not even encourage us, and they will even tell us the political party to vote for” (Sossou, 2011, p.5).

Inferring from this, it is reasonable to assume that men in Ghanaian society hardly encourage their women to participate in politics. In situations where men are supportive, they tend to influence decisions and choices of the women in question by dictating to them which political party to join or which candidate they vote for. These studies suggest that understanding the attitudes of Ghanaian women and men is likely to provide some important insights into the future of women’s representation.

### **2.8.3 Socio-economic factors**

Socio-economic conditions are critical factors that play a significant role in limiting the representation of women in the arena of politics and leadership of both long-standing and new democracies. According to Shvedova (2005), women's social and economic status in society has a direct impact on the level at which they can participate in elected bodies. She notes that the economic status of women in society has a direct impact on their recruitment to participate in political institutions and elected bodies. She further explains that the economic conditions of third world countries have intensified the risk of poverty for women and thereby leading to the increased

feminization of poverty. Also, evidence from extensive research over the years indicates that many women in the workforce hold positions that are undervalued and attract meagre wages and thereby increasing their level of poverty (Golberg & Kremen 1990; Karam, 1998; Shvedova, 2005).

### **2.8.3.1 Feminization of poverty**

According to one report from the UN Women, more women than men live in poverty, are hungrier and discriminated against across the world. Specifically, the report records that, between the ages 25 to 34 there are 122 women who live in extreme poverty for every 100 men in that age group (UN Women, 2018). This is as a result of the increasing gender discrimination in salaries, recruitment, promotion and women's unpaid labor activities. Shvedova (2005) also observes that in most countries, women's unpaid labor activities amount to twice that of men and the economic value of women's unpaid labor is estimated to be around one-third of the world's economic production, consequently resulting in what is termed "feminization of poverty".

Owusu-Afriyie and Nketiah-Amponsah (2014) affirm that women are more represented in the ranks of poverty compared to men in Ghana. A greater portion of female households in Ghana, according to Quisumbing, Haddad and Pena (2001), lies below the \$1 per person per day poverty line. Allah-Mensah (2009) indicates that steep financial conditionalities often favor men over women within political parties.

Consistent with Allah-Mensah's (2005) claim, poverty among women in Ghana may inhibit their representation in politics as a result of their inability to meet the huge financial cost associated with political campaigns in the country. To Tsikata (2009), women's inability to mobilize funds for political activities further worsens their attempt to make significant contributions to the country's political system. As noted by Sossou (2011), women do not have the necessary resources and capital to engage in active politics because, politics is very expensive, and most women are

handicapped financially. The lack of financial resources, therefore, has negative implications for women's presence in politics.

### **2.8.3.2 Illiteracy**

According to the Hobbesian theory on the state of nature, humans have the natural capacity to determine right from wrong or good from evil (Bobbio, 1993; Fromm, 2011). Similarly, people have acquired some form of knowledge before the introduction of formal education. This means that no one is totally ignorant of the politics of their environment. Stromquist (1990) argues that being illiterate does not equate to being ignorant, yet, being able to write and read is a fundamental need of every society. For this reason, women's literacy is not measured by their informal knowledge but by formal education that teaches an individual how to read, write and critically analyze policies. Within an increasingly technological global system, research shows that educational levels play significant roles in the number of seats held by women in parliament as well as influence the level of personal power acquired in contributing to national development (Matland, 1998; Stromquist, 1990, Odame, 2010).

## **2.9 Women's perception of politics**

Culture often influences the way people think, including how they conceptualize things around them. Culture therefore plays a role in how women understand and perceive the concept of politics as well as their abilities to participate effectively in politics. According to Fox and Lawless (2011), the most potent explanation for the gender gap in political ambition is that women are less likely than men to view themselves as qualified to enter the electoral arena. Shvedova (2005) also finds that women often tend to perceive politics as a "dirty game" which they wish not to be associated with.

In Ghana, Tsikata (2009) finds that the use of stereotypes, insults, and aggression during political contests creates insecurity which diminishes women's quest for participation. Thus, family members and friends often discourage women who show interest in politics from participating due to the culture of insults, electoral violence and threats often associated with politics in Ghana. Tsikata (2009) cites the example of electoral violence that took place during the 2006 general election. She notes that women were being abused by their spouses for merely showing interest in contesting the local government elections. As a result, out of a total of 16 women who picked up the nomination forms, only 8 of them were returned. In an interview, one veteran politician, Maame-Dokono, also revealed that she has no interest in pursuing politics again in her life due to the many insults she received. She said, the disgrace and insults I received for going into politics openly were too much for me. I have learnt my lessons and will not go into politics again. Even if I will go into politics, I will be behind the scenes and not as openly as I did in the past (Dadzie, 2018).

Though many of these institutionalized cultural beliefs often prove difficult to measure given the fact that they tend to emerge from formidable attitudes rather than formal or legal barriers, they affect women's presence in politics through various means. In other words, cultural barriers to women's presence in politics are very formidable and people's ideologies and perspectives affect women's decision to run. It may be much easier to create a quota for women, than tell people to change their cultural orientations. Unfortunately, these cultural perspectives have found their ways into mainstream politics and seem to be affecting women's presence in major political decision-making processes. Though evidence abounds that certain cultural practices hinder women's presence in politics (Fox & Lawless, 2011; Sossou, 2011; Shvedova, 2005), experience has also

shown how difficult it is to make changes to cultural practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Trokosi in Ghana.

## **2.10 Constraints for Women's Political Participation in Ghana**

The plight of women in politics, particularly in Africa, is a historical fact as well as a modern reality. Since 1960, women have had less than 20% representation in Ghana's Parliament, but their representation in district elections has hovered around 35% (Electoral Commission cited in Tsikata, 2009). Even with this, Tsikata (2009) believed this numerical representation does not constitute substantive or strategic representation despite being a good step. By strategic representation, Tsikata refers to political decision making where gender inequality is most pervasive and intractable. In the view of Tsikata, the reasons given for women's poor showing in political governance are systemic and structural. These reasons include disadvantages in the control of resources, gender ideologies which reinforce inequalities, problems of the political system and failure of public policy.

### **2.10.1 Control of Resources**

In all spheres of life, women have been seen to possess weaker voice as compared to their male counterparts (Tsikata, 2009). At the household level, Tsikata argues that society has ascribed the responsibility of handling visible, formal and predictable expenditures such as rent, school fees and electricity to men while women control only invisible and unpredictable expenditures. This customary demarcation of expenditure according to Tsikata defines the level of control a woman has over resources. Apart from this, the Ghana Living Standards Survey cited in Tsikata pointed out that women undertake the bulk of domestic work aside income generating activities. This increases their workload and limits their available time for participation in public life as well as engaging in activities in the productive sector to raise resources. This disadvantaged position

restricts their effectiveness in political contestations since a lot of resources are needed to prosecute their political campaigns.

### **2.10.2 Emergence of Gendered Occupations**

According to Afisi (2010), gendered occupations never existed in pre-colonial period until the emergence of colonialism because both men and women in traditional Africa performed complementary roles and each role was regarded important. Before Afisi, Tsikata (2009) had expounded that though women were involved in community affairs just as men, the extent of their involvement in Ghana was limited to community work that dealt with reproduction of the household. At the same time, their male counterparts dominated in roles such as chieftaincy and unit committees which opened opportunities for experience in the skill of public speaking, and the craft of politics. To Tsikata, this permeates through to the national level and explains why women's representation continues to be low in the executive, legislature and the judiciary.

### **2.10.3 Problems of the Political System**

According to Allah-Mensah (2009), political parties should receive some blame for women's low representation in political governance. Allah-Mensah cites factors such as steep financial conditionalities, male dominated structures in political parties which tend to favor men as well as consideration of ethnic, religious, and regional factors over gender. While recognizing that women are involved in the political party structure through the creation of women wings, Allah-Mensah believes that such action is a tokenistic and clandestine approach aimed at persuading women to vote for them. As already noted by Tsikata (2009), because women are unable to mobilize financial resources due to their domestic work and lack of time, the imposition of hefty financial conditions as a precursor to contest in an election further worsens their attempt at reversing the trend of male dominance within the political sphere.

Tsikata pinpoints some ills of the political system in Ghana that help to perpetuate women's marginalization. First, he argues that the use of stereotypes, insults and aggression during political contests create insecurity which builds resistance to women's participation. The use of insults and threatening campaign styles explain why close family members will discourage women who show interest in politics. Tsikata cites the example of a husband assaulting the wife for collecting nomination forms to contest in the 2006 local government elections. While this may be an individual obsession, Tsikata also cites reports of widespread intimidation and misinformation against women during the same election.

#### **2.10.4 The Influence of Socialization**

Apart from structural reasons, the Ghanaian socialization of men and women has been shown to have some link to the low participation of women in politics. From birth, both men and women are socialized to believe that men are natural leaders and women as followers (Tsikata, 2009). Even where women want to traverse their socialized role as followers, they end up discouraging other women from contesting for political post when they fail to win elections. In Tsikata's view, this leads to a cycle of disadvantages.

#### **2.11 Conclusion**

This study used the Social Role Theory and the Role Congruity Theory. The literature suggests that social-economic and political barriers provide explanatory variables for women's low presence in politics. Existing studies suggest that cultural factors may be a very large impediment to women's participation, and unless institutional change is made, women may not enter into politics in larger numbers anytime soon. The next chapter will focus on the methodology and design which forms the basis of analysis in this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the methodology of the study which comprised of the research design, population, sample, and sampling techniques. The instruments for collecting data and procedures were also captured. The chapter further discussed the sources of data, the method of analyzing the data and the ethical considerations.

#### **3.1 Research design**

Research design is the overall plan that includes methods and processes to gather and interpret the data (Zikmund et. al., 2010). According to Parahoo (2006), research design includes explaining approaches used in data collection and analysis, the time frame and location and the sources of obtaining data. It shows the consideration, belief, strategies and reasoning that the researcher adopts for a particular research method. The study used the quantitative research design.

Hair et al. (2008) defines quantitative research design as research design that places emphasis on using formal questions and predetermined response options in questionnaires or surveys administered to large numbers of respondents. Kent (2008) further states that quantitative research design embodies numerical records that are constructed by deciding on the cases, the variables and sets of values to be used before the data collection takes place, and then undertaking a process of measurement. Thus, quantitative research seeks to ascribe numerical measures and interpretations in explaining research phenomena.

The study also used the cross-sectional survey design. A cross-sectional survey was adopted as it studied a specific phenomenon at a particular period (Saunders et al., 2007).

Levin (2006) mentioned that cross-sectional studies are carried out at one time point or over a short period. They are usually conducted to estimate the prevalence of the outcome of interest for a given population. Data can also be collected on individual characteristics alongside information about the outcome. In this way, cross-sectional studies provide a snapshot of the outcome and the characteristics associated with it, at a specific point in time. They are limited, however, by the fact that they are carried out at one time point and not indicate the sequence of events.

### **3.3 Population and Sample**

Saunders et al. (2012) defined population as the total number of people in a specific research context. According to Ngechu (2004), a population is a well-defined or set of people, services, elements, events, groups of things, or households being investigated. The population for the study consists of all valid voters within the Ablekuma Constituency.

However, for this research, it is not feasible to collect data from the entire population. Thus, a sample size was selected to collect data. A sample is a subset of a population selected by a researcher to represent the entire population (Polit & Beck, 2010). A sample can also be defined as a specific group of people chosen to assist in answering research questions (Gentles et al., 2015). The study used a sample of seventy-three (73) respondents for the study.

### **3.4 Sampling Technique**

According to Showkat and Parveen (2017), a sampling technique is a method used by a researcher to select a sample based on the probability associated with it.

To select respondents for the study, the convenience sampling technique was employed. Convenience sampling is used to select available and willing respondents for the study (Alvi, 2016; Rahi, 2017). According to Dornyei (2007), convenience sampling must meet the criteria of availability of respondents at an appointed time, easy accessibility, geographical closeness, and the willingness to part-take. Thus this method was used to get people that were easily accessible and within reach.

### **3.5 Sources of Data**

To answer the research objectives, data collection has become an essential aspect of any study, and two approaches have arisen for obtaining information for this purpose: primary and secondary data (Douglas, 2015). Data collection includes employing certain ways to gather, prepare, and apply information required for the research topic, literature reviews, questionnaire design, survey methods, data analysis guidelines, and supporting facts for statistical results. Primary and secondary data were gathered as the basis for the research analysis. To throw more light and answer the research questions, the two types of data was used.

#### **3.5.1 Primary Data**

The first-hand information gathered by a researcher is referred to as primary data (Mesly, 2015). Observations, surveys, experiments, interviews, and questionnaires are all examples of primary data. The research employed the use of questionnaire. The questionnaire made it easy to gather relevant data related to the study. It was distributed through hardcopy and it contained short sentences with a clear arrangement that made respondents answer without any hassle and time consumption.

### **3.5.2 Secondary Data**

Secondary data comprises books, journal articles, publications, and internal records obtained by a researcher for a reason other than primary data (Johnston, 2014; Mohajan, 2017; Mesly, 2015).

Secondary data includes utilization of data that has been previously collected by others. According to David and Sutton (2016) secondary data is defined as a data that already exists. It is obtained initially by another author and is reused by other authors for their own purposes. Secondary data is generally available in articles, on the internet or in journals. Secondary data is the valuable knowledge that complements the empirical research.

### **3.6 Data Collection Instrument**

The study used a questionnaire to gather information from respondents. The benefits of the questionnaire as information gathering apparatus will make it a suitable research instrument for gathering information from participants. According to Creswell (2012), the use of questionnaires in this type of research has several advantages, which defined the rationale for its use in this study. Some benefits of utilizing a questionnaire to gather information incorporates; the questionnaires are viable as they are structured and conveyed to the members to reply, they gather much bigger data for investigation (Creswell, 2012).

The questionnaires were administered to the sampled respondents using the self-administered method. Closed-ended questions with potential answers were included in the survey, and respondents were required to select responses that reflected their viewpoints. This was done to limit and regulate the responses of the people who took part in the survey. The questionnaire is divided into two segments. Section A covers inquiries on the demographic characteristics of respondents. Section B focused on the study variables.

### **3.7 Data analysis**

Wright (2019) referred to data analysis as the editing of completed data from research instrument to check completeness and consistency, check for lapses, mistakes and coding. Yin (2017) described data analysis as the process of examining and grouping data, which result in finding and developing of research themes. Comprehending the research data is critical to data analysis (Yin, 2016). Data analysis enables for sorting, analyzing, testing indications, determining results and conclusions (Yin, 2016).

Data collected from the completed questionnaires were inspected first, cleaned, transformed, and collated into helpful information for easy comprehension. After that, the data were modeled into coded categories to facilitate analysis. With the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 26 and Microsoft excel 2016, the final data was presented in charts and diagrams. The SPSS was used to obtain frequencies and percentages of close-ended responses, and open-ended responses were analyzed.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), ethical considerations are crucial, and it is the researcher's responsibility, to be honest with respondents and carefully handle sensitive information. During the data collection procedure, these considerations were taken into account. In compliance with this, respondents were permitted to participate in the study of their own volition and guaranteed that they were not injured in any way. Before any digital recording was done, each respondent's verbal permission was asked. Participants were assured that the research was solely for academic reasons.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the research design was discussed. A quantitative approach was followed, which involved the use of a questionnaire. The use of questionnaires as the research instrument was deemed to be the best for this study and sufficient for data collection. The next chapter presents the results from the analysis of data collected from the respondents.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This first section focuses on the respondents' demographic characteristics. The next step takes into account the main variables under analysis based on the research objectives.

#### 4.1 Demography of Respondents

This section highlights gender distribution and educational level of the respondents.

##### 4.1.1 Gender of Respondents

To establish the gender of the respondents, the respondents were asked to state their sex. The results are presented in Table 4.1 below.

**Table 4. 1 Gender of Respondents**

Sex	Frequency	Percentages
Male	32	44
Female	41	56
Total	73	100%

Source: Field Data 2021

Policy makers and social scientists have recognized the importance of including men in efforts to promote gender equality and inclusion of women. The perspectives of men are therefore very important for this research and as such out of the 73 respondents of the survey, 32 representing 44% identified as males, 41 representing 56% identified as females.

#### 4.1.2 Educational qualification

Table 4. 2 Educational level

Education level	Frequency	Percentage
SSSCE/WASSCE	5	7%
HND/Diploma	7	10%
Undergraduate level	29	40%
Masters' level	25	34%
Doctorate level	4	5%
Others	3	4%
Total	73	100%

Source: Field Data 2021

Assessing the educational background of respondents contributes to the success of the research as it increases chances of comprehension and understanding of the research phenomenon. According to research by Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) and Verba et al. (1995), education can influence political participation through various mechanisms. According to economic theories, education can help develop knowledge and skills that can facilitate political engagement.

The results showed that most of the respondents were undergraduate degree holders, representing 40%, which indicated that information was obtained from well-educated respondents. 34% of the respondents were masters' degree holders. All respondents were educated at some level.

### 4.3 Women representation and participation

This section covers are the study variables and the analysis of data.

#### Did you participate in the 2020 general elections in Ghana?

Table 4. 3 Participation in 2020 General elections

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	64	88%
No	9	12%
Total	73	100%

Source: Field Data 2021

The table above shows the participation of the respondents in the 2020 General Elections. Majority of the respondents, 64 representing 88% actively voted in the 2020 elections to decide the President and Member of Parliament for the next four years. Only 9 respondents representing, 12% did not participate in the elections.

#### What normally informs your decision to vote?

Table 4. 4 Decision to vote

	Frequency	Percentage
Civil right	1	1%
Gender	4	5%

Ideology	1	1%
Media Influence	2	3%
Policies	49	67%
Political Affiliation	16	22%
Total	73	100%

Source: Field Data 2021

The respondents were asked what informs their decision to vote. Political affiliation was key in their decisions.

Numerous factors can affect a person's voting choice. These include their civil rights, religious beliefs, policies, influence from the media and political party affiliation. According to Arthur (2009) as cited in Van Gyampo et al., (2018) voting and the composition of national government in many established democracies in the Western world are supposedly shaped by more rational issues of ideology, philosophies, and policies. The data in the table above shows that policies, 67% was a major decider in the 2020 Elections. Political affiliation stood at 22%, while only 5% of the respondent decided based on the gender of the aspiring candidates.

**How do you assess the competence of candidates?**

Table 4. 5 Competence of candidates

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	2	3%

Policies	1	1%
Political Affiliation	6	8%
Popularity	1	1%
Public Service	63	86%
Total	73	100%

Source: Field Data 2021

The table above shows that majority of the respondents, 86% accessed the competence of candidates in the 2020 elections based on the public service of the candidate.

There is strong evidence supporting the assertion that women have potentials to meaningfully contribute to the development of nations. This expectation can be met through various means such as increasing women’s participation in politics and public life. Sadly, there seems to exist many gender stereotypes that hinder the fulfilment of gender parity in politics. According to the majority of the respondents in electing a candidate, public service is of great importance but this begs the question of how female candidates can be successful in the execution of their duties when there seems to be a double standard.

Women often have to perform masculine characteristics in order to gain acceptance from men, but doing so can be seen as aggressive and cold, which could drive away voters, and as stated by Sanbonmatsu and Dolan (2009) other personality traits such as gender also play a role in how voters evaluate politicians. The gendered biases in politics make it more likely that male political leaders will handle issues related to the economy, defense, military and foreign policy whilst

women are restricted to "feminine" issues. This will not only sideline women but also limit their political careers.

### **What attracts you to political parties?**

Table 4. 6 Political parties

	Frequency	Percentage
Parties with more policies for women	12	16%
Party Ideology	47	64%
Personal Interests	14	19%
Total	73	100%

Source: Field Data 2021

The table above shows that majority of the respondents, 47 are attracted to political parties based on the party's ideology. Only 12 respondents are attracted to political parties based on their policies for women. The remaining 14 respondents were attracted to political parties based on their personal interests.

Thus, Political parties in Ghana must promote ideologies that reflect fair political representation, affirmative action and gender inclusion as stated by Mills (2018).

**In your opinion have political parties in Ghana made enough provision for women to actively participate in politics?**

Table 4. 7 Political parties and provisions for women

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	26	36%
No	47	64%
Total	73	100%

Source: Field Data 2021

The table above shows that the majority of the respondents, 64% agreed that political parties in Ghana have not made enough provision for women to actively participate in politics.

**What are some of the factors hindering female political participation?**

Table 4. 8 Factors hindering female political participation

	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of an affirmative action bill	15	21%
Political factors	18	25%
Public Initiatives	9	12%
Socio Economic factors	31	42%

Total	73	100%
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Source: Field Data 2021

The respondents of the study listed a number of factors that contribute to the lack of female participation in politics. Some of the reasons stated were political, public, lack of an affirmative action bill and Socio-Economic factors. Majority of the respondents, 31 selected socio-economic factors as a reason for low participation. 18 respondents selected political factors, 15 respondents selected the lack of an affirmative action bill and 9 being the least, selected public initiatives as factor for hindering female political participation.

**Should political parties be compelled to balance political representation and participation between women and men?**

Table 4. 2 Compelling political parties

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	58	79%
No	15	21%
Total	73	100%

Source: Field Data 2021

Majority of the respondents, 58 agreed that political parties should be compelled to balance political representation and participation between women and men.

**What strategy will enhance women's political representation Ghana?**

Table 4. 10 Strategies for women's political representation

	Frequency	Percentage
Advocacy	24	33%
Education	19	26%
Passing the affirmative action bill	30	41%
Total	73	100%

Source: Field Data 2021

The table above shows that majority of respondents, 30 chose the passing of the affirmative action bill as a key strategy in enhancing women's political representation in Ghana. Advocacy and Education represent 59% of the respondents.

Ghana is yet to pass a proposed Affirmative Action Bill (AAB) into law. Respondents observed that passage of the AAB into law and thereafter, its proper implementation will help to increase women’s political participation. It has been observed that the passage of the bill into law would help remove systems that impede women’s participation in politics and decision-making. Clause 38 of the AAB states that: “A person who victimizes, obstructs or exerts undue influence and submits a female politician to verbal attack, among others, commits an offence (The Republic, 2019). This clause of the Bill would discourage stereotyping of women, which characterizes Ghana’s political system and will whip up women’s interest for political participation.

The passage of the AAB into law has been proposed by the Women’s Manifesto Ghana as one of the ways to promote women’s political participation in Ghana. In their view an affirmative action law enforced and implemented by all stakeholders including, government institutions, political

parties would help to pave the way for women's meaningful participation (The Women's Manifesto Coalition, 2016).

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

Firstly, the demographics of the respondents was analyzed and then the study variables in an attempt to answer the research questions.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary of the findings of the study, draws conclusions and makes recommendations based on the findings of the study.

#### **5.2 Summary of key findings**

##### **Determinants of voters' choice of a candidate**

The main predictors of the choice of a candidate are mainly the policies and political affiliations of the candidate, the competency of the candidate to do a just work in office relies on his or her public service to the nation or constituency. The voter attracted to a political party based on the party's ideology and their personal interests.

##### **Voters' perception on women's participation in politics.**

Majority of the respondents agreed that, political parties have done little in ensuring women's participation in areas of national development despite the historical evidence of the role they play in efforts for national development as well as the evidence of the impact of women's participation to sustainable development. Respondents also believed that political parties should be compelled to balance gender political representation and participation.

The findings in this study support the Role Congruity Theory, which highlights the gap between gender roles and leadership roles. The role congruity theory toward female leaders proposes that perceived incongruity between the female gender role and leadership roles leads to two forms of

prejudice: (a) perceiving women less favorably than men as potential occupants of leadership roles and (b) evaluating behavior that fulfills the prescriptions of a leader role less favorably when it is enacted by a woman. Evidence from this research substantiates that these consequences occur, especially in situations that heighten perceptions of incongruity between the female gender role and leadership roles.

The general view shared by all respondents is that, there have been a very relative marginal improvement in women's political participation in Ghana since the Fourth Republic even though the increase recorded has not been consistent over the years. While the number of women candidates at both national and local levels have increased consistently, the actual number of women who have won elections at the Parliamentary level for example have not increased beyond 15% since 1992.

The respondents agreed that the lack of an affirmative action bill, political factors, public initiatives and socio-economic factors are factors that account for low representation and participation of women in politics.

Political factors relates to the contribution of political party's 'gatekeepers' and 'godfathers', usually senior party officials, to the marginalization of women in political participation particularly at the party level and national level. These party 'gatekeepers' and 'godfathers' have the power to determine how possible or impossible it is for women to be candidates and which position they can vie for. These serves as an impediment for the growth of women in politics.

It was also found that, the excessive monetization of politics is a major setback for women for elective positions. This is particularly challenging as women are mostly economically disadvantaged but have to compete with their male counterparts who comparatively are more

financially resourced. Women also have to contend with expensive campaign activities, vote-buying and high nomination fees.

The Affirmative Action Bill is evidenced to have positive impact on women's political participation. For instance, the 1960 affirmative action policy during the Nkrumah regime demonstrates how effective affirmative action policies can be if well implemented. Though different affirmative action policies have been adopted by government and by institutions including political parties, the approach has not yielded the much-expected results of increasing the number of women in politics and decision-making. The passage of the affirmative action bill into law and the effective implementation of affirmative action initiatives and measures has the high potential of increasing the statistics on women's political participation in a positive way in Ghana. However, a mere passage of a bill into law without the commitment to enforcement, monitoring and evaluation would not bring the desired change.

### **The strategies that will enhance women's political representation in general elections**

Majority of the respondents were positive that the passage of the proposed the Affirmative Action Bill into law would make a difference and contribute to enhancing women's political participation and representation. Respondents highlighted the importance of both formal and informal education as one of the fundamental solutions to promoting women's political participation in Ghana.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The promotion of gender equality, human rights of girls and women and their empowerment are global issues of high importance. It is said that women's full and equal participation, and the integration of gender perspectives into every endeavor are key to global sustainable development.

Ghana since the 4th Republic has made both local and international commitments to promote women's political participation and decision making. However, women's representation and participation at national and local level politics and decision-making still remains low.

The barriers to women's representation can be overcome though the process eventually progresses. In order for women to have legitimacy in positions of power, they need to accept the legitimacy of their positions in society. Women's political participation is key to achieving gender equality. Despite the significant progress made in the number of female parliamentarians in Ghana, the country still has a long way to go in terms of achieving gender equality.

Thus, It is a wakeup call on all stakeholders - government, political parties, women groups, civil society, traditional and religious leaders, development partners and society at large to work together to remove barriers to women's political participation and pave the way for their participation and contribution to sustainable development.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were made:

1. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection as well as NGOs and CSOs that focus on women's empowerment and inclusive governance should ensure that initiatives and interventions that are developed and implemented to address the barriers to women's political participation.
2. The leadership of both parties at all levels should desist from the practice of imposing candidates on constituents and party delegates or asking some aspirants not to contest certain sitting MPs or party executives. This undermines internal democracy and breeds

bitterness. Instead, the parties should put in place mechanisms that guarantee fairness, accountability, and transparency in the candidate selection processes.

3. The National Parliament should pass the Affirmative Action Bill into Law and ensure to put in measures that would compel all stakeholders including government itself to implement it effectively at all levels. An affirmative action law coupled with proper enforcement will address the many challenges of women's participation including labeling and sexual harassment.

### **5.5 Suggestion for Future Studies**

The study revealed that female political leaders in Ghana face systemic marginalization within the political parties. This study should be used to explore how successful women political activists are in negotiating with the male-dominant political parties in the country.

Although political life at the grassroots level does not paint a picturesque image, it provides basis to understanding this world phenomenon, in the future, all other aspects like representation in parliament and internationally should be studied concurrently.

Women's political participation at the Parliamentary and District Assembly levels have been the area of interest for a number of studies. Future studies could consider focusing on women's participation and representation in the private sector and in diplomacy.

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**APPENDIX**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM**

Dear respondent,

This is a survey study is to assess the factors that influence women's participation in the Ghanaian political setting. I am writing to request your participation in the survey by completing the questionnaire, which is purposely to sample views of voters at the Ablekuma South Constituency.

The findings of the study are expected to add knowledge to the existing academic literature, which willbe used for academic purpose and would also be helpful in explaining diversity.

No individual information will be disclosed and all results will be presented as an aggregate summary data for academic purpose. It would take a participant approximately 5 to 7 minutes to fill out the questionnaire.

Thank you for your cooperation.

**SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS**

The section is asking for your background information. Please indicate your answer by ticking **(X)** Or **(√)** on the appropriate box.

A1. Please indicate your gender

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
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A2. Please indicate your age category

21-30	
31-40	
41-50	
51-60	
21-30	

A3. Please indicate your employment status

Student	
Self-Employed	
Employed full time (40+ hours a week)	
Employed part time (Less than 40 hours a week)	
Unemployed	

A5. Please indicate your educational qualification

SSSCE/WASSCE	
HND/Diploma	

Undergraduate level	
Masters' level	
Doctorate level	
Others	

**SECTION B**

B1. Did you participate in the 2020 general elections in Ghana?

Yes	
No	

B2. What normally informs your decision to vote?

Gender	
Political Affiliation	
Media Influence	
Policies	
Ethnicity	

B3. How do you assess the competence of candidates?

Gender	
Political Affiliation	

Public Service	
Popularity	

B4. What attracts you to political parties?

Personal Interests	
Party Ideology	
Parties with more policies for women	

B5. In your opinion have political parties in Ghana made enough provision for women to actively participate in politics?

Yes	
No	

B6. What are some of the factors hindering female political participation?

Political factors	
Socio Economic factors	
Public Initiatives	
Lack of an affirmative action bill	

B7. Should political parties be compelled to balance political representation and participation between women and men?

Yes	
No	

B.8 What strategy will enhance women's political representation Ghana?

Education	
Advocacy	
Passing the affirmative action bill	