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WOMEN UNDERREPRESENTATION IN POLITICS: A CASE STUDY OF OKAI KOI
SOUTH AND CAPE COAST NORTH CONSTITUENCIES IN GHANA.

SUPERVISED BY: DR. LAWRENCIA AGYEPONG

STUDENT: SANDRA OFOSU

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THIS DISSERTATION PROPOSAL IS PRESENTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE
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MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

OCTOBER, 2021

DECLARATION

I 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.

SANDRA OFOSU
Student's Name


.....
Signature

5TH NOVEMBER, 2021
.....
Date

Certified by:

DR. LAWRENCIA AGYEPONG
Supervisor's Name

.....
Signature

.....
Date

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SANDRA OFOSU
Student's Name

.....
Signature

.....
Date

Certified by:

DR. LAWRENCIA AGYEPONG
Supervisor's Name

.....
Signature

.....
Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beloved grandparents, Mr. & Mrs. Osei Tutu, who are my role models in all aspects. They have been there during the challenging and stressful times. They have celebrated my successes and their love, prayers, and immense support inspired me to achieve my goal.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

IPU - Inter-Parliamentary Union

UN Women - United Nations Women

WEF - World Economic Forum

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women

PRC - PEW Research Centre

NPP - New Patriotic Party

NDC - National Democratic Congress

IDEA - The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

NCWD - National Commission on Women and Development

ECOWAS – The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

AU – African Union

31st DWM – 31st December Women’s Movement

FIDA – The International Federation of International Women Lawyers Ghana

FAWE – Forum for African Women Educationalist

WEFORUM – World Economic Forum

ILO – International Labour Organization

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

ECOSOC – United Nations Economic and Social Council

IFWL – International Federation of Women Lawyers

A.M.A – Accra Metropolitan Assembly

CCMA – Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly

NCP – National Convention Party

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

OHCHR - Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

NDI – National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

MMDCE – Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief Executives

OECD – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

MoGCSP – Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection

HU - Hermeneutic Unit

PD – Primary Document

PHC – Population and Housing Census

WPP – Women in Political Participation

ICT – Information Communication Technology

WWW – World Wide Web

ABSTRACT

The need for more female political participation has featured in both developed and underdeveloped countries over the years. Researchers have demonstrated that women political representation in Ghana remain low. Little or nothing is known about the challenges and experiences Ghanaian women face in their quest to get actively involved in the political affairs of their respective constituencies, although international laws grant women political participation rights.

This thesis seeks to determine the factors that may affect women numeric underrepresentation in Ghanaian politics and present some internal measures to improve their participation in these two constituencies: OkaiKoi South and Cape Coast North. To achieve this goal, a qualitative research design was adopted for this study using interviews and focus group discussions to gather data from thirteen participants to assess participatory roles of women in grassroots level politics.

The researcher's analysis suggests that women underrepresentation in Ghana's politics stem from a combination of factors which can be broadly categorized under structural, political, and ideological, thus reinforcing the findings of the literature (Kunovich & Paxton, 2005). Additionally, the results from the findings showed that political and ideological factors often become the main inherent factors to women political representation in the two constituencies. The study further suggested the empowerment of women economically by enrolling them in vocations amongst other to improve their self-confidence, favourable selection criterion to ensure equal and fair participation, educational and financial support, training residents to accept women right to participation, and eliminating all forms of political violence and abuse at the constituency level.

This study contributes to the wider discourse on gender and politics by providing a framework for understanding the factors that deter women from participating in grassroots level politics.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Background of the Study

The fight for gender equality and an increase in women's political participation has been a difficult one even though it has received considerable attention from reputable institutions, and several policies have been rolled out such as the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5.5 which seeks to attain full and equal participation for women in all forms of leadership i.e., political, public and economic spheres of life (UN Economic and Social Council, 2017). Another is the Beijing Platform for Action implemented 25 years ago which was channeled in the same direction i.e., gender equality. It was anticipated that this plan of action will help resolve the issue of gender inequality and increase women participation at all levels of decision making but this seems to happen at a rather slow pace (Bondzie, 2020).

Just like men, women have tremendous roles to play in society. They possess innate qualities that when put to their full potential, will benefit society. Women throughout the world face obstacles in their participation in politics. Research conducted by International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA, 2019; Odame, 2010), shows that the rate of female representation stood at about 16% globally and this low representation according to them was attributed to the prevailing social and economic regimes as well as existing political structures. However, across all regions, it is seen that tremendous progress has been made when it comes to the issue of women's underrepresentation in parliament and other legislative positions. There has been a significant increase from 11.3% in 1995 to 16% in 2005 and 21.8% seats won in 2011 followed by a 24.3% increase in 2019, representing a global average of 19.5% (IDEA, 2019). Some countries have recorded a tremendous increase in women representation in national parliaments notable amongst these countries in sub-Saharan Africa with at least 30% (IDEA, 2019).

The UN through the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was classified as an international bill of rights for women (UN Women, 2008). It consisted of thirty (30) articles that elaborate on what constitutes discrimination against women and outlines measures to help end such discrimination (UN Women & OHCHR, 2008).

The UN Women (2021) indicated in a report titled “Facts and Figures: Women’s leadership and Political Participation” that women’s equal participation and leadership in political and public life are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. They further proved that women are underrepresented at all levels of decision-making worldwide and achieving gender parity in political life is far off. The report compiled by the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nation indicated that as of January 2021, women’s representation in national parliaments have reached 24.9%, an increase of 2.6% from 22.3% in 2015. Their report extensively covers women’s representation across all forms of leadership globally, categorizing women in executive government positions, women in national parliaments, and women in local government. However, only 13% and 15% of countries according to this report have reached gender balance in national parliaments and local government (UN Women, 2021).

A survey conducted by Pew Research Centre (PRC, 2018), revealed that there are wide gender gaps in views about women in leadership in general. About seven in ten women when interviewed indicated that there are too few women in high political offices and top executive business positions. The same was proved by half of the men. 57% of women as compared to 32% of men now say that voters are not ready to elect women as political leaders and this was assessed to be the main reason why women are still severely underrepresented in positions in the USA (PRC, 2018).

The World Economic Forum (WEF, 2021), in their annual report “The Global Gender Gap Index” indicates that the gender gap in political empowerment remains the largest out of the four tracked gaps. This as compared to the 2020 report indicates that this gap has widened by 2.4% resulting in a 21.6% out of 35,000 parliament seats won by women in 2020 and 22.6% in 2021. In 81 countries, there has never been a woman head of state, as of 15 January, 2021 (WEF, 2021). At the current rate of progress, the World Economic Forum estimates that it will take 145.5 years to attain gender parity in politics.

This leads to the question: if women are denied a fair chance to participate even in grassroots or local leadership within a political party, how then would they contribute their quota towards the development of the nation since they make up almost half of the populace?

According to Annan, K. – Former Secretary-General of the United Nations “Gender Equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development, and building good governance.” However, women face

oppressions, especially in terms of political marginalization emanating from cultural, political, economic, low educational attainment, and family restrictions. According to Opoku (2020), women are denied the same support, opportunities and respect accorded to men even though these are necessary for their success and survival in political participation.

1.1. Problem Statement

Ghana has a multi-party system, however, there are two (2) dominant political parties, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP).

The NDC has a total of twenty-five (25) party executives with women occupying seven (7) out of the total at the elite level (www.ndc.org.gh). One of the main aims of the NDC, as inscribed in their constitution is “to ensure the attainment of equality and fraternity of all men and women under the law without regard to ethnicity, race religious belief, ideology, and culture, social or economic status.” (Constitution of the NDC, 1992; Chapter 2, Article 7, 1 section c).

The NPP on the other hand has a total of twenty-six party executives at the national level with only five (5) women representing (www.newpatrioticparty.org). One of the main aims of the NPP, as inscribed in their constitution is “to give equal opportunities to women and ensure that all forms of discrimination against women end, so they can contribute more effectively to the development of the nation” (Constitution of the NPP, 1992; Article 2, section 21, p. 10).

Despite this aim, women are still underrepresented both at the grassroots and elite leadership levels. For this study, our focus will be on the New Patriotic Party and the National Democratic Congress with emphasis on grassroots leadership outlook for two main constituencies.

Women constitute almost half of the populace and it is only fair that they are actively involved in the decision-making process. It is only by their active involvement that genuine democracy can be achieved and issues of gender imbalance and accountability resolved. Women’s underrepresentation in a party hinders development.

In our parts of the world, women have been confronted with social norms that tag politics as a “man’s game” and that men rather than women should take on leadership roles (Nathan & Ichino, 2017). It is as a result of this notion that men tend to exercise control and excessive power over the rights of women within the political party. They are confronted by the men who compete with them for power and are seen as threats.

There has been significant research conducted on the reasons why women are underrepresented mostly tackled from the viewpoint of various nations, and organizational bodies in general. This research however will be tackled from the perspective of a political party (i.e., the New Patriotic Party and the National Democratic Congress) taking a critical look at their policies on gender equality at the grassroots level.

According to Duflo (2012), the exclusion of women from politics at the grassroots level may significantly limit the influence of women's choices on policy outcomes, decisions, potentially harming the economic welfare of women and inhibit overall economic development (Nathan & Ichino, 2017).

1.2. Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to understand why women are severely underrepresented in the political sphere (i.e., grassroots leadership) in Ghana specifically the two (2) constituencies i.e., OkaiKoi South and Cape Coast North.

1. To describe some of the roles of women participation in politics within the constituency.
2. To identify the challenges to women's political participation in the constituency.
3. To identify internal and external efforts to bridge the gap in women's political participation in the two constituencies.

1.3. Research Questions

1. What political participatory roles do women play in Ghanaian constituencies?
2. What are the challenges to women's political participation in the two constituencies?
3. What are some internal and external efforts planned or executed to promote the active participation of women in the constituencies?

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study presents to party executives and policymakers the need to encourage, include and build potential women leaders starting from the grassroots level of leadership. Findings will add to existing knowledge on women's participation in grassroots level leadership all through to higher leadership. It will emphasize to women, the need to equip themselves and embrace opportunities to fight for equal rights to power and leadership at constituency and regional levels within their respective parties.

1.5. Operational Terms and Definitions

The concepts and terms used in this study were defined according to how they were interpreted in relation to this study (Babbie, 2007; Anigwe, 2014). These are outlined as follows:

Women Underrepresentation: Women Underrepresentation is defined as the insufficient or disproportionately low representation of women in political and public life. In Ghana women are vastly underrepresented in all aspects of leadership (Census Bureau, 2021).

Political Participation: Eremenko (2014) defined political participation as an important part of our society that directly affects how we live in a globalizing world. Political participation affords citizens in a democratic setting an opportunity to communicate information to government officials about their concerns and preferences and to put pressure on them to respond. Political participation might also affect individual life satisfaction and happiness (Weitz-Shapiro & Winters, 2018).

Direct political participation: According to Pausch (2012), this is the expression of political interest and a political aim and an individual or citizen who participates directly is politically motivated to help his or her party where he or she belongs or either way promotes his or her ideologies, win hearts for the purpose of winning an election. Direct political participation can be further grouped into conventional and unconventional participation.

Indirect political participation: Indirect political participation on the other hand is the act of willingly engaging in social activities for the benefit of all without any political aim or interest (Fayomi & Adebayo, 2017).

1.6. Scope, Limitations, and Delimitations of the Study

Data for this study was gathered from two constituencies in Ghana. The two constituencies were Okaikoi South of the Greater Accra Region and Cape Coast North of the central region respectively. The study within these constituencies was focused at providing a fair representation of cases from both urban and rural areas of the two constituencies i.e., women participation in the constituencies. None of the two constituencies studied had more women representation in politics. The polling station numbers differed slightly because one had more residents than the other. For example, Cape Coast North had more residents about 40, 000 more than Okai Koi South. The Okaikoi South falls under the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) whereas Cape Coast North falls under the Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly (CCMA). In all,

the study covered the areas within these constituencies and the major ethnic groups in these constituencies were Fante and Akan. While information gathered from the two constituencies differ slightly, the study identified and covered the leadership structure of these constituencies, election structure of the constituencies, polling station agents in these constituencies during elections, discussions on the performance of women political leaders in the constituency, and strategies to ensure the active participation of women in local and elite level politics.

The limitations of this study are that looking at the scope and as a result of the restrictions due to covid, the researcher was unable to cover many constituencies and limited this study to two constituencies. Another limitation was the researcher's inability to visit the various district assemblies and Metropolitan assemblies due to restrictions and the inability to have direct access to some respondents as they opted for virtual interviews. This further led to an inability to observe and assess respondent's gestures which influenced the data obtained notwithstanding the expenses to cover such conversations. This limitation was alleviated with technological advancement such as zoom meetings and Microsoft teams.

The study adopted a small sample size and this was the main limitation. Although this sample size of 13 participants was appropriate for qualitative research study namely the Focus Group Discussion and Interview, the data obtained and conclusions drawn may not be generalizable to all women in other constituencies and the nation in general. The researcher only focused on women political participation in the Okai Koi South and Cape Coast North Constituencies of Ghana with focus on a few key leaders of the constituencies with different backgrounds and qualifications which could have influenced their responses on the subject. The researcher did not also cover personal subjects such as their marital status and family and spousal support in their political careers.

1.7. Organization of Chapters

This study is organized into five chapters. The background for this study is presented in Chapter one and out of this background the problem statement was identified. The significance and objectives of the study were drawn from the problem identified.

The second chapter contains a comprehensive Literature Review which supports the objectives and research questions of the study.

Chapter three explains the methodology adopted for this study and focuses on the data collection and research design. This chapter describes the area under study, its population, and

sampling techniques employed to address the study objectives. The procedures used in the data collection that is focus group discussions and interviews within the area under study. The chapter further explains the analysis of data collected and methods used in analyzing the data i.e., transcribing, coding, data categorization and ethical considerations of the study.

Chapters four and five of this thesis focus on data analysis and presentation, discussion, summary, and conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

This literature chapter review goes beyond the arguments on the pros and cons of women political participation. It first elaborates on the theoretical underpinnings of this study, the obstacles to women's political participation and the latest strides made in women's political participation and the impact of women's political participation at the Constituency levels.

2.1. Theoretical Framework and Concepts

For this study, we focus on the political party, structures, and resources allocated to ensure gender balances, and as such, the researcher has decided to back the findings by using feminist theories that tend to assess the issue of female underrepresentation in politics. The researcher will go with Kunovich and Paxton's model of Women in Politics which states that women's presence in politics is determined by the multiple points of contact for them in that political system. These multiple points of contact according to Kunovich & Paxton (2005) can be grouped under the following factors structural, political and ideological system-level and these influence women's inclusions in political parties, selection of women as candidates and election of women as officials. According to Kunovich & Paxton (2005), women representation can be best understood and solutions found only if we consider the multiple factors that coincide to create barriers for women's political participation.

Women Political participation is the core of this study as Ghana's record of women political participation keeps fluctuating. Women's representation and participation in formal politics according to Kunovich & Paxton (2005), matters both normatively and practically. From the normative view, political upper class should represent the interests of all citizens, including traditionally marginalized groups in this case women (Williams 1998; Phillips 1991; Kunovich & Paxton 2005). On the other hand, practically, female underrepresentation can result in a state that constitutionalize in the male interest (MacKinnon 1989; Connell 1990; Waylen 1994; Kunovich & Paxton 2005) and policies, resource allocation, and decisions made nationwide may not be strategized in the interest of women. Although women have made strides in the areas of education, business and enterprises, in the area of politics (parliamentary) they are still severely underrepresented (IPU, 2020).

2.1.1. A Model of Women in Politics

Fig 2.1. below is a theoretical model of women in politics. The model views the inclusion of women in politics as a process with three (3) visible sequential outcomes i.e., country-level factors which implies that the percentage of women in the labour force and whether the country has a proportionate representation system directly influences all outcomes of interest; i.e., it determines women’s inclusion in the party at elite level, the percentage of women selected as candidates, and the percentage elected into power (Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Tenu, 2019). Women at the elite levels can influence the percentage of women selected as candidates and the presence of women at elite party circles can influence how many women attain legislative positions (Tenu, 2019). The UNDP (2020), in their annual report titled “The Struggle for women in politics continues” shows that women in office motivate other women to do so and serve as a positive image for up-and-coming female aspirants and candidates.

Fig 2.1: Pathways to Power

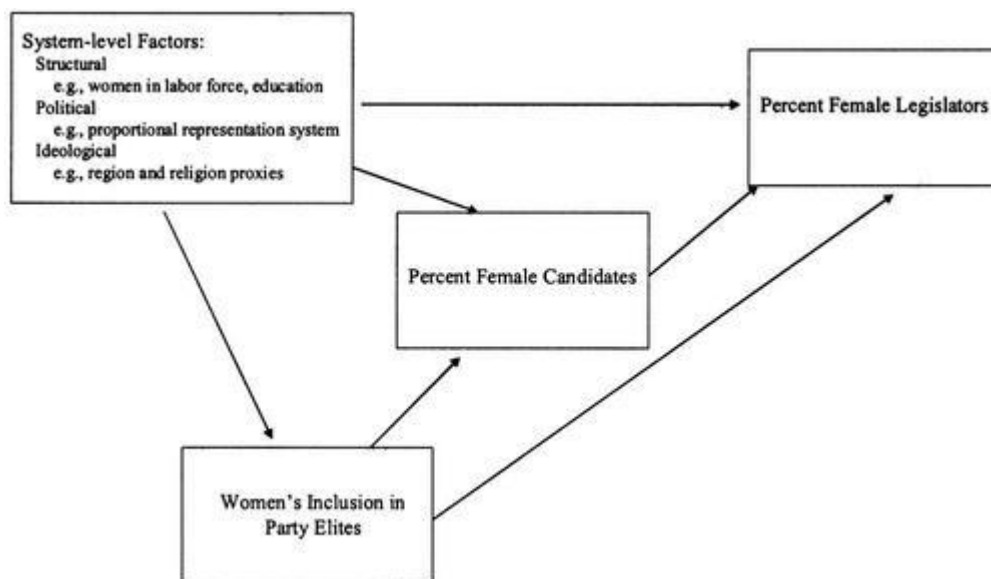


Fig 2.1. Represents the process of women’s inclusion in politics. Source: Kunovich and Paxton (2005); Tenu (2019)

Country-level factors – At the national level, there are three (3) factors that influence the percentage of women in political power i.e., structural, political, and ideological.

Structural indicates that women’s educational achievement and participation in the labour force positively affects their level of representation. Mostly political representatives are chosen from highly educated backgrounds preferably law (Putnam, 1976; Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Tenu, 2019). Financial and human capital are also a requirement needed to stand for an office. It is

believed the higher your educational achievements, the higher your economic standing and security to stand for office.

Political structures in a nation have different demands for candidates whether male or female and do so at their own discretion based on their interests and goals. Most are tilted towards male candidates and that contributes to women's underrepresentation (Caul 1999, 2001; Matland 1998; Giele & Smock 1977; Kohn 1980; Kunovich & Paxton, 2005). In some cases, a stronger tie with a political party is the determinant factor for being in their list of selected candidates and this is especially for those that recruit along ethnicity or region or within financial limits. Such draw their political candidates from allies and friends even without the proper qualifications. Women political candidates are sometimes required to pay sums which most women are unable to afford even if they are qualified for the positions. Women are still unaware of their political potential, they are tagged as 'electoral cattle' since the various women's wing and networks can be easily rallied for campaigns, rallies, balloting, and representing at the polls in large numbers (Compaore, 2005).

The third country-level factor is Ideologies. Ideology obstacles also include gender ideology, cultural patterns, and predetermined social roles assigned to women and men; their lack of confidence to stand for elections; and the perceptions of politics as a 'dirty' game not meant for women and the media's depictions of women (Shvedova, 2005). To elaborate on these ideological obstacles, women's ability to seek political power can be restrained by the ideas about women's role and position in society (Paxton & Kunovich 2003; Paxton 1997; Arceneaux 2001; McCammon et al. 2001). Some countries are governed by certain cultural norms and this can limit women's opportunities to participate in politics (Rule & Zimmerman 1994; Norris & Inglehart 2001). This can also be as result of the traditional roles of women in society. Traditionally, women are restricted to the role of mother and caretakers giving them a place in the private sphere and not politically. Any role they take up outside the household is to be a working mother and nothing else.

2.2. Obstacles/Barriers to Women's Political Representation

There are several issues facing women which limits their involvement in political participation. These issues limits impact their ability to decide to enter and remain in political life. Kunovich and Paxton (2005) indicates that to fully wrap your head around women underrepresentation in politics, we need to understand female legislators by first comprehending the female

candidates then finally understand what inhibits their transmission from candidates to legislators (Kunovich & Paxton, 2005; Tenu, 2019).

The barriers contributing to women's underrepresentation can be grouped under social and cultural factors, structural and Institutional factors, knowledge and information and intersectionality (Lovenduski, 2005; Maguire & Institute for Policy Research, 2018).

Boateng (2017), on the other hand attributes the barriers to women's political participation to socialization and socio-cultural factors. She added that the limited number of females in political and other governmental positions was as a result of the unequal gender power relations in Ghana. This unequal gender power was as a result of Ghanaian socio-cultural beliefs and practices, gender construction in society and this has created the gender gap and limit opportunities open to women as to men (Boateng, 2017). Britwum (2009), defined gender construction as a process of nurturing and influencing individuals with social norms, rules and values and allocating gendered responsibility or roles in society. Culture, patriarchy, family system, marriage, religion, social class, gender construction, preference to male education and customary laws are some of the obstacles to women's political participation in Ghana (Boateng, 2017).

Adatuu (2019), in a study conducted in the Tamale Metropolis revealed that even though women representation in the metropolis is gradually increasing, their presence and impact is yet to be felt. He attributed the low level of women representation in politics in the Tamale Metropolis to the following: financial constraints, lack of self-confidence, inadequate political skills and knowledge, women lack support from their colleague women, and limited government support.

IDEA (2021), in a publication titled "Africa Barometer 2021" categorized the systematic barriers to women's political underrepresentation in Africa under formal and informal factors. The informal factors include custom, socialization, gender stereotypes, and the formal factors include the media, finances and resources, and electoral systems and election management. In this publication IDEA (2021), further revealed that the formal factors are those that are within control whereas the informal factors are that which are "age-old" norms that cannot be eradicated overnight as they are deeply rooted in our cultural, religious, and traditional systems.

a. Social and Cultural Factors

This is mostly as a result of our male-dominated political structure, women are forced to conform to rigid masculine expectations and culture of our parliaments in order to succeed and an unpredictable calendar that is not compatible with their family and public life (CFWD, 2011; APPG, 2014). McNeil et al, (2017), in their study proved that due to the existence of “old boys’ network”, women are expected to fit into the masculine nature of operating in order to be recognized. The survey further proved that 4 in 10 women have had to deal with sexist remarks directed at them. This has led to the lack of appetite and unwillingness on the women’s side to participate in politics (Allen, 2012).

The Ghanaian society is divided into five main ethnic groups across the sixteen (16) regions and each of these ethnic groups have an element of patriarchy system embedded in their culture, practices and norms that perceive men to be superior to women (Amoakohene, 2004; Coalition of the women’s manifesto for Ghana [CWMG], 2004; Prah, 2004; Sam, 2010; Ebila, 2011; Boateng, 2017). Patriarchy as defined is a structure of power relations which approves female subordination and male supremacy over them (Akita, 2010; Boateng, 2017). The man as a father holds authority over the women and his kids as household head. Women mostly relied on men for their survival as wives and sought for permission from fathers and husbands before engaging in any political or public activity (Boateng, 2017; Adibi, 2006). Our deeply rooted cultural background, religion and believes are a contributing factor to why women are underrepresented because it tends to favour and privilege men more than women (Boateng, 2017).

b. Family and Household Responsibilities

Women’s domestic roles also deter them from local political participation. Unfortunately, women’s gender identity is still to a greater extent perceived as domestic in nature (IDEA, 2021). Most women see taking care of family and the home as a primary role. Most female candidates have many household responsibilities to discharge, they do not have ample time to combine the household role and political role as it is hectic and others fail at it (Mckay, 2011; Adatuu, 2019). Thraser (2015) in a survey discovered that while 31% of male councilors were proactive on weekly basis, women rose to 42%. Women councilors were reported to commit only 3 hours of their working hours to work as compared to men.

The Ghanaian family system (matrilineal and patrilineal family lineage) is a little bias towards female in that most families tend to leave their inheritance to their male heirs instead of females (Boateng, 2017). It is perceived that males are better at managing an inheritance as compared to females. As a result of biases in the allocation of resources, assets, and capital resources, inhibits females the required financial resources to engage in political activities (Kabeer, 2002; Boateng, 2017).

c. Financials

Another barrier is the gap in pay for women as they do not earn enough and are employed at lower positions within society and the inequalities in accessing jobs for a livelihood. They do not have enough to stand and compete as political candidates. Also, their source of funding mostly come from private means and are insufficient to embark on campaigns and rallies to win the elections (Murray, 2018). Several research done in the Tamale Metropolis revealed the financial constraints (money) posed on the female candidates in their attempt to contest and campaign for votes at the local level of the Tamale Metropolis (Offei-Aboagye, 2000; Allah - Mensah, 2005; Amoako, 2011; Adatuu, 2019). Adatuu (2019) further revealed that women are financially constrained, and this deters them from participating in politics and governance at the local level.

d. Structural and Institutional Barriers

There is a disconnection of political parties and national policies at the local levels (Durose et al, 2011). Norris & Lovenduski (1995), argues that the lack of strong female candidates and challengers has resulted in male dominance in our political system. There is lack of openness and transparency in the selection and recruitment of candidates for political participation. The factors (wealth etc.) that contribute to their selection is not known (Byrne & Theakston, 2016). Some women also deal with sexual harassment and the assumptions and perceptions of women belonging to traditional duties and roles (Lovenduski, 2005; Kenny, 2015).

e. Knowledge and Information Barriers

The underrepresented group (women) have likely less access to networks and information required to run a political office (Fawcett Society, 2015a). Several researchers have lamented over the lack of votes for women political candidates which is gradually conforming to the notion that the political domain belongs to men more than women (Offei-Aboagye, 2000; Allah

Mensah, 2005; Amoako, 2011; Adatuu, 2019). These researchers also found that most of the women in the Tamale Metropolis were intimidated by their male opponents and lack the skills to interact in public spaces. Women in this metropolis are perceived as lacking the necessary skills and knowledge in running a political office at the local level (Adatuu, 2019).

f. Preference to Male Education

Segregation of subject and prioritizing male education over female is another contributing factor to women underrepresentation in politics and other public spheres. Females were restricted to studying home management and economics whereas the men could pursue what was classified as the good courses. This act and belief instilled over the years has resulted in most females securing jobs mostly in the private sector with no interest in public office and politics (Sam, 2010; Ebila, 2011; Boateng, 2017). These discrepancies stemmed from the beliefs that women belonged to the home and kitchen and are dependent on men who are likened to bravery for their survival (Makama, 2013; Boateng, 2017). As a result, most of these decision-making positions were not designed to accommodate women (Makama, 2013; Boateng, 2017).

g. Lack of Support from Women Colleagues Towards Women Political Candidates

Women political candidates lack support from colleagues which is required when seeking public office. Research conducted in the Tamale Metropolis by Adatuu (2019), revealed that eighty-two (82) respondents interviewed representing a 54.7% confirmed this. The lack of support affects their overall performance and participation in local politics (Adatuu, 2019).

h. Limited Government Support

The issue of women underrepresentation has been in existence as far back as 1988 and persists to date. A contributing factor to this underrepresentation is the lack of government support to enable women participate in local politics. The Tamale Metropolis and other metropolis in Ghana have consistently had low women representation since 1988 (Adatuu, 2019). The lack of support (funding and commitment) to pass gender sensitive policies that equips more women to participate in politics. Political parties lack the necessary funding to promote female political candidates locally and nationally (Sakyi et al., 2015).

i. Covid-19 and Women's Political Participation

The increasing rate of covid-19 cases and death tolls across the world even though there is limited data on segregation of female or male cases, the pandemic has affected women more (IDEA, 202). The majority of health workers and care-givers during the peak of the pandemic were women. The rate of violence increased as most women during the lockdown restrictions were subject to abuse from the partners. The pandemic has created a new barrier for women's political participation as they constitute majority of those working in the informal sectors (casual work) and the support services they provide declined during the pandemic limiting their participation in decision-making (IDEA, 2021).

j. ICT as an Opportunity and Barrier to Women's Political Participation

The lockdown restrictions which limited movements and gatherings necessitated the need to engage, communicate and transact businesses on online platforms. Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) presented both opportunities and barriers to women politicians as they were able to hold meetings to reach their constituencies and campaign via online platforms (IDEA, 2021). Barriers because according to the World Wide Web Foundation (2021), men are 21% more likely to be online than women and 52% across least developed countries. Also the internet which was initially meant for access to information, expression of one's ideas and provide support to all who need it has eventually turned into an avenue for all levels of online violence such as trolling and cyber bullying (IDEA, 2021). This has served as a deterrent to women's political participation on online platforms. The IPU (2021), affirmed this as they indicated that social media is the main channel for all sorts of psychological violence against women political candidates and politicians (IDEA, 2021).

2.3. The Underrepresentation of Women in Politics

The issue of women's underrepresentation in politics is a global one that persists despite extensive research and education in this area. There have been persistent efforts by several recognized bodies to help address this longstanding issue of women underrepresentation and help strengthen the level of women's participation in all spheres of life and this has become a major issue in the discourse of economic and social development in the last decade (Abantu for Development, 2004; UN Women, 2020; International Growth Centre, 2015, 2020; MoGCSP, 2015; Odame, 2010). This section tackles the issue from a local and global point of

view and state the limitations of some researchers done on this subject and how they influence the direction of this study.

Research conducted on this study on the reasons why women are underrepresented in grassroots and elite levels of leadership, attributes most of the reasons to economic constraints, culture and societal norms, education, wealth, and lack of political will on the part of the woman (Inglehart & Norris, 2003; Chattopadhyay & Dufflo, 2004; Tripp & Kang, 2008; Arriola & Johnson, 2014). Politics is considered to be for men with a higher level of education attainment and enough wealth to win the hearts of the people.

A study by Ichino & Nathan (2017), titled “Political Party Organization and Women’s Empowerment” attributes the barriers to women’s political participation to economic and resources constraints, and social norms, party structures and attitudes towards women political participation. It takes a critical look at the various political parties and assesses women’s representation at the local levels of politics with focus on five selected rural communities with the aim of bridging the grassroots gender gap in these areas. This study failed to address policies and ideologies within the party that is women-centered and their effectiveness and associated challenges since implementation (Ichino & Nathan, 2017).

Fuad & Rofhani (2021), tends to tackle it from the strict ideologies of a party based in Indonesia with a large and active female support base that emphasizes that women’s political roles should be considered secondary to their primary duties i.e., domestic chores such as taking care of the home, family and general upkeep.

Sossou (2011), tackles her study from the viewpoints of the Ghanaian Woman focusing on two regions in Ghana; it explores the voices and perceptions of these women on issues of gender inequality, their struggles for equal rights to power, barriers, and roadblocks. According to Sossou (2011) the reason for women in Ghana have been oppressed and dominated by patriarchal society resulting in their underrepresentation. She added that in traditional societies in Ghana, women are taught to respect their elders and husbands and not to compete with them on any platform. Some the other factors inhibiting women political participation are access to education, also most politically active women are at the elite levels where they pursue agenda’s that conform to their class (i.e., their wealth and level of education) and not necessarily promoting gender issues of concern. Last is the fact that politics is seen by most men and women as the “male quintessential sphere of action” where “females are not welcome and ineffective” (House-Midamba, 1990; Sossou, 2011, p. 2).

Women throughout the world face obstacles in their participation in politics. Research conducted by Niederle & Vesterlund (2005) shows that the rate of female underrepresentation globally should be attributed to occupational differences which is as a result of the discrimination against women in fields of study, their abilities, and work preferences. It is perceived that women may not choose competitive jobs with technical fields (i.e., math, engineering, and science) because of the responsibilities and long work hours that may be required to work at such jobs. Also, differential treatments accorded men and women with the same abilities at the same jobs (Niederle & Vesterlund, 2005).

The underrepresentation of women in politics as studied by Weforum (2018) in an article titled “How do we get more women in politics?” indicated that in the USA 19.3% female are in the House of Representatives and 23% in the senate ranking them 103rd worldwide when it comes to women representation. The article further indicated that efforts to improve female representation in politics focused only on quotas and reserved shares. The report advised that what is needed was a sound approach that tackles the underlying, and interconnected barriers that women face in getting nominated for elected office and conducting successful campaigns.

Masad (2020), in a report titled “The struggle for women in Politics continues” indicated that the reason why the issue of women underrepresentation persists in 2020 is as a result of the many challenges women face to get into those political seats. Women are marginalized from political and public life and even though more women are putting themselves up for elections, their numbers still lag behind that of the men (Masad, 2020). E.g., The United States and Ghana where women were appointed as vice presidents yet the numbers continue to lag as they continue to face socioeconomic, institutional, structural, and cultural barriers. Masad (2020), perceives that to achieve full prosperity, development, and peace, the active participation of half the world’s population which is women is necessary. This report attributed the discrimination and stigma against women in politics to structural, socioeconomic, institutional, and cultural barriers.

Some researchers however failed to look at the main motives for the establishment of women’s wing and its contribution to women’s underrepresentation. The Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD, 2021), in a research proposal is seeking to engage organizations and individuals to conduct research on the role of women’s wing in political parties. Also, these researchers failed to investigate the recruitment process of women candidates which is limited within these political parties. Farrell & Titcombe (2016) and Maguire (2018), affirmed that the

recruitment network adopted by political parties tend to be closed and confined within the selection committee. The lack of transparency and openness in the selection process of candidates especially women and some of the rules they are expected to abide by existing laws without any reform of any sort (Durose et al, 2011; Child's & Cowley, 2011; Maguire & IPR, 2018).

2.4. A Look at Ghana's Women Political Participation

Despite a population of about 15, 605, 052 (49.31%) in the country representing almost half of a total population of about 31,666,394 (Population Stat, 2020) women tend to be underrepresented in parliament and other political leadership.

The government of Ghana has pledged its continuous commitment to promoting gender equality, empowering women, and ensuring notable advancements towards their participation and inclusion in politics and decision making on various platforms and forums. Despite the societal norms, cultural barriers, and socio-economic factors that discourage women political participation, Ghana has made several strides to ensure an increase in women political participation (Modern Ghana, 2020). Ghana has seen the appointments of females in political leaderships such as the Chief Justice in 2007 (Georgina Theodora Wood) and 2017 (Sophia Akuffo), Speaker of Parliament in 2009 (Joyce Adeline Bamford-Addo), Chair of the Electoral Commission in 2015 (Charlotte Osei) and 2017 (Jean Mensa). The country has also seen the nomination of female running mates by the CPP in 2012 (Naana Akosua Frimpomaa-Sarpong), PPP in 2012 (Eva Lokko) and 2016 (Brigitte Dzogbenuku), and the NDC (Prof. Jane Naana Opoku Agyemang) in the just ended 2020 election (Bondzie, 2020).

Female political representation in Ghana is still insignificant 25 years after the restoration of multi-party democracy in 1992. A report issued by IPU (2020), indicated that only 14.55% of Members of Parliament (MP) are women in Ghana and 25.5% globally. Current members of the Eighth Parliament of the Fourth Republic of Ghana as of December 2020 according to IPU (2020) stood at a total of 275 with 235 men and 40 women. The National Democratic Congress and the New Patriotic Party both have twenty females each.

Notwithstanding, the president nominated six (6) women for ministerial positions in Ghana for the next term of office of Government out of a total of thirty (30) ministerial positions. These appointees will occupy the following roles Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Communication and Digitalization, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Sanitation and Water

Resources, Gender, Children and Social Protection, Works and Housing, and additional two (2) women to head Regional Ministries i.e., Central and Bono Regions out of a total of sixteen (16) regional ministers nominated by the President (Communications Directorate, Jubilee House, 2021). The Global Gender Gap Report (2020), ranked Ghana 107 out of 153 countries for the gender index on political, 63 years after been the first African country to attain independence. This goes to show that the Parliament of Ghana remains male-dominated.

The council of state is a small body of prominent citizens that advises the president on national issues of concern. One Hundred and Two (102) candidates from 16 regions filed to contest for the regional slots on February 12, 2021 out of which three (3) were women from the Ahafo, Bono and Western Regions respectively (Graphic Online, 2021). After the elections, no woman was elected as council of state out of a total of 16 members elected for the 16 regions (GhanaWeb, 2021). However, only 3 women out of 11 were part of the presidential appointees as council of state members and an additional one as ex-officio member bringing the total of women councils to 4 out of total of 30 council of state members. This is a slow progress from 2013, 2009, and 2000 when only 2 women were appointed council of state members (GhanaWeb, 2021). In 2004, 3 women were appointed by the president to join the council.

Ghana is a republic with two levels of government: national and local. The local government is incorporated in the constitution, and the key piece of law that governs it is the Local Government Act 2016 (Act 936). The nation is organized into sixteen administrative regions, each of which is led by a regional minister which is strictly by President's appointment (Commonwealth Local Government Forum [CLGF], 2020). At the highest levels of local governance, there are three types of assemblies: metropolitan, municipal, and district. Sub-metropolitan, district, urban, town, zonal, and area councils, as well as unit committees, are sub-structures that do not have legislative or rating powers but carry out activities allocated to them by the assembly (CLGF, 2020).

The District Assembly Elections of Ghana took place on the 17 December 2019, and Ghanaians went to the polls to cast their ballots to elect members to serve in their district assemblies for the next four years ending 2023. An article by Abantu for Development (2020), showed the discouraging outcome for women of the 2019 District Level Elections. With 909 female candidates and only 216 winners, the 2019 district assembly elections record was the second lowest number of women contestants in the history of the District Assembly Elections after the 547 women contestants and 196 winners in 1998 (Abantu for Development, 2020). This is

compared to 17,601 male contestants in more than 6,000 electoral areas countrywide. In a press statement issued by Abantu for Development, indicates that the 2019 Local Government Election proves that the goal of gender parity is far off reach and the nation should take actions immediately (Abantu for Development, 2020).

Below is a table illustrating the trend of women’s representation in District Assemblies (DA’s) over the years (2002 – 2019).

Table 2.1. Women’s Low Representation in District Assemblies in Ghana

Candidates				Elected				
Year	Female	Male	Total	Female	%	Male	%	Total
2019	909	17601	18510	216	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2015	1182	17756	18938	282	4.65	5779	95.35	6061
2010	1376	15939	17315	412	7.95	5681	92.05	6093
2006	1772	13084	14856	478	10.1	4254	89.9	4732
2002	965	12625	13590	341	7.4	4241	92.6	4582

Reference: Boateng (2017; p. 26); ABANTU for Development (2009, 2020); Electoral Commission, (2010, 2015)

From table 2.1. the level of women participation in District Assemblies (DA) improved only in 2006 after which there’s been a decline as the years went by (2010 – 2019).

Another instance of women underrepresentation in Ghana was during the 2015 local election for councillors in Ghana, women made up 4.7 percent (i.e., 276 out of a total of 5,930) down from a 6.7 percent in 2010 (CLGF, 2020). Table 2.2. below shows the trend over a decade (2002 – 2015).

Table 2.2. Women’s Low Representation as Councilors in Ghana

Election Year	2002		2006		2010		2015		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Councilors									
Women Rep	341	7.4	478	10.1	412	6.7	276	4.7	
Men Rep	4241	92.6	4254	89.9	5681	92.1	5654	95.3	
Total	4582	100	4732	100	6093	100	5930	100	

Source: CLGF (2020)

Over the years, there have been concerns raised and policies rolled out to help address the issue of women’s underrepresentation in parliament and other political leadership roles across the globe. Notable among these policymakers are the United Nations, World Economic Forum, and Inter-Parliamentary Union amongst others: According to Musau (2019), even though 52% of Ghana’s Population are females but their representation and participation in politics do not reflect the examples set by peer countries such as Rwanda (51.9%), South Africa (48.6%), and Ethiopia (47.6%).

This issue of women’s underrepresentation is evident at our polling stations during elections where men dominate as polling agents, party electoral committees, and at the various constituency electoral committee heads (Ansah & Nketsiah, 2019). A survey conducted by Ansah & Nketsiah (2019), in Agona East Constituency proved that women were severely underrepresented at their local leadership within the constituency.

Table 2.3. Women Representation in Agona East Constituency

Variables	Males	Females	Total
Political Positions			
Members of Parliament Elect (1992 – 2012)	22	1	23
Constituency Executives	28	4	32
Electoral Area Coordinators	40	2	42
Polling Station Officers	400	100	500
Total	490	107	597

Source: Ansah & Nketsiah (2019)

Another study conducted in the Akan Constituency of the Volta Region, showed the low level of women participation in grassroots politics. The study which was mainly to show how involved women in the constituency were in politics revealed that three-fourth of the respondents (80%) women did not attend constituency meetings on political issues, 72.2% also indicated they had never attended political campaigns or rallies in the constituency and 83.4% (150 respondents) had never volunteered for political campaigns and rallies in the constituency. Likewise, 72.8 % (131 respondents) indicated they have never contacted an assembly member or DCE on issues pertaining to the constituency (Attom & Akromah, 2018; p. 23). 117 respondents (65%) of women that participated in this survey indicated that they do not vote

regularly on political issues in the constituency whereas 141 respondents (76.7%) and 143 respondents (79.5%) of the women participants affirmed that they were not members of any political group in the community and active members of any political group respectively. Whiles 159 respondents (88.3%) confirmed that they had never contested for political positions before, 160 (88.9%) indicated they were not holding any political position in the constituency at the time of the study (Attom & Akromah, 2018; p.24).

These two studies affirm the fact that women participation in grassroots politics is low and not encouraging. It has been argued by several scholars that women participation in politics is a means to the realization of good governance and sustainable policies of which without their involvement full democracy and development will not be achieved (Allah Mensah, 2005; Attom & Akromah, 2018).

2.4.1. A Positive Outlook for Women Political Representation

Below is a table illustrating women representation for some countries within sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, and American. In 2020, women hold 50% or more seats in parliament in four (4) countries meaning 2.1% of countries have attained gender parity. Although these successes are recognized, a majority of countries still have less than 20% women representation in the various parliaments.

Table 2.4. Women Representation in other Countries

1995		2020	
Country	% Women	Country	% Women
Sweden	40.4	Rwanda	61.3
Norway	39.4	Cuba	53.2
Denmark	33.5	Bolivia	53.1
Finland	33.5	United Arab Emirates	50.0
Netherlands	32.7	Mexico	48.2
Seychelles	27.3	Nicaragua	47.3
Austria	26.8	Sweden	47.0
Germany	26.3	Grenada	46.7
Iceland	25.4	Andorra	46.4

Argentina	25.3	South Africa	46.4
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Source: IPU (2020)

Table 1.1 above shows the progress of women’s political representation across three (3) continents. Some countries have achieved gender parity whereas some are still struggling to get ahead.

2.4.2. The Importance of Women Political Representation

According to the Africa Human Development Report (2016), having more women in political leadership will help drive the gender equality agenda, empower more women to actively participate in local, national, and community politics, and help achieve all the sustainable development goals (Asuako, 2020). Having more women partake in decision making increases political accountability and effectiveness in a country. Women are believed to be dynamic and leaders and effective at promoting change and strengthening their communities (Asuako, 2020). More women in politics helps reduces conflict, increases creativity and innovation, and diversified pool of knowledge to tap from. The National Democratic Institute Chairman Madeline Albright in 2018 once said, “women in power can be counted on to raise issues that others overlook, support ideas that others oppose and seek an end to abuses that other accept” (Albright, 2018).

More women in political offices means an increase in sound policy making which has positive impacts on communities, political parties, and citizens. The National Democratic Institute (2018), found that women’s participation in politics helps promote gender equality and impacts an array of policy issues that are considered and proposed solutions to these policy issues. Their research further proved that whether a decision maker is male or female has an impact on the type of policies and how they are prioritized. Women in politics mostly represent the marginalized group of voters and promote gender sensitive policies that affect most females (National Democratic Institute [NDI], 2018).

i. Women Lawmakers are More Responsive to Constituents Concerns

Women, traditionally play the role of mothers and caregivers and because of this role, they tend to be sensitive to community, constituency and national issues. When in political office, they perceive government as a tool to resolve all issues of the marginalized groups and

underrepresented (NDI, 2018). An example is the Ministry of Gender, Children and social Protection in Ghana (MOGCSP) that has over the years rolled out policies and provided support to help street vendors(kayaye's), protect women against domestic violence, empower women, poverty reduction, and protect child rights amongst others (www.mogcsp.gov.gh). In the USA, congresswomen are believed to rake in more money thus 9% more for their districts than congressmen do and also sponsor 3 more bills per term and co-sponsor 26 more bills than their male counterparts do (Volden et al, 2010; NDI, 2018).

ii. Women Work Across Party Lines

Research conducted by NDI (2018) in several countries revealed how collaborative women can be when it comes to gender sensitive issues. It showed how women leaders in some of these countries were willing to cross over party lines and boundaries, and set aside party differences (religions, ethnicity, language) to help the other in achieving development. A case was that of non-partisan women leaders in Sri Lanka who overlooked their various party tensions to draft and endorse a plan of action for improving women's political participation. Women support each other in gender policies no matter their political affiliations (NDI, 2018). In Ghana, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MOGCSP), is able to rally support of most female political leaders from different political parties to help promote child and women rights (MoGCSP, 2016).

iii. Women's Participation Encourages Citizen Confidence in Democracy

Globally, women political leaders are perceived to be honest, trustworthy and responsive when in office. It is also believed that women become more representative of the nation, community, and constituency they serve more than their male counterparts. As a result of their honesty, they help build the confidence of citizens in democratic institutions. Women who are elected into power mostly feel the need to perform and work harder to prove themselves and clear the notions that men are better at politics.

iv. Women Prioritize Education, Health and Help Secure Lasting Peace

Women in power take keen interests in the areas of education, health and infrastructure to ensure the systems are running effectively for an improved standard of living. A research conducted in 19 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries

(Luxemborg, United Kingdom, United States etc.,) found that an increase in women political leaders results in an increase in education and health expenditure (NDI, 2018).

A similar case is a survey conducted by IPU (2018) on 187 women in public positions in over 65 countries. The survey revealed that 90% of these women shared in the believe that they had a responsibility towards their fellow women and needed to represent their interests and that of other marginalized members of society (NDI, 2018). Madeleine Albright was right to say in 2018 that “the world is wasting a precious resource in the dramatic underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, often resulting in the exclusion of women’s talents and skills in political life” (NDI, 2018; Global Advocacy for African Affairs [GAAA], 2019). Likewise, Kofi Annan noted, “study after study has taught us, there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women” (GAAA, 2019).

2.5. Internal Efforts Towards Achieving Gender Equality in Ghana.

Several organizations and movements were established to help achieve gender balance and promote the active participation of women in politics and other public and economic activities. These notable institutions paved the way and contributed immensely to the positive results attained when it comes to women’s representation within the country.

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection in 2015 launched the National Gender Policy with the theme “Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment into Ghana’s Development Efforts” under the efforts of the then Minister, Nana Oye Lithur. This was to re-emphasize government commitment to working for the benefit of all and enhances women’s rights and address the issue of gender inequality in society (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection [MoGCSP], 2015). The policy acknowledges that although efforts have been made to achieve the target of 40% representation of women at all levels of governance as outlined in the Beijing Plan of Action, women are still underrepresented in political positions (National Gender Policy, 2015).

2.5.1. The National Commission on Women and Development (NCWD)

Ghana in its quest to assist in ensuring women’s active participation in politics established several movements and organizations to help achieve these feet. Notable amongst them was the National Commission on Women and Development (1975) Act, 1975 which was established as a follow up to the UN Resolution requesting member states to have government machinery that will help accelerate the integration of more women in national development

and eliminate discrimination against women (MoGCSP, 2015). Notable amongst its function includes ensuring that the objectives of the UN decade were achieved in Ghana at local and national levels and advise the government on the matters relating to the integration of women in national development.

The NCWD was faced with several roadblocks such as our cultural beliefs, practices, and patriarchal nature of our society which worked against the development of women in the fields of economics and politics. These roadblocks were reduced to their minimum by recommending the law reforms and advocating for relevant legislation on issues on women's status in Ghana. They worked assiduously to improve women's access to economic resources and participation through credit facilities with the World Women Bank, enhancing women's access to formal education and professional training aimed at building their self-esteem and confidence to participate in political activities and programmes locally and at the national levels. (Awumbila, 2001; MoGCSP, 2015).

Other women organizations formed in Ghana for the purpose of achieving gender balance in politics were the 31st December Women's Movement, FIDA, and FIWA. Notwithstanding the several international conventions that were for Africa such as CEDAW, The Beijing Platform for Action, the SADC, ECOWAS, and AU.

These organizations helped increased women's awareness of their numbers in politics and how that will influence women's aspirations and challenge the unfavorable political structures that contributed to their underrepresentation.

2.6. Conclusion

To conclude, the literature suggests that women's underrepresentation in politics in Ghana (locally and nationally) are as a result of several barriers socio-economic, gender construction, financials amongst others (Boateng, 2017; Adatuu, 2019; Tenu, 2019). The theoretical underpinnings of this study as referred from Kunovich & Paxton (2005), concludes that structural, political and ideological factors are the main factors that inhibit women representation in politics. Aside these two, a critical assessment of other literatures (UNDP, 2020; PRC, 2018; UN Women, 2021; WEF, 2021) indicates there are several other factors contributing to the poor representation of women in formal politics globally. Although in the Ghanaian context, all these factors are evident in our political system, studies show that political and ideological factors may be the greatest impediment to woman's political participation (Tenu, 2019).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

This research aims at exploring and understanding why women are still severely underrepresented in local politics in Ghana, particularly, grassroots leadership of the two major constituencies in Ghana i.e., OkaiKoi South and Cape Coast North.

This chapter presents and describes the research design and approach for the study. The design describes the specific methods adopted for collecting data, population, key participants, areas under study, and procedures for data collection (one-on-one interviews, focus group discussion) while the research approach focuses on the phenomenological nature of the study. It also presents the data analysis methodology and limitation of the methods used. As well as the ethical considerations and the role of the researcher.

3.1. Research Design

Research design is defined as the overall plan for addressing a research question, including specifications for enhancing the study's integrity" (Polit & Beck, 2017, p.743).

The objective of this research is to understand why women are severely underrepresented in local politics within the chosen constituencies. To investigate, this research employed the use of a qualitative research design. Qualitative research as defined by Strauss & Cobin (1990, p.4), "is any kind of research that produces findings not arrived by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification".

Qualitative research design varies based on the method used; in-depth interview (i.e., face to face) and focus group discussion was adopted for this study. The main reason for adopting a qualitative approach was to gain a detailed understanding of the topic on first-hand experience. Qualitative data is focused on depth as compared to quantitative which is mostly concerned with the quantity of findings. The researcher was concerned about finding answers to the questions of this phenomenon. Additionally, the researcher wanted to steer the research in a particular direction engaging directly participants for a deeper understanding of the study and data obtained cannot be quantified and not statistically representative of the entire population. Another drawback of qualitative research design is that it can create misleading conclusions.

3.2. Sources of Data

Primary data for the study is collected using an interview method. Primary data is most appropriate because it captures the fact at its raw state and mostly directly from the source. It also enables the researcher to realign the study objectives during data collection. The use of these data sources is to enable the researcher to arrive at more specific findings.

Data collection was done using a face-to-face interview. Key decision-makers of the constituencies were the interviewees. Aside the interview, the researcher adopted relevant survey data collected by other researchers' data such as Boateng, 2017; Nathan & Ichino, 2019; Anigwe, 2014; Ansah & Nketsiah, 2019 to support its qualitative data collected.

The researcher also used Secondary data which was gathered from research conducted by several scholars as outlined in Chapter one and two.

3.3. Case Study

Okaikoi constituency is a sub-metropolitan district council of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (A.M.A) that shares boundaries with several other constituencies such as Ablekuma North and Central Constituencies respectively. As of 2010 PHC, it had an estimated population of about 121,718 with 13,378 houses and 34,800 households. It's current population as of 2018 stood at 148,897 (A.M.A, 2018). The constituency has a history of being a stronghold of the NPP with males mostly occupying the seat.

Table 3.1. History of MP's Elected in the OkaiKoi South Constituency

MP Elected	Year	Party
Samuel Wise Quarcoo	1992 - 2000	EGLE
Nana Akomea	2000 – 2012	NPP
Ahmed Arthur	2012 – 2020	NPP
Dakoa Newman	2020 – Present	NPP

Source: Election Data Centre – The Ghana Report

Table 3.1. shows the trail of MP's that have occupied the seat of the constituency since 1992. There had been a history of no woman winning since 1992 except for the just-ended 2020 election where a woman emerged winner for the first time in decades, with a total vote of 40,383 representing a 60.28% of the total and its opponent (Abraham Kotei) from the NDC

with a vote of 26,019 representing 39.18% of the total vote cast 66, 856 (Election Data Centre, 2020; Ghana News Agency, 2020)

The constituency has eight (8) Electoral Areas:

- Kaneshie
- Awudome
- Goten
- Kaatsean
- Mukose
- Bubuashie
- Bubui, Avenor

Source: AMA Website (www.ama.gov/sub-metro-details.php?s=NQ==)

Cape Coast North Constituency

Cape Coast North constituency is a sub metropolitan district council of the Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly (C.C.M.A) that shares boundaries with several other constituencies such as Cape Coast South and Central respectively. As at 2010 the Population and Housing Census had an estimated population of about 169,894. It’s current population as of 2020 stands at 201,168 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2020). The constituency has a history of been a stronghold for the NPP and the NDC with males mostly occupying the seat.

The constituency has several Areas such as:

- Pedu
- Aburankwanta
- Kakumdu
- Adisadel
- Kwapro
- Akotochin amongst others.

Table 3.2. History of MP’s Elected in the Cape Coast North Constituency

MP Elected	Year	Party
Harry Hayford	1992 – 1996	NCP
Christine Churcher	1996 – 2008	NPP
Ebo Barton-Oduro	2008 – 2016	NDC
Barbara Asher Ayisi	2016 – 2020	NPP
Kwamena Minta Nyarku	2020 – Present	NDC

Source: Election Data Centre – The Ghana Report

Table 3.2. shows the trail of MP's that have occupied the seat of the constituency since 1992 there has been no history of a woman winning since 1992 except for the just-ended 2020 election where a woman emerged winner for the first time in decades, with a total vote of 22,972 representing a 51.94% of the total and its opponent (Barbara Asher Ayisi) from the NPP with a vote of 21,643 representing 48.51% of the total vote cast 66, 856 (Election Data Centre, 2020; Ghana News Agency, 2020).

3.4. Study Population

As discussed in Chapter One, the research was conducted in Okai Koi South and Cape Coast North Constituencies with their political executives as the study population. These constituencies help present a fair representation of cases from both rural and urban constituencies in Ghana. This sophistication is driven by three factors. Firstly, the Okai Koi South constituency is believed to be well equipped in various sectors including hospitality, information technology, and education. Secondly, the Cape Coast North constituency has a unique mix of upper, middle- and low-income earning groups (Ghana Statistical Service, 2015). The researcher visited the study sites and interacted with some participants as well as making telephone conversation with them.

3.5. Sampling Size and Technique

Sampling criteria or technique refers to the criteria for the selection of the population that meets the required characteristics for the phenomenon under study (Burns & Grove, 2009, p.344). The Sampling techniques employed in choosing the participants is a purposive and criterion sampling strategy. Purposive sampling is the “Selection of participants based on the researchers’ judgement about what potential participants will be most informative” whiles “Criteria Sampling is the selection of participants who meet pre-determined criteria of importance” (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p.10; Polit & Beck, 2008). Purposive sampling is deemed appropriate if the researcher has valid reasons for the justified exclusion of some entities from the population and the sample (O’Hamon & Taylor, 2007). For the purposive sampling, participants were carefully chosen based on experience and knowledge of political issues in the constituency. Key decision makers in the constituency who were accessible, and willing to provide information to answer the research questions were engaged for the face-to-face interview. Also, some polling agents, and party women were selected for the focus group discussions. A homogenous purposive sampling strategy was used in selecting the interview

participants in the constituencies because they shared some similarities in their ideologies and experiences (Boateng, 2017). A homogeneous sampling is a purposive sampling technique that focuses on achieving a sample or samples that share the same or nearly similar characteristics in terms of age, gender, background etc.

Based on these selection criteria, three participants for the face-to-face interview was identified for this study. These three participants selected for the interview were key decision makers who had experienced some of the challenges attributing to women’s underrepresentation in the constituencies. Upon approval from the Ghana Institute of Journalism, School of Graduate Study, interview guides were administered to all the four qualified groups in the catchment areas either by hand delivery or via emails.

The criterion sampling strategy was used to select the eight focus group discussion participants. These participant’s views were solicited because they understood the theoretical underpinnings of the study which attributed women’s underrepresentation to structural, political, and ideological factors. The participants have lived experiences and confirmed that these are still factors affecting women representation in local politics. Below is a table of participant’s summary.

Although the sampling techniques employed were appropriate for the study, that is saves costs, has low margin of errors, produces real time results, and can involve multiple phases, a major disadvantage is that irrespective of the type of purposive or criterion sampling adopted, it can be prone to biases (Boateng, 2017). This is because the sample is selected based on the researcher’s judgement of who will be more informative to the study. Unlike probability sampling, that is designed to reduce possible biases. The researcher explains later in this chapter how such biases was eliminated.

Table 3.3. Participants Summary

Sampling Technique	No. of Participants	Total Participants	Participants
Face-to-face Interview 1	1	3	Key decision maker
Face-to-face Interview 2	2		Key decision makers
Focus Group Discussion 1	5	10	2 polling agents, 3 active political participants

Focus Group Discussion 2	5		Same
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Source: Boateng, 2017; Researcher, 2021

The four groups (a total of 13 participants) took active part in the interviews conducted. The results, as discussed in chapter 4 are based on the experiences of these 13 interviewees most of which were women from the two constituencies. The participants were to communicate mostly in English. As stated earlier in this section, the researcher deemed these sampling methods appropriate even though purposive sampling can sometimes be highly prone to research biases, as the samples have been obtained based on the judgement of the researcher, however the researcher did not find the other sampling methods such as theoretical sampling, convenience sampling, snowball sampling, maximum variation sampling amongst others as appropriate for this study. The researcher explains in the role; how possible biases were avoided. The next section describes how the data used for this study was solicited from participants.

3.6. Data Collection Methodology

The data was obtained from interviews conducted in the two constituencies and focus group discussions with selected groups in the constituencies. Anderson (1990, p.222), defined an interview as “a specialized form of communication between people for a specific purpose associated with some agreed subject matter”. Research interviews are mostly to obtain relevant information from the interviewee which is used to describing, predicting, and explaining the phenomenon based on emotions, feelings, and experiences (Cohen & Manion, 2007; Dilshad & Latif, 2013). Denscombe (2007, p.115), defined focus group discussions as a group that consists of a small size of people, usually between six and nine in number, who are assembled by a trained moderator (the researcher) to explore their attitudes, perceptions, feelings, and ideas about a subject.

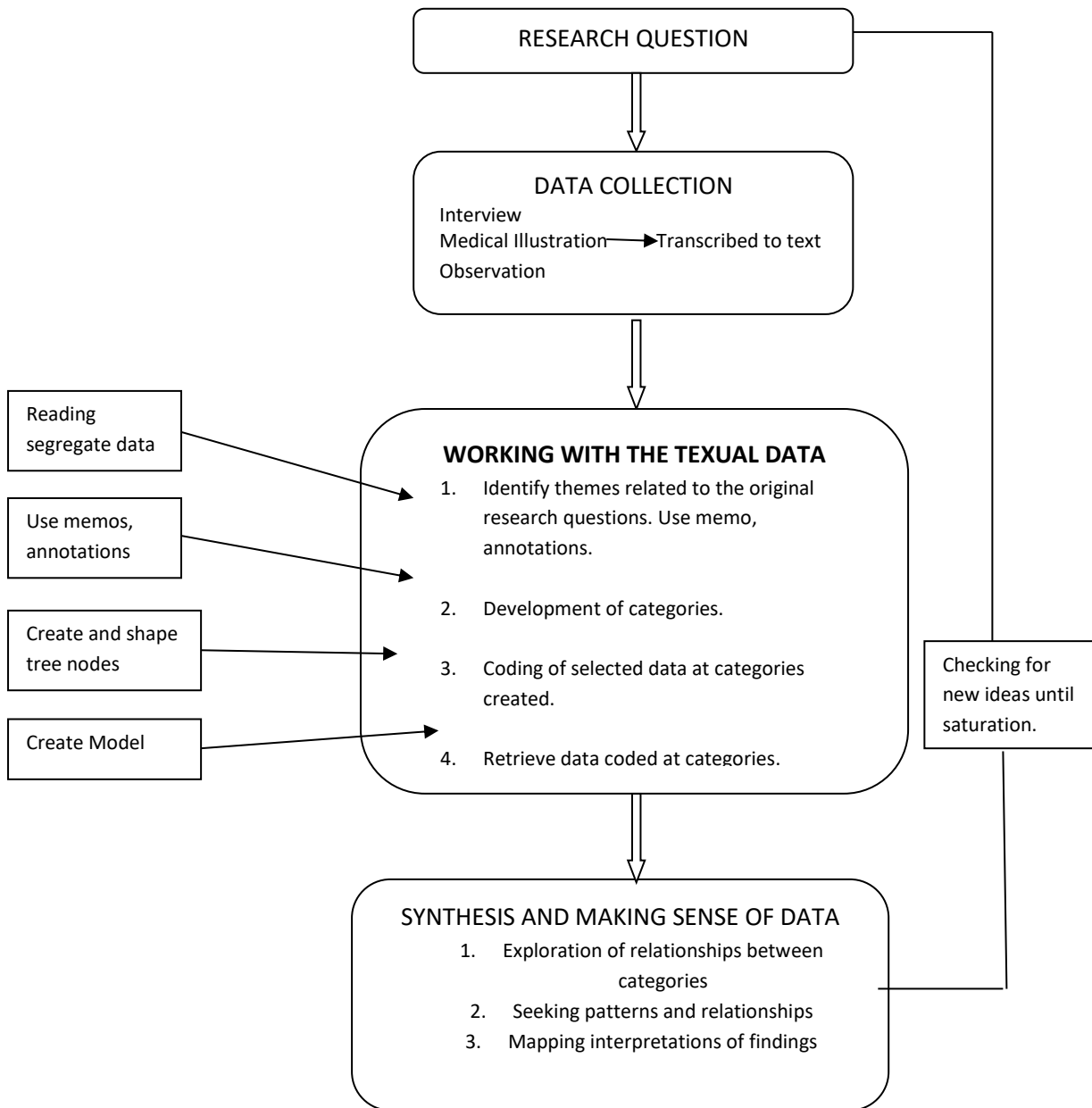
The data collection tools (i.e., the interview and focus group discussion) were mainly a semi-structured in-depth interview (see appendix 3). The researcher and participants had a face-to-face interview in which information on the specific phenomenon under study was gathered (Harrell & Bradley, 2009; Boateng, 2017). Upon approval from the Ghana Institute of Journalism, School of Graduate Studies the researcher extended invitation to each participant via email or WhatsApp. A letter requesting for an interview (see appendix 1) was shared. The letter was very brief but detailed the subject, its importance, and duration of the interview. The

informed consent (see appendix 2) form and interview guide (see appendix 3) was shared with all participants who expressed interest to participate. Times were arranged for the interviews based on participant's availability. Interviews were recorded upon consent of participants if not notes were taken instead and it lasted for 30 minutes to 60 minutes' maximum. The Focus Group discussions were conducted online as participants opted for this option as a result of their independent work schedules and the interviews conducted in person. The interview questions were open-ended and was centered around the research questions and objectives of the study. Interviews were properly completed with participants due to their political influence and experience. Notes were taken to ensure the objective of the research was achieved. Notes taken from these interviews were transcribed and saved for indexing and coding.

3.7. Data Analysis Methodology

Data analysis is seen as the most challenging and exciting phase of the qualitative research process (Lewis, 2003; Boateng 2017). Data Analysis is a methodical approach to assessing, organizing, and categorizing data (observation notes, interview transcripts, and other non-textual materials) with the intent of obtaining meaning from data collected (Hatch, 2002; Anigwe, 2014). According to Lewis (2003), It is a phase that requires a mix of creativity and systematic searching, a blend of inspiration and diligent detection. **Figure 3.1.** below is an illustration of how qualitative data analysis is done. It presents the various stages the researcher encounters to provide findings that are accurate and reflects true experiences of participants without distortions.

Figure 3.1. Qualitative Data Analysis Process



Source: Wong (2008)

This process includes identifying themes, seeing patterns, developing relationships, making interpretations, and draft explanations for the subject under study. The interview tapes were listened to thoroughly and transcribed alongside. The transcribed data was then saved in Microsoft word rich text format and crosschecked again for accuracy before it was uploaded into the Atlas.ti 6.2 qualitative data analysis software. This software was specifically designed to assist in storing, indexing, coding, and annotating data uploaded. (Atlas.ti User’s Guide, 2004; Anigwe, 2014). It can also handle large amounts of data uploaded at a time. In using the Atlas.ti software, these are the main steps the researcher employed in analyzing data collected.

Creating a project.

Adding documents (transcribed data).

Identifying key things in the data and coded them (i.e., comments were added to each stage of the process).

Developing models and visualize.

Analyzing and querying the data.

Lastly, identifying relevant data segments (**Atlas.ti 6 User Manual, 2011**).

Information was compiled out of this analysis and presented in Chapter 4.

3.8. The Role of the Researcher

As the researcher of this study and a primary instrument, the researcher was actively involved in all the stages of this study including data collection, data analysis and record /report writing (Anigwe, 2014). To obtain accurate data that is free of biases, the researcher kept in focus the objectives of the study. The role of the researcher was very keen to the study as it could determine the additional knowledge researcher is able to acquire (Singleton & Straits, 2005; Anigwe, 2014). To avoid biases in research, bracketing was employed. Bracketing is where the researcher of a study decides to set aside previous experiences or knowledge on the subject to fully incorporate the perspective of the participants (Creswell, 2007; Anigwe, 2014). It is further believed that, for a researcher to successfully do this, the researcher will have to fully describe their own experiences on the study and bracket them before dealing with participant's experiences.

3.9. Ethical Consideration

An introductory letter for permission to conduct the study was obtained from the head of department of the University. Written informed consent was also sought from respondents prior to the administration of the interview guides. The respondents were assured of confidentiality of the nature of data that will be collected and the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Anonymity was assured by not requesting the names of respondents but rather the use of unidentifiable names such as respondents for interviews and participants for focus group discussions. General information on the consent form included the purpose of the study, objectives, specific expectation regarding participation. They were assured of their protection and the information receive will not be exposed to others with the exception of supervisor of the study.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an in-depth information on the researcher's choice of research approach, methodology, and other procedure adopted to undertake the study. It also presented the data analysis tool used to achieve the objectives of the study that is the challenges that affect women representation in local politics in Ghana using the two constituencies. The methods used was to explore and understand the reasons why women are still underrepresented in local politics and some measures adopted to help improve their representation. Chapter 4 elaborates on the findings and results of the research conducted.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0. Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the data collected from participants. It covers the background of some participants, the state of women political participation in the constituencies, importance of their political participations, challenges to women's political participation, and internal and external measures to improve their political participation. Three research questions were used to guide the data collection and analysis process. To address these questions, interviews and Focus Group discussions were conducted with thirteen participants who are actively involved politically in constituency affairs. The study was conducted in these two constituencies with strict adherence to covid protocols. Also, the focus group discussions were conducted via zoom as most of the respondents opted for that. The face-to-face interviews took place in the confines of their office and an arranged location. All participants were pre-informed either in writing or through phone calls and they agreed and were willing to participate. All consent forms were signed and returned, participants were also pre-informed that notes and interview recorded will be for transcription and further analysis and nothing else. The results from the data analysis are presented in this chapter detailing the description and discussion of emerging themes from the results.

4.1. Demographics

The purposefully chosen participants were all Ghanaians and from the Constituencies who had lived there for five years or more. All participants were educated and well informed on the political affairs of the constituency. Participants were leaders or active participants in the political affairs of the constituency. They included delegates, polling agents, and constituency executives. Some participants had served actively in the political affairs of constituency for years and were between the age range of 27 to 80 years. To protect the privacy and confidentiality of interviews, all participants of this study were assigned unique identifiers. A summary of participant's background is presented in **table 4.1.** below. FGD R represents participants of Cape Coast North and FGD P represents participants from Okaikoi South constituency. Interview applicants have been identified as Interview P1 and P3 for Okaikoi South and Interview P2 for Cape Coast North Constituency.

Table 4.1. Summary of Demographics

Participants	Education	Gender	Current Position
Interview P1	Higher Level	Female	Constituency Executive
Interview P2	Higher Level	Male	Constituency Executive
Interview P3	Higher Level	Female	Constituency Executive
FGD P1	A & O levels	Male	Delegate
FGD P2	A & O levels	Female	Delegate
FGD P3	SHS & Vocational	Female	Polling Agent
FGD P4	Distance Learning	Female	Polling Agent
FGD P5	First Degree	Female	Active Member – Women’s Wing
FGD R1	A & O levels	Male	Delegate
FGD R2	First Degree	Female	Delegate
FGD R3	Polytechnic	Female	Polling Agent
FGD R4	First Degree	Female	Polling Agent
FGD R5	First Degree	Female	Active Member – Women’s Wing

Source: Field data (2021)

4.2. Data Analysis

Data analysis involves breaking down of collected data into workable themes and categories. The aim of data analysis is to discover, organize, communicate, and structure data in a way that meaningful conclusions are drawn (Burns & Grove, 2009, p.544).

In this study, the data analysis was identifying similarities i.e., themes in participant’s responses so it reflects their shared meanings and consciousness of the subject. To do this the study used Thematic Analysis to examine and identify patterns of themes in the data. Thematic Analysis is used to ensure that the researcher goes through the data in a thorough and systematic manner and this makes your results more trustworthy and easier for people to comprehend how you arrived at your conclusions. An advantage of thematic analysis is that it can be used to analyze big text and several themes can be developed from a text to aid in better understanding of the data. Thematic analysis is a flexible tool that novice researchers can use to analyze their qualitative data using different ways to interpret meanings from data set.

This study was analyzed using the six-step process of the Thematic Analysis; Familiarize yourself with the data, assign preliminary codes to your data to describe the content, Search for patterns or themes in your codes across the different interviews, Review themes, Define and name themes, Produce your report (Reference). **Table 4.2.** below present the Thematic Analysis stages and a brief description of each stage and how it was used to analyze the transcribed data.

Table 4.2. Thematic Analysis Stages

Thematic Analysis Stages	Description
Familiarization	Familiarize with the transcribed data.
Assign Preliminary Codes to your data	A brief description of what was said at the interview.
Search for patterns or themes	Collate the codes into broader themes
Review themes	Review and Refine the themes identified.
Define and name themes	Name and describe each identified theme
Produce report	Write up your report

Source: Researcher’s construct

Familiarization is the process of getting accustomed to the content of the transcribed data from the interviews. The researcher read the transcripts to generate a basic understanding of participants shared experiences and to familiarize with the data (Mortensen, 2020).

At the second stage, the researcher generated initial codes by assigning codes to the data. This was used to provide a brief description of what was raised or experiences shared during the interview. The researcher read through the transcribed data, interesting information in the data were noted down by assigning a code. This is a way to start organizing the data into groups (Mortensen, 2020). By assigning codes, the transcribed data was saved in rich text format and uploaded unto the Atlas.ti 6.2 data analysis software. The researcher identified throughout the transcribed data categories that best described the views and experiences of the participants in relation to their political participation in the two constituencies.

The third stage is where you interpret the codes assigned to your data. The researcher collated the codes into broader themes that best fit or interpreted the data. In arriving at the themes, the researcher moved codes back and forth to help identify the relationship between different codes

and themes (Mortensen, 2020). Some codes can become themes and some redundant. With the aid of the Atlas.ti 6.2 software, the researcher, highlighted patterns, themes, and significant similarities of the uploaded transcripts. Several categories and themes were established.

The fourth stage was to review themes that were identified during the third stage. The researcher read through all the extracts for which codes and themes had been assigned to be ensure codes fall under the appropriate theme (Mortensen, 2020). This was done to ensure that themes adequately represent and do not deviate from the information shared during the interviews.

At the fifth stage of data analysis, the researcher named and described each of the themes. The researcher describes what the themes are about and the essence of these themes. The researcher relates these themes to the research questions.

At the final stage, the researcher writes up report on the analysis of the data collected. The various themes and categories derived throughout the analysis is explained in detail. **Table 4.2.** shows the emerging themes and assigned codes derived from the data with its coded references that explains the number of times a particular code appeared in the data.

Table 4.2. Summary of Categories and Themes

Emerging Themes	Assigned Codes	Coded References
Challenges to Women Participation	Active Member	5
Measures to Improving Participation	Electoral Quotas	4
Importance of Women Participations	Empowerment	7
Women Representation in Constituencies	Inadequate Financial Resources	6
Women Underrepresentation in the Constituencies	Inadequate Support	7
	Level of Assistance	3
	Level of Participation	4
	Male Dominance	6
	Overcoming Political Challenges	2
	Participation Challenges	10
	Participation Importance	2
	Participation Measures	4
	Political Abuse & Violence	12
	Political Ideologies	4
	Proposed Leadership Style	4
	Selection Criteria	8
	Women Involvement	4

	Women Underrepresentation	6
	Women Representation	2

Source: Field data, Atlas ti.6.2

Five emerging themes and nineteen categories were derived from the interview responses. The section below presents on the themes with the various codes assigned to each theme. The coded references show the number of times a code appeared in the transcript. From the reference codes, political abuse and violence appeared twelve times in the transcript. Excerpts from both the interview and discussions is subsequently shared to equip readers with a better understanding of the research questions and objectives. A detailed discussion themes coupled with statements from participants are described and interpreted in this section. These statements are entirely participant’s opinions and experiences relating to women underrepresentation in these constituencies. The emergent themes and categories explain the political outlook for women in Ghana with the two constituencies as case studies. Table 4.2. shows that the most emergent category was Political Violence and Abuse which seemed to be the most important factor hindering women’s political participation and representation in the two constituencies with 12 coded references from the transcribed data. Thus, malicious lies, framing, stereotypes, biases, verbal abuse and violence against women political aspirants and leaders was a greater deterrent to women participation. This was followed by Participation Challenges with 10 coded references which is characterized by other challenges women encounter throughout their political journey. The next is Selection Criteria with 8 coded references, followed by Empowerment and inadequate support with 7 coded references each. The least is Overcoming Political Challenges with 2 coded references.

The emergent themes from the data collected that is the face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions is explained as follows. The themes were developed to best explain the research questions of this study. In this study, participants were active constituency executives and members, and it was a mix of both sexes with some form of education enough to express their selves and share their understanding on the subject.

4.2.1. Women Representation in the Constituencies

To determine the level of underrepresentation of women politically in these constituencies, the researcher first of all needed to identify their level of representation in these constituencies. Participants responses showed that women were severely underrepresented in the constituency. This was sub categorized into the level of participation and extent of women involvement in

constituency affairs. With women involvement, responses showed that women are mostly preoccupied with other activities such as work and family affairs leaving them with less time to attend to political issues in the constituency. This was attributed to their way of upbringing and training to prioritize family first amongst other things. Their level of participation in the constituency was limited to campaigning for candidates prior to elections after which they return to their normal lives devoid of politics. A participant from the Cape Coast North described women in its constituency as “passive political participants”. It was affirmed that men were preferred as polling agents over women due to electoral violence and abuses of which women are believed to possess less strength to fight. Additionally, aside few MP’s that were women, other political positions held by women in these two constituencies are limited to: women organizer, deputy women organizer, treasurer and secretary.

4.2.2. Women Underrepresentation in the Constituencies

The participants acknowledged that women were underrepresented in the political affairs of the constituencies. A participant indicated that 60% of polling agents were men whereas the remaining 40% were women (i.e., 340 women out of a total of 805 executives). Also, out of the 17 party executives in one constituency, only 3 were women and out of a total of 17 campaign team members only 1 is a woman likewise the zonal coordinators. This theme is categorized into male dominance, electoral quotas, political ideologies, political abuse and violence, inadequate support, selection criteria, inadequate financial resources. Participants explained that male dominance was as a result of favourable electoral quotas, selection criteria and the adequate support from sponsors amongst others. This was not the same for women as they are faced with unfavorable electoral quotas, political ideologies, rigid selection criteria’s, the lack of support from members of the constituency and business partners, political abuse, stereotypes and biases even after elected into power. There is no end to the political abuses and stereotypes against women. The selection criteria for polling agents according to a participant was male dominated as they preferred more males to women, women were not supportive of their own female candidates and sponsors did not mostly see the need to assist female candidates as they occupied with the political ideology that men are the best fit for the job. Education and wealth was another contributing factor to why women are not represented in their numbers as most women are not economically empowered and not well qualified to run the race. A participant shared response on the understanding of women underrepresentation as follows and another shared some experience on the selection criteria.

FGD R5

“Women underrepresentation is where women are not sufficiently represented in political leadership to partake in decision making at the local and national levels.” Participant believed that the women in the constituency could not contribute to decision making in the constituency as they were underrepresented.

Interview Participant 1

“Candidate should be a card bearer and a member of good standing. Candidate selection is partly based on national party criteria which looks at education and professional background, influence, communication skills. The candidate should be a resident of the constituency and reside there most often. For Okaikoi South constituency the participant indicated that another criterion will be tribe relations as the register consists of 52% Akan’s so automatically any Akan candidate that stands for elections wins be it a woman or a man. Candidate should have access to wealth, highly educated more than the men, popularity to qualify for selection. Among the criterion for selection was age in some cases such as the women’s organizer should be married, and above 35 years in the Cape Coast North Constituency. On the hand, the criterion for selecting a youth organizer in the Okaikoi South is that the candidate should be 40 years and above to qualify. One participant on the other hand threw more light on the selection criteria for political candidates in the constituency”.

4.2.3. Importance of Women Participation

This theme was sub categorized under participation importance where participants explained the importance of women political participation. Research has shown that women political participation is a necessary tool for development (Asuako, 2020). Some participants shared their experiences working with women and indicated amongst others that women were respectful of party structures and executed their roles with that in mind. Another indicated that women were humble and run an inclusive leadership delegating tasks. They continued to add that women are humble enough to sought for views of others executives and do not impose to a greater extent, they disagree and agree to come out with the best solutions to problems of the constituency. Women are considerate and communicate ahead of time scheduled tasks and duties. A participant added that some of the major projects in their constituency were frontline by women i.e., the construction of constituency libraries amongst others. Women were also described as unified beings, and great communicators by nature. As leaders, participants affirmed that they were able to mobilize people for community work towards development and

promote peace. These responses from the participants indicates the need for women representing sufficiently for a nation to attain full development. Participants were of the view that because the political sphere remains male dominated, not enough policies rolled out are in favour of women. Most of these policies meant for the nation at large are unfavourable to women and male centered since most of the decision makers are men. They added that the only way to ensure a gender balance was only if more women are represented in key decision-making positions but participants claim is not easily attainable as all odds seem to be against women political participation. The next theme discusses some measures participants think can help curb the menace. Below are some excerpts from some participants during the interviews on why it is important to ensure women political participation.

Interview P1 – OkaiKoi South

” Women are humble enough to sought for views of others executives and do not impose to a greater extent, they disagree and agree to come out with the best solutions to problems of the constituency”.

Interview P2 – Cape Coast North

“Women are a unified, and great communicator by nature. As leaders they are able to mobilize people for community work towards development.”

These participant attested that some female political leaders are humble and unified unlike some male political leaders. They believed that this helped the female leaders run a successful office.

4.2.4. Challenges to Women Participation

This theme is sub categorized into political abuse and violence, political ideologies, selection criteria, electoral quotas, inadequate financial resources, inadequate support, male dominance, and level of assistance. All these sub categories are the contributing factors to why women are underrepresented in these constituencies. Participants shared that woman are faced with political abuses such as verbal abuses, heavy backlash and criticisms, attacks on family and violence during elections. This according to participants makes politics unattractive to most women as they intend to protect their image hence their low political representation. With regards to the political ideologies, most residents believe politics is a man’s game and not for women. One participant used “tough reality” to describe the nature of politics in the

constituency. Selection criteria was the next major challenge to women political participation according to some of the participants; the selection criteria in most of these constituency according to the participants was rigid; it involves good educational qualifications or background, access to wealth as this is necessary to fund campaigns and other cost, tribalism in one of the constituency where mostly Akan candidates are most likely to win because Akan's make up about 52% of the voter's register. Most women as indicated by participants are not economically empowered which renders them unqualified to contest for political positions to some extent. Also they are not "active members" like one participant indicated and this is a selection requirement. Another challenge hindering women political participation was inadequate financial resources which include the lack of financial support from sponsors amongst others, women are denied the necessary support financially but instead business entities are willing support men political candidate. While men are able to rally support from both sexes during campaigns and rallies, women are unable to get their own female colleagues to support where necessary. A participant recounted an experience where women failed to show up in their numbers as required to support a female candidate. Below is an excerpt from the Focus Group Discussion where FGD R5 from Cape Coast North constituency had this to say;

"The lack of support from women to support their own. I quite remember when the women's wing was rallying support for our female candidate and only a few women came out to support. They all gave the excuses of not been available one way or the other. They were only available when motivations of some sort were offered showing that they only support on condition which is not good for the future of politics especially for women."

"Electoral Quotas at party and constituency level not favorable to women political participants. More seats are reserved for Male candidates as compared to female candidates" (Field data, 2021).

Male dominance in the political positions in the constituencies is as a result of all the above named factors. More women shun away from politics because some of these factors makes it unattractiveness. As indicated by one participant, FDG P4 during one of the interviews that "most of our leaders are men, and do not fully understand the plight of women. Yes, they roll out policies but how well do they study the ground to know that these policies meet the needs of the women and are capable of solving the challenges. The issue of women underrepresentation will continue to persists if leaders fail to incorporate more women in the process of addressing the issue" (Field data, 2021).

Another participant, FDG R2 also affirmed that “the political system is male dominated and so is the party executives of this constituency” (Field data, 2021).

Most of the female participants during the interview and focus group discussions stated that if not for their courage, confidence and resilience they would have bowed out of politics since a lot of challenging factors are working against women political participation. They further added that the women who managed to obtain seats as Member of Parliament in these constituencies are only a few and they did it with humility, perseverance and most importantly out of love for the constituency. They managed to win the hearts and love of the people gradually.

4.2.5. Measures to Improve Participation

This theme was to answer the third research question of some of the measures by the constituency to improve women political participation. It is sub categorized into proposed leadership style, empowerment, active membership, electoral quotas.

With regards to proposed leadership style, participants shared their proposed leadership vision which they believed would promote women political participation in the constituencies. This includes but was not limited to empowering women individually by investing in young entrepreneurs to ensure they are economically and financially sound to pursue their dreams. This would be done in collaboration with the women’s wing to help empower most of these potential women other than just been known for rallying support for political candidates. Other suggested measure includes enlightening the people through community training and advocacy to prepare them mentally to accept and support women political participation.

Active membership, most of the selection criteria for constituency required that the candidate aside been a card bearer must be an active member who participates in all meetings and political affairs of the constituency. Candidate must demonstrate love for the constituency and good relations with the residents. It was therefore concluded by the participants that for women to be able to increase their level of political participation, they should get involved in constituency political affairs frequently. While some participants disagreed with this, one participant believed that the Electoral quotas which comprises of the candidate quotas and legal gender quotas should be reviewed to reserve more decision making seats for women.

Sponsorship offers should be extended to women candidates to increase their chances of getting elected. Also support from both sexes especially women should be accorded to women political candidates to increase their sense of belonging.

Advocacy and trainings to enlighten residents on the need for social norm transformation aimed at helping residents to accept an inclusive participation and reduce the extent of political abuses and violence meted out to women political candidates.

Below are nine measures shared by participants from the two constituencies during the focus group discussions:

1. Elimination of all sorts of favoritism and biases by party and constituency executives in the selection process instead provide a fair and equal participation to all.”
2. Funding grassroots organizations that help build the capacity of women to participate individually and collectively in social, economic, and political life.
3. Incorporate men and women in training that is focused on supporting and promoting women as leaders and decision makers.
4. Promote community programs that foster leadership skills for women and promote gender equality.
5. Promote women leadership and decision making at all levels, including emergencies and peace negotiating tables.
6. Promote and all inclusion training on political systems, and women’s right to participation in decision making.
7. Eliminate structural obstacles and ideologies that hinder women’s political participation and hold those accountable for obstructing them to serve as an example.
8. Provide a safe and enabling political environment in which more women will be willing to participate without fear of physical or digital violence or verbal abuse.
9. The revision of the Electoral gender quotas which comprises of the candidate quotas and legal gender quotas. More political decision making seats should be reserved for women to enable them contribute equally to the development of the nation.
10. Revise some party internal measures that are not favourable to women political participation and redefine the role of the constituency women’s wing thus they take up more responsibilities which will include taking key decisions (Field data, 2021).

The final section of this section was to present some of the other unique projects of these constituencies that is aimed at improving women political participation. The participants affirmed that some of these measures are yet to be rolled out. This measures includes:

Cape Coast North

1. Work together with some private institutions to get some of the youth into training institutions that would help equip them with employable skills.
2. Work to get more women and mostly the youth into agriculture which will empower them economically.
3. Continued commitment to helping young women in particular to develop their self-esteem and self-confidence as most of these women lack the self-confidence and self-esteem to compete for political roles
4. On education, we would work on attracting one of the community senior high schools to the constituency to increase access to education.
5. Work on resolving the inability of the youth in the area to access schools in the metropolis and would work to ensure that indigenes would get access to schools in Cape Coast.
6. Provide jobs to address the issue of unemployment in the constituency was very worrying.
7. Set up libraries and reading rooms and organize special classes and computer studies for students to enhance educational standards in the constituency.

Okaikoi South

1. Education and Training - Organize women empowerment programmes, forums and outreaches to reach out to constituency women and understand their needs and fight discriminations against women in the constituency.
2. Construction of a fully furnished Library for constituency members especially women to equip themselves with knowledge and information for future.
3. Educating women in the constituency by enrolling women into vocational training and the men in technical training (i.e., Ten beneficiaries have been enrolled in print and design training).
4. Economic Empowerment - Channel more attention and investment to women entrepreneurs and as such we have started with:
5. Provide financial assistance occasionally to market women and other women in need.

6. Offering ten fresh female university graduates employment opportunities as this will encourage more ladies in the constituency to study and bring a positive change to women political participation.
7. Monthly allowances allocated to trainees to enable them go through the training.
8. Some other women have been enrolled in vocational training such as sowing and hairdressing.

4.3. Results

The following results presented the shared lived experiences of women and men who are active players of the constituencies. In this section, the results are discussed in relation to each research question. One interview participant summarized this study as “the active participation of women in a country’s local politics is a right and a necessity” (Field data, 2021). “A right in that the constitution of both parties NPP and NDC encourage the equal participation of both genders and a necessity in the sense that a country cannot attain its full potential and democracy if half of its population is inactive” (Field data, 2021).

“I am a woman who is guided by a popular quote of Sahle-Work Zewde the president of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (Field data, 2021). She explains that “leadership is an attitude which should begin with paying attention to your surroundings and having a sense of responsibility. You can nurture this wherever you are” (Zewde, 2019; Field data, 2021).

The first research question for this study sought to identify their current political representation in these two constituencies and elaborated further on their participatory roles in these constituencies. This showed the level of underrepresentation in the political affairs of the constituency. Aside the fact that in one constituency a women was the MP, their participatory roles were limited to women organizer, deputy women organizer, treasurer, and secretary. Other key roles as described by one participant such as the organizer, youth leaders amongst others had never been occupied by a woman. Women were poorly represented in these two constituencies and even as delegates they were underrepresented.

The second research question sought to identify and examine the challenges that hindered women political participation in the constituencies. The participants believed that the lack of support for female candidates, access to wealth, political violence and abuse, unfavorable electoral quotas, and unfavorable selection criterions were the main factors that hindered women political participation in these constituencies. A participant indicated that a highly

educated woman with access to wealth is likely to increase her chances of being selected and elected as a leader. This hinders candidates with the necessary experience but without wealth lose out on being selected for any position.

The third research question sought to identify and examine the measures put in place to improve women's political participation. Participants believed that empowering women economically by investing in their business and enrolling others in vocational training to acquire skills needed to be gainfully employed was very necessary. They also believed that an economically empowered and educated woman is confident and mostly well prepared for the political encounters that lie ahead.

A discrepancy may occur in qualitative research. It is where participants' response(s) may differ from any identified category or patterns. This study did not present more of such cases. An exception is when a participant during the focus group discussion indicated that some leaders were doing their best to promote women political representation. The participant believed that to some extent leaders were playing their roles. Another discrepancy is when the interview participants indicated the different participatory roles women play in the constituencies. The roles occupied in one constituency differed from the other.

4.4. Conclusion

The results of the study were presented in this chapter including participant's demographics and findings that answer the three research questions posed. The results as indicated earlier presented five major themes. The interpretations of findings are discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. Introduction

This chapter is to provide a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations, and the significance of this study based on the insights gathered from the focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews conducted. The research focused on the women political underrepresentation in two constituencies namely the Okai Koi South and Cape Coast North. Data was used from two sources, interviews and focus group discussions and in-depth literature search.

The results of the analysis presented five major themes: Challenges to Women Participation, Measures to Improving Participation, Importance of Women Participations, Women Representation in Constituencies, and Women Underrepresentation in the Constituencies out of which emerged several categories to explain these themes. Thirteen participants were engaged for this study and all participants believed that women were underrepresented in the political affairs of the constituency and nation in general. They attributed the reasons for women underrepresentation to financials, education, and lack of support for women candidates resulting in male dominance.

5.1. Recommendations

Equal participation of both men and women in politics is necessary for complete development to be achieved therefore women should be given equal rights and the same opportunities as men to enable them participate fully at all levels of politics.

The first recommendation will be to train men and women on the need to identify with women and accept their participation. This will help reduce stereotypes, discriminations and biases levelled against women political candidates.

The second recommendation will be easy and equal access to education. More women should be encouraged to seek knowledge because it is power.

The third recommendation will be the enforcement of gender sensitive policies that favour women and encourages their participation. Electoral quotas both at the national and constituency level should be reviewed and revised to accommodate more potential women in

politics. Government should ensure to enforce laws that measure that the right quotas are awarded women and their effectiveness when in command should be measured.

5.2. Recommendations for Future Studies

This study which employed qualitative research design explored. A future qualitative research is required to understand why measures put in place to promote women political participation still yield not yield a significant improvement in women political participation till date. The research should also focus on how this suggested measures are monitored to ensure its effectiveness. The findings also revealed that men see women as threats and do not provide the necessary support to promote their active political participation. It further revealed the lack of support from their fellow women as another factor inhibiting women's political participation in sufficient numbers. Qualitative research should address why this is so and what can be done to reduce its impact in our political system.

5.3. Summary of the Findings

The problem this qualitative study sought to address was women underrepresentation using the two constituencies i.e., Okaikoi South and Cape Coast North as a case study. The emerging issues were that government and constituency leaders had failed in protecting the rights of women which has resulted in their underrepresentation in leadership positions. Prior to conducting this research, women were facing challenges in political participation. Even though improvements have been made but at a slow pace and the results not very encouraging in some countries. Participation in Africa especially still remains low although international laws recognized and have granted participation rights to women (Anigwe, 2014). The study showed that women continue to be underrepresented. They face challenges when standing for positions and when elected they continue to face discriminations, stereotyping, and biases. For women order to survive this environment, they must show humility, build strong networks and alliances with both sexes to protect their interest and positions. The two constituencies have history of women winning only once that is 2020 for Okaikoi South and 2016 for Cape Coast North.

The participants expressed that most women are still financially barred due to their economic instability. Finance is seen as a major factor in getting political positions because candidates require money to cover campaign cost amongst others. Most men are financially stable and able to finance their campaigns hence the reason for the male dominance. The women are unable to raise money to oppose the men candidates.

Electoral Quotas should be reviewed and be made flexible to incorporate more women in decision making roles, selection criteria from national and constituency level should also be flexible to accommodate more women.

As indicated in the theoretical framework by Kunovich & Paxton (2005), the findings of this study supported the three factors raised in the theory which were ideology in terms of the abuses and violence and discrimination against women, structural in terms of education and other skills required to qualify, and political in terms of electoral quotas that are unfavourable to women political participation.

5.4. Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following conclusions have been drawn:

Firstly, women are still severely underrepresented in politics and this manifest itself in the Okai Koi South and Cape Coast North Constituencies through their elected member of parliament, polling station executives, constituency executives, and electoral area coordinators.

Secondly, women political participation is necessary as it will help in decision making that fulfills overall development of a nation. Their inability to participate infringes on their rights and freedom and all efforts in attaining gender balance in political participation and other decision making positions have been long battled for. Their participation in local level politics can be seen as a stepping stone in gaining political experience to succeed in national level politics. Local level politics is the lifeblood or a build-up for national level politics and each depends on the other for survival. Women adequate representation in politics at the local level would mean a steady rise in the number women at the national level. Although this has not been possible due to the continuous lack of attention to gender equality i.e., women representation in political leadership.

Thirdly, the nature of politics in Ghana remains male dominated and efforts are being made to ensure gender equality although it is unknown to anyone when this will be fully achieved. This study has shed more light on old knowledge such as the real state of women political representation at the grassroots level in these two constituencies, and provided a better understanding of the factors that hinder women active political participation at the grassroots level which preclude their national level political participation. The study also presented measures that help contribute to the successful representation of women in grassroots politics,

and may serve as a guide to encourage more women to get involved in local level politics to help government achieve gender parity.

Finally, leaders can start by correcting institutional factors that affect women political participation such as reviewing and revising the electoral quotas thus more reserved seats could enhance the number of females in political leadership in Ghana. Also addressing party internal regulations, and reemphasizing the need for women's wing while redefining roles of existing ones to include more decision taking exercises. Do away with all forms of biases, stereotypes, heavy backlash, and criticisms at female political aspirants and leaders.

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Appendix 1: Letter of Invitation to Participate

Sandra Ofosu
The Church of Pentecost
C/O Love Assembly
P.O.BOX AO 436
Abossey-Okai

The Party Office
Okai Koi South Constituency
Awudome, Accra

Dear Madam,

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW REQUEST – FOR THE AWARD OF MA IN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION (SANDRA OFOSU)

My name is Sandra Ofosu, and I am a final year graduate student at the Ghana Institute of Journalism. Development Communication has been of interest to me and I am currently conducting research in the area of Gender Studies.

My area of concentration is in Women Underrepresentation in Grassroots leadership and I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you briefly to discuss your experience and views on the subject. I am especially interested in your views regarding women underrepresentation within the constituency and the party in general. Any further insights you have would be greatly appreciated.

Kindly reach out to me at your earliest convenience if you are able to find time to meet with me.

Thank you so much and I look forward to meeting with you soon.

Yours faithfully,

Sandra Ofosu
sofosu22@gmail.com
0242045771

Appendix 2: Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

I would like the permission to conduct a tape-recorded interview with your experiences and views on the underrepresentation of women in politics. Questions will focus on their underrepresentation in the constituency starting from the polling stations to party executives. Questions do not address sensitive topics, and your participation is not considered to entail personal risk. Nevertheless, as a participant, you have the right to refuse to answer any of the questions posed, and you may withdraw from the interview at any time. Your participation in this interview is strictly voluntary.

The interview will take approximately 60 minutes. The interview will be tape-recorded. I will also take notes during our conversation. As a participant, your anonymity will be protected. My notes will not contain your name. You will be identified only by general descriptors, including gender, age, and occupation. These notes are for my sole use and will not be available to anyone else. Results from this research are intended for future use in academic publishing and conferences. Please let me know if you would like to be advised on the findings of this research.

If you have any questions regarding the research, you may contact me at **0242045771**.

If you consent to participate in a tape-recorded interview, please sign below.

Participants Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

Thank you for your time. Your participation is very much appreciated.

Appendix 3: Interview Guides

GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

WOMEN UNDERREPRESENTATION IN GRASSROOTS POLITICS IN THE CONSTITUENCY (OKAI KOI SOUTH AND CAPE COAST NORTH CONSTITUENCIES)

INTERVIEW GUIDE ONE

Dear respondent, I am a post-graduate student at the Ghana Institute of Journalism undertaking a research on ‘WOMEN UNDERREPRESENTATION IN GRASSROOTS POLITICS IN THE CONSTITUENCY’.

I would like you to help me answer these questions to aid me in obtaining information for this research. I guarantee that your response will be used strictly for the purpose of this research which is academic. Your responses will be strictly confidential.

Women representation in the Constituency

- Describe the political executive structure of the constituency?
- Which of these executives are women?
- Would you say that men and women have different roles in the constituency? How different are these roles?
- Do you think women are underrepresented in your constituency?
- In your view, why are women not sufficiently represented in the constituency?

Efforts to promote Women representation

- What are some of the internal (constituency level) efforts made to promote the active involvement of women in the constituency?
- What are some of the external (party level) efforts made to promote the active involvement of women in the constituency?

Factors inhibiting women political participation

- What are some of the reasons for male dominance in our political sphere despite all efforts to ensure gender balance at the:
 - grassroots leadership
 - elite

- Do the following factors contribute to a woman's possibility or chances of getting elected into power in the constituency?

Wealth

Fame/ Popularity

Education

Marital Status

Profession / Occupation

Family / Spousal Reputation

Native of the Community

Age

Tribe / Race

- In what way(s) do the factors above contribute to the chances of a women getting elected into power within the constituency?
- What are some of the likely stereotypes, bias, and prejudices women in political positions within the constituency face?
 1. Describe the significance of their experience to deal with this and still sought leadership positions in the constituency?
- Elaborate on the challenges to women's political participation in the constituency?

Importance of Women representation

- Representation of women in political positions is understood to be key to development? Yes, or No? Why?
- Describe your experiences (projects and achievement) working with women in the constituency?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM
WOMEN UNDERREPRESENTATION IN GRASSROOTS POLITICS IN THE
CONSTITUENCY (CAPE COAST NORTH CONSTITUENCY)

INTERVIEW GUIDE – FGD TWO

Dear respondents, I am a post-graduate student at the Ghana Institute of Journalism undertaking a research on ‘WOMEN UNDERREPRESENTATION IN GRASSROOTS POLITICS IN THE CONSTITUENCY’.

I would like you to help me answer these questions to aid me in obtaining information for this research. I guarantee that your response will be used strictly for the purpose of this research which is academic. Your responses will be strictly confidential.

Women Underrepresentation

What is your understanding of women underrepresentation in political leadership at the local and elite levels?

Are women actively involved in constituency meetings/rallies? Yes, or No. Why?

Do you think decision makers are doing enough to get women involved in local politics? Yes or No. Why?

What would you do differently if you were a leader?

Selection Criteria

What are the criteria for your selection as a polling station agent?

What are the criteria for your selection as a constituency delegate?

What are the criteria for your selection as an active women’s wing member?

Challenges to women representation

Do you think the selection criteria hinders / encourages women participation in politics?

What challenges are women political aspirants likely to face? Based on your experience, are they able to overcome or succumb to these challenges?

What challenges do women political leaders face? How did they overcome these challenges?

Measures to improve women representation

What are some of measures for improving women’s political representation in the constituency?

Appendix 4: Transcription (Focus Group Discussion – Cape Coast North)

Women Underrepresentation

1. What is your understanding of women underrepresentation in political leadership at the local and elite levels?

Women underrepresentation in where women are not sufficiently represented in political leadership to partake in decision making at the local and national levels.

Women underrepresentation is where less female is in the political sphere steering affairs.

2. Are women actively involved in constituency meetings and rallies? Yes, or No? Why?

All Participants: No

Why?

FGD R2

Women in this constituency are mostly traders by profession, aside that they were well brought up to take care of their homes of which they take pride in. Politics is not an area that women of this constituency find appealing enough to participate in. They are not well prepared to face all the violence, insults and accusations and sometimes attack on family. Women like to protect their most treasured possession which is family.

They only show interest when it is time for elections and rallies to rally support for a candidate but are not always readily available to assist in constituency affairs and attend meetings.

FGD R1

Women of this constituency are passive political participant except those in full time politics, the rest only show up during election periods to either support a candidate after which they go back to their regular routines. They are always occupied and prefer to go to church meetings and all other meetings except constituency meetings.

Do you think decision makers are doing enough to get women involved in local politics? Yes, or No. Why?

FDG R4

No, issues are being addressed at the national level and not much has been done to check access to education and other resources to empower more women. The political system at both grassroots and elite levels are still male dominated and our leaders are comfortable with that

because they perceive women as threats not as potential leaders who can help build a better constituency.

The lack of support from our leaders to promote women candidates is an issue of concern not only in this constituency but at the national levels. Also women are our own enemies as the level of support they accord men candidates are not the same support they accord women candidates.

FDG R2

No, the political system is male dominated and so is the party executives of this constituency. There is always news about the empowerment of women but none of these ever materialized and its impact certainly not felt. Even though we have come a long way in achieving gender parity, the system is being controlled and manipulated by men with no reverence to women whatsoever. Right from polling station male dominate as most leaders prefer male candidates over women with the excuse that elections are characterized with violence of which women cannot fight back nor protect others.

Selection Criteria

You are a polling station agent, what are some of the criteria for your selection?

FGD R3

Aside meeting all the qualifications of the Electoral Commission that is minimum education of SHS amongst others, you need to be an active member of the constituency and demonstrate your love and dedication for the constituency.

You are a delegate, what was the criteria for your selection?

FGD R1

You need to be an active member of the constituency, that is participate in all meetings held in the constituency, attend all rallies, build that relationship with the people and be recognized by them, be able to communicate and move the people and most importantly be a card bearer. Demonstrate your love and passion for the constituency and must have been a resident and served the constituency for 10 years or more. Mostly favored candidates who tend to occupy these positions are familiar faces and possess the necessary requirements such access to money, and other personal resources.

The selection for Member of Parliament is first done in the constituency based on factors such as electoral systems, party ideologies, political culture. Upon acceptance by the constituency, the candidates are vetted by national and one candidate is selected to represent a party and will be on the ballot paper. This is done through primary elections where only delegates are allowed to vote to choose a candidate.

With party executives, elections are conducted by constituency Electoral Committee and active members who are allowed to participate.

What would you do differently if you were a leader?

FGD R5

I believe women leaders should serve as a model to prove why it is to believe and trust in women as equal candidates who can yield positive results when in command.

I will help apply fully democratic standards at all levels of decision making in the constituency and beyond when given the mandate. This will set the stage for a country's social and economic development.

Empower women individually by investing in young women and entrepreneurs and putting them on platforms to serve as role models to the rest. The women's wing for instance was set up to empower more women through advocacy amongst the rest but has lately been reduced to rallying female voters to exercise their voting rights during elections.

FDG R2

Enlighten the people through community training and advocacy on the need for social norm transformation. This will help promote the acceptance of more women in political decision making roles.

Challenges to women representation

Do you think the selection criteria hinders / encourages women participation in politics?

FGD R3

Yes, most women are not active members, do not attend meetings and rallies regularly due to their daily work schedules. Even though they are membership card bearers, they are unable to

hold any political position in the constituency. This makes politics in my opinion unattractive for most women.

FGD R4

Yes, most of these selection criteria are more favourable to men. For polling station agents for instance, men are mostly preferred over women due to the violence and abuses that are likely to occur during elections

What challenges are women political aspirants likely to face? Based on your experience, are they able to overcome or succumb to these challenges?

FGD R5

They are likely to face verbal and digital abuses, ridicules from their fellow male aspirants, and citizens.

The lack of support from women. I quite remember when the women's wing was rallying support for our female candidate and only a few women came out to support. They all gave the excuses of not been available one way or the other. They were only available when motivations of some sort were offered showing that they only support on condition which is not good for the future of politics especially for women.

What challenges do women political leaders face? How did they overcome these challenges?

FGD R4

They continue to all forms of abuses including verbal, attack on family, heavy backlash and criticisms, framing and lying amongst other

Most men are likely to get sponsorship deals because they are known as political animals as they have been in the system for long enough. Women are barely starting and so investors are more likely to trust their resources in the hands of men who are deemed more experienced than women. This has made politics less attractive to most women.

The legal framework in force is rather ineffective and a contributing factor to women political underrepresentation.

Amidst all these challenges, the female leader is able to compose and achieve what they set out to do.

Coupled with all these challenges, wealth is another factor, politics require money lots of it to fund campaigns, posters, banners, motivate citizens amongst others. Most women shy away from political positions because of money. Most of these potential women are not economically empowered to compete with most of the men who are independently empowered financially and physically.

Measures to improve women representation

What are some of measures for improving women's political representation in the constituency?

FGD R5 & R2

Support, women should always support women regardless of their political affiliations and the unbridled male mentality should be disregarded.

The revision of the various types of quotas i.e., Electoral gender quotas which comprises of the candidate quotas and legal gender quotas. More political decision making seats should be reserved for women.

Possession of wealth should not be criteria for selection and definitely not

Elimination of all sorts of favoritism and biases by party and constituency executives in the selection process instead provide a fair and equal participation.