

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

**AN ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN GHANA
UNDER SDG5**



DECEMBER 2019

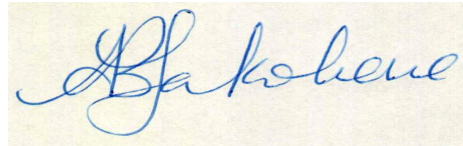
DECLARATION

I, **Bertha Bannor**, do hereby declare that apart from references to works of other authors which have been duly acknowledged, this dissertation is the result of my own research work carried out under the supervision of Dr. Mrs. Afua Boatemaa Yakohene. It has not been presented in part or in whole to any institution for the award of a degree.



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13 April 2021

DATE:.....

14 April, 2021

DATE:.....

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to God Almighty for His divine grace, wisdom and strength. I also dedicate it to my spouse Benedict Desmennu and to my children Joshua and Moyo for the continuous love and support.

Finally, I dedicate it to my supervisor Dr. Mrs. Afua Boatemaa Yakohene for the support and encouragement.

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My utmost gratitude is to God Almighty for keeping me in all my ways. To my husband Benny, thank you for your support - physical, spiritual and emotional. It made a BIG difference. To my children, Joshua and Moyo, I am grateful for bearing with me. Missing *mummy time* is not cool, but you managed to bear with that during my period of studies.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Affirmative Action
AAB	Affirmative Action Bill
ACHPR	African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights
AU	African Union
AWDF	African Women Development Fund
BPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEFM	Child and Early Forced Marriage
CPP	Convention People's Party
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DFID	Department for International Development
DPs	Development Partners
EC	Electoral Commission
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting
FRC	Fourth Republican Constitution
GAF	Ghana Armed Forces
GenCED	Gender Center for Development
GoG	Government of Ghana
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum on the SDGs
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
MDAs	Municipal and District Assemblies
MDG3	Millennium Development Goal Three
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoGCSP	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection
MOWAC	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs
MPs	Members of Parliament
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NETRIGHT	Network for Women's Rights in Ghana
NORSAAC	Northern Sector Action on Awareness Centre
NPP	New Patriotic Party

PNDC	Provisional National Defense Council
RCCs	Regional Coordinating Councils
SDG5	Sustainable Development Goal Five
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
TFDWM	31st December Women's Movement
UDHR	Universal Declaration on Human Rights
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNOWAS	United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VNR	Voluntary National Reviews
WAJU	Women and Juvenile Unit
WFP	World Food Program
WILDAF	Women in Law and Development
WSR	Women Situation Room
YWCA	Young Women Christian Association

ABSTRACT

The representation of women in political and public life has been historically low across the globe despite the efforts being made to reverse the trend. Very few countries have recorded marginal and inconsistent increase in women's representation. Ghana is not exempted from this global trend. This study focused on analyzing women's political participation in Ghana in the context of sustainable development, an attempt to identify factors that have positively affected women's political participation, challenges faced by women occupying and intending to occupy political positions and innovative ways of dealing with these challenges. The methodology was qualitative in design and involved online survey with purposively selected members of the general public and interviews with women parliamentarians, district assembly and unit committee members, political party executives and also representatives from non-governmental organizations. In addition to primary data from respondents, the study relied on secondary data from existing literature to support the work. The study found out that despite domestic and international commitments and efforts to increase women's political participation, the statistics is still low at both national and local government levels with very marginal rise particularly in the number of contestants for elective positions. Since 1992, women's representation in the national parliament has been below 13 percent. The study realized that women occupying and intending to occupy political positions face similar and sometimes peculiar challenges including excessive monetization of politics, political party gatekeeping and the 'godfather' syndrome and lack of support from family, media and society due to the patriarchal society. It is a wake-up call for all stakeholders. - government, women's groups, non-governmental organizations, civil society, traditional and religious leaders, development partners and women themselves to work together. The passage of the affirmative action bill into law coupled with proper implementation, monitoring and evaluation by all stakeholders will make a difference in meeting the Sustainable Development Goal 5.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Research Problem

The promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment has become a global agenda of high importance. It is said that women's full and equal participation, and the integration of gender perspectives into every endeavour are key to global development¹. In September 2000, heads of state and governments from 189 countries met at the United Nations (UN) in New York at the Millennium Summit and adopted what became known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Eight MDGs were set to encourage all countries, rich or poor, big or small, to focus on human development problems. These goals were mainly about fundamental human rights – the rights of every woman, man and child to shelter, health, education, and security as pledged in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Millennium Declaration. It was said that they were the most comprehensive, specific, and broadly supported development goals the world had ever agreed upon and were expected to be achieved by 2015. It was in this context that the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment was set as goal three (MDG3) of the eight MDGs. The specific target that was to be met under the MDG3 was “to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005, and in all levels of education by 2015”².

The MDGs' report 2015 showed that at the end of 2015, substantial progress had been made regarding the MDGs. For instance, the world had already realized the first MDG of halving the extreme poverty rate by 2015. However, the achievements with regard to all the eight goals had been uneven. For instance, the MDG3 was set to promote gender equality and empower women. Nevertheless, only one target was set to be achieved: to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005, and in all levels of education by 2015. At the end of 2015, progress had been

made globally with regard to equality in primary education between girls and boys. Unfortunately, other important elements such as the elimination of unequal division of unpaid care and domestic work, women's limited control over property and assets, and women's unequal representation in public and private decision making, that would contribute to achieving gender equality and empowering women in a holistic manner, were not set as targets for the MDG3. This trend of limiting the number of specific targets for each of the goals was common with most of the MDGs and contributed to the challenges the MDGs faced in their implementation. As a result, there was the need to find new and sustainable ways of completing the unfinished business of the MDGs.

Consequently, in 2015, world leaders again met and set out to defy the odds, committing themselves to achieve 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The SDGs have 169 targets, most of which are a continuation and expansion of the MDGs targets that never got to be achieved. It was in this vain that goal 5 of the SDGs (SDG5) was set to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls³. Included in the SDG5 targets, specifically SDG5.5, is the target to “ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life”⁴. The proposed indicators are the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments and local government, and the proportion of women in managerial positions.

Research shows that women's political participation and representation in governance are taken as an indicator of the general level of public sector effectiveness, accountability and the overall development of states⁵. On the contrary, the level of women's participation in politics and political processes is still low globally, and only a few countries have made progress towards gender equality in political participation. As of November 2018, women hold an average of 24% of parliamentary seats globally⁶. With the exception of Rwanda, Cuba and Bolivia that have achieved gender parity

as of January 2019 (61.3%, 53.2% and 53.1% of members of parliament are women respectively)⁷, only few countries have made progress towards gender parity in political participation globally. In sub-Saharan Africa for instance, countries such as Namibia, Mozambique, Tanzania and South Africa have made tremendous progress towards gender equality in political participation at the parliamentary level. It is worth noting that many of these countries obtained this achievement through the implementation of innovative strategies to promote and make progress in women's political participation and representation⁸.

With a global average of just 24.3 (as of January 2019) per cent of women in national parliaments, most Parliaments remain male-dominated. While the Nordic countries lead in the number of women in national parliaments with a regional average of 42.5%, the sub-Saharan Africa region has an average of 23.9% and countries in the Pacific region lag behind with an average of 16.3%. Women Members of Parliament (MPs) are not only a few, but also, they usually lack equal representation in senior positions or on decision-making bodies⁹. In Ghana (as of January 2019), only 35 out of 275 parliamentarians (12.7%) are women lower than the average recorded for the sub-Saharan region, with less than 30% being Ministers of State and District Chief Executives¹⁰. Few others have been appointed to the positions of Chief Justice, Attorney General and Chair of the Electoral Commission.

Similarly, low participation by women at the local government level is also recorded. Over the years, few women in Ghana have contested for positions in local government elections and very few have actually won the elections when compared to their male counterparts. In 2016, out of the 18,938 candidates that contested for the District Assembly level¹¹ elections, only 1,182 were women¹². This is a clear indication of the low representation and participation of women in politics in Ghana.

This notwithstanding, Ghana is making gradual progress in promoting women's participation in political leadership and processes particularly since the year 2000. Statistics from the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC) shows that 19 women were elected as MPs in the year 2000, 25 in 2004, 20 in 2008, 30 in 2012 and 35 in the 2016 elections. Whilst this represents gradual progress, the numbers are still very low compared to government's objective of 30% women representation. Some progress has also been made at the local government level as the number of women who contest in the district assembly elections has seen some marginal increase over the years. This marginal increase however does not translate into the numbers that actually win elections, as these are relatively low. The gradual increases in numbers, elections after elections is said to portray the increasing interest by women in participating in politics both at the national and local government levels. Ghana as a state party to the SDGs, continues to strive to reach the set targets including the SDG5 by 2030.

1.1 Statement of the Research Problem

From the local to the global level, women's leadership and political participation are limited. Women are under-represented as voters, as well as in leadership positions, whether in elected offices, the civil service, the private sector or even in academia. This occurs despite their proven abilities as leaders and agents of change, and their right to participate equally in democratic governance¹³.

It is said that women's political participation is an essential component for sustainable development. That the SDGs will only be achieved if women are able to participate as equal partners, decision makers, and beneficiaries of the sustainable development of their societies. One of the most effective ways of improving the status and well-being of women is by ensuring their full, equal and effective participation in decision making at all levels of political, economic and social life. It is evi-

denced that this approach promotes and protects women's human rights while allowing society to benefit from the diverse experiences, talents and capabilities of all its members¹⁴.

Over the years, Ghana has demonstrated commitment to promoting gender equality and empowering women including through promoting their full participation and representation in politics. This objective, which is part of the SDG5 specific targets, was one of the goals that evaded the world, including Ghana under MDG3. While some marginal progress has been made with women's participation and representation in politics particularly at the national and local government level, women are still very much at the periphery of political, economic and social decisions and rely most often on decisions made by others - men - regarding their lives.

Women continue to be limited by many barriers to their participation in politics in Ghana. Those who have managed to get involved in politics or take leadership positions continue to make efforts to overcome the barriers to their full participation in politics, making worthy contribution to Ghana's patriarchal political landscape and leave a positive mark on the country's political fabric.

This study aims to analyze women's participation in politics in Ghana under SDG5 from 2015 to 2019. In doing so, it looks at the extent to which women have participated in politics at the Parliamentary and District Assembly level under the Fourth Republic, the challenges they face before and while engaging in politics and the nontraditional or innovative solutions to address these challenges in the context of the SDGs.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the problem stated above, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) How has women's political participation in Ghana been under the 4th Republic?

- 2) What factors may be contributing positively to women's political participation in Ghana under SDG 5?
- 3) What are the challenges facing women occupying and intending to occupy political positions in Ghana?
- 4) What innovative solutions could be adopted to promote women's participation in Ghana?

1.3 Research Objectives

The general objective of the research is to analyze women's political participation in Ghana under SDG5. Specifically, it seeks to:

- 1) Find out how women's political participation in Ghana has been under the 4th Republic?
- 2) Find out what factors may be contributing positively to women's political participation in Ghana under SDG 5.
- 3) Identify the challenges facing women occupying and intending to occupy political positions in Ghana.
- 4) Identify innovative solutions that could be adopted to promote women's participation in politics in Ghana.

1.4 Scope of Study

Political participation covers a wide range of activities and engagements. These include voting, standing for office, membership in political party and taking part in the political campaigns of the political parties. Other activities considered as part of political participation include exerting influence in the decision-making process through public debate, and dialogue with elected representatives or through their capacity to organize themselves; or exercise public power by holding public office at different levels of administrations - local, regional, national and international - among other activities¹⁵. This study focuses on women intending to engage in politics as well as those who are already engaged in politics and political processes in Ghana. Women's participation under

SDG5 relates to political, economic and social participation. However, this study focuses on only the aspect of women's participation in politics, specifically engagement in political processes and representation at the parliamentary and district level. In doing so, it considers women's participation in politics under the Fourth Republic of Ghana. This approach gives a better picture of women's participation since Ghana became democratic. The study especially focuses on the period from 2011 to 2019 during which Ghana held two presidential and parliamentary elections. The time frame allows the study to capture information relating to pre-SDG political environment particularly as it relates to the MDGs period and the lead up to SDGs.

1.5 Rationale of Study

The participation of women in politics is said to be an important governance and gender equality issue. This is because of the perceived and acknowledged potential contribution of women to democracy and democratic development. Ghana has recorded gradual increase in women's participation in politics over the last couple of decades at both local and national level. The advocacy to increase women's political participation has been ongoing at various levels. However, women continue to face challenges not only prior to engaging in politics but also when they enter into politics and are undertaking political endeavours.

The research seeks to analyze women's participation in politics in Ghana under SDG 5. In doing so, it among other things, looks into the characteristics of the current trend of women's participation and representation in politics and the challenges they face not only before entering into politics but also whilst they occupy political positions and are involved in political engagements. Findings from the study will inform the constituents of civil society, donor partners and government about the state of affairs of women who are already engaged in politics and the support required to help them remain in politics and contribute to socioeconomic and political development in Ghana and beyond.

This is relevant to policy formulation and implementation and would consequently contribute to promoting women's political participation in general.

1.6 Hypothesis

The study hypothesizes that women's political participation remains constrained.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

1.7.1 Background

The theoretical and/or conceptual framework in research explains the path of the research and grounds it firmly in theoretical and/or conceptual constructs. The overall aim of the two frameworks is to make research findings more meaningful and acceptable, and ensures generalizability¹⁶.

This study employs the conceptual framework of political participation.

The concept of political participation can be traced back to the era of the ancient Greeks, when the question about participation including in politics, and its relation with social and human development came up among scholars for consideration. One of the most extended considerations of the effects of participation particularly in the political affairs of states is that of Aristotle. He analyzed the Greek City States, to assess what arrangement, most likely contributed to human happiness and "the good life" and concluded that participation in the affairs of state as a citizen, was crucial to the development and fulfillment of the human personality. In his estimation, to be excluded from politics even as slaves, implied that one did not develop fully the faculty of reason, a sense of responsibilities for others welfare, a disposition towards prudent and balanced judgments. While participation did not unflinchingly produce such virtues in all persons, its denial contributed to ignorance and selfishness.

Since the Aristotelian considerations of political participation, various social scientists have continued to conceptualize political participation in varying ways which are influenced by prevailing circumstances and political environment. The late 60s and 70s for instance, saw the conceptualization of political participation by scholars such as Max Kaase, Samuel P. Huntington, Joan M. Nelson, Sidney Verba and Norman Nie among other scholars. The various conceptualization of political participation have resulted in variations including as it relates to its definition, typologies and assumptions among other elements. The debate and considerations continue to present days as the dynamics of global political development continues to give course for further and revised considerations.

1.7.2 Conceptualizing Political Participation

The concept of political participation is broadly defined by social scientist as being the process through which an individual plays a role in the political life of his or her society, has the opportunity to participate in deciding what the common goals of the society are, and the best strategies to employ in order to achieve these goals¹⁷. Political participation has also been described as the actual participation in voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers, and directly or indirectly, in the formation of public policy. It is said that people participate in politics in many different ways, with varying degrees of emotional involvement and at different levels of the system. Traditional democratic theory generally regards participation by the individual in political activity as a virtue in its own right. Participation has been seen as a civic duty, as a sign of political health, as the best method of ensuring that one's private interests are not neglected and as a sine qua none of a democracy. Generally, this perspective was predicted, upon a Greek view, of the private man as an animal or idiot, or the more calculative eighteenth century view, of participation as being caused by a deliberate weighing, of the alternatives to tyranny or oligarchy¹⁸.

Verba and Nie¹⁹ define political participation as behavior designed to affect the choice of governmental personnel and/or policies. They posit that "... where few take part in [political] decisions there is little democracy; the more participation there is in decisions the more democracy there is...". Verba et al²⁰ also reiterates the importance of political participation and highlights that "[c]itizen participation is at the heart of democracy. Indeed, democracy is unthinkable without the ability of citizens to participate freely in the government process".

Barnes and Kaase²¹ define political participation as "all voluntary activities by individual citizens intended to influence either directly or indirectly political choices at various levels of the political system." For Joan Nelson²², political participation is the "action by private citizens intended to influence the actions or the composition of national or local governments". According to the International Encyclopedia of Government and Politics, "Political participation concerns the manner in which citizens interact with the government and through active participation in government, citizens attempt to convey their needs to public officials in the hope of having these needs met." Per the UN²³, Political participation derives from the "... ability to take part in the conduct of public affairs; and the opportunity to register as a candidate, to campaign, to be elected and to hold office at all levels of government".

Discussed above are how some political philosophers have conceptualized political participation through definitions. The various definitions attempt to broaden the concept by including one or more phenomena. Whiles Verba and Nie for instance maintains a more simplistic definition, Barnes and Kaase expand the concept to include civil disobedience and political violence. Nelson on her part adds efforts to change or maintain the form of government and behavior mobilized by the government whilst Booth and Seligson extend the concept still further by incorporating behavior outside the sphere of government and unintended political outcomes which Patrick Conge argues to be

too expansive. The variations in the conceptualization of political participation have led to the development of different typologies, levels and forms of political participation.

1.7.3 Typology, Forms and Levels of Political Participation

Verba and Nie²⁴ proposes four types of political participation, including voting, participating in campaign activity, contacting public officials and participating in cooperative or communal activities. Teorell, Torcal and Montero²⁵ used Verba and Nie's work and proposed a similar but broader typology encompassing five activities (electoral participation, consumer participation, party-based activity, protest activity and contact activity). These typologies and several others are not without critics. Ekman and Amnå²⁶ contend they are somewhat limited in that they fail to consider latent—or 'pre-political'—political participation forms such as being a member of charity organizations, or watching the news on television. They claim pre-political behavior is important to understand new forms of political behavior and of the prospects for future political participation.

Barrett and Zani²⁷ express that political participation can take many different forms. Aside the conventional methods such as voting and contesting for public office, non-conventional forms may involve signing petitions and participating in political demonstrations, and even online activities which have become more common with the advent ever evolving information and communication technology and easy²⁸. Thus, political participation can either take the form of active or passive participation.

Political participation is said to take place at different levels in the state. The International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences observes political participation as the involvement of individual and groups in the political process of political system at various levels. In a federal form of government, power is divided at the national, state, district and village level and as such participation takes place at all these levels. Some assumptions that have been put forward by political scientists such as Al-

mond and Weber is that the higher an individual's social and economic status the higher their level of participation; that race, sex, ethnicity, level of education of individuals also have a correlation with their level, form or type of participation in political affairs.

1.7.4 Gender and Political Participation

Is political participation limited to certain group of people based on their sex, race, religion, ethnicity, social status etcetera? In a society where participation of citizens is encouraged such as in a democracy, political participation is open to all irrespective of their gender identity. It is recognized that certain elements such as sex, education, social and economic status have an influence on how active or inactive an individual is in political affairs. Verba and Nie posit that where few take part in [political] decisions there is little democracy; the more participation there is in decisions the more democracy there is...". Women are integral part of citizens and thus cannot be excluded from political participation. Barber shares the view of Verba et al and also argues strongly for participatory democracy that recognizes political participation by all citizenry. This implies that a citizen's gender should not be a determinant for political participation. He emphasizes the need for engagement in politics by all citizenry, which he considers as "integral part of social life and essential for every individual" including women. Under international standards, women and men have an equal right to participate fully in all aspects of political processes. However, in practice, it is usually harder for women to exercise this right.

1.7.5 Dissenting Views about the Concept of Political Participation

Contrary to the arguments in favor of political participation, some political philosophers are of opposing views. Some argue that political participation is less important than is often thought. Jason Brennan²⁹ argues that full participation by citizens which is the stand of democratic theorists is not the best. In his view, many citizens are ill equipped to participate effectively and responsibly in pol-

itics notably in voting. He proposes “epistocracy”³⁰ - a system that privileges the most politically informed citizens, notably men given the patriarchal makeup of most societies.

In addition, the varying definition of political participation particularly as it relates to the types of activities that could be considered as part of political participation is also the basis for arguments leveled against this concept by several scholars. Verba and Nie for instance define political participation as “behavior designed to affect the choice of governmental personnel and/or policies”. Patrick Conge³¹ posits that this definition of the concept of political participation excludes “passive forms, civil disobedience and political violence, efforts to change or maintain the structure of government, behavior outside the sphere of government, behavior mobilized by the government, and unintended political outcomes”. He also argues that scholars like Barnes, Kaase et al³² broaden the concept to include one or more of these phenomena such as civil disobedience and political violence, which Verba and Nie exclude in their own definition of the concept of political participation³³. The over broadening of the concept to include many new forms of activities is considered as a weakness of the concept. In addition to the variation in the conceptual definitions, political philosophers have not yet agreed to definite typologies, forms and even the levels of participation. Which activities should be considered as part of political participation and whether participation should be limited to active or passive elements still remain a subject of argument.

In spite of these arguments against the concept of political participation, it is relevant to this study as it provides the basis for participation in politics and political affairs by all citizens including women particularly in a democracy. It largely helps in the study’s quest to analyze women’s political participation in Ghana under SDG5.

1.8 Literature Review

This portion of the study views literature related to aspects of the dissertation topic. It also looks at the views or opinions of the authors about them - information which contributes to attaining the objectives of the paper.

1.8.1 Importance of Women's Political Participation

Women are known to be under-represented in the political arena globally as well as regionally. However, the positive impact of women in politics to development cannot be overemphasized. According to Kofi Annan,

*“study after study has taught us, there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women. No other policy is as likely to raise economic productivity or to reduce child and maternal mortality. No other policy is as sure to improve nutrition and promote health, including the prevention of HIV/AIDS. No other policy is as powerful in increasing the chances of education for the next generation.”*³⁴

Gretchen Bauer³⁵ evaluates women's participation in African parliaments and highlights the importance of women's symbolic and substantive representation in parliament. Bauer shares that women's participation in politics as MPs have a symbolic effect as it tends to change gendered ideas about the roles of women and men in politics. Women's presence and participation in parliaments contribute to 'raising awareness of what women can achieve as political actors and legitimizing them as political actors', or encouraging more women to be engaged in politics as voters, activists, candidates, leaders.³⁶ For Bauer, women's participation in politics does not only have a symbolic effect but also a substantive effect. It advances women's interests through the policy making process, whether publicly or behind the scenes, and this being measured, for example, in terms of promoting or accomplishing certain policy agendas or legislative items³⁷. Across sub-Saharan Africa for instance, the substantive and symbolic representation effects of women's increased presence have been identified. Legislative gains especially in areas related to gender-based violence (GBV), change to institutional culture which is mainly founded on patriarchy and even increase in women's

presence in executives have been recorded. In view of the importance of women's participation in politics and the need to promote their participation, Bauer posits that strategies that have been used by some countries to increase women's representation and their participation in African parliaments include the use of gender quotas. Drude Dahlerup and Lenita Friedenvall³⁸ describe the electoral gender quota system to increase women's representation as taking the 'fast track' to parliament rather than the much slower 'incremental approach' that waits for political and socio-economic changes. Scholars including Bauer highlight the struggle by women's organizations over the years to elect friendly electoral laws to increase the number of women in the political sphere³⁹ so as to benefit from their important contribution to societal and democratic development. Bauer's work focuses mainly on women in national parliaments and not other areas of politics including at the political party level, local government level and in other aspects of public life. Nonetheless, it remains very relevant to the study as it speaks to the contribution by women in politics and the role they play in advancing women's issues and consequently promoting democratic development.

Beatrix Allah-Mensah⁴⁰ among other things highlights the important contribution women have made in Ghana's development. She demonstrates that women have been involved in the political affairs in Ghana either actively or passively since pre-independence era, recognizing that their participation though significant, has not been at the same level as men. Women's active participation and contribution was evidenced through their indispensable and pivotal support for the governing party, the Convention People's Party (CPP) in the struggle for independence. This even led to the cooptation of women's group by Ghana's first President Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, into his CPP. Allah Mensah, however, notes that women's involvement in politics has been challenged over the years by the discontinuity (caused by military coups) that characterized Ghana's political administrations resulting in low participation of women in politics over the years. Women have continued to participate in diverse ways throughout the post CPP political regimes right up to today's 4th Republican

dispensation. Despite the important contribution women make to global and national development, they continued to be hindered by many factors. Some of the factors that Allah-Mensah outlines include, the patriarchal colonial educational and governance systems that were instituted by the colonial masters, the status of women in the society, and the socially and culturally gendered roles assigned to women among other factors. This literature is significant to this study as it touches on the extent to which women have participated in and contributed to politics in Ghana over the years and some of the challenges they have faced.

1.8.2 Barriers to women's Political Participation

It is said that the exclusion of women from participation in general and political participation in particular is neither a 21st century phenomenon nor peculiar to certain countries only. Elements that have posed as barriers to women's political participation have been attributed to many factors which are traceable to time past and are linked to history, socio-cultural and political environment of countries.

Kassa Shimelis⁴¹ traces the exclusion of women from political participation and decision making far back to human history (since the époque of democracy in ancient Athens). Women were not considered as citizens and did not have the right to participate in any decision-making process. It was not until the 20th century that women in Europe had the right to vote. Kassa and other scholars such as Shvedova and Kunovich et al⁴² ascribe the low participation of women in politics, to socio-cultural, economic and religious factors. Shvedova posits that lack of financial resources is one of the major obstacles to women's political participation. Women in many countries are unable to finance expensive campaign activities, and are more often than not overshadowed by their male counterparts who often own or have access to economic resources.

In addition to the financial constraints, the work points to religious factors that also inhibit women from meaningful political participation. It argues that major religions in the world promote male dominance over female counterparts. While men are projected as the head of the home and leaders in the society, women are expected to play subordinate roles in the home, within the church hierarchy and in the various aspects of life in the society. Islamic law is often times interpreted to exclude women from leadership roles. The social construction of women as subordinates to men therefore does not create an enabling environment for women's participation in politics. While Kassa touches on various challenges to women's political participation, he does not cover other important barriers and factors that contribute to low women political participation which Shvedova, in *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers* unveils. These include very low media coverage of events and organizations of interest to women, the perception of politics as a dirty game and the lack of confidence in women themselves to participate in politics and public leadership. In spite of the limitations in Kassa's work, it remains relevant to the subject of this study.

Electoral violence has also been identified by scholars as a barrier to women's participation in politics. This form of violence is particularly predominant in developing democracies including in Sub-Saharan countries like Ghana. Linda Darkwa⁴³ highlights some of the challenges that have affected women's political participation in Ghana. She focuses on how electoral related violence affects the participation of women in politics. Darkwa demonstrates two forms of electoral violence - structural and non-structural violence. Structural violence includes the patriarchal system of society, gender construction of roles that always ascribes subordinate positions to women, covert and institutionalization of gender inequalities among others factors. She also cites different types of non-structural violence that militates against women's participation in elections. These include access to and control over resources, the level of political knowledge and access to strategic information. In her writing on gender and politics in the third world, Waylen⁴⁴ also highlights the fact that, "[t]he low polit-

ical representation of women is attributed, among other factors, to low levels of literacy and formal sector employment among women and the operation of the legal system...". She argues that the role women play in the private sphere constraints them and consequently prevents their participation in the public sphere "... on the same terms as men and gaining the experience deemed necessary for a career in politics".

According to the IPU, the lack of political will among political parties to implement effective policies to improve women's representation such as gender quotas, for instance, are also among the factors that contribute to low representation of women in politics. Scholars continue to debate on what constitutes political participation. As earlier discussed, political participation is said to include participation in various activities that ultimately impact decision making process and actions by governments. It is therefore not limited to elections. However, Darkwa's work is limited to electoral related violence as barriers to political participation and excludes other barriers which Waylen discusses. Despite this limitation, Darkwa's literature is very useful in the analysis under the scope of this study.

1.8.3 Overcoming barriers to Women's Political Participation

It is said that when women are empowered everyone benefits - individuals, communities, society and the world. Women's participation in politics including at the international, national and local levels allows issues concerning women themselves, such as their empowerment, to be put forward, heard and addressed. Countries across the globe continue to identify and explore strategies to promote women's political participation.

Gretchen Bauer⁴⁵ discusses strategies - notably gender quotas - that have been used by some Sub-Saharan African countries to increase women's participation in politics, particularly their representation in parliament. She posits that the advocacy to promote women's political participation has often increased during reforms in constitutions and electoral laws. Sub-Saharan Africa has experi-

enced two waves of gender quotas during which there was either an increase in the use of gender quota or its adoption. Countries like Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Senegal achieved success with the gender quota system, resulting in an increase in women's representation in their respective legislatures. Norris and Dahlerup⁴⁶ attributes the rise in the call for increased women's participation in politics in the second wave of gender quota adoption around the world to "international forces" including the UN agencies, transnational feminist organizations, and "domestic forces" involving mainly the work of national women movements. Whilst the use of gender quotas has proven to be successful in some countries including Rwanda and Ethiopia, many have argued that emphasis should be placed on quality and not quantity of women who participate in politics. Bauer's work does not touch on other strategies that could be used to increase women's participation in politics, however, the literature is relevant to this work.

The Women's Manifesto for Ghana⁴⁷ addresses the issues concerning women including their participation in politics and decision-making. It proposes a number of solutions to remove barriers to women's participation in politics in Ghana. These strategies or solutions which could also be applicable to many other countries include implementing "...genuine transformative measures that will allow both men and women to participate equally in politics and decision-making processes at all levels"⁴⁸; change of political culture to increase its transparency, accountability and sensitiveness to "the needs and concerns of women"⁴⁹. It further proposes a number of other actions that could be undertaken to increase women's political participation in Ghana. These include the passage of an Affirmative Action Law that should be implemented by all stakeholders including, government institutions, political parties; sensitization of the general public in order to "enhance understanding and support of gender equality policies"; appointment of women by government to occupy public positions, including at the local government level; commitment to implement constitutional provisions and international protocols that seek to promote gender equality and empowerment of women.

Whilst the aforementioned solutions are laudable, The Women's Manifesto for Ghana fails to suggest solutions that address some very fundamental causes of the low representation by women in politics, such as education and women economic empowerment. In spite of this shortfall, the literature is very relevant to this study as it proposes solutions which could result in increased women's political participation in Ghana and elsewhere when tailored to local conditions.

Prof. Mike Oquaye⁵⁰ posits that “[q]uotas and reserved seats, which are affirmative actions, are statutory routes for enhancing women's political representation.” In fact, international conventions and protocols including the CEDAW and the Beijing Platform of 1995 recommend the use of quotas to promote women's political participation. Oquaye highlights the important role of political parties in the promotion of women's participation politics. To him, political parties “constitute the vehicle of political representation at the national level”. As such a party's internal democracy which maximizes the role of women would enhance their participation and representation. Local and international advocacy networks are said to be crucial in efforts to increase women's political participation. Oquaye and other scholars including Bird⁵¹ corroborate the important role these advocacy networks play across national frontiers. These networks help to identify women with talent, help build their capacity to occupy politics positions, push governments to make and implement policies that will advance women's participation in politics. The role that women themselves can play to promote their individual participation and representation in politics is said to be very important. However, Oquaye's work does not discuss this. The work is also silent on the aspects of socio-cultural barriers to women's political participation. In spite of these shortfalls in the work, this literature is very useful to the study as it identifies various steps that could be taken to overcome the barriers to women's political participation in Ghana and elsewhere.

1.9 Operational Definitions

An operational definition connotes how the researcher decides to measure the variables in the study.⁵² In this study:

Participation “is a development approach, which recognizes the need to involve disadvantage segments of population (in this study women) in the design and implementation of policies concerning their wellbeing”.⁵³

Politics in this study refers to the activities of the government, members of law-making organizations, or people who try to influence the way a country is governed; and the job of holding a position of power in the government⁵⁴.

Political Participation under this study refers to the active involvement and engagement by individuals both women and men (in this study focus is on women) with political process that affect their lives. The act of active engagements in this study includes active involvement in politics particularly in representation in parliament and at the local level and in the decision-making processes⁵⁵.

1.10 Sources of Data

In this study, both primary and secondary sources are employed in order to accomplish its aim.

1.10.1 Primary Sources

Primary sources of data are actual unprocessed information retrieved from the field by means of interviews, observations, questionnaires and surveys⁵⁶. Primary data for this study are obtained through interviews with selected women who are engaged in politics at the parliamentary and district level, members of the two main political parties in Ghana with representation in Parliament - the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC); and selected CSOs who work to promote women’s interests including their political participation in Ghana. The-

se include the Gender Center for Development (GenCED), Women in Law and Development (WILDAF), Abantu for Development, African Women Development Fund (AWDF), NORSAAC.

1.10.2 Secondary Sources

Secondary information is obtained from reports on the MDGs and documents on the SDGs including those from the United Nations (UN) and African Union (AU). In addition, relevant policy documents, books and journal articles are also employed for this study.

1.11 Research Methodology

This section discusses the steps, methods and processes that are undertaken to conduct this study.

1.11.1 Research Design

The research design encompasses information required for the study, methods required to gather and analyze data and how the information answers the research questions⁵⁷. It outlines how the research is carried out and the various elements that go into it. This study is qualitative in design as information considered for the analysis is mostly non-numeric. According to Catherine Hakim⁵⁸, qualitative research ‘is concerned with individuals’ own account of their attitudes, motivations and behaviour.’ It gives an in-depth description of perceptions, attitudes values, behaviours, opinions and interpretation given to events. In this regard, qualitative research is a strategy that seeks to explore and provide descriptive and detailed report of how individuals find meaning to their own sociality.

1.11.2 Sample Population and Size

A population is a complete set of people with a specialized set of characteristics, and a sample is a subset of the population. In this study, the sample population comprises women who occupy political positions and have been involved in political processes. In this design women parliamentarians as well as those who are engaged in district level politics are interviewed using a semi-structured

interview guide. Informants from civil society organizations and political parties are also interviewed. The varied population brings different perspectives to the analysis.

A sample size is referred to as the sum of selected portion of the population capable of representing characteristics of the entire population⁵⁹. A total of 12 women in politics are sampled for interviews. These include three MPs each from the NPP and the NDC. In addition, six female District Assembly officers are also selected with three each from Northern and Southern Ghana. Interviews with five CSOs representatives are also conducted. They include representatives from Abantu for Development, Women in Law and Development Africa (WILDAF), Gender Centre for Development (GenCED), African Women Development Fund (AWDF) and (NORSAAC). These organizations are selected given their credibility, period of operation and their area of focus. Interviews are conducted with four females and four males from the various political parties to contribute to the analysis from the male perspective. At least one interviewee is selected from the NPP, NDC, Convention People's Party (CPP). A total of 90 respondents are targeted for online survey.

1.11.3 Method of Sampling

A sample is a portion of the target population. A sample size is therefore referred to as the sum of selected portion of the population capable of representing characteristics of the entire population. The study employs purposive sampling to select the sample from the target population for the analysis. According to Bryman⁶⁰, purposive sampling is recommended in qualitative research based on interviews, an attempt to foster communication between the researcher and samples relevant to the study. This method is employed because of the expertise of the target population which is very useful for the purposes of the analysis.

1.11.4 Data Collection

Method of data collection refers to methods that the researcher uses to acquire relevant data for the study in order to achieve the objectives of the research⁶¹. Data is collected through in-person and virtual interviews using a semi-structured interview guide and online survey respectively with the selected sample population. The online survey is a cost effective and time efficient mechanism to reach a good number of the target population. Additional information is also gathered through secondary sources including reports from relevant organizations including CSOs; scholarly works and other online and offline literature.

1.11.5 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis as an independent qualitative and descriptive approach is mainly described as “a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data”⁶². This approach is used to analyze women’s political participation in Ghana by searching for patterns or themes in the c across the different interviews; reviewing the themes, defining and naming them to produce a report. This method of qualitative analysis aids in answering the research questions⁶³.

1.12 Ethical considerations

Issues of ethics and confidentiality are often raised about studies conducted by researchers. Permissions and consent are obtained from interlocutors in the conduct of this study. Other considerations given under this study include assurance of confidentiality and anonymity as requested. Information shared under this study does not reflect individual views of participants but rather a cumulative representation of information gathered through interviews in the conduct of the study.

1.13 Limitations of the Study

The study like other studies faces some limitations or weaknesses in the process of carrying it out. One major challenge is the qualitative method employed. This method may be prone to biases and besets the researcher with the problem of objectivity as opposed to subjectivity. In addition, the study is limited in terms of the number of women in politics who are interviewed. Interviewing more women in politics across Ghana would guarantee a higher level of confidence in the findings. Time constraint is another challenge as the research has limited time within which it is carried out and analyzed. Despite the above limitations, the study covers relevant points that are meant to be achieved at in the end.

1.14 Arrangement of Chapters

The study is organized into four chapters.

The first chapter comprises an introduction to the study which provides a brief overview through the background of the study. It also highlights the problem to be investigated, the research objectives, research questions as well as the rationale of the study. It further provides operational definitions, conceptual underpinning of the study, literature review on women's political participation, the research methodology employed, the sampling size, sources and collection of data, and the analysis of data for the accomplishment of the study.

The second chapter provides an overview of women's political participation in Ghana in the 4th Republic prior to 2016. It focuses on the contribution of women in politics during the time frame. It also touches on Ghana's effort to meet its international obligations to promote women's political participation particularly the SDG5.

Chapter three analyzes women's political participation in Ghana in the era of the SDGs. Under this session, it focuses on the specific factors that have contributed to an increase in women's political

participation in Ghana, the aspects of politics that Ghanaian women are mostly engaged in, the challenges they have faced in the conduct of duties and how these challenges have been addressed and the essence of the rise or otherwise in women's political participation to democratic development in Ghana. Finally, it discusses innovative mechanisms that have been and could be used to address the various challenges to promote women's political participation in Ghana.

The chapter four is a summary of the research findings, conclusions and recommendations.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE FOURTH REPUBLIC AND WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN GHANA: PRE-SDGs ERA

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of women's political participation in Ghana from the 4th Republican dispensation to the adoption of the SDGs. It demonstrates that the Fourth Republican Constitution of Ghana makes provisions for gender equality in all spheres of life including the right to political participation. The chapter further outlines some major international and regional Conventions and Protocols to which Ghana is a state party in the quest to promote gender equality notably in political participation. Women's leadership and representation at the national and local governance level in Ghana from 1992 to 2016 are also discussed in the chapter. This aspect of the chapter addresses aspects of the research question one that seeks to find out how women's political participation in Ghana has been under the 4th Republic of Ghana.

2.1 The 4th Republican Constitution and Equal Rights to Political Participation in Ghana

2.1.1 Historical Antecedents

Ghana, a former British Colony, called Gold Coast during the colonial era gained independence from British colonial rule in 1957 through the leadership of Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. The Independence Constitution of 1957 established a parliamentary monarchy which had Dr. Kwame Nkrumah as Prime Minister. Three years after independence, Ghana became a Republic for the first time in 1960 with a new constitution establishing a presidential system of government which was based on multi-party democracy. In 1964, Ghana became a one-party state through a constitutional amendment which made Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's ruling Convention Peoples' Party (CPP) the only

party recognized by law. Dr. Nkrumah became the first President of the First Republic of Ghana from 1946 until 1966 when he was overthrown in a military coup d'état.¹

Ghana's post-independence era following Nkrumah's overthrow recorded periods of military rule with interludes of civilian governments. The military rule in Ghana occurred during the following periods 1966-1969; 1972-1979; 1981-1992.² The Second Republic spanning 1969 to 1979 witnessed one civilian regime with Dr. Kofi Busia as Prime Minister from 1969 to 1972, and two military governments headed successively by Gen. I. K. Acheampong and Lt. Gen. Fred W. K. Akuffo. The period from 1979 to 1992 was the Third Republic of Ghana during which, Dr. Hilla Liman, a civilian President, governed Ghana from 1979 to 1981 while Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings assumed power as a military leader from 1981 to 1992.³

Ghana returned to constitutional rule during 1992 (the Fourth Republic) after experiencing the many changes in government administrations in its post-independence trajectory. Flt. Lt. Rawlings transitioned from being a military ruler of his party the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) to a democratic leader of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) which was couched out of the PNDC when he was elected as the first president of the fourth republic. Rawlings and his NDC led Ghana for two consecutive terms spanning 1992 to 2000. The NDC-led administration was overtaken by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in 2000 through democratic elections. The NPP administration led by John Agyekum Kuffour as the President of the Republic also governed Ghana for two consecutive terms from 2000 to 2008. Power again changed hands from the NPP to the NDC who led the country from 2008 until 2016 when elections were held. The NPP won the elections in 2016 with Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo as elected as President.

2.2 Constitutional Provisions for Equal Rights to Political Participation in Ghana

The outset of the Fourth Republic saw the adoption of the Fourth Republican Constitution (FRC) in 1992 which came into force on 7 January 1993. The FRC makes provisions for gender equality including the equal rights to political participation for women and men. The principle of gender equality is endorsed in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana⁴ which mandates the state to put in place measures to eradicate socio-economic, education and political disadvantages encountered by women. The fifth Chapter is exclusively dedicated to basic human rights and freedoms recognized in the International Bill of Rights. It states in Article 17(1) that, “all persons shall be equal before the law”.⁵ It further declares in Article 17(2) that, no person shall be discriminated against on grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status. Article 21(3) of the Constitution also states that:

*“all citizens shall have the right and freedom to form or join political parties and to participate in political activities subject to such qualifications and laws as are necessary in a free and democratic society and are consistent with this Constitution”.*⁶

The Constitution further declares gender equality in participation in public life in Chapter 6 under the Directive Principles of State Policy in Article 35 (5) that “[t]he State shall actively ... prohibit discrimination and prejudice on the grounds of ... gender or religion, creed or other beliefs”, and in 35(6)(b) that “the State shall take appropriate measures to achieve reasonable...gender balance in the recruitment and appointment to public offices”.⁷ The FRC obviously makes provisions for the equal rights to participation in politics and decision-making. Albeit, in reality, gender equality in political participation and in decision-making has yet to be realized in Ghana.

Ghana continues to make constitutional amendments to ensure that some of the key Articles which promote and address human rights of the citizens are updated to meet current exigencies. A draft of the Property Rights of Spouses Bill is available to enhance property or estate distribution upon dissolution of marriage or death of a spouse. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection

(MGCSP) which among other things is mandated to coordinate and ensure gender equality and equity⁸, has sponsored an Affirmative Action Bill (AAB) which is currently (2019) before Parliament pending passage. The AAB was proposed some fifteen years ago. Although affirmative action has been used in Ghana over the years since independence to address gender and regional inequalities in access to education, health, work and political representation, its successes have been inconsistent⁹. It is said that affirmative action measures to improve political representation in particular, have not been effective. This has been alluded to the fact that, they have not been proportional to the inequalities being addressed.¹⁰ Commitment to affirmative action in politics in Ghana is said to have been at best half-hearted, a situation exacerbated by the fact that, the basis for affirmative action is neither shared nor properly understood.¹¹ For scholars like Tsikata D.¹², this creates fatigue and resistance among the political and bureaucratic classes and the general population towards affirmative action programmes.

2.3 Ghana's International and Regional Obligations to Promote Women's Political Participation

For over thirty decades now, the call for gender parity in all facets of life including in political participation has seen tremendous and consistent increase.¹³ It is said that the consistent and increased call is mainly due to the important contribution of women's participation to development. As such, the standard of gender equality including in women's political participation has been enshrined in a series of international and regional conventions and protocols to which Ghana is state party. Ghana as a state is bound by her Constitution to adhere to:

“promote respect for international law, treaty obligations...” and “...the principles enshrined in or as the case may be, the aims and ideals of

- i) the Charter of the United Nations;
- ii) the Charter of the Organisation of African Unity;
- iii) the Commonwealth;

- iv) the Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States; and
- v) any other international organisation of which Ghana is a member.”¹⁴

Ghana therefore has national and international obligations to promote women’s participation in local and international development.

2.4 International and Regional Commitments

Ghana has ratified several international commitments to eliminating gender inequality and ensuring the empowerment of women including through promoting their political representation and participation in decision-making. Overview of the major international and regional commitments that give impetus to women’s political participation are discussed in the subsections below.

2.4.1 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the UN on 20 December 1948 to serve as a common standard of achievements for all its member states. Comprising 30 articles, the UDHR outlines the UN’s criteria on human rights assured all people regardless of their nationality, religion, social and economic status, race, ethnicity and sex among other elements of gender.¹⁵ The UDHR was also adopted by the UN member states as a measure to prevent future occurrence of the catastrophe and horrors that took place during World War II and the Holocaust respectively. The UDHR is not binding. However, it has been expounded in global conventions and regional human rights as well as national constitutions¹⁶ including that of Ghana.

In the preamble of the UDHR, governments of member states make a commitment to secure the collective and effective acknowledgement of the human rights delineated in the declaration. The Declaration, in Article 2, makes provision for the right to equal participation in politics, public service, governance of their state regardless of whether they are females or males.¹⁷ Per Article 21(1) “[e]veryone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely

chosen representatives.” In Article 21(2) [e]veryone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.”¹⁸ These support the fundamental human rights contained in the 4th Republican Constitution of Ghana. The Chapter five of the 1992 Constitution is dedicated to promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms in line with the tenets of the UDHR. It also supports the equal right to participation for both women and men which is being pursued including through the implementation of affirmative action policies in Ghana.

The UDHR espouses universality of human rights. Some analysts, however, have criticized the UDHR based on its universality without due consideration for the social and cultural differences that exist between societies in the world.¹⁹ Others have also argued that the UDHR is skewed towards Western values and perspectives and imposing them on the rest of the world.²⁰

2.4.2 The Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

The CEDAW is a global convention on equality between girls/women and boys/men adopted by the UN General Assembly on 18 December, 1979 and entered into force on 3 September 1981.²¹ 186 states have ratified the document and committed to eliminate discrimination encountered by girls and women in their country.²² However, some of the states ratified with reservations most of which conflicts religious laws or state’s party’s constitution that enshrines religious laws. Countries that ascribe to Sharia Law have entered the greatest proportion of substantive reservations to the CEDAW. For instance, Article 16 on equality in marriage has the greatest number of reservations entered by states on the basis that personal issues are decided by the law of the several religious and ethnic societies in the states.²³ Article 5 requires efforts to eliminate customary practices that marginalize women and advocates for measures to monitor public attitudes towards women²⁴. Ghana is a State Party to the CEDAW which it signed in 1980 and ratified in 1986 without reservations.²⁵

The CEDAW entreats governments to put measures in place to ensure equal treatment of the sexes.²⁶ Article 7 of the convention states that:

*“States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right: (a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies; (b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government; (c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country”.*²⁷

Ghana in efforts to implement the CEDAW has among other things formulated an affirmative action policy in 1998, setting up a 40% quota for women's representation on all government and public boards, commissions, councils, committees and official bodies, including Cabinet and Council of State. However, the poor implementation of the policy and the continued underrepresentation of women in decision making in political and public life remain a challenge.²⁸

2.4.3 The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa

Ghana is a signatory to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR) which was adopted in Nairobi on 27 June 1981, and entered into force on 21 October 1986.²⁹ Ghana ratified the ACHPR on 24 January 1989. While all the articles of the Charter refer to the rights of all African citizens, Article 18 (3) specifically provides for states working to ensure the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women as stipulated in international declarations and conventions. Even pertinent to the ACHPR is the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa known as the Maputo Protocol which was adopted in Maputo on

11 July 2003 and came into force in November 2008.³⁰ Ghana signed the Protocol on 31 October 2003 and ratified it on 13 June 2007 without reservations. The Maputo Protocol is constructed on the back of several important documents and as acknowledged in its preamble. These include The African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights.

The Maputo Protocol also known as the Women's Protocol guarantees comprehensive rights to women including; the right to participate in political processes, to social and political equality with men, improved autonomy in their sexual and reproductive health decisions and an end to female mutilation.³¹ The Article 9 of the Maputo Protocol entreats State Parties to "...take specific positive action to promote participative governance and the equal participation of women in the political life of their countries through affirmative action, enabling national legislation and other measures to ensure that:

1. a) women participate without any discrimination in all elections;
- b) women are represented equally at all levels with men in all electoral processes;
- c) women are equal partners with men at all levels of development and implementation of State policies and development programmes.
2. States Parties shall ensure increased and effective representation and participation of women at all levels of decision-making."³²

This justifies affirmative action for addressing imbalances in the Ghanaian society, making the point that the guarantees of equality should not be taken to mean that Parliament cannot pass laws for the implementation of policies and programs aimed at redressing social, economic or educational imbalances in the Ghanaian society.³³ While Ghana has ratified most of the international and regional human rights instruments including the ACHPR and the Maputo Protocol, it has not explicitly domesticated them. However, many policies of the government of Ghana contain human rights commitments which are in line with the provisions of the ACHPR and the Women's Protocol. A

few of the government's policies such as the National HIV and AIDS Policy, make explicit reference to the ACHPR and the Women's Protocol as instruments which influenced the policy objectives.³⁴ A Maputo score card report for Ghana launched in January 2019, on the implementation of the Maputo Protocol with a focus on Article 4 and 13 of the Protocol showed that though progress is being made to resolving women issues much needs to be done by all stakeholders including government and civil society. Also, more importantly is the fact that Ghana does not need extra laws to implement the Protocol but empowerment³⁵.

2.4.4 The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

In 1995, 189 countries including Ghana adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (The BPfA), which identified gender inequality in the sharing of power and decision making at all levels as one of the twelve critical areas of concern. The BPfA recognized that the equal participation of women and men in public life and decision-making provides a more balanced reflection of the composition of society, while strengthening democracy, and also ensuring that women's interests and perspectives are streamlined into government policies. The BPfA called for an increase to 50% of women in national legislatures.³⁶

However, it also recognized that there are a number of hindrances to women's full and equal participation in politics. These are said to include open and hidden practices that hinder women's abilities to participate in and lead successful campaigns to compete alongside their male counterparts for positions. One such practice is the monetization of political campaigns and other political activities since women rarely have the same personal, socio-economic and traditional advantages that men do.

If the political empowerment of women is to be attained, it has to be complimented with educational and socio-economic empowerment. The empowerment of women for increased political partici-

pation is important because as expressed by Bawa and Sanyare, “women either as individuals or as a group inject an inimitable viewpoint into the developmental processes which greatly enhances participatory democratic processes.”³⁷ The duo also note that existing socio-cultural systems which are discriminatory may jeopardize modest progress made by women with regard to political and public sector participation.

The 1995 Conference on Women in Beijing that birthed the adoption of the BPfA was a pivotal moment for legitimating women’s rights work in Ghana. It also served as a powerful framing for the empowerment of women in Ghana.³⁸ As expressed by Mensah-Kutin:³⁹

“The idea of struggle and change is always there, but then Beijing or these UN conferences provided a frame of reference that made it easy for people to come out easily to say that this is what we want... The Platform for Action was a document that was widely disseminated, and that reflected issues that women could identify with in their locality. They were picked up by government institutions and NGOs.”

The BPfA increased and strengthened NGOs and civil society coalition building and advocacy for women’s empowerment in Ghana. It influenced the work by NGOs and civil society to translate the commitments of the BPfA to actionable programmes. The work by these groups in the aftermath of Beijing was instrumental for instance in the establishment of the Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU) of the Ghana Police Service. It also influenced the preparation and advocacy for the Affirmative Action Bill, the Domestic Violence Bill, the Property Rights of Spouses Bill and the Interstate as well as facilitated the passage of the Domestic Violence Act in 2007.⁴⁰ The implementation of the BPfA also influenced the expansion and redesigning of the former Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs (MOWAC) as the current Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MOGCSP) to ensure gender equality, child protection and promote the welfare of minority groups including persons with disabilities and the aged.

In spite of the positive effect of the BfPA on the women empowerment drive in Ghana, the momentum it created did not remain at the same level and did not fully resolve the issues of women empowerment in Ghana as well as in many countries across the globe. This is due to some challenges that Ghana faced in the implementation of the BfPA notably getting more resources to fund gender equality and gender mainstreaming activities⁴¹, negative cultural perceptions of gender equality and inadequate of access of women to productive resources such as credit, land technology and information. Almost two and half decades since the adoption of the BfPA, Ghana has not yet attained the 30% critical mass of women in political representation and decision-making at all levels.

2.5 The Millennium Development Goals

“Only through broad and sustained efforts to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in all its diversity, can globalization be made fully inclusive and equitable,” world leaders, in September 2000, unanimously stated as they approved the UN Millennium Declaration.⁴² The MDGs were to facilitate a global mobilization to find solutions to public concerns of poverty, child health, empowerment of women and girls, gender inequality, and environmental degradation.⁴³

Ghana was among 189 states which signed the MDGs when it was adopted and committed to the total eradication of extreme forms of poverty by the year 2015. Eight MDGs, each of which had specific targets were set. These were expected to tackle various aspects of poverty and how they affected people across the globe regardless of their sex, age, race, religious affinity and status among other gender dimensions. The pursuit of the MDGs, from the government of Ghana perspective, was associated with a national target of attaining a middle-income status by 2015. In this regard, the MDGs were streamlined into the country's framework for development and poverty reduction strategies - the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy. It was also aligned with the country's Shared Growth Development Agenda.

The MDGs had goals in relation to the empowerment of women and girls. The goal three of the MDGs was specifically set to ensure gender equality and empowerment of women. It was said that the success of the MDGs was very much dependent on gender equality and the empowerment of women.⁴⁴ The MDG indicators for monitoring included the ratio of girls to boys at all levels of education, the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector and the proportion of seats held by women in national parliament.⁴⁵

At the end of 2015, a global assessment conducted on the MDGs revealed that, progress on the MDGs had been mixed, with sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and Southern Asia, recording relatively weak performance. It was recognized, however, that that the variation in progress might have been influenced by countries' specific targets per their respective national development strategy.⁴⁶

Ghana's performance at the end of the MDGs implementation period revealed similar trends - mixed progress. Out of the 21 targets and 60 official indicators adopted globally for monitoring the MDGs, Ghana adopted a set of 17 targets and 36 indicators in line with its national development agenda for monitoring. Targets such as halving extreme poverty, attaining universal primary education and gender parity in primary school had been achieved. However, indicators including the equal share of women in non-agriculture wage employment, and women's involvement in governance had made very slow progress.⁴⁷ Ghana's achievements on the gender equality agenda had been limited by its focus on gender parity, underpinned by the emphasis on universal primary education.⁴⁸ While this focus led to marked progress towards gender parity in primary school enrolments, wider advances towards gender equality in education more broadly required a shift in approach above and beyond counting the numbers of boys and girls in school.⁴⁹ This and many other unfinished business in the MDGs in Ghana and elsewhere required new strategy to find sustainable solutions to achieve sustainable development. Women's participation and representation in politics

and decision-making at all levels still remain low in Ghana and the 30% benchmark for women's representation is yet to be met.

2.6 The Transition from Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, 193 states including Ghana came together to agree on what are called the SDGs, also referred to as the Global Goals. These goals, which are a global collective call to action, came into force in January 2019 to tackle the unfinished business of the MDGs. The main objective of the SDGs is to end poverty, protect the environment and ensure that everyone everywhere enjoys peace and prosperity by 2030 while leaving no one behind - Agenda 2030.⁵⁰ State parties are expected to situate the Agenda 2030 in country specific context and translate the SDGs into actions at the national level whilst considering individual realities on ground, resources, policies and priorities.⁵¹

The Agenda 2030 has 17 goals that are linked to five main themes, known as the five Ps: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships. It is said that these goals are interconnected and interdependent. As such none can stand in isolation and that the success of one is dependent on the other and the failure in achieving one will have an impact on the others.⁵² As it is expected from state parties, Ghana with support from the UN and in collaboration with CSOs and the private sector is aligning its development priorities to collectively achieve the SDGs targets by 2030.⁵³

The SDGs progress report released by the UN in 2018 showed that while some important progress has been made three years since the adoption of the Global Goals, a lot more needs to be done by all stakeholders in order to achieve the set goals by 2030.⁵⁴ For instance, progress has been so far in improving lives: extreme poverty and child mortality on decline, access to education, jobs and sustainable energy has increased. However, global hunger, conflict and displacement are on the increase; and so is poor climatic conditions and inequalities. These and other challenges are prevent-

ing and in some instances, undoing progress made.⁵⁵ Ghana undertook a Voluntary National Review (VNR) of the implementation of the SDGs and joined 46 other countries in July 2019 to present the findings of the VNR at the High-Level Political Forum on the SDGs (HLPF) 2019.⁵⁶ Ghana is said to be taking a very inclusive approach in the implementation of the SDGs and demonstrates that the importance of civil society inclusion in the SDGs implementation is very important.⁵⁷

2.7 Sustainable Development Goal 5

It is estimated that about half of the world's population are women.⁵⁸ However, gender inequalities exist in almost every facet of life, from politics to business, education and sociocultural domains. This situation persists despite the evidence from studies that when equal opportunities are given to women and men, it helps to achieve development outcomes and that everyone benefits when women are empowered.⁵⁹

The above reasons among many others, justify the promotion of gender equality for women and girls and their empowerment which were set as the goal five of the SDGs.⁶⁰ The SDG5 has nine targets including the fifth target which is set to promote women's effective participation and leadership in decision-making in economic, political and public sphere.⁶¹ The 2018 SDG reports shows that there has been some progress with regards to representation of women in single or lower houses. An increase of an average of 4% has been recorded between 2010 and 2018 globally.⁶² Despite the progress made with some of the SDG5 indicators, women continue to face inequalities which prevents them from enjoying their full rights and opportunities. It is therefore very critical to address structural issues such as unfair social norms and attitudes and also reform legal frameworks that promote gender equality and development⁶³ of new ones where there are none existing.

Ghana's progress on the implementation of 67 indicators out of the 101 SDG targets shows improvement whilst 20 have worsened. On SDG5, gender equality in basic education has been

achieved, improvement in access to secondary education has been recorded thanks to the implementation of the Free Senior High School Policy.⁶⁴ However, the actual progress of the SDG5.5 relating to women's representation and participation in politics is not yet ascertained since general elections have not been held since 2016. The progress on SDG5.5 would become more evident in the outcome of local government elections and Presidential and Parliamentary elections in 2019 and 2020 respectively, and in subsequent elections until the end of the SDGs implementation period (2030).⁶⁵

2.8 Women's Representation in Politics and High Rank Public Offices in Ghana: 1992-2016

There is established and growing evidence that women's leadership in politics and decision-making processes improves them and contributes immensely to sustainable development across sectors. It is said that women demonstrate political leadership through the work they do across party lines, through parliamentary women's caucuses - even in the most politically combative environments - and by championing issues of gender equality, such as the elimination of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), gender-equality laws and reforms in electoral processes. In writing about women's political participation and representation in the fourth Republic of Ghana, it is expedient to briefly discuss their participation prior to independence and post-independence period that led to the Fourth Republic.

2.9 Women's Political Participation: Pre and Immediate Post Independence Ghana

Women in Ghana have participated in Ghanaian politics even before independence although the level of participation was very low compared to that of men - a phenomenon which persists in present day. During the colonial era, women helped the course of wars by participating in various ways. They participated by acting as nurses, taking care of wounded combatants and helped in passing water and ammunition to soldiers.⁶⁶ Few other women stood out among the rest and participated in combats as leaders. Notable among them include Queen Yaa Asantewaa of the Ashanti Kingdom who led the Ashanti rebellion against British colonialism to defend the Golden stool.⁶⁷ The war led

by Yaa Asantewa is considered the last major war led by an African woman. She is honored in Africa and globally as one of the greatest African women leaders. Others are Queen Adisa of the Nanumbas and Dokua of the Akyems who also played pivotal roles in various wars as leaders of the army.⁶⁸ These queen mothers promoted women emancipation as well as gender equality through their leadership and courageous roles.

Ghana attained independence from colonial rule in 1957. Women were key players in the independence struggle. They put their organizational skills to use and were phenomenal in rallying support and enormous contributions for independence. Notable among them include Mabel Dove Danquah, Sophia Oboshie Doku and Hannah Cudjoe who contributed in diverse ways in the struggle for independence. Hannah Cudjoe, for instance, played an important role in mobilizing a large gathering of Ghanaians to petition the colonial powers at the time for the release of the leaders of the struggle for independence - the Big Six - who had been arrested following riots in 1948.⁶⁹ Even though the roles women played in the struggle for independence in Ghana are often not highlighted, there is substantial proof that women have played key roles and contributed to the socio-economic and political development in Ghana, albeit at a low rate in comparison to that of men.⁷⁰

The Kwame Nkrumah CPP-led administration in the first Republic also saw the pivotal role women played to support political processes. Women provided various forms of support including financial contribution at the time. They were also efficient and effective organizers and were able to easily mobilize people for political events and at very short notice. Their role influenced the call to promote gender parity in decision-making in the area of politics through a legal framework begun in the 1960s in Ghana when 10 women were appointed into the National Assembly via a Parliamentary Act by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. The call for the increase in women's representation and participation had been intensified in Sub-Saharan Africa by the early 80s and 90s⁷¹ although the advocacy

could not increase women's participation as expected. In 1979, out of 140 MPs, only five were women and their representation in Parliament since 1992 has remained at less than 14%.

The military regimes in the post-independence period also had some women who were active even though the regimes were not very enthusiastic about addressing issues that bordered on gender in politics. Women were most active under the PNDC government through the 31st December Women's Movement (TDWM). Led by Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings, wife of the then leader of the military regime Jerry John Rawlings, the TDWM created the enabling environment to promote women's economic empowerment and helped to open up a bit of the political space for women.⁷²

The Movement also contributed in raising issues pertaining to human rights, women's rights and accountability, in the lead up to multiparty democracy in Ghana by organizing regional rallies and collect views of the general populace. Other important issues that were raised via these platforms were freedom of speech, representation and the need for inclusive participation in government. Through the activities of the Movement, some women, mainly supporters of the PNDC administration, were motivated to participate in the 1992 general elections as candidates.

2.10 Women's Representation in Politics and Decision-Making in Ghana: The Fourth Republic in Perspective

Ghana operates a constitutional democracy since 1992 with two levels of government - the central and local government systems. The President and the MPs are elected every four years through general elections to serve a four-year term of office. However, an extension of not more than twelve months at a time beyond the four years will be allowed in time of war. The President plays the role of the head of state and head of government. He is also the Commander in Chief of the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF). The Parliament of Ghana is a unicameral legislature, and has 275 seats as of 2017.⁷³ This number of seats is an increase from 192 in 1992 to 200 in 1996 and 2000, and subsequently to 230 in 2004 and 2008. Women in the Fourth Republican dispensation of Ghana, have

played varying roles and have occupied various positions including in Parliament, highly ranked public offices and at the local government level even though the level of participation has been low.

2.10.1 Women in Ghana's Parliament

The last of the indicators for monitoring progress on gender equality and women's empowerment in the SDG5 target is in relation to the number of seats that women hold in national parliaments. It shifts the "focus of empowerment into the arena of politics, and the struggle for participation and representation in decision-making structures."⁷⁴

Research indicates that women parliamentarians, for instance, tend to bring diverse views on politically aware issues, and low representation of women in legislations is therefore said to have "important consequences for the public policy agenda... as well as the acceptability of representative bodies". Gretchen Bauer emphasizes the importance of women's symbolic and substantive effects of their representation in Parliament. Bauer views women's symbolic representation effect as the representation effect of having more women in politics leading to

*"altering gendered ideas about the roles of women and men in politics, raising awareness of what women can achieve as political actors and legitimizing them as political actors, or encouraging women to become involved themselves in politics as voters, activists, candidates, leaders."*⁷⁵

In her view, the presence of women in Parliament and their contribution to national discourse and development motivates and encourages other women to also seek political offices.⁷⁶ The presence of women in parliaments and other public offices also changes the perception about women as being second rank in society and incapable of taking up political positions and other leadership positions in public offices.⁷⁷ Women in national parliaments are also able to advance women's issues and debate issues from their perspectives which are sometimes overlooked or not considered either

intentionally or unintentionally by their male counterparts.⁷⁸ Bauer refers to this kind of impact as the substantive representation effect of women in parliament. Thus, "...advancing women's interests through the policy making process, whether publicly or behind the scenes...", and measuring this, for instance, on the basis of promoting or accomplishing certain policy agendas or legislative items. Fraser-Moleketi supports the shared view about women's representation in Parliaments and posits that:

*"Promoting increased women's political leadership and gender equality is a development issue, a human rights issue and also a moral obligation. More inclusive parliaments also have the capacity to strengthen civic engagement and democratic participation among its citizens... A political system where half of the population does not fully participate limits the opportunity for men and women to influence and benefit from political and economic decisions."*⁷⁹

Across sub-Saharan Africa, women's substantive and symbolic representation has been witnessed. For instance, in Rwanda, the introduction and adoption of the Gender Based Violence bill was made possible through efforts of women MPs and their parliamentary women's caucus who pushed for women's interests to be served. Similarly, in Tanzania, women in parliament have had a 'big impact'

on the issues discussed in parliament, have been able to successfully push laws that have addressed the needs of women in several areas and have monitored the national budget with women's concerns in mind.⁸⁰ These successes can be alluded to the fact that gender parity in women's representation in these countries has been achieved and they are therefore reaping the benefits expected to be derived from women's equal participation in decision-making processes.

Despite these widely-accepted assertions about women's representation in Parliament, gender inequality has characterized the political domain in Ghana over the years in spite of the remarkable

contribution some women have made since the early days of independence. Ghana transitioned from decades of military rule in 1992 and has since held democratic presidential and parliamentary elections, with the seventh held in 2016.⁸¹ In keeping with the trend of low representation of women in global Parliaments, women’s representation in Parliament since the Fourth Republic of 1992 has remained low compared to their male counterparts.⁸² It is recognized that there has been some marginal increase. This increase, arguably, can be alluded to the increase in the number of parliamentary seats from 200 in 1992 to 275 in 2016. The proportion of women in Parliament since the Fourth Republic is below the 30% benchmark recommended for states (see Table 1 below).

In 2016, 36 women were elected to occupy 36 out of 275 seats in Parliament. This number represents 12.73% of the membership in Parliament. This is a marginal improvement from the statistics from previous years as seen in Table 1 but certainly below the recommended benchmark of 30% for national parliaments by the UN.

2.10.2 Women in Local Government Politics under the Fourth Republic

Ghana practices a decentralized local governance system. The legal framework for the local governance system is provided by Article 240 of Chapter Twenty of the 1992 Constitution and the Local Government Act coupled with other relevant laws that have been passed subsequently to augment it.⁸³

Table 2. 1 Proportion of seats held by women in Ghana’s Parliament

Year	Total Number of Seats	Number of Seats held by Women	Proportion of Women-held Seats (%)
2019*	275	37*	13.1
2016	275	36	12.73
2012	275	30	10.9
2008	230	20	8.7
2004	230	25	10.87
2000	200	19	9.5

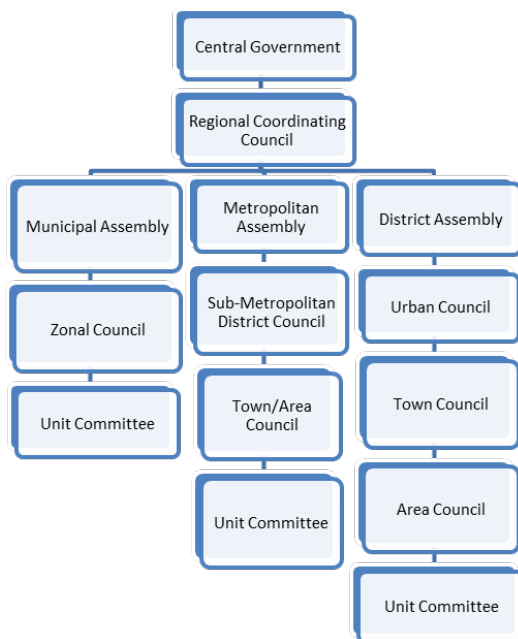
1996	200	18	9
1992	192	16	8

Source: Adopted from different sources (Allah-Mensah, <https://sustainabledevelopment-ghana.github.io/5-5-1/>)

*A woman won in a By-Election held in 2019 due to the demise of a male MP.

Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs), a three-tier and four-tier District/Municipal Assembly system make up the local government system (see Figure 1). The mandate of the Municipal/District Assemblies (MDAs) is prescribed by the Constitution which also gives them authority to function in the state’s decentralization system.⁸⁴ The functions of the MDAs include the coordination and supervision of all programmes of Government Ministries and Departments and non-governmental organizations per Section 10 (5) of the Local Government Act 462. Certain public services are also solely controlled by the MDAs, who also have the prerogative to make decisions in relations to some executive and policy issues.^{85 86}

Figure 1: Ghana’s Local Government Structure



Source: Boateng J.S⁸⁷

Given the important role played by the various components of the local governance structure, women’s participation and representation at this level of governance is very crucial. According to Kurebwa⁸⁸, fair and equal participation and representation of women and men in local governance is crucial in managing development through local level administration. Women’s presence and voices certainly promote issues that concern them and help drive democracy and development through a gendered lens and leaving no one behind.

Despite the fact that the call for gender parity is said to have started earlier in Ghana than in many other SSA countries, women’s participation including at the local government level in Ghana remains low compared to their male counterpart (see table 2).

Table 2.2 Female Representation in District Assemblies in Ghana (1994-2015)

Year	Contested			Elected				
	Female	Male	Total	Female	%	Male	%	Total
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
1998	547	14696	15243	196	4.1	4624	95.9	4820
1994	N/A	N/A	N/A	122	2.9	4082	97.1	4204

Source: Adopted from Kosi I.⁸⁹, Boateng J. S.⁹⁰

Since 1994, the proportion of women elected to occupy positions within the District Assemblies has not been more than 12%. The proportion increased from 7.4% in 2002 to 10.1% in 2006. One would have thought the steady increase will continue in 2015. However, as seen in Table 2, the number dipped in 2015 and only 282 women out of 1182 were elected representing 4.65%. This is below the 30% threshold expected from countries by the UN. Similarly, the proportion of women at positions by appointment within the MDAs such as the Chief Executive Officers also remains low. In 2013 for instance, only 11 out of 216 District Chief Executives appointed were women. The situation reflects gender inequality in electoral participation and representation in political and public

life⁹¹, which is widely used as a measure of a country's level of democracy. The world has recognized that a government is more democratic when more women are present.⁹² Yet, women in Ghana remain on the peripheries of the affairs of the state and are confronted by limited options and many social-cultural and economic barriers that place them at a great disadvantage.⁹³

2.10.3 Women in other High Ranking Decision-Making Positions

Women play very pivotal role in economic, political and social life of society. It is said that women in Ghana have made immense contributions towards Ghana's political and public life at all historical junctures.⁹⁴ Since the days of independence, "women have contributed resources and actively articulated their concerns and issues within both their households and in the public arena".⁹⁵

In spite of their pivotal role, women's representation is not only low with respect to elected positions such as at the Parliament and at the Local Government level, but also with appointments to high ranking decision-making positions in all the arms of government. Appointment of Ministers, Speakers of Parliament, members of the Council of State among other high ranking positions have all been dominated by men. It was only recently that Ghana made history by appointing some few women to occupy high ranking decision-making positions. A woman was appointed as the Speaker of Parliament⁹⁶ for the first time in the history of Ghana in 2009, Chief Justice⁹⁷ for the first time in 2007, Attorney General and Minister of Justice⁹⁸ (three women appointed successively since 2013), Electoral Commissioner⁹⁹ (two women appointed successively since 2015), Chief of Staff for the first time in 2017¹⁰⁰ and Chancellor of the University of Ghana for the first time in 2018¹⁰¹. In 2013, Ghana also appointed women as Minister for Foreign Affairs for the first time since independence. Few other women have been elected to ministerial positions since the Fourth Republic with 8 out of 36 Ministers of State being women as of 2019.¹⁰² For a country with about 51% of its population being women, while these appointments have been considered as a progress, it is certainly a reflection of the low participation and representation of women in politics and in decision-making processes.

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter of the paper discussed women's representation and participation in politics and decision-making under Ghana's Fourth Republic right to the adoption of the SDGs. It showed that Ghana has international, regional and national obligations to promote and ensure women's full participation in politics. Regardless of the existing frameworks including the FRC, CEDAW, UDHR and other affirmative action policies, women's political participation remains low at the national and local government level. Although the decentralized local governance structure and the important function of each of its components are to ensure inclusive governance and development with participation from both men and women, few women are either appointed or elected to occupy positions at this level. The UN's assessment that a threshold of at least 30 per cent representation for women's meaningful participation in politics and decision-making has not been met. Much effort is required from all stakeholders - government, civil society, traditional and religious leaders, individuals including women themselves - to ensure the achievement of gender equality in Ghana.¹⁰³

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CHAPTER THREE

WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN GHANA IN THE ERA OF THE SDGs

3.0 Introduction

This chapter seeks to analyze how women's political participation in Ghana has been under the SDG5. Moreover, the study is premised on the hypothesis that "*the barriers to women's political participation remain traditional*". The chapter focuses on the analysis of data collected from a survey and interviews in line with the hypothesis by answering the research questions posed at the beginning of the study outlined below:

1. How has women's political participation in Ghana been under the 4th Republic?
2. What factors may be contributing positively to women's political participation in Ghana under SDG 5?
3. What are the challenges facing women occupying and intending to occupy political positions in Ghana?
4. What innovative solutions could be adopted to promote women's participation in Ghana?

Therefore, the analyses have been grouped based on these thematic areas in addition to some demographic characteristics of the sampled population that are relevant to this study.

3.1 Demographic Information

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents of a survey and interviews conducted to collect data in response to the afore-mentioned questions. The demographic characteristics that were examined include age, educational background, gender, place of residence and marital status of interviewees holding political offices. This demographic information was included to highlight the kind of respondents and women who are involved in national and local government politics and decision-making, and whether their characteristics are homogenous or varied.

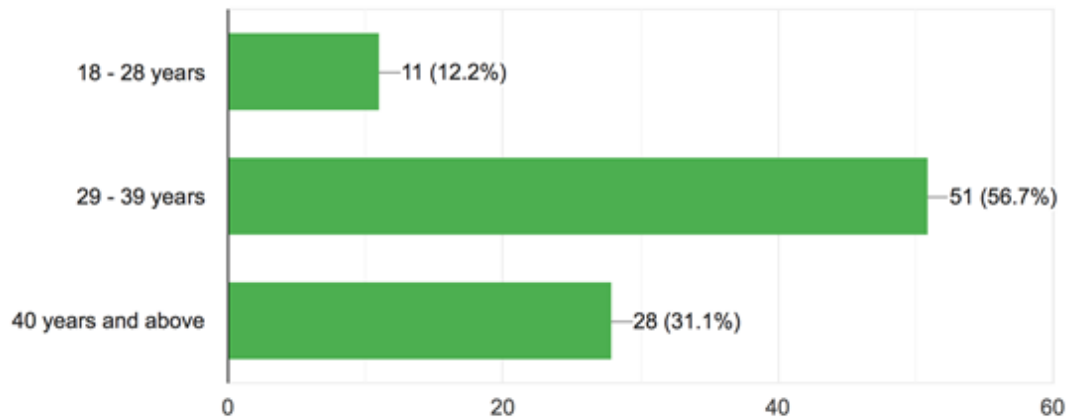
3.1.1 Age of respondents

The age distribution of the respondents who participated in the survey is shown in Figure 3.1. Of the total 90 respondents who participated in the survey, 11 (12.2%) were between 18-28 years, 51 (56.7%) were between 29-39 years, and 28 (31.1%) were above 40 years. In addition, 12 women in politics at the national and local level were interviewed (see figure 3.2). 11(91.7%) of these women were of the age 40 to 50 and 1 (8.3%) was between the age of 29-39years. Generally, in Africa, and per the African Youth Charter, a person is considered to be a youth when she or he falls within the age brackets of 15-35 years.¹ However, within the UN, the ages 15 to 24 are often used to define a youth, in contrast to the AU's definition of a youth.² Going by both definitions, the youth were underrepresented in this sample even though they are described as the vibrant human resource. This is indicative of the low and lack of effective participation and engagement of youth especially young women in politics in Ghana.

The low political participation of youth in Ghana's politics, particularly at the national level, is often attributed to several major challenges that include the inadequate legal framework for enhanced youth participation.³ As prescribed by Ghana's 1992 Constitution, the voting age is 18 years. However, one has to be at least 21 years old to legally qualify to contest as an MP and she or he must be 40 years or above to run for state presidency.⁴ This constitutional requirement automatically excludes all the young people within the age bracket of 18 to 21 years (40 or above for presidency) from potentially becoming MPs or President of the Republic. In addition, there are no provisions within the electoral law for neither quota nor for any other specific positive discrimination that favours the youth particularly young women who are already under represented in all areas of decision-making and in politics.

Figure 3.1 Age of respondents

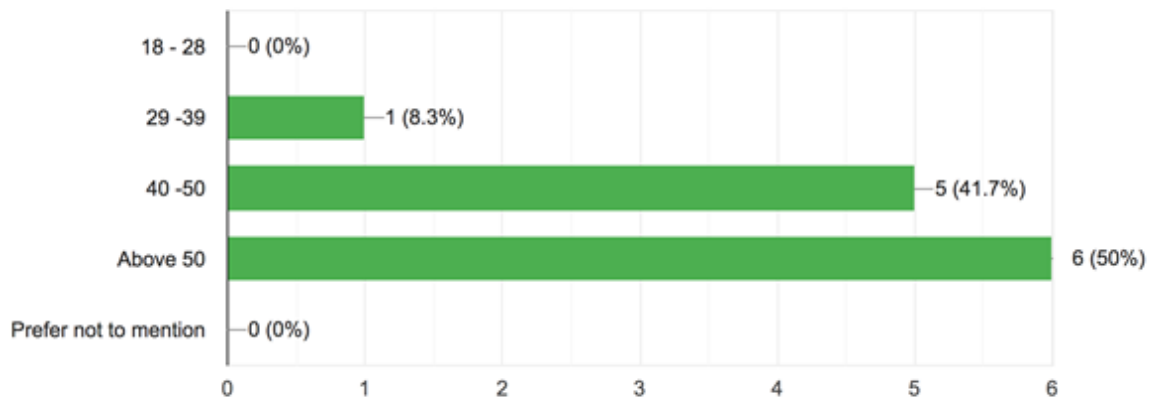
90 responses



Source: Online survey

Figure 3.2 Age Distribution

12 responses



Source: Field interview

3.1.2 Educational Background

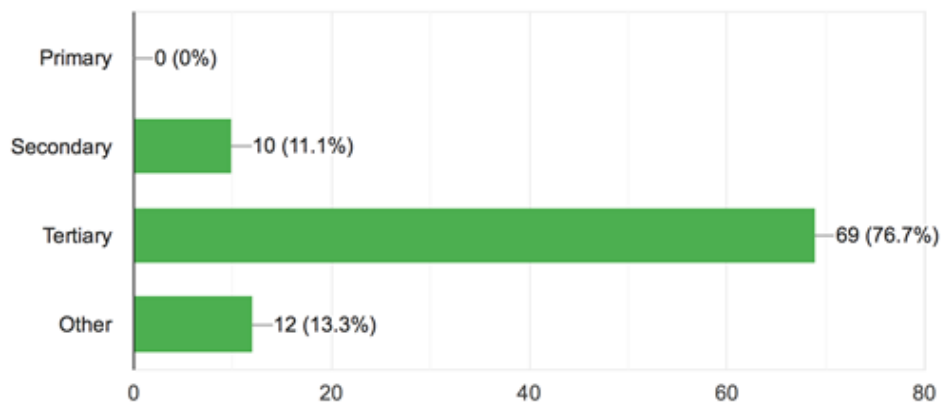
All the respondents had some form of formal education although in varying degrees. Figure 3.3 shows the educational background of respondents of the survey while figure 3.4 shows the level of education of the women in politics who were interviewed. None of the respondents had an educational background below the Senior High School level. Out of the 90 respondents, 69 representing

76.7% have received tertiary level of education. 10 respondents representing 11.1% had high school education and 23 respondents representing 13.3% have other forms of education including vocational. Each of the 12 women occupying political positions who were interviewed also had some form of education. From these findings, it appears that both men and women need literacy for meaningful political participation and discourse. While the direct relationship between literacy and political participation may be more complex, studies have shown that literacy helps individuals to become more exposed to information about their environment, for instance public institutions and government, and makes them more prepared to engage to make such bodies become more responsive to their needs.⁵ This confirms the aspects of the findings of a research released in November 2019 and conducted by Afrobarometer on the December 2019 referendum in Ghana to amend Article 55(3) of the 1992 Constitution that shows that the highly educated citizens, are more aware of the referendum and related issues than citizens with less schooling.⁶ Studies have also shown that literacy brings about self-esteem, thus a person's assessment of his or her worth, which can be considered as "a personal condition that precedes social and political action."⁷

Out of the 12 women in politics interviewed, 25% had secondary education, 66.7% had tertiary level of education while 8.3% had other type of post-secondary education. This is in line with observations made in a study⁸, which affirmed the assertion that "education is a significant predictor of women's political participation." Women with a minimum of secondary education are positively associated with political participation than those without formal or informal education. This finding is also consistent with previous argument by McLendon and Eddings' that women's political and economic participation are enhanced by education.⁹ Evidence of this was found in Bangladesh where it was realized that women's visibility in the family and in social affairs was enhanced by the introduction of non-formal education to women.¹⁰ This also supports the argument that groups with higher income and the better educated tend to participate more actively in democratic politics.¹¹

Figure 3.3 Level of education of respondents

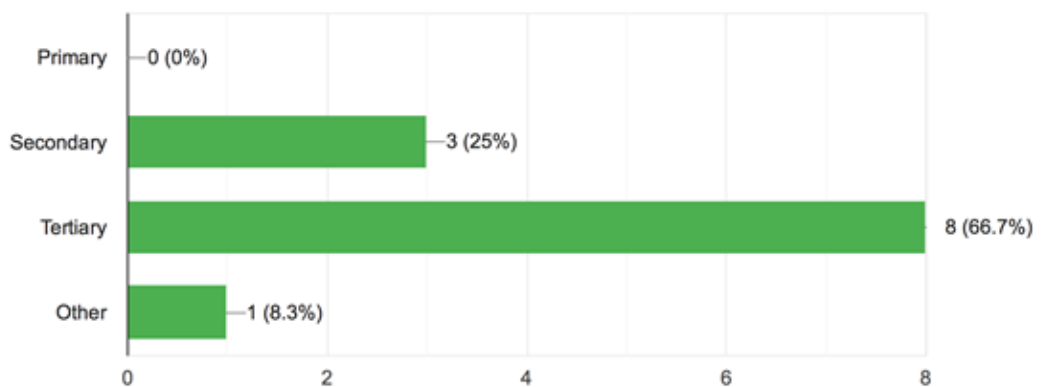
90 responses



Source: Online survey

Figure 3.4 Level of education

12 responses



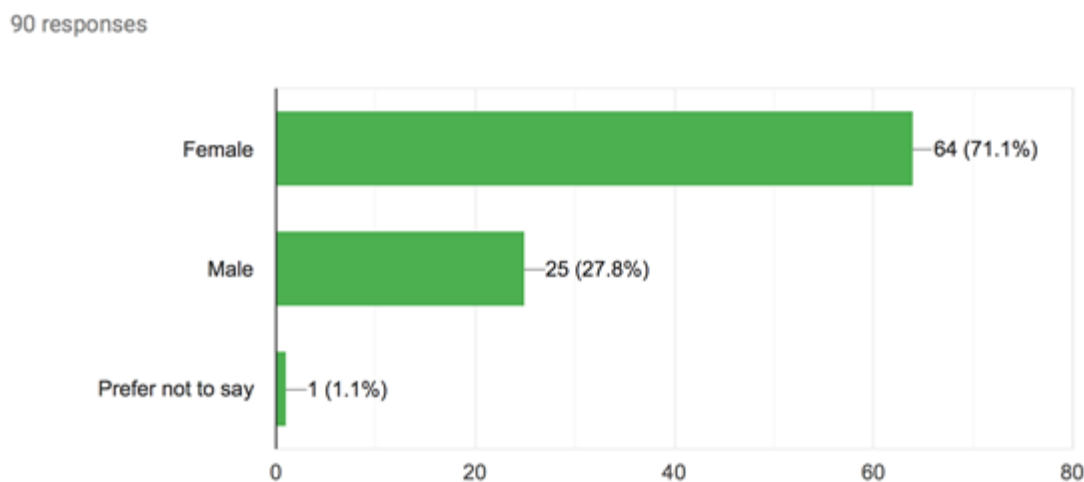
Source: Field interview

3.1.3 Gender of respondents

Policy makers and social scientists have recognized the importance of including men in efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and have begun to emphasize the role

and responsibility of men and boys as key to making progress on the SDG5.¹² The perspectives of men are therefore very important for this research and as such out of the 90 respondents of the survey, 25 representing 27.8 percent identified as males, 64 representing 71.1% identified as females and 1 representing 1.1% preferred not to identify as either male or female. See figure 3.5. However, for the interviews, only women who occupy political positions were interviewed given the focus of the study.

Figure 3.5 Gender of respondents



Source: Online survey

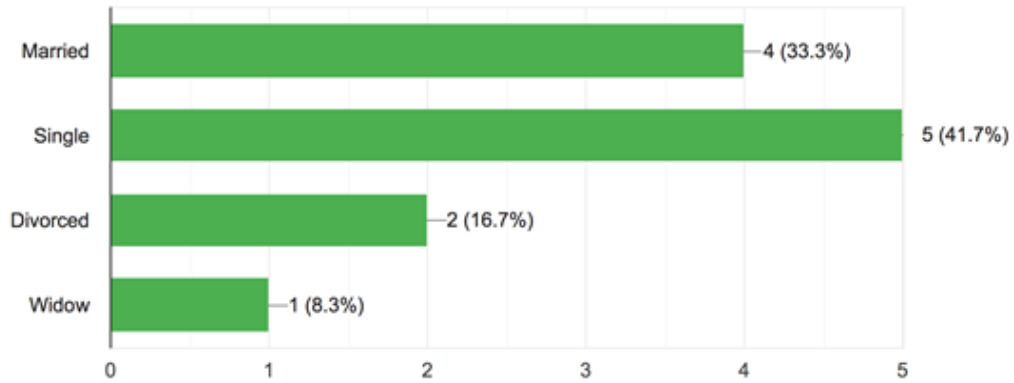
3.1.4 Marital Status of Women in Politics Interviewed

In Africa and in Ghana for that matter, marriage is considered as a revered and a very important social institution. The institution of marriage is regarded as an important mechanism for ensuring social reproduction, raising of families, socializing children and caring for the sick and elderly. As these roles associated with marriage are mainly performed in the domestic sphere and by women, it is sometimes argued that women's participation outside the domestic space is restricted. Therefore, women who participate in politics are most likely to be unmarried, divorced or single mothers. From this study (figure 3.6), out of the 12 women in politics interviewed, 47.1 percent of respond-

ents were single, 33.3 percent were married 8.3 percent was widowed while 16.7 percent were divorced.

Figure 3.6 Marital Status

12 responses

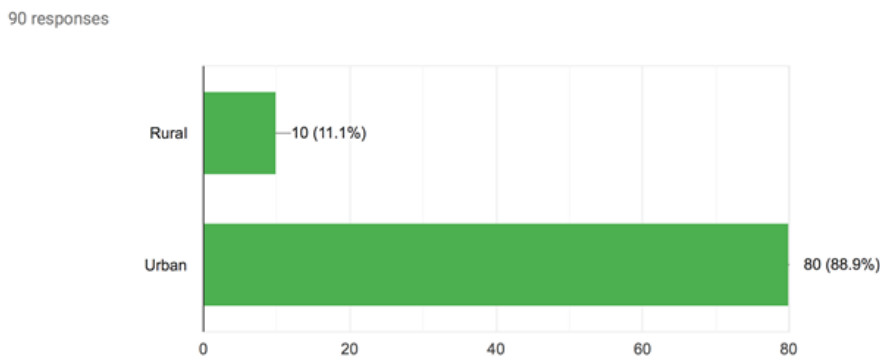


Source: Field interview

3.1.5 Place of Residence of Respondents

The place of residence of all respondents of the survey is shown in figure 3.4. Out of the 90 respondents of the survey, 80 are urban dwellers and 10 rural dwellers. Studies have shown that where people live has influence on a person’s level of political participation, on how she or he identifies on a political ideology spectrum, and on their experiences.¹³ It is said that urban dwellers have access to facilities and basic amenities which tend to facilitate their engagement in politics more than those living in rural areas. This is in line with observation made in a study¹⁴ that demonstrates that the place of dwelling is a significant predictor of women’s political participation. Neighborhood characteristics, including attitude towards education, the quality of education, and the richness of the social network, can impact women’s political participation.

Figure 3.7 Place of Settlement of respondents



Source: Online survey

3.2 Factors that may be contributing positively to women’s political participation in Ghana

All respondents agreed that there has been a relative increase in women’s political participation in Ghana since the fourth Republic. Albeit, the increase has been very marginal and inconsistent over the years.

To determine the factors that have contributed positively to women’s political participation in Ghana, respondents of the survey were asked about the factors that they think are contributing to the marginal increase in women’s participation in politics and in decision-making at both the local and national level in Ghana. Women in politics and NGO representative that were interviewed also shared their views based on their experiences. The various perspectives are summed up into domestic and international factors to reflect all the views shared.

3.2.1 Domestic Forces

3.2.1.1 Gender Mainstreaming and Women’s Empowerment

Gender equality is said to be intrinsically linked to the SDGs and is vital to the realization of human rights for all.¹⁵ The success of all the SDGs is hinged on the achievement of gender equality (SDG5)¹⁶ of which women’s political participation and their empowerment are important indica-

tors. It was observed that though the period preceding the 4th Republic of Ghana saw the call for women's empowerment and their inclusion in politics and decision-making, the 4th Republic period has seen relative increase in efforts to promote women's political participation by all stakeholders, both state and non-state.

Examples of key GoG's efforts include the formulation of the Affirmative Action Policy (AAP) in 1998 after Beijing Plan of Action set targets of 40% representation of women at all levels of governance, on Public Boards, Commissions, Councils, Committees and Official Boards including Cabinet and Council of State, and the National Gender Policy of May 2015 which received cabinet's approval in August 2015 and seeks to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment into Ghana's development efforts.¹⁷

Though generally unimpressive, affirmative action efforts have yielded marginal increase in women's participation in governance, at the political party level and in other sectors. Evidence of this is in recent records of appointment of a female Chief Justice (2008), a female Speaker of Parliament (2008-2012), a female Attorney General (2016), a female Chief of Staff (2016), and appointments of women to key ministerial positions and institutions of state such as the Electoral Commission (2016 and 2018)¹⁸. At the political party level, some presidential candidates in the 2016 elections chose female running mates, but the NPP and NDC have yet presented female running mates. The National Democratic Party – NDP, a new entrant to Ghanaian elections, is the only political party that presented a female presidential candidate for the first time in the history of Ghana during the 2016 elections. Political parties including the NPP and the NDC have also had manifestos that included issues of gender with particular emphasis on policy aspects for the elimination of violence and discrimination against women and girls and the elimination of child, early and forced marriages.¹⁹

Engagement between policymakers and experts to discuss ways of improving gender parity at various levels have taken place as part of steps to promote gender equality and empowerment of women. The MoGCSP for instance organized a number of gender dialogues on “promoting gender equality and non-discrimination through affirmation action”. Similarly, stakeholder engagements prior to the 2016 general elections, to discuss ways of improving women participation resulted for instance in the NDC reducing filing fees by 50 percent for female contestants to encourage their participation.²⁰

More recently in December 2017, the national launch of the HeForShe advocacy campaign as part of global solidarity movement for the advancement of women, which was initiated by UN Women on 20 September 2014.²¹ Its goal is to achieve equality by encouraging men and boys to act as agents and champions of change, and take action against negative inequalities faced by women and girls. The HeForShe movement is said to have resulted in gained momentum around gender talks in many regions. While the momentum for the launch in Ghana demonstrates commitment to addressing inequalities in the Ghanaian society, it faces challenges such as limiting the initiative’s momentum to the capital without replicating it in the regions across the county.

NGOs and CSOs efforts including advocacy for gender equality and the empowerment of women; inclusion of women in politics and decision making in public life; capacity building efforts for women’s political participation among others. Respondents observed the efforts by NGOs and Groups such as Abantu for Development, WILDAF, the Network for Women’s Rights Ghana, Women’s Manifesto Ghana among others who are working to empower women and promote their rights and inclusion in national development efforts. While these efforts are observed to be laudable and have had impact on a number of issues including GoGs policies, Ghana is yet to reap the full expected results of gender parity in political participation and decision-making.

3.2.1.2 Stable Democracy

A stable political environment is required for women to enjoy their rights to political participation and decision-making. Sustainable development cannot be achieved in an unstable democracy. Since the introduction of 1992 Constitution, Ghana has moved away from the constitutional instability that characterized the country for more than 25 years. Coup d'états and military regimes that bereft the country from the First to third Republic (1966 to 1991), have been replaced by a more open political system and more stable democratic institutions.²² It was observed that the stability in the Ghana's democracy allows for women's political participation although the level of participation is far below the parity level.

3.2.2 International Forces

Ghana as a member of the UN, the AU, the ECOWAS and other multilateral organizations has made a commitment in the promotion of women's human rights, political participation and empowerment with the ratification of key international instruments. Key international instruments that Ghana is signatory to, some of which Ghana has ratified include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948; the CEDAW signed on 17 July 1980 and ratified on 2nd January 1986; the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995; the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa signed on 31st October 2003 and ratified on 13th June 2007; the MDGs of 2000 and the SDGs of 2015 (see chapter 2 for full discussion on the international instruments). Countries are expected to meet certain indicators under these instruments; measure progress made in their implementation and in some instance undergo periodic review and assessments. In the light of these, respondents observed that, Ghana is indirectly under obligation to take steps in this direction.

The GoG, NGOs and CSOs receive direct and indirect technical and financial support from development partners, both states and non-states, in the effort to meet shared objectives in the context of these key international instruments. The UN agencies, traditional development partners (DPs) such

as the United States of America (USA) through the USA International Development (USAID), Canada through Global Affairs Canada (GAC), the United Kingdom (UK) through the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and others support Ghana's efforts in promoting inclusive democracy, gender equality, human rights and good governance. The support takes the form of either bilateral or multilateral assistance. For example, at the multilateral level, the UNFPA, UN Women, WFP provided the MoGCSP with technical and financial support towards the development processes of the National Gender Policy, which was launched in 2015.²³

In the lead up to the general elections in 2016, UNDP supported initiatives that aimed to promote the active participation of women both as voters and candidates, and encouraged the political participation of other minority groups including vulnerable and marginalized groups. The initiatives included capacity building training and awareness programmes organized for women and youth to promote their active participation in the elections. In addition, a gender campaign, dubbed “#MoreWomenInParliament” was run by the UNDP to bolster the 29 female candidates who won in 2012 by raising awareness on the importance of encouraging more women to participate in political activities and governance. It also aimed at increasing the visibility of capable women ahead of the 2016 General Elections in Ghana.²⁴

The awareness raising was mostly undertaken in collaboration with the GenCED and the women groups of the political parties. The strategy employed was the use of short videos and dramas broadcast through traditional and social media, car stickers and brooches, several affirmative calls were made on the public to highlight the value of having more women in parliament. While these efforts and others did not result in gender parity in political participation, it contributed to the marginal increase for example, of female MPs from 26 in 2012 to 37 in 2016.²⁵

The UNDP through a multi-donor funding support from the Governments of Norway, and Canada; UNOWAS, and UN Women and with technical support from the Angie Brooks International Centre (ABIC) facilitated the establishment of a Women's Situation Room (WSR) in Ghana. The WSR-Ghana is owned by Ghanaian women and led by five Ghanaian CSOs namely; Abantu for Development, GenCED, The Women's Manifesto Coalition, Ghana Federation of Disability Organizations and Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) was an initiative to support the expertise and experience of women and youth networks to rally, harness, lead peace initiatives and actions that create a conducive environment for the 2016 election processes. WSR Ghana engaged with key electoral stakeholders such as the Police, the National Peace Council, Religious and traditional leaders, the media, youths, Ministers of state, Das and CSOs. These actions contributed to the peaceful partition of vulnerable groups including women and youth in the 2016 Parliamentary and Presidential elections.²⁶

3.3 Reasons for Low Participation of Women in Politics and Decision-Making in Ghana

All respondents of the general survey and women in politics interviewed for this study agreed that, the proportion of women's participation in politics and decision-making in Ghana is low compared to their male counterparts. The reasons attributed to the unequal participation that were summed up during survey and interviews were mainly cultural, structural and socio-economic barriers. To identify the different challenges to women's political participation, respondents were asked to share their opinions and experiences about the issue which are summed up below and represents the various views expressed.

To understand the context accounting for the low participation of women in politics at the national and local level, respondents to the online survey, women in politics and representatives of CSOs who were interviewed, were asked to give their opinions and share their experiences on the reasons that deter women intending to occupy political positions - some of whom are qualified to participate

in politics - from actually engaging in politics. Another question that sought to probe further on the factors that pose as barriers to women already occupying political positions followed. The strategy was to be able to identify some nuances in the barriers to women's political participation. Thus, those they face before they get into politics and those that they encounter while occupying the elected or appointed position in politics or other decision-making position. In view of the fact that this study is qualitative in design, the views of the respondents are presented in a manner that reflects the different groups of respondents interviewed and surveyed.

3.3.1 Challenges encountered by women intending to occupy political positions

3.3.1.1 Culture and Tradition

It came out visibly that cultural and religious practices and beliefs are a major barrier to women's political participation in Ghana.

“Traditions that make opinions of women not counted or their opinions not taken seriously especially in the traditional setting. For instance, at family gatherings, women are mostly relegated to the background and are advised to remain quiet. Each time a woman wants to rise up, she's reminded she's a woman and must therefore stay in the background not only by men but also by their fellow women”²⁷

This is a true reflection of the patriarchy in the Ghanaian society, dominant in some cultures and local settings than others.²⁸ A system in which men hold primary power, dominate in leadership in all spheres - political, economic, social - of life. The cultural and traditional norms expect women to be led but not to lead. In fact, these traditional and cultural norms allow for gender stereotyping which disfavours women and limit the opportunities for them to exhibit their potentials beyond the traditional roles in the domestic setting. This societal perception which is founded on culture and tradition about leadership abilities of women, women's lack of assertiveness are some barriers that were highlighted as some of the challenges that women have to deal with before even deciding to

become active in politics. They have to contend with these before considering presenting themselves for any elected position or accepting any proposal for a political appointment that may come their way.²⁹

Respondents at the party level, remarked that although there are positions within the political party structure, such as leadership of the women wings, those positions seem reserved. They also give the impression those were instituted to tick the box for including women in party leadership. This is because the affairs within the party are almost always being run by the men.

“Traditions that make it look like women shouldn't aspire too high, if they do, they will not get husbands and being an unmarried woman in the Ghanaian society comes with its own name calling.”³⁰

A woman MP shared that:

“it became very real to me when I was deciding to get involved [in politics] that women, in our cultural environment, may be seen but not heard such that those of us who wanted to venture into politics were breaking a taboo or two.”

At the district assembly and unit committee level, very few women are amidst the men and their *“...voices are equally drowned by their male counterparts. When a woman considers all these things, she will definitely advise herself to limit her political ambitions.”*

Respondents observed that closely linked to traditions and culture is religion. They cited religious beliefs and values as another important source of cultural belief that reinforces the place and role of women as secondary and hinders women from taking political and leadership positions. It has been proven that, across all dominant religions, the inferiority of women to men is very much present. This has long been the basis for excluding women from actively participating in various aspects of life, politics and decision-making included. Albeit, the views of the major religions of the world are

differentially conservative or patriarchal with regard to the place of the woman, be it in the church hierarchy or in society.³¹ For example, Protestantism promotes nonhierarchical religious practices and more readily accepts women as religious leaders compared with Catholicism.³² With regard to Christian women and Islamic women, analysis made by some scholars shows that Islamic women are less associated with higher political participation than Christian women.³³ Respondents observed that while both religions may reinforce the gendered roles for both men and women, Christianity is observed to be less conservative than Islam with regard to women's political participation. "The Muslim women do not want to participate in politics because the men are intimidating them and sabotaging them and for that they fear to come out boldly."³⁴

3.3.1.2 Monetization of politics

It is known that most women are economically disadvantaged due to their historical experience of discrimination in society. Socio-economic status of women to a greater extent play a significant role in enhancing their participation and representation in political decision-making bodies. This is in line with an argument put forward by Shvedova that social and economic status of women in society has a direct influence on their participation in political institutions and elected bodies.³⁵ Respondents identified the excessive monetization of politics coupled with a lack of and access to economic resources as one of the biggest hurdles that women in Ghana have to contend with when considering to participate in politics, and prevents them from participating in politics in greater numbers.

All the women in elective positions interviewed shared that this was a major challenge they had had to deal with before getting into politics. A respondent shared:

"The money problem is a major challenge for even the men most of whom have money or easily get funding support from other sources. So if this a problem for the men then you can imagine what the women are facing especially as most political financiers are reluctant to

support women financially for obvious reasons. They say we [women] are unlikely to win elections so when you support them how do you get your money back.”³⁶

Another respondent opined: “I barely had money to run my campaign and there wasn’t any support for me”. Ghana’s Majority Leader and Minister of parliamentary Affairs in a recent (October 2019) statement affirmed that the excessive monetization of Ghana’s multiparty democracy is adversely affecting the participation of political aspirants who do not have the financial capacity to compete. Unfortunately, the majority of the poor aspirants are women.³⁷

Candidates are expected to raise money for nomination fees and campaign activities. Delegates also expect to receive some favours from aspirants either in monetary or material forms and this influences their votes. Given political parties are not funded by the state, this obviously raises questions about political financing and related governance issues particularly corruption which Ghana has to deal with.

3.3.1.3 Support

An observation that was generally held by all respondents was the lack of support from family and society at large when women express intention to aspire for a political position. The support is explained in various ways including the support from the spouse with domestic work so that the woman can devote some time to pursue the political ambitions; financial support from family, friends and even corporate bodies for campaign activities, which have become increasingly costly in Ghana. Some of the respondents recounted having to juggle professional work with domestic duties while meeting social expectations in order to prove that they were strong emotionally and physically. They reportedly faced the daunting challenge of proving to society that they were not incapable of achieving their ambitions. A respondent argued that:

We live in a patriarchal society where women are considered second citizens. Males dominate and their opinions on issues are sometimes valued more than the values of women.

Again, some occupations and positions are seen as being the preserve of men and so its difficult for a woman to receive the necessary support to break through and be accepted as an equal or even a better option to a man.³⁸

The lack of support from the media to project women in politics positively in their reportage was also highlighted. “It is very unfortunate that we (women) are breaking the glass ceiling in politics but our voices still go unheard. What you often hear is this woman has done this and that...” a respondent shared.³⁹ This is obviously a disincentive for women intending to pursue political ambitions.

Another aspect of support highlighted by respondents was the lack of support from political parties to create the enabling environment for women to venture into politics. To contest for an elective position on a party’s ticket as an MP, one needs to win internal party primaries to become the parliamentary candidate. Unfortunately, political parties do not provide the expected support to women who are already disadvantaged by patriarchy, the social construction of the woman as the weaker sex and the demands and expectations of culture and tradition. Most political parties in Ghana have steep financial conditionalities and male-dominated party structures which tend to be unfavourable for women. The impression is that women are expected to vie for those positions that have been created exclusively for women such as the leadership of the women’s wing. Aside the women’s organizer position, women are generally not expected to contest and be voted for to occupy other executive positions such as the national chair, general secretary, youth organizer and other top level national positions. This is in line with the view shared by Allah-Mensa cited by Hammah⁴⁰ that such action as creating the women’s wing position is a “tokenistic and clandestine approach aimed at persuading women to vote for them” (political parties).

3.3.1.4 Lack of Assertiveness

It was also observed that another challenge that women have to deal with prior to taking a decision to participate in politics is the issue of self-confidence. For instance, a woman should be able to speak publicly with confidence. Generally, all respondents attributed the level of education among women, the traditional upbringing which expects women to be submissive and “keep quiet when the man speaks” as an inhibiting factor contributing to lack of assertiveness and their effective involvement in political governance.

3.3.1.5 Political Party Gatekeepers and the ‘Godfather’ syndrome

Respondents identified political party gatekeepers and ‘godfathers’, usually senior party officials/members, as a factor many women especially have to deal with when deciding to vie for a position. It was shared that these party gatekeepers and godfathers have the powers to determine how possible or impossible it is for women to be candidates and which position they decide to vie. This is in line with Watuka’s assertion that “it is within political parties that the marginalisation of women’s rights, skills and experiences has been most visible.”⁴¹ In her view, these are the institutional barriers that interferes with the selection processes and affect individuals especially women who have interest or have already decided to run for office. A respondent shared that:

“you have to have a godfather or know a big man (influential person) within the hierarchy to make progress. Some of us had to struggle really hard to pass through. My sister it is not that easy even sometimes for the men too”.

Political parties are the main channels through which women can be elected as representatives. Whether as candidates for MPs or even to be appointed for public offices, your affiliation to the political party is very important. Internal and external constraints both formal and informal guide and influence party decisions and actors, and consequently affect the selection of women. Whiles some of the political parties in Ghana including the two main parties the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) have some sort of affirmative action policy in their mani-

festoes, its application is not automatic. The opinions of the party leadership including the gatekeepers on gender equality and the decision-making processes have huge impact on women's participation. Political parties are therefore important institutions that can either promote or constrain women's political participation. The role of political parties will even become more crucial should Ghana vote yes in the referendum (December 2019) to amend Article 55(3) of the Constitution to allow elections at the MMDAs to be on partisan basis.

Political violence was observed as a challenge women have to deal with and consider carefully before participating in politics. A respondent shared that she had had to deal with intimidation, and verbal abuse when she decided to vie for a position. It was shared that many women even those who are educated, stay away from politics due to the violent nature of multi-party politics in Ghana. "The unfair criticism, insults and labelling affect women's self-esteem and makes them shy away from politics."⁴²

3.3.2 Challenges faced by women occupying political and decision-making positions

3.3.2.1 Labeling

An observation that was generally held by all respondents was the pervasive perception in society that the female gender is incompetent. Some of the respondents recounted being labeled as incompetent when they were elected. They are therefore faced with the daunting challenge of continuously proving to society that they are not incompetent.

Frequent sexist statements against women in politics and in decision-making positions both at the local and national level is also another angle of labeling that was observed. Respondents shared how some of their fellow women had to battle and many others continue to battle with negative societal perceptions about women politicians being tagged as prostitutes. Labeling results in verbal abuse and attack on personality which is purely based on gender, physical looks and sometimes al-

legations. Interviewees confessed this often discouraged them from actively engaging in political party activities. One respondent shared:

*... when you consider all this you will quit. But the determination to be part of the national discourse, contribute to national development and ensure women and children's issues are taken care of by our government is what keeps some us in this game.*⁴³

This suggests that, there is still a higher ethical and moral standard bar for women than men in Ghana. Women are expected to conduct themselves in the society to earn respect or qualify for political party leadership, election to the MMDAs, appointment as a Minister or whatever public position they aspire for.

3.3.2.2 Unreasonable expectations

Women, whether in elective or appointed positions suffer the challenge of meeting unreasonably high expectations by their male counterparts, constituents and society at large to prove themselves worthy of being elected or appointed.

“As a woman, I have to go above and beyond to deliver. If not, my chances of being reelected becomes very slim”.

Another respondent added:

*“even when you stand to speak in public, everybody listens to mark you for what you say, how you say it. Eyes are on you all the time. This is not the same for our men and it is so unfair.”*⁴⁴

Another aspect of the unreasonable expectations respondents pointed out is the demands made by constituents, family and friends for personal support both monetary and material. Whiles this challenge is not limited to women but also men, women are most affected given the limited access to

financial resources, their economic position in society and sometimes the observation that many married women in Ghana do not have exclusive control of family resources including their personal funds and have to seek the consent of their spouses and partners before undertaking spending from the “family purse.”

Women in politics are harshly treated because they are women. The expectations for women in politics are not comparable to expectations of men. It's almost as though everyone is waiting for them [women] to fail. And of course there are those insults for them to stay home and raise a family. - A respondent shared.

Whilst there are higher expectations for women than men to deliver, women especially those with family responsibilities are the ones who have to juggle family life with political life and maintain a balance to meet expected outcomes at every side. This is a clear indication of the gender inequalities that continue to persist in the Ghanaian society.

3.3.2.3 Constitutional limitations

The 1992 Ghanaian constitution was observed to have some elements of discrimination in the context of ministerial appointments. To buttress this point, they quoted article 78 clauses 1 and 3 of the Constitution. Per the Article 78(1) “ministers of state shall be appointed by the President with the prior approval of parliament from among Members of Parliament or persons qualified to be elected as Members of Parliament, except that the majority of ministers of state shall be appointed from among members of parliament”. It continues in Article 78 Clause 3 as “a minister of state shall not hold any other office of profit or emolument whether private or public and whether directly or indirectly unless otherwise permitted by the Speaker acting on the recommendations of a committee of Parliament on the ground, 3(a) that holding that office will not prejudice the work of a minister”. Respondents viewed these provisions as discriminatory as it imposes some limitations on the number of women who could join the executive arm of government.

They based their argument on the fact that women are already underrepresented in Parliament as such these constitutional provisions tend to favour the men who are the most represented. They however, remarked that even though appointment of ministers as prescribed by Article 78 Clause 1 is not in itself discriminatory against women, it tends to limit the executive powers vested in the President to reach out to the majority of women who are outside Parliament. Respondents further observed that the 1992 Constitution grants powers to the Speaker of Parliament to allow MPs to be appointed as ministers even though per its provisions a minister of state shall not hold another public or private. In the respondents view, this aspect of the Constitution is discriminatory and once again women are the worse hit.

It was further argued that aside the constitutional provisions that create the platform for fewer women to be appointed as Ministers, women have seemingly been appointed as Ministers to certain Ministries only - those that align with the traditional gendered role of women. Inarguably, the Ministry for Gender, Children and Social Protection and others including Ministry of Communications; Aviation; Tourism, Arts and Culture were cited. On the contrary, the Ministries that have functions that suggest traditional gendered role of men have always had men appointed as Ministers. Those cited included the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources. This creates a perception that women are not fit for certain ministries and reflects the patriarchy of the Ghanaian society which is a structural problem for Ghana's democracy.

3.4 Innovative solutions to address the barriers to women's participation and representation in politics and decision-making

Addressing the barriers to women's participation in politics and decision-makings so as to increase their effective participation is not an impossible task. In spite of the many challenges that women face in participating in politics and decision-making, respondents for this study are optimistic that

the current trend can be reversed through attitudinal change, capacity building and the right policy framework. The interviews and survey sought suggestions for innovative solutions that could be explored other than already known and suggested solutions to increase women's political participation. However, those that came out repeatedly were not entirely new.

3.4.1 Education

All respondents underscored the importance of education and the need to bridge the education gap between boys and girls and get more girls educated. They believe this is the fundamental and long term solution to enhance women's political participation.

"It's a long haul and something to be actively envisaged over a generation - but to me, it starts with keeping all capable girls at school up to the SHS level and beyond, with programmes of affirmative action at the tertiary level, with targeted further training through scholarships for a good number of them such that, in an unlikely scenario women can constitute a cabinet all by themselves. So education is the key..."⁴⁵

"To be able to understand the Constitution and other policy documents and speak confidently to it [them], you need education".

To the respondents, women's education meant "power" to lead, to be heard and to influence especially in a society where patriarchy is the status quo and the power to make decisions and lead is vested in the hands of men.

Respondents linked education to economic empowerment and access to resources that has a direct correlation to political participation. In their view, education increases employability and employment gives not only economic independence but also greater professional skills and self-confidence. It has been proven that access to means of production and finances has a direct relationship and influence on the participation of women in political institutions.⁴⁶

Respondents, however, argued that, formal education alone is not enough. It needs to be complemented with capacity building training for women and girls and especially for those interested in politics and public offices, to build their confidence, increase their knowledge and help them to acquire the requisite know-how for their effective political participation. To this end, it was observed that the onus lies on both state and non-state actors including the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), the Electoral Commission (EC) and other civil society organizations to hold series of capacity building workshops for women aspirants.

Another form of informal education and capacity-building for women which came out strongly is mentorship and role-modeling. A respondent shared: “I looked up to other women like Hawa Yakubu and Gifty Anti and that took me forward.”⁴⁷ Women in leadership positions in politics and public life can help mould other young women to aspire for such roles. A respondent expressed her willingness to “... work harder to encourage and mentor other women to take up development of the nation through sharing of ideas, experiences and support.”

3.4.2 Affirmative Action Law

Ghana has yet to pass a proposed AAB into law. Respondents observed that passage of the AAB into law and thereafter, its proper implementation will help to increase women’s political participation. The AAB, which for over 10 years, has suffered a number of setbacks including changes to some clauses including those relating to persons with disabilities, was intended to increase women’s participation in decision-making. It provides for a 40 per cent women’s representation and participation in governance, public positions of power and decision-making. It has been observed that the passage of the bill into law would help remove systems that impede women’s participation in politics and decision-making. Clause 38 of the AAB for instance says that: “A person who victimises, obstructs or exerts undue influence and submits a female politician to verbal attack, among

others, commits an offence.”⁴⁸ This clause of the Bill would discourage stereotyping of women, which characterizes Ghana’s political system and will whip up women’s interest for political participation. The passage of the AAB into law has been proposed by the Women’s Manifesto Ghana as one of the ways to promote women’s political participation in Ghana. In their view an affirmative action law enforced and implemented by all stakeholders including, government institutions, political parties would help to pave the way for women’s meaningful participation.”⁴⁹

In addition, respondents affirmed the above views expressed by the Women’s Manifesto and thought that the proper implementation of existing affirmative action policies will contribute to increased women’s political participation. They suggested that the 30 percent government quota at the district assembly level for instance should be fully utilized by government to appoint more women to the assemblies. In their view, this will help more participation at the local level, which will be a great avenue to prepare women for participation at the national level. It would also contribute to enriching their experiences hands-on to effectively influence policy through constructive contributions. This is in line with the argument that “... affirmative action has symbolic value and is necessary to speed up the achievement of equality.”⁵⁰

Respondents observed political parties have a key role to play in reaping the fruits of affirmative action. Parties eventually form governments when they win elections. It is evidenced that governments derive aspects of their policies from their party manifestos. These party manifestos literally serve as social contracts with the electorates such that governments can be held accountable based on their manifestos and campaign promises. Respondents believe that political parties fully aware of the institutionalized gap between men and women in political participation have affirmative action promises in the various party manifestos improve the proportion of women in governance. They shared that these should not just be implemented in a tokenistic fashion so as to tick the gender equality checkbox. “Tokenism delegitimizes affirmative action by conveying the idea that this

is not serious business.”⁵¹ Instead, political parties should be committed to and accountable for it. Thus, citizens, women groups, opposition parties, and civil society groups can hold political parties accountable for promises made in their manifestos. This way, they will be compelled by pressure from these groups to honour their promises of scaling women’s participation in governance.

As observed by Tsikata⁵² affirmative action law, and policies can only be effective when a robust regime of implementation, monitoring and evaluation is put in place to back these actions. Indeed, quotas are only effective when complimented by policies such as electoral reform, political education, mobilization of citizens and the removal of obstacles that prevent women from being able to fully utilize women's ability to utilize the quotas.⁵³

3.4.3 Funding Support to Women Politicians

The excessive monetization of multiparty democracy is increasingly affecting the participation of poor political aspirants. Unfortunately, majority of aspirants who do not have access to resources, are women. To reduce the financial burden on women and empower them financially to compete on equal grounds with their male counterparts, respondents proposed state funding as an affirmative action measure for women politicians and aspirants at the Assembly and Unit Committee level. In addition to the proposal for a national fund, respondents also suggested scrapping of nomination fees for women by political parties and perhaps a reduction in filling fees for women by the EC if total scrapping of the fees is not feasible. This could be an incentive for political parties to field more women. They believe that the reduction of the financial burden which have been observed to be a constraint to women’s political participation will be a great incentive for more women to avail themselves for political participation.

3.4.4 Reorientation of the Media

Media - traditional and social media - are a powerful tool for education, information and entertainment. However, respondents observed that media rather than having a shared objective and respon-

sibility to use their channels for positive coverage of women in politics, the channels are rather used to run negative publicity of women especially those in politics. The media tend to attack the personalities of women instead of showcasing the important roles women have played in the past and continue to play currently and how these are contributing to socio-economic and political development. A reorientation of the media in Ghana to use their channels to promote the women agenda will bring a difference.

3.4.5 Male Champions

Men can champion the course for women's political participation. Women's political participation could be improved if men work alongside women to "share the responsibility in breaking harmful socio-cultural norms and practices, as well as the institutional, structural and legal barriers that hinder women's equal and influential political participation."⁵⁴ Respondents believe when men proactively work as *HeForShes* alongside women, it would help considerably in establishing an environment that empowers women and promote their participation at all levels of decision-making.

They reiterated the importance of men's partnership in addressing issues that pose as obstacles to women's political engagement. These obstacles include structural barriers, practices that favour men over women and violence against women such as those that prevent them from even exercising their voting rights; disparity in the access to education, networks and resources. Others are institutional practices that are discriminatory, laws that prevent women from being recruited, nominated for standing for office, or getting elected; "sexism and harassment against female candidates and female elected officials, and negative gender-based stereotypes perpetuated by the media."⁵⁵ The Government of Ghana as part of national efforts to meet the SDG 5, launched the 'He For She' Advocacy campaign in December 2017 to reduce Gender inequality in Ghana.⁵⁶ However, the HeforShe Campaign has been slow since its launch and the actual impact is yet to be felt.

3.6 Symbolic and Substantive Representation effect of Women's Political Participation in Ghana

Scholars like Gretchen Bauer posit that women's participation in politics and in decision-making including in parliament as MPs has a symbolic and substantive effect and this has been made evidence in some African parliaments. By symbolic effect, the presence of women in politics serves as great source of encouragement for and influence on other women to also present themselves to occupy leadership positions. It also tends to change gendered ideas about the roles of women and men in politics. Women's presence and participation in parliaments contribute to 'raising awareness of what women can achieve as political actors and legitimizing them as political actors', or encouraging more women to be engaged in politics as voters, activists, candidates, leaders.

Female respondents in the survey were asked to share their opinions about the symbolic effect of women MPs. The responses gathered expressed mixed views about the symbolic effect of women's political participation in Ghana. While some felt encouraged by the presence of other women in parliament and other leadership positions to also vie for such positions, others were not sure if this have any effect at all (including on themselves). Majority of respondents said the presence of women in parliament does not have any influential effect on them (see Figure 3.8).

With regard to the substantive effect of women's presence in Parliament - thus their ability to move forward the issues regarding women including infant and maternal mortalities, female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C), child and early forced marriage (CEFM), and wage inequality among others - majority of respondents were of the view that women in Parliament have not really been able to move the women issues forward. They however, recognized that some efforts have been made even though these efforts have not always yielded the expected results. For instance, the AAB has not been passed in Ghana, despite the efforts being made by MPs coupled with massive support and advocacy by women's rights organizations and civil society groups. They cited some challeng-

es that in their view hinder women in Parliament from moving women's issues forward. These include the low numbers of women in Parliament which limits their voices, influence and ability to lobby; political divide which makes them lean more towards party lines and interests, and are therefore unable to receive the attention required to address specific women's issues given their limited numbers. They are only able to move specific women issues forward when they receive the buy-in from their male counterparts. A respondent shared that:

... affiliation to one's party prevents coherence for women in Parliament to work together to achieve purposes for other women. That is, because of loyalty to ones party, even if a subject matter is of importance to women's development, because it was suggested, for instance, by a fellow woman of the minority side of Parliament, members of majority side of Parliament will reject it so the minority will not leverage a successful implementation for political gains during campaigns.

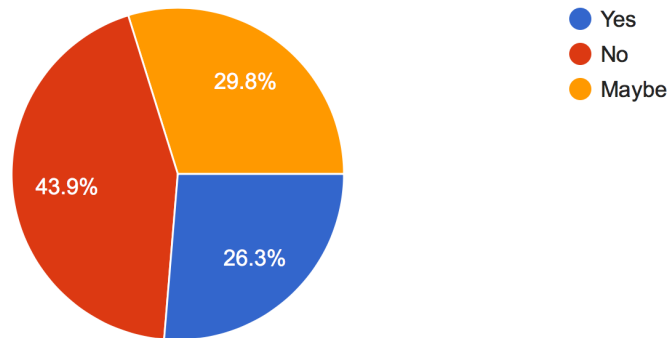
Another respondent shared also that:

"... because our numbers [women] are low, we are unable to overcome the opinions of men who are the majority in terms of numbers in Parliament".

Despite the challenges that limit the full manifestation of the symbolic and substantive effect of women's presence in Parliament, some respondents agreed that women in Ghana's Parliament have been able to push forward some women's issues especially when these issues were supported by women's rights organizations through advocacy. The case of the property rights laws was cited as an example in addition to the momentum observed in the advocacy for the passage Affirmative Action Bill. In view of these mixed views and given the limited number of views sampled, one cannot make explicit conclusions particularly about the symbolic effect of women's participation in Parliament at this stage. This could be an area for further research in the context of Ghana.

Figure 3.8 Respondents' opinions about the symbolic effect of women's representation in Parliament of Ghana

57 responses



Source: Online Survey

3.7 Conclusion

On the premise of the objectives 2, 3 and 4 (objective 1 was mainly covered in chapter 2 of this study) of this study, the chapter sought to find out the factors that are contributing to an increase in women's political participation in Ghana under SDG 5, the challenges facing women occupying and intending to occupy political positions in Ghana and innovative solutions that could be adopted to promote women's participation in Ghana. Increasing recognition of the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women to sustainable socio-economic development; the push for Ghana to meet her constitutional and international obligations for gender equality and empowerment of women in all aspects of development; efforts by stakeholders particularly women's groups and NGOs coupled with the funding support of development partners to achieve shared objectives of the SDG5 are some of the factors identified as contributing somewhat positively to women's political participation in Ghana.

Despite the marginal increase, women's political participation remains low. This is attributed to challenges women occupying and intending to occupy political positions in Ghana face including

labelling; verbal and physical violence that characterizes the political terrain; monetization of politics; undue pressure on women to deliver; limitations within the Constitution regarding appointments; political party gatekeepers and the ‘Godfather’ syndrome and traditional and cultural norms that supports patriarchy and undermines the leadership capacities of women.

To overcome these challenges, some solutions were identified recognizing that although these solutions are not new in themselves, will make a difference when well implemented. Proposed solutions include education (formal and informal); men championing the course for women; reorientation of the Ghanaian media to project women issues positively; funding support to women in politics, and the passage of the Affirmative Action Bill into law.

The symbolic and substantive effect of women representation in parliament has yielded positive results in some African countries. However, this effect of women’s participation in parliament is yet to have full effect in Ghana. This is because women in parliament are limited by their numbers and are unable to move forward women’s issues when these do not attract the support of their male counterparts.

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CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.0 Introduction

The promotion of gender equality, human rights of girls and women and their empowerment are global issues of high importance. It is said that women's full and equal participation, and the integration of gender perspectives into every endeavour are key to global sustainable development. Ghana since the 4th Republic has made both local and international commitments including the SDGs to promote women's political participation and decision making. However, women's representation and participation at national and local level politics and decision-making remains low.

The study sought to analyze women's political participation in Ghana under the SDG5 and premised on the hypothesis that the challenges to women's political participation remain traditional. To do this, the study begins by looking at women's political participation under the 4th Republic in the era of the SDGs and then using qualitative personal interviews and online surveys tried to find out the factors that have influenced women's political participation positively and whether women's representation in Parliament has a substantive and symbolic effect in Ghana; account for the challenges women occupying and intending to occupy political positions in Ghana encounter; identify innovative solutions to overcome the challenges.

This chapter presents a summary of the major findings of the study from the data analysis, draws conclusions from the findings and makes recommendations to promote women's political participation and their effective contribution to sustainable development.

4.1 Summary of Findings

Summary of the research findings are discussed below:

4.1.1 Factors Contributing Positively to Women's Political Participation in Ghana

- The general view shared by all respondents is that, there have been a very relative marginal improvement in women's political participation in Ghana since the Fourth Republic even though the increase recorded has not been consistent over the years. While the number of women candidates at both national and local levels have increased consistently, the actual number of women who have won elections at the Parliamentary level for example have not increased beyond 13% since 1992.
- The marginal increase is alluded to factors that are summarized into domestic and international forces. Domestic forces cited include constitutional provisions that allows for equal political participation for both men and women; political and constitutional stability that creates the peaceful political environment for participation; efforts by government including the launch of a national gender policy in 2015 to mainstream gender into national policies and development agenda; and efforts by NGOs, women's groups and civil society such as capacity building training for women in politics and advocacy for the passage of an Affirmative Action Law towards the empowerment of women and the promotion of their participation at all levels of development.
- Factors that are considered as international forces that are positively influencing women's political participation include the Government of Ghana's commitment to regional and international protocols of which the SDGs are a part, that aim at promoting gender equality, human rights of women including their rights to political participation and their empowerment. In addition to this, respondents cited the technical and funding support from develop-

ment partners at the bilateral and multilateral level to stakeholders including the government of Ghana, women's groups, NGOs and civil society in their efforts to achieve shared objectives of promoting gender equality human rights of women and their empowerment.

4.1.2 Challenges encountered by Women occupying and intending to Occupy Political Positions in Ghana

All respondents agreed that, women's participation in all areas of national development remains low despite the historical evidence of the role they play in efforts for national development as well as the evidence of the impact of women's participation to sustainable development. An observation made is that, some nuances exist in the challenges that women intending to occupy political positions face vis-a-vis those faced by women already occupying political positions in that some challenges are more pronounced in the latter than the former and vice-versa.

- Generally, the respondents held the notion that cultural and religious practices and beliefs are a major barrier to women's political participation in Ghana. They cited traditional and cultural values and norms coupled with religious beliefs that support patriarchy and make men dominate in leadership in all spheres - political, economic, social - of life and places women as subordinates, incapable of taking leadership and decision-making positions. Respondents believe this has negatively affected affirmative action including at the political party level and in appointing high level public officials, rendering affirmative action mere tokenistic not achieving its intended objective despite the fact that affirmative action is recommended widely as one of the effective ways of promoting women's participation. The creation of women's wings within the structure of political parties was cited as an example. To them, such actions aim at ticking the check box for inclusion while maintaining the existing patriarchy where men continue to occupy the influential positions and at best women deputize.

- It was also found that, the excessive monetization of politics is a major setback for women for elective positions. This is particularly challenging as women are mostly economically disadvantaged but have to compete with their male counterparts who comparatively are more financially resourced. Women also have to contend with expensive campaign activities, vote-buying and high nomination fees.
- Respondents believed that lack of assertiveness on the part of many women is a major challenge. Most respondents attributed this to low level of education, the upbringing of girls to reflect traditional norms and values that make them secondary to boys and men in society, and the lack of political knowledge. It became clear that women are deterred by this phenomenon from aspiring to participate in politics particularly at the national level where one is expected to for instance speak at the floor of parliament, read and understand policy and constitutional documents and refer to them as may be required.
- The study also made an important observation relating to the contribution of political party ‘gatekeepers’ and ‘godfathers’, usually senior party officials/members, to the marginalization of women in political participation particularly at the party level with a ripple effect at the national level. These party ‘gatekeepers’ and ‘godfathers’ have the power to determine how possible or impossible it is for women to be candidates and which position they can vie for. This was cited as very worrisome as the main channels through which women can be elected as representatives are the political parties.
- Lack of support from spouses and family as it relates to juggling domestic duties with political duties; finances; and the lack of support from society and institutions such as the media in promoting women and their contribution to sustainable development were cited as barriers.

ers to women's political participation. Society holds high expectation for women to deliver compared to men and puts undue pressure on women to show that they are not incompetent. The media often carries negative publicity of women in politics rather than use their channels to promote the positive achievements by women, which could help remove the negative perceptions about women's political participation and decision-making. This tends to promote patriarchy while confining women to the silent roles. The 1992 constitution of Ghana, which makes provisions for equal participation for both women and men, was cited as having loopholes, which allow subtle discrimination against women. Reference was made to Article 78 Clauses 1 and 3 of the Constitution with the argument that they impose a constitutional limitation on the President to appoint majority of ministers from Parliament where women already have low representation. This means they are technically disadvantaged given their low numerical presence in Parliament.

- Lastly, labelling of women as incompetent for political and leadership roles, coupled with sexist comments about women in politics was cited as a disincentive for women's political participation. The notion of incompetence in their opinion presents another challenge for women as they are expected to prove that they are not incompetent rather than demonstrating how competent they are. The sexist comments include equating successes to be the result of sexual favors and discourages women from participating in politics.

4.2.3 Ways to Dismantle the Barriers to Women's Political Participation and Decision-Making in Ghana

All respondents were positive that affirmative action including instituting measures such as gender quotas is an effective way of increasing women's political participation at both national and local government levels. They were confident that the passage of the proposed the Affirmative Action Bill into law would make a difference and contribute to meeting the SDG5 targets. However, ma-

majority emphasized the proper enforcement of the AAB should it be passed into law as the turning point for progress.

- Respondents underscored the importance of both formal and informal education as one of the fundamental solutions to promoting women's political participation in Ghana. Respondents especially women in elective positions highlighted political education, capacity building and mentoring as very useful and impactful forms of education.
- Respondents suggested the enactment of a law to check vote-buying and campaign financing to reduce the excessive monetization of politics in Ghana. This law should be binding on all political parties as well as aspirants and should have measures to track and penalize offenders. Suggestion was also made to scrap filing fees for female candidates at all levels and where total scrapping is not feasible, a significant reduction in fees could be an option worth exploring.
- Lastly, respondents believed men championing the course of women would be an effective way to overcome stereotyping women, traditional and cultural values that relegate women to the background. The media could also be a good partner in showcasing women and their (potential) contribution to sustainable development through their political participation and contribute to the drive towards gender equality in society.

4.3 Symbolic and Substantive Representation effect of Women's Representation in the Ghanaian Parliament

Respondents expressed mixed views about the symbolic effect of women's presence in Ghana's Parliament. While some felt encouraged by the presence of other women in Parliament and other

leadership positions to also vie for such positions, others were not sure if this has any effect at all (including on themselves).

- Majority of respondents agreed that women in Ghana's Parliament have been able to push forward some women's issues in Parliament. However, they argued that the substantive effect of women's representation has not fully manifested as women in Parliament are limited by their numbers and have not attained the critical mass required to influence Parliamentary decisions. They shared that successes are made only when they are supported by their male counterparts as well as by advocacy groups.

4.4 Conclusions

There is no doubt that women's political participation and decision-making both at the national and local levels is low. While the glass ceiling is real, it can be broken given the potential women possess and which could be harnessed to ensure more women participate at levels of decision-making and politics. It is a wakeup call on all stakeholders - government, political parties, women groups, civil society, traditional and religious leaders, development partners and society at large to work together to remove barriers to women's political participation and pave the way for their participation and contribution to sustainable development.

It is said that, women's political participation is an essential component for sustainable development. That the SDGs would only be achieved if women are able to participate as equal partners, decision makers, and beneficiaries of the sustainable development of their societies. Despite the constitutional provisions for equal political participation for Ghanaian men and women, commitments to international and regional protocols that aims to promote women's political participation, and the several attempts made to increase women's political participation, women's representation is still below expectation. For instance, since 1992, women's representation at Ghana's parliament

has not gone beyond 13 percent although their population has consistently been higher than men over the years. Achieving the SDG5 by 2030 in Ghana will be mirage if the level of commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women remains at the current state.

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

The symbolic effect of the presence of women in Ghana's parliament would require further in-depth studies to test its influence on women's representation. However, the substantive has not yielded maximum results as women in Parliament has not reach the critical mass required for lobbying and pushing through women's issues. Increase in the number of women in Parliament would have a positive influence on decisions made on issues that affect women the most. A positive substantive effect would probably culminate in a positive symbolic effect in that more women may be encouraged by seeing more women in Parliament and the successes they are able to attain.

4.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the analysis, the study makes the following recommendations to promote women's political participation and decision-making in Ghana under the SDG5:

- The National Parliament should pass the Affirmative Action Bill into Law and ensure to put in measures that would compel all stakeholders including government itself to implement it effectively at all levels. An affirmative action law coupled with proper enforcement will address the many challenges of women's participation including labeling and sexual harassment.
- Article 78 (1) could be considered for amendment by the National Parliament to allow for the President of the Republic of Ghana to appoint ministers from all quarters that does not require that majority should come from among members of Parliament. This will reduce the limitation on appointing more women for ministerial positions and open up opportunities for more women to be appointed.
- The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection as well as NGOs and CSOs that focus on women's empowerment and inclusive governance should ensure that initiatives and interventions that are developed and implemented to address the barriers to women's political participation in the context of the SDG5 are not structured as a one size-fit-all. The needs of women who are already in politics maybe different from that of those intending to occupy political and decision-making positions. Therefore, specific policies, initiatives and interventions should focus on addressing the challenges faced by women intending to occupy political positions and while others focus on the needs of those women who are already occupying positions. However, it is recognized that there may be those that would be applicable to all as

some challenges maybe crosscutting. This approach would ensure more women get into politics and those who succeed would remain active for a considerable period of time.

- The Electoral Commission working in collaboration with the political parties should put a firm policy in place to tackle the problem of vote-buying and campaign financing and be adopted by Parliament and included in the Political Parties Act 2000. The Policy could put a cap on campaign spending, criminalize vote-buying and have a system to track culprits and apply sanctions. This should be binding on political parties and all candidates. This is particularly important should Ghanaians vote ‘yes’ in the referendum (December 2019) to amend Article 55(3) and allow district assembly and unit committee elections to be conducted on partisan basis. This would address the issue of excessive monetization of politics and related funding challenges that hinders women’s participation.

4.6 Suggestion for Future Studies

Future studies should consider conducting an in-depth analysis of the symbolic effect of women’s representation in Parliament and other areas of decision-making in public life. The results will influence the design of initiatives to increase women’s political participation. Where the symbolic effect is proven to be positive, consideration should be given to initiatives that showcase women’s contribution to sustainable development in a way that will whip up interests of other women particularly young women in political participation.

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

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Appendix



UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

LEGON CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND DIPLOMACY

INTERVIEW GUIDE

RESEARCH TOPIC:

AN ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN GHANA UNDER SDG5

NAME OF STUDENT: BERTHA BANNOR

MA INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

2018/2019 ACADEMIC YEAR

Questionnaire for NGOs/CSOs

The purpose of this interview is to enable me collect data to help with my research . My dissertation topic is “An Analysis of Women’s Political Participation in Ghana under SDG5”. Your organization has been selected as a stakeholder because of the work you do including the promotion of and advocating for the rights of women. Your experience/knowledge/perspectives on women’s political participation in Ghana will be an invaluable input to making a successful analysis of the subject of the research. This interview is expected to last for 20-30 minutes. The expectation at the end of the interview is to affirm the hypothesis of the study or otherwise, that the barriers to women’s political participation remain traditional.

Thank you for accepting to participate in this interview.

Questions

PS: Participation in politics refers to representation and participation in Parliament, Assembly/Unit Committee level and other high ranking public offices.

1. Why does your organization support women to engage in politics at the national/local level?
2. What factors enable women to participate actively in politics in Ghana?
3. What are some of the challenges women face before getting into politics in Ghana?
4. What do you think encourages women to get elected/appointed to the District/National level politics/decision-making positions?
5. From your experience/work, what will discourage women from participating in politics in Ghana?
6. What are some of the challenges women who are ALREADY occupying political positions face at the national of local government level that hinders their work?
7. What can be done to encourage them to continue to participate in politics in Ghana?
8. In your opinion are women in politics a means of encouragement or influence for other women to also get involved in politics? If yes, explain how?
9. How has women's political participation in Ghana been under the 4th Republic (since 1992)?
10. In your opinion, has/will the implementation of SDG5 in Ghana made/make any difference in women's political participation in Ghana? If yes, explain how?
11. Looking at the Ghanaian society, could you suggest any innovative solutions that have not been suggested/explored already to promote women's representation and participation in politics?
12. Do you have any additional comments?



UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

LEGON CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND DIPLOMACY

INTERVIEW GUIDE

RESEARCH TOPIC:

AN ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN GHANA UNDER SDG5

NAME OF STUDENT: BERTHA BANNOR

MA INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

2018/2019 ACADEMIC YEAR

INTERVIEW GUIDE

QUESTIONS for Women in Politics (Members of Parliament and Assembly/Unit Committee Members)

Demographic information

1. Age

- 18-28 years

- 29-39 years

- 40-50 years

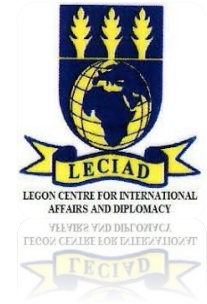
- Above 50 years
 - Prefer not to say
2. Level of Education
- Primary
 - Secondary
 - Tertiary
 - Other
3. At which level do you hold/have you held your political office?
- Parliamentary
 - Municipal Assembly
 - District Assembly
 - Political Party
 - Other
4. What is your marital status?
- Married
 - Single
 - Divorced
 - Widow

Questions

PS: Participation in politics in this work refers to representation and participation in Parliament, Municipal or District Assembly/Unit Committee level and other high ranking public offices.

1. Why do you engage in politics at the national/local level?
2. What factors enabled you to participate actively in politics?

3. What are the challenges you faced before getting into politics?
4. How did you overcome these challenges?
5. How were you encouraged to get elected/appointed to the District/National level politics?
6. From your experience what factors will encourage or discourage you from participating in politics?
7. Can you share with me any challenges you face as a member of Parliament/District Assembly Office holder?
8. How do you deal with these challenges?
9. What do you plan to do to continue to participate in politics?
10. What would you say is/are best way(s) with me the best way to deal with low representation of women in politics in Ghana?
11. In your opinion are women in politics a means of encouragement or influence for other women to also get involved in politics? If Yes, explain how.
12. In your opinion are women in politics (Parliament) able to promote women's issues in Ghana? If yes, explain how.
14. Looking at the Ghanaian society, could you suggest any innovative (new) solutions to promote women's representation and participation in politics?
15. Any other comments?



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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ONLINE SURVEY

RESEARCH TOPIC:

AN ANALYSIS OF WOMEN’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN GHANA UNDER SDG5

NAME OF STUDENT: BERTHA BANNOR

MA INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

2018/2019 ACADEMIC YEAR

Questionnaire for general participants

The purpose of this survey is to enable me collect data to help with my research. My dissertation topic is “An Analysis of Women’s Political Participation in Ghana under SDG5” (Gender Equality). You have been selected as a stakeholder because your experience/knowledge/perspectives on women’s political participation in Ghana will be an invaluable input to making a successful analysis of the subject of research. It will take approximately 15 - 20 minutes to complete the survey. The expectation at the end of the survey is to affirm the hypothesis of the study or otherwise, that the barriers to women’s political participation remain traditional.

Thank you for accepting to participate in this survey.

Demographic information of participants

Please check the appropriate boxes.

1. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

2. Age

- 18-28 years
- 29-39 years
- 40 years and above

3. Highest Level of Education

- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Other

4. Place of settlement - rural or urban?

- Rural
- Urban

Questions

PS: Political Participation in this study refers to representation and participation in Parliament, Assembly/Unit Committee level and other high ranking public offices.

1. What factors do you think enable women to participate actively in politics at the national and local level?
2. In your opinion, what are the challenges women in Ghana face before getting into politics?

3. Are you aware of any challenges that Ghanaian women who are active in politics or occupy decision-making position face? If yes, what are they?
4. In your opinion, what will encourage women to participate in politics?
5. In your opinion, what will discourage women from participating in politics?
6. In your opinion are women in politics a means of encouragement or influence for other women to also get involved in politics?
7. In your opinion are women in politics (Parliament) able to promote women's issues in Ghana?
8. (*Female respondents only*) Do you feel encouraged by the presence of women in politics to seek any political office?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
9. In your opinion how has women's political participation in Ghana been under the 4th Republic (since 1992)?
10. Looking at the Ghanaian society, could you suggest any innovative solutions to promote women's representation and participation in politics?
11. Do you have any additional comments?