

**THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICS IN GHANA: THE
CASE OF TAMALE AS A MUSLIM COMMUNITY**

BY

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DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that, except for references to other people's work which have been dully acknowledged, this research is an original piece of work carried out by me, Saajida Shiraz, under the supervision of Dr. Seidu Mahama Alidu of the Department of Political Science, University of Ghana Legon and has never been submitted either in whole or in part for a degree anywhere.

I am therefore solely responsible for any marginal or substantial shortcomings that may be encountered in this work.



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ABSTRACT

Ghanaian women have made considerable progress towards participating more effectively in politics and issues of public concern. In spite of this, a myriad of challenges still inhibit the participation of women in politics in Ghana. This study explores the issues surrounding the participation of women in politics in Ghana. It analyzes the participation of Ghanaian women in politics by using Tamale, a Muslim dominated society, as a case study. This study also examines the hindering factors that affect the political participation of women in Ghana broadly and in Muslim dominated communities specifically. It analyzes perceptions on the participation of women in politics in Tamale and analyzes how it impacts the participation of women within the community. It also examines the effect of Islamic teachings and perceptions on the political participation of women in Muslim communities and the extent to which religious and socio-cultural factors affect the participation of women in politics.

Data have been gathered using structured questionnaires. Quantitative methods of data analysis have been employed and SPSS has been used as a data analysis tool.

The study finds out that, though the participation of women in politics is gaining both international and national attention, several challenges still inhibit the effective participation of Ghanaian women in politics. These challenges range from socio-economic to religious and cultural factors. They include patriarchy, religious practice, inadequate finances, societal and family commitments and low levels of education,

The researcher thus makes recommendations to improve the participation of women in politics.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my son, Fareed Katari Hamza, for filling my days with laughter and my nights with light.



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The task of putting together this piece of research has been quite challenging. I could not have done this alone. I would therefore like to sincerely acknowledge all those who in diverse but crucial ways contributed to the successful completion of this work.

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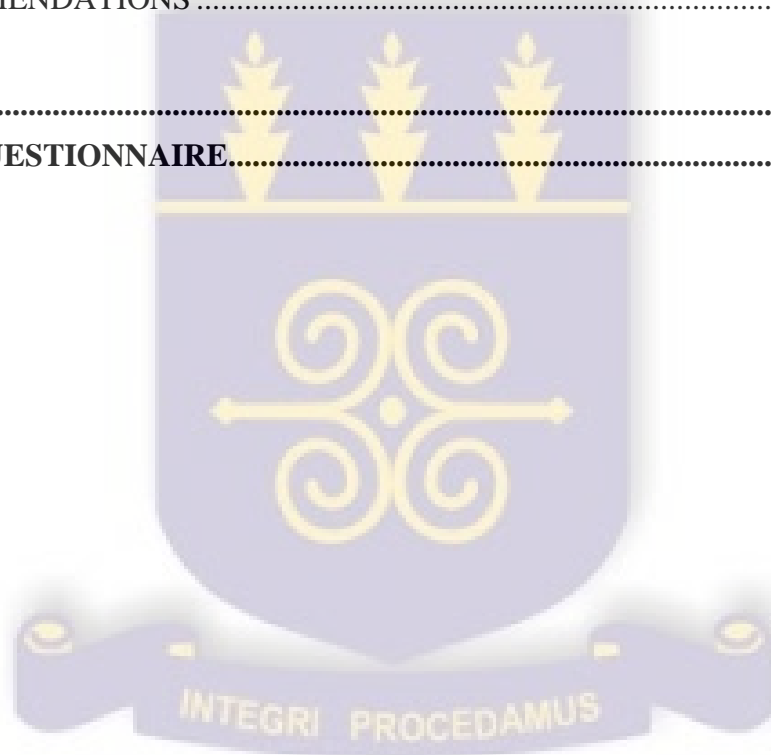
Finally, I say a silent prayer for the many other people whose support time and space would not permit me to acknowledge them. Thank you.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Affirmative Action
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CHRAJ	Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CPP	Convention People's Party
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DWM	31 st December Women's Movement
MOWAC	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs
MPs	Members of Parliament
PNDC	Provisional National Defense Council
NCWD	National Council on Women and Development
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NLC	National Liberation Council
NPP	New Patriotic Party
PfA	Platform for Action
UN	United Nations
UN-CSW	United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Participation in politics is a very important condition for the democratic progress of any society. It is a fundamental pre-requisite of democratic quality (Diamond & Morlino, 2004). Ideally a democracy aims to preserve and promote the dignity and fundamental rights of the individual, achieve social justice, foster the economic and social development of the community, strengthen the cohesion of society, and enhance national tranquility (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 1997). Subsequently, when people participate in decision making within a political entity, governments are more effectively held to account, constitutionally guaranteed rights are enforced and individual and community demands are better represented within the policy process (Krishna, 2006). Participation in politics thus ensures the realization of democratic objectives within a political entity.

The participation of women in politics is critical for the legitimization of the decision making processes and decisions that arise eventually. When women participate in politics, it enhances the legitimacy of governments, ensures fair representation of society in elected office, impacts the policy agenda by strengthening the ability of women to make inputs in the policy process and promotes a better understanding of women related issues in society (Miranda, 2005). The issue of women's participation in politics is as much a human rights issue as it is a political rights issue. Every individual has the right to participate in decisions that define his or her life. Miranda (2005) describes this right as the foundation of the ideal of equal participation of men and women in

decision-making. When women participate equally with men in politics, it ensures that the female perspective is effectively incorporated into policy decisions.

Globally, there has been a historic trend of exclusion of women from politics. This is a result of “multiple structural, functional and personal factors that vary in different social contexts across countries” (Bari, 2005, p. 2). From the local to the global level, women face several obstacles to participating in political life. Structural barriers, through discriminatory laws and institutions, and capacity gaps like a lack of education, contacts and resources have led to the underrepresentation of women as voters, as well as in leading positions (UN-Women, n.d).

In Ghana, “the lack of gender analysis in the Ghanaian economy in general and the invisible role of women in Ghana in particular have a historical connection (Allah-Mensah, 2003).

Allah-Mensah (2005) identifies traditional and cultural factors based on a strong patriarchal pedestal, lack of economic and social capital, limited literacy, the nature of the political terrain, and the domestic obligations of women as the challenges to the participation of women in politics in Ghana. These challenges to the participation of women in politics are not peculiar to Ghana.

In the past decades, there has been increased attention on issues affecting women on the global agenda. In 1946, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UN-CSW) was established to set standards and formulate international conventions to change discriminatory legislation and foster global awareness of women’s issues (UN-Women). UN-CSW has been instrumental in highlighting the areas in which women rights need attention. It has resulted in several declarations and conventions of which the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is the central and most comprehensive document. CEDAW is a landmark international agreement that affirms the principles of fundamental human

rights and equality for women around the world. Currently, 187 countries out of a total of 194 have ratified the treaty. In 1995, the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women was held, which resulted in a global Platform for Action for women's equality, empowerment and justice. Twenty years after the Platform for Action was adopted in Beijing, there has been slow but slight improvement in the political participation of women (UN-Women).

In the Republic of Ghana, the history of the participation of women in politics in Ghana predates the independence of the country. During the colonial period, women in Ghana were involved actively in the fight for independence. They put their organizational skills to use and helped in rallying interest groups and stakeholders. Following the events that eventually led to the attainment of independence and the appreciable role played by women in the prelude to independence and after, there was a general recognition of the abilities of women and the significant contributions they could make to an emerging democracy like Ghana if given the opportunity. It is worthy of note that, the majority of these women were ordinary market women who had proven they were a greater force than earlier reckoned. The Convention People's Party (CPP) with Dr. Kwame Nkrumah as its leader put in place a quota system in which ten (10) women were appointed unto the general assembly. This was to give women at least some form of representation at the echelons of power. The increased expectation of the participatory role women were to play in politics in Ghana did not materialize. The unstable political climate at the time which culminated in several military takeovers is largely responsible for this setback to the participation of women in politics in Ghana, (Allah-Mensah, 2005; AfriMAP, 2007).

In the view of Allah-Mensah (2003), the coming into power of the Provisional National Defence council marked the beginning of an extensive restructuring process of the local government system in place at the time. The policy objectives of the PNDCS decentralization programme included

popular participation, efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, responsiveness, stability and issues of development. The inclusion of thirty percent government control was however seen as a means of government control (Allah-Mensah, 2003).

With the return to democratic rule in 1992, the issue of empowering women for effective political participation began to engage the attention of interested stakeholders including women themselves. The empowerment as perceived was to take several forms: constitutional, educational, and economically. Because of the late start of women in formal education and the gendered nature of the courses they were eventually made to take, they were generally less qualified for positions in government and less informed about issues of political concern (Allah-Mensah, 2005). The women's movement, made up of civil society and a broad spectrum of women and men worked actively and passionately to ensure the equal participation of women in all facet of Ghanaian society. Sister's keeper's, a community watchdog group was formed to protect other women in Ghana who were at the time victims of serial killings. Led by ABANTU for Development, an organized document which chronicled the demands of women was authored under the title *Women's Manifesto*. The women's movement in Ghana has also been significant in the eventual passage of the domestic violence bill into law.

Issues of women have been a thematic concern in all political party manifestos from 1992 to date. Since the inception of the fourth republic, The National Democratic Congress, (NDC), and the New Patriotic Party, (NPP), are the only two parties given the political mandate to translate those pledges into reality. After the 1992 election, the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) - turned NDC government was prepared to take women empowerment to new heights. With the help of women's organizations like the 31st December Women's Movement, women were economically empowered. Practices like domestic violence and female genital mutilation were highly

condemned. Women's participation in politics reached unprecedented heights though one could argue that, the greater number of them were at the grass roots level and did not wield any real power to be able to influence policy decisions at the national level. Educational policies like the 'Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education' (FCUBE) were launched. This, among other things, was to hopefully lead to increased enrolment rates of the girl child (Allah-Mensah, 2005).

In the prelude to the 2000 election, 4 pages of the 47 page manifesto presented by the NPP were dedicated to opportunities for women. The party welcomed the new international agenda of empowerment of women and made a commitment to its enforcement. The manifesto promised constitutional empowerment and pledged to strengthen women's groups like the National Council on Women and Development, (NCWD). They also pledged to increase female participation in decision making processes through sensitization. The creation of the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC) by the Kufuor administration was one of the manifest fulfillments of its manifesto pledge to empower women. The Ministry which had the NCWD as a department was charged with protecting the rights and interests of women and children (Allah-Mensah, 2005).

The run up to the 2008 elections was characterized by increased demands for political party commitment to the economic and political empowerment of women. Political parties presented their manifestos with some attention on women issues. The NPP in its manifesto (2008) sought to bring attention to its commitment to women issues by citing measures the Kufuor led NPP government had undertaken to improve gender equality. The National Democratic Congress with Professor John Evans Atta Mills as its flag bearer pledged to introduce major gender policy and legislative reforms, with an aim towards achieving a minimum of 40% representation of women at conferences and congresses of the party, government and public service. (National Democratic Congress, 2008). After the election, The NDC government in fulfillment of these promises made

some historic appointments. The first female speaker of parliament, Joyce Bamford Addo was appointed. Betty Mould Iddrisu also made history as the first female attorney general. The first female commissioner of the Commission on Human rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Laretta Vivian Lamptey was also appointed.

After losing to the NDC in the 2008 general elections, the NPP geared up for the 2012 elections. The 2012 manifesto paid more attention to issues of women. Under women matters, the NPP in its manifesto stated its commitment to the development and welfare of Ghanaian women. The manifesto acknowledged the historical, social, political and cultural challenges Ghanaian women face and pledged the commitment of a New Patriotic Party government to the introduction of programmes that will encourage and bring women into the mainstream of economic and political activities (NPP Manifesto, 2008; NPP Manifesto, 2012). In its 2012 Manifesto, the NDC reiterated the commitment of an NDC government to attaining 40% women's representation in all public appointments and at the party's conferences and congresses. It also highlighted measures the NDC will take to reform outmoded cultural practices that promote gender discrimination and to provide economic empowerment to women.

Presently, almost all political parties are re-echoing their commitment to the increased participation of women in politics. In March 2015, the NPP announced its affirmative action policy on women. Men were to be disqualified from contesting in constituencies in which there were female Members of Parliament (MPs). This policy received heavy backlash. Subsequently, the party keeled to intra party pressure and withdrew the policy. To encourage women to contest the parliamentary primaries for the 2016 elections, the NDC also set the filling fee for women aspirants to GH ¢5000 instead of the GH ¢10000 men are required to pay.

In conclusion, it is fair to say that the participation of women in politics is gaining needed attention in Ghana. This has however not translated into a significant increase of the number of women wielding political power in Ghana.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Since 1992, Ghana has often been promoted as an exemplary democratic country. The Fourth Republican Constitution guarantees universal adult suffrage and stipulates that elections are to be held every four years in line with democratic practices (Republic of Ghana, 1992). After passing the two turn-over test as prescribed by Huntington (1991), Ghana is considered a consolidated democratic nation. Despite the glowing democratic credentials and status Ghana has been touted to possess, the level of women's participation both in policy making and government representation is sadly very low. The Population and Housing Census (2010) conducted by the Ghana statistical service shows 12,633,978, representing (51.2%) of a total population of 24,658,823 are female. In the 2012 general election, 133 women sought to be elected to represent their constituencies as members of parliament. Only 29 women were elected (Electoral Commission of Ghana, 2012).

In Ghana, the factors that affect the participation of women in politics vary across social contexts. The position of women in society is determined by a number of factors including social and customary practices and religious beliefs. The socio-cultural and religious beliefs of a society feed into that society's perception of the role of women in politics. This is why Christianity and Islam, two of the world's largest religions, have often been cited as either manifestly or latently responsible for the subordination of women through their doctrines and practices. In Ghana, Islamic beliefs are deeply engrained in socio-cultural norms in Muslim dominated communities.

The socio-cultural norms in Muslim communities which are significantly shaped by Islamic doctrines, principles and practices are perceived to inhibit the participation of women in politics in those communities.

The onus of this research will be thus to explore the issues surrounding the political participation of women in Ghana. The study will analyze the political participation of women in Ghana in the context of Muslim dominated societies. By so doing, the relationship between religion, gender and politics in Ghana will be explored.

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Every research needs to be grounded in theory. It is for this reason that the researcher adopts the civic voluntarism model in an attempt to explain the reasons for the participation levels.

1.3.1 Civic Voluntarism Model

This model of political participation has its origins in the work of Sidney Verba and Norman Nie. As a model of political participation, its main ideas are focused on political activity (Rubenson, 2000).

In answer to why people do not become politically active, the model proffers the following answers:

1. Because they can't;
2. Because they don't want to; and
3. Because nobody asked (Whiteley & Seyd, 2002)

In other words, the model suggests that the reason why people do not become very active politically is because of the lack of resources, the lack of psychological engagement with politics, and because they are outside the recruitment networks that bring people into politics (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995).

Resource here is defined in terms of money, time and civic skills. Psychological engagement is defined principally in terms of the individual's sense of political efficacy. Recruitment refers to requests for participation that come to individuals at work, in church, or in organizations, especially those that come from friends, relatives or acquaintances (Whiteley & Seyd, 2002).

According to the resource model of civic voluntarism, the social status of an individual, his job, education and income determine to a large extent how much he participates.

Inferentially, this theory is suggesting the reasons for the low political participation of women in Ghana are as follows:

- Women in Ghana participate minimally in politics because they can't. This may be due to factors like low levels of education, poor communication skills, a lack of funds, and a non-existing support system.
- Women in Ghana do not participate in politics because they have little motivation to participate in politics. Participation is spurred on by the belief that it can impact outcomes. Women in Ghana do not participate in politics simply because they do not believe in their ability to affect outcomes.
- Ghanaian women do not participate effectively in politics because they are not encouraged to. The opportunities for successful participation and recruitment into politics are also

limited to them. The fear of failure to realize their goals for political participation can also be an explanatory cause of their low participation levels.

This model also helps in explaining the levels of political participation of women in Ghana by examining and putting into perspective their strength in resources, psychological engagement with politics, and the availability of the recruitment networks that will bring them into politics.

The major weakness of the civic voluntarism model of political participation is that though it regards socio-economic status as an important determinant of political participation, and therefore fails to explain why large numbers of high-status individuals do not participate in politics (Rubenson, 2000; Whiteley & Seyd, 2002).

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

The central question of the study is: What accounts for the low political participation of women in politics in Ghana? To answer this question, the following empirical questions would be explored:

1. What accounts for the low political participation of women in politics in Ghana?
2. To what extent do socio-cultural and religious factors affect the participation of women in politics in Ghana?
3. How has the practice of Islam influenced the political participation of women in Tamale?
4. What appropriate recommendations can be made to enhance the participation of women in politics of Ghana?

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research has the following broad objectives:

1. Find out reasons that account for the low political participation of women in Ghanaian politics.
2. Examine if socio-economic and religious factors limit the participation of women in politics in Ghana.
3. Assess the extent to which the practice and influences of Islam in Tamale have inhibited the participation of women in politics living in the community.
4. Make recommendations to increase the political representation and participation of women in politics especially in Muslim dominated settlements.

1.6 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The study will proceed on the following assumption: that the socio-economic and religious constraints lead to the low participation of women in politics.

1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The research analyzes the participation of women in politics in Ghana with emphasis on the fourth republic (1992-2015) by case studying the participation of women in politics in Tamale, a Muslim community.

1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Political Participation

Margaret Conway defines political participation as “those activities of citizens that attempt to influence the structure of government, the selection of government authorities, or the policies of government” (Conway, 2001, p. 231).

Political participation has been defined as an “*activity by private citizens designed to influence governmental decision making*” (Huntington & Nelson, 1976, p. 3).

Participation is explained in Allah-Mensah (2005, p.25) as “the active engagement of citizens with public institutions”.

For the purposes of this study, participation in politics shall refer to the activities of citizen’s that attempt to influence government decisions and policy outcomes. It shall be operationalized as follows:

- Voting
- Attending political meetings and gatherings
- Speaking out at political gatherings in which both sexes are present
- Contesting for political office
- Engaging political leaders on issues of public concern
- Advocating for a policy change
- Demonstrating

Women

The term women refer to adult human females. Women are distinguished from girls, by their age and maturity, and from men by their sex.

Muslim

A Muslim is an adherent of Islam. Islam is derived from the Arabic word “Salema”, which means peace, submission, purity and obedience. Islam is therefore understood to mean submission to the

will of Allah and obedience to his laws (www.barghoti.com). A Muslim is one who submits himself to the will of Allah.

For the purposes of this study, a Muslim is regarded as one who identifies Islam as his religion

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study explores the relationship between religion and politics in the Ghanaian context. It will contribute meaningfully to existing literature by assessing the impact of socio-cultural and religious dynamics on political participation.

It will also contribute to increase the political participation of women and religious minorities in Ghana by making achievable recommendations to address the factors that inhibit the participation of women in politics.

Finally, it will add to existing literature in academia on the participation of women in politics by discussing religious dimensions to participation in Ghana.

1.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was looking at the participation of women in Muslim communities. Because the researcher only studied a Muslim community and did not contrast it with another community with different socio-cultural characteristics, the findings may not necessarily be peculiar to Muslim communities.

1.11 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The work is organized into five chapters. Chapter one contains the introduction, background to the study, theoretical framework, the statement of problem, research questions, research

hypothesis, conceptual definitions and the significance of the study. It also chronicles how the study will be organized.

Chapter two examines the literature for the purposes of this study. It covers the review of literature relevant to the participation of women in politics. It identifies the inherent gaps in existing literature, and states how the study will contribute in bridging that gap. Chapter three contains the methodological framework of the research. It contains a profile of the research setting, outlines data collection methods, and the methods used in analyzing data gathered. The research data is analyzed and presented in chapter four. Chapter five contains the summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations. An appendix and bibliography then follows.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A number of studies in the area of women's participation and representation in politics have been conducted by different researchers (Huntington & Nelson, 1976; Bawa & Sanyare, 2013; Allah-Mensah, 2003). Literature that exists on the subject matter focuses on how women participate in politics, why they participate, barriers to their participation, a history of the participation of women in politics, and what attempts have been made to increase the participation of women in politics. This research work complements other studies on the subject matter. It focuses on the impact of socio-cultural and religious influences on the participation of women in politics. It extends the existing literature by analyzing the relationship between Islamic influences and political behavior and participation. An extensive review of previous related studies is presented in this chapter. In studying the participation of women in politics in Ghana, the literature relevant to the following broad areas has been reviewed:

- Political Participation
- Participation of Women in Politics
- Religion and politics
- Participation of Ghanaian Women in Politics

2.2 POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND DEMOCRACY: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

2.2.1 Political Participation

Several definitions have been put forth by scholars for political participation. All these definitions of political participation are consistent in the conceptualization of participation as an activity geared towards achieving specific outcomes.

Huntington & Nelson (1976, p. 3) define political participation as “*an activity by private citizens designed to influence governmental decision making*”.

Ross (1986, pp. 843-844), defines political participation as “actions on the part of individuals which either directly or indirectly affect the authoritative allocation of scarce resources, either material or symbolic, in their community or between communities either within or outside their society.”

Political participation is perceived by Conway (2001, p. 231) as “those activities of citizens that attempt to influence the structure of government, the selection of government authorities, or the policies of government”.

Momani, Dados, Maddox, & Wise (2010, p. 12) also regard political participation as “comprising a spectrum of activity from voter turnout to formal political representation, with activities such as advocacy and community consultation, community leadership and opinion making”.

The African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation, (p. 6), goes beyond a definition of participation by trying to capture the essence of popular participation. Article 11 of the Charter emphasizes that, popular participation is “the empowerment of the people to effectively involve themselves in creating structures and in designing policies and programs that

serve the interests of all as well as to effectively contribute to the development process and share equitably in its benefits.”

Political participation has been operationalized differently by authorities in the area though the main elements are strikingly similar. In the opinion of Huntington & Nelson (1976), participation may be individual, collective, organized and spontaneous, sustained or sporadic, peaceful or violent, legal or illegal, effective or ineffective. It may be rooted in different group bases such as class, communal group, neighborhood, party, and faction.

According to Eduard (2007), participation may also be conventional or unconventional. Eduard (2007) defines conventional political participation as those legitimate activities which take place within the political system and is in consistence with the law. He pinpoints voting and campaigning for a political candidate as examples of such kinds of participation and explains unconventional political participation on the other hand include activities like protesting which may be considered illegal, but are inappropriate.

According to Huntington & Nelson (1976), political participation includes electoral activity such as voting, working in an election, campaign contributions, and wooing people to support a candidate. It also includes lobbying, organizational activity and contacting. Violence is regarded as a controversial form of political participation.

Salisbury (1975) also identifies the modes of participation as follows:

1. Voting
2. Campaign activity
3. Communal activity
4. Particularized contacting

According to Mattarita-Cascante et al (2006; as cited in Zal: 2011), participation can be measured by a factor analysis of the following:

1. Attended a local community event
2. Contacted by a public official about some issues or problems affecting a community
3. Worked with other local residents to try and deal with a community issue or problem
4. Attended any public meeting of the community
5. Served as an officer in a community organization
6. Voted in a local election
7. Served on a local governments commission, committee or board
8. Served as a volunteer in a community service organization.

The relevant acts of participation include among others, voting in elections, giving money to political parties and candidates, helping out in political campaigns, contacting elected or appointed officials to express an opinion or to request some action, taking part in a nonpartisan organization's activities directed toward altering some public choice (Uhlener, 1986).

From the literature on the dimensions of political participation, and how political participation is operationalized, there's a noticeable consensus among scholars about conventional acts of political participation. The differences arise in whether activities considered unconventional can be referred to as political participation.

Participating in politics is a means to an end. It is geared towards many ends. Political participation “may be directed towards changing the decisions by current authorities, toward replacing or retaining those authorities, or toward changing or defending the existing organization of the political system and the rules of the political game” (Huntington & Nelson, 1976, p. 4).

In exploring why people participate in politics, Huntington and Nelson (1979) posit that, the tendency of people to try to influence the government is affected by their means to alternative means of solving their problems. If nonpolitical means can solve their problems, there is less motivation to participate politically. Participation is thus higher in situations when the government is the sole avenue or authority which can deal with the issue. McAtee and Wolak (2011) simply think that, people may participate in any elections because of personal reasons, local factors, state level effects or national factors.

Momani, Dados, Maddox, & Wise (2010, p. 13), consider active political participation as crucial to developing and maintaining a sense of belonging. They assert that, political participation gives the minority community channels through which their concerns and ideas can be raised in the forums best placed to bring about change, provides formal and semi-formal means of building bridges with other groups who share similar concerns and ideas lessening the feeling of isolation, enables the majority community to become aware of, and grow to understand the minority community's concerns and ideas.

The importance of political participation has been magnified in the preamble of the *African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation*. In clause 7 of the Charter it is stated, "We affirm that nations cannot be built without the popular support and full participation of the people; nor can the economic crisis be resolved and the human and economic conditions improved without the full and effective contribution, creativity and popular enthusiasm of the vast majority of the people" (African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation, 1990, p. 4).

There's consensus among scholars about the advantages of political participation.

Table 2.1: Advantages of Citizen’s Participation

	Advantages to Citizen Participants	Advantages to Government
Decision Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Education (learn from and inform government representatives) * Persuade and enlighten government * Gain skills for activist citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Education (learn from and inform citizens) * Persuade citizens; build trust and allay anxiety or hostility * Build strategic alliances * Gain legitimacy of decisions
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Break gridlock; achieve outcomes * Gain some control over policy process * Better policy and implementation decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Break gridlock; achieve outcomes * Avoid litigation costs * Better policy and implementation decisions

Source: Irvin and Stansbury (2004:56)

Irvin and Stansbury (2004) go beyond the strength’s of political participation to its disadvantages.

This is presented in the table below.

Table 2.2: Disadvantages of Citizens' Participation
Disadvantages to Citizen Participants

	Disadvantages to Citizen Participants	Disadvantages to Government
Decision Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Time consuming (even dull) * Pointless if decision is ignored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Time consuming * Costly * May backfire, creating more hostility toward government
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Worse policy decision if heavily influenced by opposing interest groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Loss of decision-making control * Possibility of bad decision that is politically impossible to ignore * Less budget for implementation of actual projects

Source: Irvin and Stansbury (2004:58)

2.2.2 Theories on Political Participation

Several theories have been put forward by scholars to explain the political participation phenomenon.

A theory offers a general account of how a range of phenomena are systematically connected.

One of the theories proffered as an explanation of the phenomenon of political participation is the rational-actor model. This theory is explored greatly by Uhlener (1986). According to Uhlener (1986), the distinguishing characteristic of the rational actor approach to the explanation of behaviour is the presumption that individuals have preferences and act instrumentally so as to achieve what they prefer. Essentially, an individual is rational under this view if he or she has an objective goal and acts to optimize the chances of attaining that goal. Uhlener (1986) asserts that, though the rational actor models give a coherent account of motivations for political action, it fails to deal adequately with the community within which action occurs and does not give predictions of future behaviour. Rational actor models bring to the study of participation a focus upon the motivations of individuals.

The theory of group consciousness is another widely used explanation for the phenomenon of political participation. According to Miller et al (1981), group consciousness is identification with

a political group. Group consciousness, as a theory of political participation, helps in explaining why minority groups, who as a result of their relative societal status, participate in politics as a whole. This is especially useful in trying to explain the political participation of women in politics in Ghanaian Muslim communities. The findings of Miller et al (1981) support the hypothesis that, identification with a subordinate group, especially if combined with feelings of power deprivation, a relative dislike for out-group and a belief that social barriers are responsible for their disadvantaged position, promotes political participation among such group.

Salisbury (1975), who also explores the concept of group consciousness in political participation, argues that, group consciousness may potentially act to motivate political participation for a variety of groups.

Another theory that has been discussed extensively as a model of political participation is the civic voluntarism model of political participation. It has its roots in the original works by Sidney Verba and Norman Nie. As a model of political participation, the main ideas of the civic voluntarism model are focused on political activity. Nygard & Jakobsson (2013), explain that, the civic-voluntarism model view political participation as a consequence of three factors: socio-economic resources, engagement and mobilization. The model suggests that, the reasons why people are not very active politically is the lack of resources, the lack of psychological engagement with politics, and because they are outside the recruitment networks that bring people into politics (Whiteley & Seyd, 2002). According to the resource model of civic voluntarism, the social status of an individual, his job, education and income determine to a large extent how much he participates. According to Salisbury (1975), attitudes such as a sense of efficacy, one's psychological involvement in politics and a feeling of obligation to participate, determines the extent to which people participate in politics.

Another theory that has been used by researchers to explain participation is feminist theory. Feminist theory attempts to develop a comprehensive account of the subordination of women. It identifies the underlying causes of women's subordination and develops effective strategies to liberate women. According to Flax (1979), feminist theory seeks to understand the power differentials between men and women, to understand the oppression of women; its evolution, how it has changed over time and how it is related to other forms of oppression. Feminist theory has many variants; Liberal Feminism Marxist Feminism, Radical Feminism, Socialist Feminism, Psychoanalytic Feminism, Existentialist Feminism, Postmodern Feminism, Global Feminism, and Ecofeminism. These variants reflect the changing and varied nature of women's experience. All these branches of feminism agree that women have been oppressed and unjustly treated, and steps need to be taken to liberate women.

In sum, many theories exist to explain participation in politics. These theories each have their strengths and weaknesses. The setting in which participation in politics is studied determines which theoretical framework can be best used to explain participation in that context. After a thorough review of literature on theories of participation, the researcher has grounded this study in the civic voluntarism model of political participation.

2.2.3 Democracy and Participation

Several scholars have explored the relationship between democracy and participation. For a thorough understanding of this relationship however, the concept of democracy needs to be thoroughly assessed.

Democracy as a form of government is different from monarchy, aristocracy and dictatorship (Becker & Raveloson, 2008). According to Touraine (1998), democracy is the power of the people. It is the link established between a social reality, the people, and a political reality.

Beetham (1998) argues that democracy in its purely political form describes the system of government which meets three necessary conditions:

- (i) the real existence of competition between individuals or groups of individuals organized into political parties to gain power and public office, at regular intervals and according to peaceful procedures which are pre-established and generally accepted;
- (ii) the right of citizens to participate in the choice *of* leaders through the holding of free, transparent and fair elections;
- (iii) recognition and the juridical guarantee of the exercise of civil and political freedoms and rights which recognized under international conventional law as an integral part of human rights: freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of the press, right to security of the person and property against any form of arbitrary infringement, etc.

Bassiouni (1998) classifies democracy into three paradigms; democracy as a process, democracy as a state or condition, and democracy as an outcome. Bassiouni's conceptualization of democracy as a process entails the mechanisms, procedures, formalities and those actions by which power is applied. He regards the concept of democracy as a state and an embodiment of suitable conditions for the existence of institutions like civil society and a free press. As an outcome, democracy is measured by the effect of policies and practices on the governed (Bassiouni, 1998).

Participation in politics is very essential to democracy. While some scholars regard participation as an essential element of democracy, others extend the relationship between democracy and participation further by viewing the attainment of democracy as a presupposition of a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society. For participation in a democracy to achieve maximum effect, it is essential for individual participation in democratic

processes and public life at all levels to be regulated fairly and impartially and without discrimination or intimidation from state or non-state actors.

Bassiouni (1998) asserts that democracy helps to ensure that the priorities of diverse social groups are considered in the formulation of development strategies. When people participate in politics, economic and social development establishes deeper roots and becomes more meaningful. In other words, democracy facilitates the participation of diverse groups in policy making and ensures that policy outcomes are reflective of the entire society.

Beetham (1998) notes that if the starting point of democracy is the right of citizens to have a say in the decisions that affect their lives, then it requires a framework of other rights to make this basic political right effective. These are the rights and freedoms of expression, association and assembly. Democracy is thus inseparable from fundamental human rights and freedoms. He identifies the right of all adults to have a voice in public affairs as the foundation of democracy. He emphasizes the need for these rights to be exercised in conditions of equal citizenship and respect. Beetham also notes that, the right to participate in government includes the rights to take part in public service, to stand for elective office and to elect public officials, and the right to hold public officials accountable. Democratic societies are characterized by differences of opinion and a diversity of cultures and identities. In such a society, the state will guarantee the flourishing of cultural diversity. Cultures and identities are able to pursue their distinctive way of life guided by the principle of equal citizenship, and are able to resolve conflicts through dialogue. Tolerance of diversity and a readiness to engage in dialogue are a basic responsibility of citizens as well as governments. Bassiouni (1998) confirming the view of Beetham (1998), opines that for democracy to thrive, people must have the knowledge and capacity to exercise their individual and collective

rights. This will not only bring about democracy, it will preserve democratic processes and insure that these processes work effectively to achieve democratic outcomes.

Many states are composed of various ethnic groups and nationalities. These are mostly a product of colonialism. The democratization process should grant decision-making power to its various constituent peoples (Villoro, 1998). This is in effect what participation in politics will achieve.

According to Viloro (1998), political parties can have a significant impact on opportunities for women's political advancement. Legislation governing political parties can directly or indirectly discriminate against women. Furthermore, the requirements for advanced educational qualifications or minimum years of public service can unduly limit the right to stand for public office and may disproportionately affect potential women candidates. At the same time, direct or indirect gender-based discrimination in party procedures can create barriers to women's participation. This is particularly so when such provisions affect women's opportunities to be nominated as candidates and elected as representatives, or their access to internal political party decision-making, financing or other party resources. Regulating the internal functioning of political parties, in an effort to make parties operate more democratically and equitably, is therefore an important first step in creating a more equal playing field for men and women party members.

2.2.5 Participation of Women in Politics

A growing body of literature has sought to deal with the gender dimensions of political participation.

Women are now much more visible in public life. However, though women's formal political representation is now taken for granted, the struggle for descriptive representation remains. Indeed, gender inequality across all elected and appointed positions persists. Although women have

reached important milestones, such as 20% representation in national legislatures in many countries, women's overall representation remains low (Paxton, Kunovich, & Hughes, 2007).

Ross (1986), who seeks to understand societal level mechanisms associated with gender based inclusion and exclusion from political life, identifies societal level explanations on variation in female political activity as follows: socio economic and political complexity, contributions to subsistence, social structural theories of fraternal group strength and post marital residence, conflict and warfare, psychological dispositions acquired during socialization.

According to Ross (1986), female involvement in decision making is more common in societies with high internal but low external conflict and violence, low male organizational solidarity and warm and affectionate child rearing. Explaining further the comparative variation of the level of female political participation to men, Ross (1986) argues that, the variation occurs because female and male political roles are less differentiated and hence less equal, in less complex societies. He states also how studies have shown a correlation between the status of females to women's role in subsistence which has led to an expectation of greater female involvement in politics as women's share of production increases. According to Ross (1986), social structure can have important consequences for political activity. Effective male organization lowers female status and increases their exclusion from political activity; he sees warfare as encouraging male power through the glorification of warriors who oppose external warfare, resulting in female exclusion as women lack access to this training ground for leadership. Again, Ross thinks where values of physical punishment are stressed; female political participation will be low.

Among the factors that has and continues to inhibit female political participation is the lack of resources. Women, compared to men, are economically disadvantaged. Women are mainly found in the agricultural labour force while men are owners of resources. Women are often semi-skilled,

and work poorly paid jobs that reflect historical barriers (Ampofo, 2013). Subsequently, the comparatively disadvantaged economic status of women has contributed to their low participation in politics. Welch & Secret (1981) note that, the traditional roles of women as wives and mothers leave them little or no resources to participate actively in politics.

In addition to the general theories on political participation discussed above, some more gender specific theories on political participation have been espoused by scholars to increase understanding about the participation of women in politics.

Conway (2001) explores a variant of the cultural theory. The cultural theory focuses on the time demands associated with women's traditional roles as wives and mothers, and the frequent lack of family support for women seeking political power. Conway (2011) asserts that the failure of women to gain support of gatekeepers, who are responsible in determining who can successfully run for political office, affects their political bids. She sees the discrimination by the predominantly male gatekeepers as an out-group effect targeted at women who are considered different from themselves.

Welch and Secret (1981) explore the situational view of the isolation explanation to explain the low level of female political participation. This theory has it that, because of the isolation of women from society, they lack the social and economic resources necessary for participation. They posit that, female participation is low because females are less likely to be found in those occupational, educational and other groups that engage the most in politics.

According to Aubrey (2001), many reasons account for the low participation of women in politics. The gendered nature of public life in Africa is deeply embedded in African traditional cultures. These cultures were heightened by colonialism and religious expansion. Ordinary women must be

able to participate in politics as socially, culturally, politically and economically empowered people. They should have the effective right to participate equally in politics. Until this is possible, democracy is falling short of its potential (Aubrey, 2001).

2.3 RELIGION AND POLITICS: ISLAM IN PERSPECTIVE

Religion has always been cited for being either overtly or covertly responsible for the subjugation of women throughout history. The practices and doctrines of two of the world's largest religions, Islam and Christianity, have been considered contributory factors to the subjugation of women. Though religion may not be manifestly oppressive towards women, monotheistic religions like Orthodox-Christianity and Islam promote complementary gender roles, which imply a separation between the private realm where the female dwells and the public realm which is male dominated (Drezgic, 2010).

Islam is a monotheistic faith that revolves around the declaration that, there is no God but Allah. Muslims can be found in almost all parts of the world; in Muslim dominated communities and in minority Muslim countries. The population of Muslims across the world is estimated to be around 1.57 billion. More than a fifth of all Muslims live in non-Muslim majority countries (Pew Templeton Global Religious Futures Projects , 2001). In Ghana the population of Muslims is estimated by the Ghana Statistical Service to be 17.6%. Christianity is the dominant religion with over 70% of Ghanaians adhering to the Christian faith.

The relationship between religion and politics has in recent decades been increasingly explored by scholars. According to Sossou, (2011), social practices and religious beliefs have reinforced the inferior position of women in traditional society.

Dallmayr (2001) questions if democracy can be religious, and explores how religion can be brought into modern democratic politics. He states that, Islam like many religions in the world has been challenged by the conflict between religion and politics. Given the strong commitment of Islam to human equality and its opposition to any kind of idolatry, this is conflicting for Muslim believers who are afraid of submitting to worldly powers if their identity as Muslims means surrender to nothing but God. Dallmayr (2011) posits that, religion and politics are not necessarily antithetical.

Participation in communal activities, and by extension politics, is considered to be very important in Islamic practice. (Zal, 2011), explores political participation from an Islamic perspective. According to Zal (2001), participation in politics is embedded in the holy books of Islam where Ali Imran: 110 reads, “you are the best of people ever raised for mankind, you enjoin Al-Ma’ruf and forbid Al-Munkar, and you believe in Allah”. This simply means the best people are those who enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. Inferentially, participation is equated to doing what is considered right and speaking out against what is considered wrong.

The participation of Muslim women in politics is an issue rife with controversy. According to the Women's Islamic Initiative in Spirituality and Equality (n.d), the exclusion of Muslim women from political and civic participation in some countries is influenced by patriarchal interpretations of Islamic text that favors women’s subordination to male authority. In Surat An-Nisa (Women) Sura 4 verse 34 it is stated, “Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has made one of them to excel the other, and because they spend from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient and guard in the husbands absence what Allah orders them to guard.” Mir-Hosseini’s works on the participation of women in politics, have effectively thrown more light on the position of feminists on the marginalization of Muslim women in politics and public life.

Mir-Hosseini (2006), argues that the inequalities embedded in Islamic doctrine are human constructions and not manifestations of divine will. She states that, there are socio cultural and religious rationales behind the interpretation and implementation of Islamic law. Islam's approach and treatment of women's rights is often justified on the basis of the protection of women and their dignity. In the opinion of Mir-Hosseini (2001), rereading of textual Islamic sources, will prove that Islam's sacred texts have been tainted by the ideologies of their interpreters. Mir-Hosseini (2015), also asserts that, an examination of textual Islamic sources will affirm the essential equality of men and women in the eyes of God. She states that, the sense of placing women under male guardianship is not derived from Quranic concepts, but from juristic patriarchic constructs in Muslim legal tradition. The assumption that God gave men authority over women is a theological fiction translated into legal fiction with the chief purpose of sustaining gender inequality (Mir-Hosseini, 2015).

Mir-Hosseini (2015) suggests decoding and exposing the relation between the production of knowledge and the practices of power as the only way real and meaningful change to the deeply embedded assumptions and tendencies in religion, culture and politics can be brought about.

Mir-Hosseini also provides insights into the history of the women's struggle for equality in Islam. According to Mir-Hosseini (2015), at the start of the twentieth century, there was great contention among Islamic fundamentalists and feminist scholars about the role of women in Islam.

During this period, the rest of the world was swept up in feminist ideologies and the rise of feminist movements. Muslim women were at the risk of having their dissent misunderstood and considered a betrayal of Islamic principles and practices. They were thus faced with a choice between their Muslim identity; which will entail them sticking to the prescriptions of Islamic scholars on the behaviors of women, or their new gender awareness; considered liberation by secularists and

feminists. To ensure the compliance of women in Islam to their natural roles, classical Islamic jurists and scholars gave new legal force to gender equalities by re-enforcing Sharia. The return to Sharia and the attempt to translate patriarchal gender norms into law provoked many women and spurred them to greater activism. This created a sustained discourse among feminist scholars who saw no inherent or logical link between Islamic ideals and patriarchy, and Islamic faith and feminism. The rise of political Islam in the second half of the century helped to create an arena within which Muslim women could reconcile their faith and identity with a struggle for gender equality (Mir-Hosseini, 2013).

Gender equality as a concept is a modern ideal in Islamic tradition. It is an issue Muslim jurists did not have to address until the 20th century (Mir-Hosseini, 2013). According to Mir-Hosseini (2006), the genesis of gender inequality in Islamic tradition lies in the cultural norms of early Muslim societies. Muslim norms and social structures in the formative years of Islamic law impeded the realization of Islam's ideals of freedom, justice and equality. The underlying assumptions of these societies were that women were created of men and for men. Not only were women considered inferior to men, they were considered as the weaker sex who needed protection. Men were naturally considered the guardians of women. These assumptions are still evident in the rules defining the formation of marriage in Islam, and have led to the sustenance of gender inequality in present day Muslim societies (Mir-Hosseini, 2013).

2.4 PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN GHANAIAN POLITICS

Ghanaian women have participated in politics in Ghana even before the country achieved independence status. When Ghana attained independence in 1957, women were key players in the independence struggle. They put their organizational skills to use and were phenomenal in rallying

support for the independence struggle. Notable among these women are Dr. Mrs. Letitia Obeng, an educationist and Akua Asabea who spread the independence message at rallies across Africa, and Hanna Cudjoe, who rallied people behind the independence struggle (Allah-Mensah, 2007; Allah-Mensah, 2005; Tsikata, 1989). In recognition of the contribution of women to the anti-colonial struggle, the Nkrumah led Convention People's Party (CPP) government put in place some measures to improve the situation of women in Ghana. The Representation of the People's (Women Members) Bill was passed in 1960. This Act was designed to give women representation in local, regional and national decision making processes by mandatorily appointing 10 women to the national assembly.

According to Tsikata (2009), the ten seats were highly contested. This disputes the impression that the low representation of women was a result of their lack of interest in electoral politics. This was not without some form of discrimination. According to Tsikata (2009), the ten female representatives, unlike male members of parliament, were vetted for their proficiency in English and current affairs. The election of the ten women representatives unto the general assembly created increased expectations about the role of women in the new independent government. This expectation did not however materialize. In 1966 the Nkrumah government was overthrown in a coup d'état by the National Liberation Council (NLC). This was the beginning of many setbacks to the increased political participation of women in politics. Military governments are by nature incompatible with the democratic principle of popular participation. The NLC however made some attempts to promote the rights of women in Ghana. In 1967, a labour decree which was intended to deal with all forms of discrimination in public employment and grant equal rights of employment to men and women was issued. It also granted women six weeks' maternity leave

with pay and made it illegal for a woman absent on maternity leave to be dismissed (Ohemeng & Adusah-Karikari, 2015).

In 1969 there was another change of government, from military to civil rule. The Progress Party (PP) under Busia which was more progressive attempted to enhance Affirmative Action (AA) policies for women. In 1971, PP the government granted women in public service three month's paid maternity leave. Women were also able to take time to nurse their infants during working hours. The Progress Party was overthrown in another coup d'état in the early months of 1972. The National Redemption Council which later metamorphosed into the Supreme Military Council in 1975 emerged out of this coup. In 1975, the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) was established. This was a fulfillment of a commitment made by Ghana and other UN countries, at the international Women's Conference in Mexico, to undertake initiatives to address the persistent discrimination against women (Ohemeng & Adusah-Karikari, 2015).

On June 4th 1979, a coup was staged to topple the Akuffo led Supreme Military Council (SMC) government. This was led by Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings. The resulting Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) government later handed over power to the People's National Party on the 24th of September 1979, thereby effectively ushering in the third republic. On the 31st of December 1981 Rawlings toppled the Limann led administration in another coup d'état. This was the beginning of the PNDC government (Ohemeng & Adusah-Karikari, 2015; Allah-Mensah, 2005). During this era there were some important developments for women in Ghana and in Ghanaian politics. The 31st December Women's Movement (DWM) which was led by Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings was central in the championing of women's issues. The DWM was criticized as espousing highly political rhetoric whiles claiming women's empowerment as its overarching objective. Furthermore, as the de facto women's wing of the Provisional National

Defense Council and the NDC, its operation as an autonomous women's organization was compromised (Aubrey 2001: 98).

Despite these setbacks, the DWM was able to put in place measures to support women. It started the Day Care Centre's Program, a program which allowed women to leave their children with childcare providers so that they could go about their daily work to earn their living. However, the political empowerment of women took a back seat to the building of childcare centers, bakeries, and *kenkey* and *gari* producing centers. Aubrey (2001) criticizes the 31st DWM for not significantly attempting to integrate women into the public life of politics in Ghana. The 1992 Constitution provides for women's rights to participate in political and decision making processes in Article 9. The article makes provision for the use of affirmative action and enabling legislation and other measures to ensure women's rights.

The fourth republic in perspective: The return to constitutional rule in 1993 came with it increased demands for more to be done for women. This was spearheaded by the women's movement in Ghana. The demands of the women's groups compelled political parties to make women's issues a priority. The NDC government instituted an Affirmative Action (AA) Policy to promote equality of right and opportunities for women in Ghana. The ultimate aim was to increase women's representation and enhance their involvement in decision making in governance and politics. In 1998 the NDC government led by Flight-Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings adopted an AA Policy that established a 40% quota for women's representation in all government institutions, including public boards, commissions, councils, committees and other official bodies, including the Cabinet and Council of State. The policy also called for one-third of government appointees to district and municipal assemblies to be women. The policy guidelines also led to the setting of quotas for women to serve on the governing boards of selected public institutions. Consistent with the AA

Policy guidelines, Gender Desks were established in 1998 within the ministries, departments and agencies of the government to ensure that problems concerning gender and women especially would be given priority attention at all levels throughout the country (Ohemeng & Adusah-Karikari, 2015; Tsikata, 2009).

In 2001, after the New Patriotic Party came to power, the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC) was set up to replace the NCWD as the national machinery for women in Ghana. This was meant to depoliticize women's concerns by establishing a stronger institution to replace the weak National Council on Women and Development (Allah-Mensah, 2001). The ministry was created to focus on creating an enabling environment for gender equity and women's empowerment in the public sector. As part of its goals, the ministry is to strengthen the institutional foundations for promoting greater responsiveness. Currently, it is called the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (Ohemeng & Adusah-Karikari, 2015).

In 1965, the number of women elected increased to 19, representing 18.2% of members of parliament. Progress since then has been slow and painful. Women's participation in the second and third republican parliaments did not attain the figure of ten, largely because there were no affirmative action measures. The fourth republican parliament instituted in 1992 was the first time the figures began to go beyond the achievements of the Parliament of the First Republic. The number of women in parliament in Ghana has since the beginning of the fourth republic not increased significantly. There were 16 female parliamentarians in 1992, 18 in 1996, 19 in 2000, 25 in 2004, 19 in 2008, and 29 in 2012. Below is a table showing the number of women in parliament by year from 1960 to 2012.

Table 2.3 Women in Parliament from 1960-2012

Year	1960	1965	1969	1979	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	2012
Seat	104	104	140	140	200	200	200	230	230	275
women	10	19	1	5	16	18	19	19	18	29
% of total	9.6%	18.2%	0.7%	3.5%	8%	9%	9.5%	8.3%	7.8%	10.5%

Source: (Awal, 2013)

According to Allah-Mensah (2005), there is enthusiasm for women's participation in politics in Ghana. However, “majority of Ghanaian women are found at the bottom of the hierarchy thereby diminishing their chances of contributing meaningfully to decision making” (Allah-Mensah, 2005, p. 99). Women in Ghana are afraid to contest for political office because of the unavailability of recruitment networks that will bring them into politics. The failure of women candidates to win elections discourages other women from vying for political office. The chaotic nature of the political scene often discourages women from participating in politics. Violence during elections serves to deter women from contesting in politics. Violence creates an insecure environment, which is often used by family members to discourage the participation of women in politics (Allah-Mensah, 2005; Ohemeng & Adusah-Karikari, 2015).

Political parties constitute a great channel through which gender representation can be achieved. The political parties aspiring women political candidates associate themselves with contributing significantly to their electoral success. Political parties should thus make it a duty to ensure the adequate representation of women in intra party decision making. This will significantly broaden the dimensions of women’s political participation in Ghana. Presently, almost all political parties have women wings as part of their structural organization. This serves to legitimize the existence

of political parties, and is a tentative acknowledgment of the need to secure electoral victories by capturing women's votes (Allah-Mensah, 2001; Tsikata, 1997).

Tsikata (1998) makes the case for affirmative action. Affirmative Action has been used in Ghana since independence to address regional imbalances in access to education, health, work and political representation. Its successes have however not been effective because the AA policies adopted have not been commensurate with the serious nature of the inequalities being addressed. According to Tsikata (2009) the justification for affirmative action in Ghana is that, it will help in the improved representation of social groups such as women. This will have a beneficial impact on policies.

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana gives legal force to the equality of men and women. It states in article 17(1) that, "all persons shall be equal before the law". It goes on to declare 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. The 1992 Constitution also states in the Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 35 (6) that "the State shall take appropriate measures to achieve reasonable regional and gender balance in the recruitment and appointment to public offices" (Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1993).

Ghana has ratified several international commitments to eliminating Gender inequality. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which was signed by Ghana in 1980 and ratified in 1986 without reservations. 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” (UN General Assembly, 18 December 1979).

Ghana has also ratified the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, known as the Women's Protocol. The Protocol, which was adopted in Maputo on the 11th July 2003, came into force in November 2008. Ghana signed this Protocol on 31st October 2003 and ratified it on 13th June. Article 17(4) justifies affirmative action for addressing imbalances in 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 (Tsikata, 2009; Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, 2003).

In 1995, the Government of Ghana together with 188 other countries, adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PfA), which identified inequality between women and men in the sharing of power and decision making at all levels as one of the twelve critical areas of concern. The Platform recognizes 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 ensuring that women's interests and perspectives are incorporated into government policies. The PfA calls for an increase to 50% of women in national legislatures (Tsikata, 2009).

If the political empowerment of women is to be attained, it has to come alongside educational, social and economic empowerment. The empowerment of women for increased political

participation is important because, “women either as individuals or as a group inject an inimitable viewpoint into the developmental processes which greatly enhances participatory democratic processes” (Bawa & Sanyare, 2013). Bawa & Sanyare (2013) also note, Prevailing social-cultural systems which are discriminatory may to erode modest inroads made by women with regards to political and public sector participation.

There are overt and covert practices which hinder women’s abilities to lead successful campaigns alongside male counterparts for political positions. One such practice is the monetization of political campaigns since women rarely have the same personal economic advantages that men do. Another hindrance is the traditional belief that women are politically inferior. For instance, in Nabdam in the Northern region, voters are informed by male candidates that if they cast their votes for a female candidate they will face the wrath of the gods” (Gender Studies and Human Documentation Centre, 2012).

2.5 CONCLUSION

The literatures reviewed are limited in their focus on the participation of women in communities which have unique and peculiar socio-structural characteristics. By embarking on the study of the political participation of women in Muslim communities within a Muslim minority country like Ghana, it is the researcher’s hope that the work will contribute new insights and perspectives to the participation of women in politics in Ghana.

In sum, the reviewed literature on the subject matter has entailed definitions of political participation, how political participation is brought about, the relevance of political participation to development, and what goes into political participation. The relationship between Islam and politics has been explored to provide better background knowledge about why Muslim women

may or not participate in politics. The history of women in politics in Ghana has also been traced to provide an in depth understanding of the role women have and continue to play in Ghanaian politics. These have provided a guiding framework for the better understanding of the phenomenon of political participation.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter presents the methodology of the study. It includes the profile of the study area, the research design, research strategy, method of data collection, the sampling technique & sample size, framework of data analysis, ethical consideration, the expectations of data collection as well as the positive experience in the data collection and methodological challenges.

3.2 PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA

According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2010), the northern region has a total population of 2,479,461. Out of this number, there are (1,249,574) females and (1,229,887) males. Tamale is the administrative capital of the northern region. The population of Tamale Metropolis, according to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, is 233,252 representing 9.4 percent of the region's population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). Muslims form 60.0 percent of the population in the Northern region. This makes Islam the dominant religion in the region (Northern: Tamale Metropolitan, n.d; Ghana Statistical Service, 2010).

Below is a table showing the population of Tamale by religion and sex.

Table 3.1: Population of Tamale by Religion and Sex

Religion	Both sexes		Male		Female	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	223,252	100.0	111,109	100.0	112,143	100.0
No religion	374	0.2	209	0.2	165	0.1
Catholic	6,638	3	3,082	2.8	3,556	3.2
Protestants (Anglican Lutheran etc.)	5,390	2.4	2,607	2.3	2,783	2.5
Pentecostal/Charismatic	5,403	2.4	2,630	2.4	2,773	2.5
Other Christian	2,318	1	1,118	1	1,200	1.1
Islam	202,003	90.5	100,816	90.7	101,187	90.2
Traditionalist	755	0.3	446	0.4	309	0.3
Other	371	0.2	201	0.2	170	0.2

Source: 2010 Population and Housing Census

From the above table, it can be observed that, 90.5% of the people of Tamale adhere to the religion of Islam. 90.7% of males are Muslims and 90.2% of all women living in Tamale are adherents of Islam.

The Tamale Metropolitan assembly was elevated to the status of a metropolis in 2004 (Northern: Tamale Metropolitan, n.d). Socio-culturally, the metropolis is patriarchal in nature. Within the Tamale metropolis, basic Islamic practices have been enmeshed so deep within traditional Dagbon customs that it is difficult to tell the difference. Politics is greatly tied to religion. The effect of the convergence of traditional Dagbon customs and Islam is interest worthy to the researcher and this has been explored to find out how it impacts on the political participation of Muslim women in Ghanaian politics within the Tamale locality.

Visibly, women in Tamale are limited in their participation in Ghanaian politics. Participation is often limited to voting. The few who are active in politics and go further to seek for political offices do so for portfolios considered female portfolios like the position of women organizers (magaziyas). The level of female political participation in Tamale is still very low. Out of the number of elected assembly persons in the Northern region of which Tamale is the capital city,

Only 21 women members have been elected as opposed to 685 men. In 1998, the Northern Region recorded 2.3% of elected assembly members who were women. This number dropped to 1.3% in 2002 and increased to 8% in 2006. In 2010 the percentage of women elected as district assembly members reduced to 3.1% in the district level election. As at June 2014, Tamale had no elected assembly woman. There have never been more than two assembly women at a time in the Tamale metropolis from the period 1992 to 2014 (Alhassan, 2014; Civil Society Organizations Platform Northern Region, 2015). Below is a table showing the number of women who won district assembly elections from 1998 to 2010 in the entire northern region.

Table 3.2: District Assemble Elections Women Winners from 1998-2010

Year	Number of women elected
1998	14
2002	4
2006	38
2010	21

Source: (Awal, 2013)

In the 2015 district assembly elections in Tamale, no woman was elected unto the district assembly in Tamale. Only four women were appointed by government as district assembly members out of a total of 18 assembly members in Tamale.

Below is a table depicting the number of men and women elected and appointed to the district assembly in the year 2015.

Table 3.3 District Assembly Elections and Appointments 2015

Number Appointed		18
Appointed	Male	14
	Female	4
Percentage appointed	Male	77.78%
	Female	22.22%
Number Elected		40
Number Elected	Male	40
	Female	0
Percentage Ellected	Male	100.00%
	Female	0.00%
Number elected and		58
Number elected and appointed	Male	54
	Female	4
Percentage elected and	Male	93.10%
	Female	6.90%

Source: (Northern Sector Action Awareness Center, 2015)

From the above information, it can be seen that, though Tamale has more women than men, only a limited number of women hold public and political office. Since the inception of the fourth republic, the regional chairpersons of the two main political parties in Tamale, the NDC and the NPP, have been men. All the regional coordinators in Tamale are men, and two out of 3 regional coordinators for the ministry of gender and social protection are men.

Ultimately, Tamale is a suitable setting for determining how socio cultural and religious factors impact on the participation of women in politics in Ghana.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

A case study is an appropriate way to answer broad research questions. It is an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of similar units (Gerring, 2004). A case study also provides tentative ideas about the phenomenon in general. A case study is an intensive approach which often takes the form of a field study within a specific local setting. The case study

approach to research however has some disadvantages. It is hard to draw generalizations from a single case which may be challenging to a researcher not undertaking a comparative study, (Hsieh, n.d). A case study approach to conducting research was adopted for the purpose of this study.

3.4 RESEARCH STRATEGY

The attempt to assess the participation of women in predominantly Muslim communities can only be done with a methodological framework well suited to the research. To that effect both qualitative and quantitative methods of research were employed in this study.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher used the mixed method approach. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were used. The qualitative data collection method was embedded in the quantitative method of data gathering. This type of mixed methods design has been described by Terrell (2012) as the Concurrent Nested Strategy. The primarily purpose for using mixed methods was to provide the researcher with a broader perspective that could not be gained from the use of only quantitative methods of research. The strength of this method is that one can collect both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously. This allows perspectives gathered from the use of each method to be incorporated into the study. The weakness of this method is that because data needs to be transformed to allow integration during analysis, this may lead to issues in resolving discrepancies that occur between different data types (Terrell, 2012).

3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

In this study, data was collected using questionnaires and personal interviews. The two methods of data collection complemented each other. The use of questionnaires enabled the researcher to sample a lot of views on the participation of Muslim women in politics. The personal interviews were necessary because they had the advantages of completeness and accuracy. It helped the researcher to delve into the relationship between religion and political participation.

The use of structured questionnaires was a cheaper method of data collection and very convenient to most of the respondents who happened to be very busy most of the times. The challenge, however, was to ensure that the questions were clearly understood and correctly answered.

The above methods were supplemented by the use of secondary data. Due to lack of time and financial resources, secondary data proved to be very vital in this study. Several documents were perused. The 2010 population and housing census summary report was a key document used. The Holy Quran was also perused alongside several interpretations on the status of women in Islam to be able to examine Islamic prescriptions on the political participation of women. Because of the nature of the secondary data available, the main challenge was to choose what to use and what to ignore. This I did by picking the information that coincided with what the research required. This was out of the understanding that secondary data might have been collected originally for other purposes other than my current study. Thus, apart from Islamic prescriptive text on the behavior of Muslim women, I also relied on political party manifestoes, policy documents on the participation of women, and articles on the participation of women globally.

The secondary data from existing statistics and library research was analyzed, and together with the interview responses from key respondents, used to draw conclusions and make

recommendations on the participation of Muslim women in Ghanaian politics. Out of the conclusions, recommendations are made to contribute to new knowledge and development of national public policy on women's participation in politics.

To ensure the accuracy of data collection, data collectors were given orientation on how to proceed with data collection. They were given background information on the area of the study. This enabled them ask follow up questions in areas they needed to. They were given clear cut instructions on whom to administer questionnaires. This was to ensure quality assurance and control.

Data from interviews were gathered by the researcher personally. Interviews were recorded and later transcribed. This was to ensure no valuable information was lost.

In sum, data was collected directly from the field of study to help the researcher answer scientifically questions on the political participation of Muslim women in Ghanaian politics.

3.6 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE AND SAMPLE SIZE

The Sampling Model involves foremost the identification of the population. A fair sample is then drawn from total sample and generalizations can be made from this. For the purpose of my research the population is Ghanaian women who live in Muslim dominated communities. A sample of this population has been studied and generalizations can be made for the rest of the population of such women based on the results of the study. This will ensure the external validity of research.

No research can claim external validity if sampling is not properly done. The researcher did not employ probability sampling techniques because of the nature of the sampling frame available. The method of sampling used was purposive sampling. This gave the researcher the opportunity to hand pick subjects on the basis of specific characteristics. Because the researcher had prior

knowledge of the setting of the study and the characteristics of the respondents under study, the sample was quite representative.

In terms of the sample size, a total of one hundred and twenty five (125) participants were engaged in the quantitative research process. Out of the 125, 115 were interviewed with a structured questionnaire for the quantitative aspect whereas 10 key informants were engaged in an in-depth face-to-face interview for the qualitative aspect. 83.5% of respondents were female.

3.7 FRAMEWORK OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected from questionnaires have been analyzed qualitatively using IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Coding was done, and the data entered and subsequently merged. The results are presented in detail in Chapter four.

The in-depth interviews conducted were transcribed verbatim. After transcription the data were organized into retrievable sections by assigning a code to each interview respectively using a word processing file. The researcher had to familiarize herself with the data by listening to the tape recordings from the interviews several times to ensure that the appropriate transcription and coding were done. This was followed by preliminary coding data by identifying how the respondents conceptualized certain key phrases and words. The documents were analyzed using content analysis by identifying common themes that emerged taken into consideration the objectives of the study. The documents were sorted by types (annual reports and policy documents). From the various themes and categories that emerged, the data were analyzed.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

One of the growing methodological concerns in social science research is ethical consideration where the social science researcher is supposed to adhere to the element of consent and

confidentiality of informants in the research process. In this respect, the researcher assured respondents of confidentiality. The consent of interviewees was sought before interviews, to use their names in the study. Thus, no ethical guidelines were bridged.

Ethical Concerns:

- Respondents participated voluntarily in the study
- Respondents understood the purpose and procedures of the study
- Respondents understood their right to a copy of the results.
- Respondents understood the potential benefits of the study
- Respondents understood that their privacy will be respected.
- Care was taken to avoid situations and issues where power between the researcher and respondents could be abused.
- The anonymity of respondents was maintained during data analysis. Permission was sought in the instances the researcher needed to make direct allusions to respondents.

3.9 EXPECTATIONS

In collecting the data for the study, the researcher expected and came across some financial challenges. This was because the thesis grant was inadequate. The expectation that the researcher will gain some new insights into the participation of Muslim women in politics also came to fruition.

3.10 METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

The methodology employed was a mixed method of both qualitative and quantitative research methodology. Outlined below are the challenges the researcher faced in gathering data:

1. One hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed in sum. Data collectors had to be employed for that purpose.
2. Only one hundred and fifteen questionnaires were finally retrieved.
3. In the gathering of the quantitative data, challenges were faced in getting people to respond. The more educated respondents were either too busy to answer the questionnaire, or didn't see how relevant it was to them. The enthusiastic semi-educated people thought it was a survey to give out loans or grants to them. It took a lot of convincing to prove otherwise.
4. Financial challenges were also encountered. Thesis grants proved woefully inadequate. The researcher had to travel frequently to Tamale, to ensure accuracy of data gathered.

3.12 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the researcher used a research methodology that was appropriate to the study. In choosing a research method, the researcher took into consideration the nature of the study, and the research objectives. This enabled the researcher to employ techniques that will ensure the external validity of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

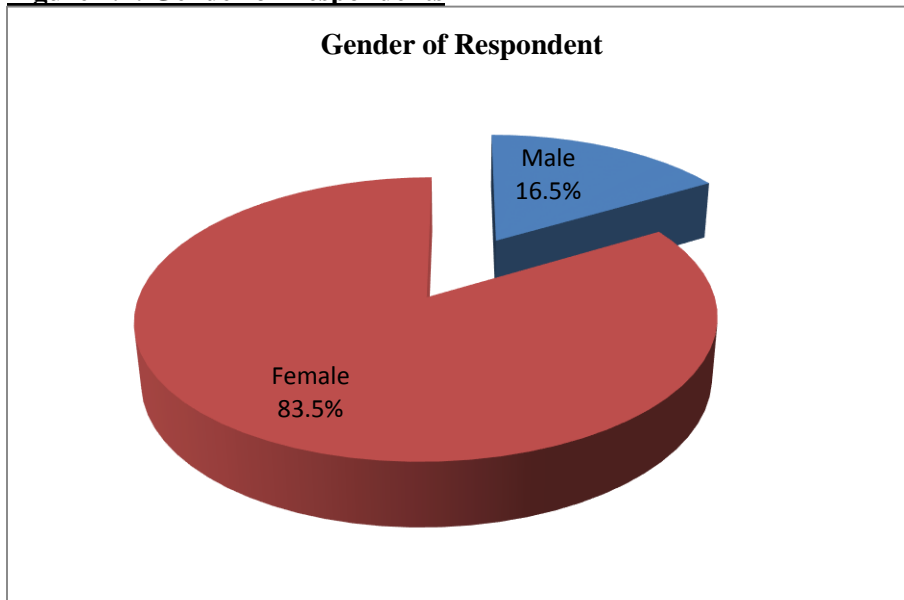
ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to investigate the participation of women in politics in Ghana. By using Tamale as a case study, the researcher seeks to explore how socio-cultural and religious factors impact politics in the Muslim-majority community. This chapter describes the results of the data analysis performed with the help of the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20.0. These results were computed, interpreted, discussed and presented on tables and figures and graphs by using simple descriptive analysis, in the form of frequency, percentages and mean. The results from the interviews have been analyzed using content analysis.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

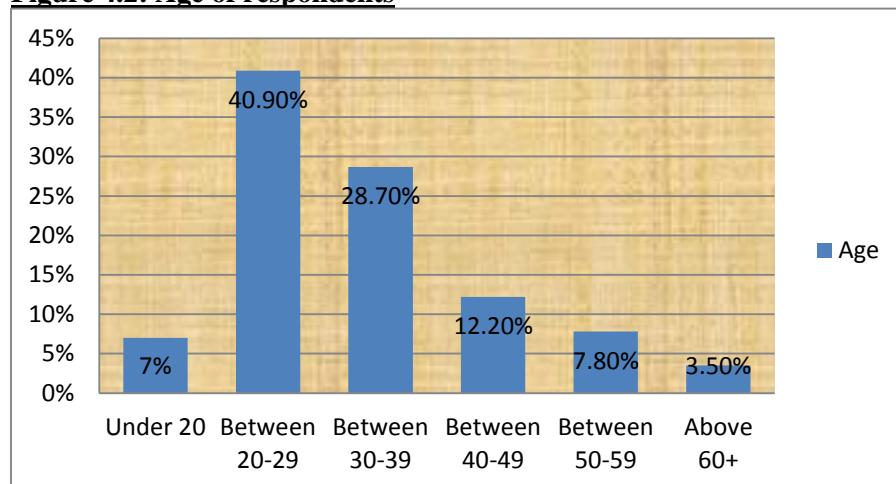
Gender: Out of the 115 questionnaire respondents, 96 were female and 19 male. This represented 83.5% and 16.5% respectively. These show that the majority of the respondents who participated in the study were female. The researcher chose to sample the opinion of more women in the study to help determine how women participate in politics. However, the views of men were also sought to enable the researcher determine how men viewed perceptions of women by the male demographic of Tamale fed into the low participation of women in the region. The gender distribution of respondents is shown in the figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1: Gender of Respondents

Source: Fieldwork, 2014.

Age: Out of the 115 respondents, 47 representing 40.9% fall within the ages 20-29, 33 respondents representing 28.7% were between the ages of 30-39. 14 respondents fell within the 40-49 age brackets. This translated into 12.2%. Out of the remaining respondents, 9 were in the ages 50-59 representing 7.8%, and 8 respondents who represent 7% were below the ages of 20. Only 4 respondents representing 3.5% were above the ages of sixty (60). The result in figure 4.2 clearly shows that there is a very strong and youthful working population; almost 89% of the sample gathered was below the age 50.

Figure 4.2: Age of respondents



Source: Field work, 2014

Ethnic Background: The ethnic distribution of respondents is shown on the table 4.2 below, Ninety Five (95) of the one hundred and fifteen (115) respondents representing 82.6% were Dagomba, Sixteen (16) representing (13.9%) were Mamprusi, three (3) were Gonja representing 2.6% and only one (1) respondent representing 0.9% was Frafra. This implies that the community is dominated by the Dagomba. The result is shown on table 4.1 below.

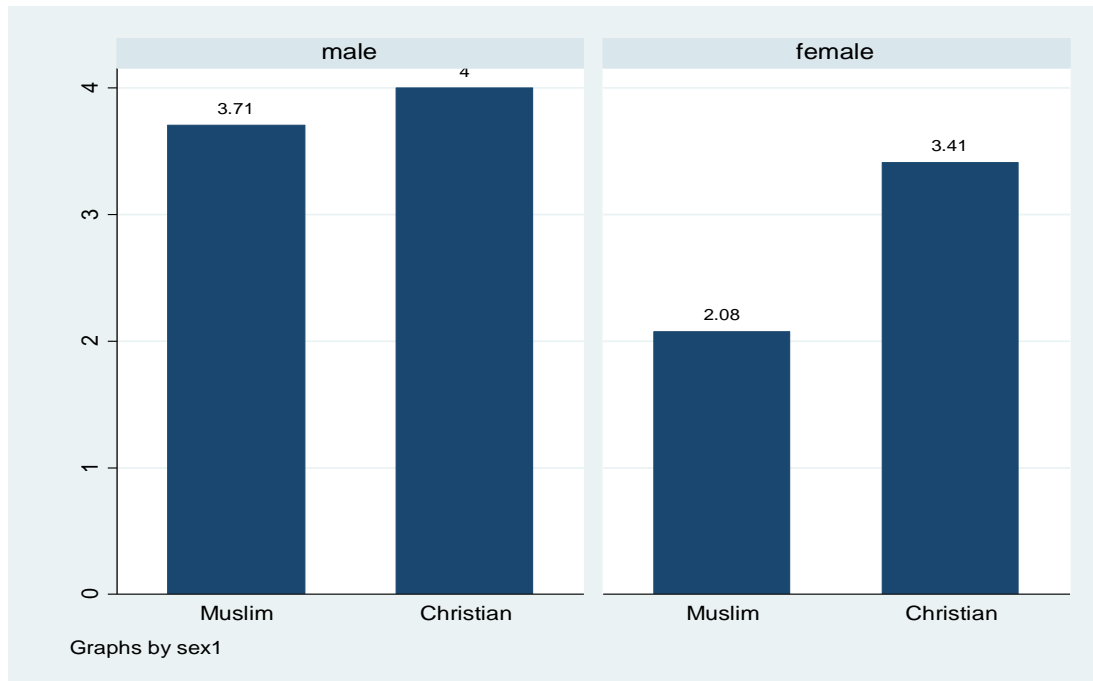
Table 4.1: Ethnic background of respondents

Ethnic Group	Frequency	Percentage %
Dagomba	95	82.6
Mamprusi	16	13.9
Gonja	3	2.6
Frafra	1	.9
Total	115	100.0

Source: Field work, 2014

Educational Background of Respondents: The educational background of respondents was considered very important by the researcher in determining how the level of education affects the participation in politics of women in Tamale. This has been disaggregated by the religion of respondents and presented on the table below. The result from data (fig. 4.6) shows a lower average education among Muslim women in Tamale with a 2.08 on a mean value of 5-point education scale. Being that the majority of women living in the metropolis are Muslims, this may hinder the political participation of women in Tamale.

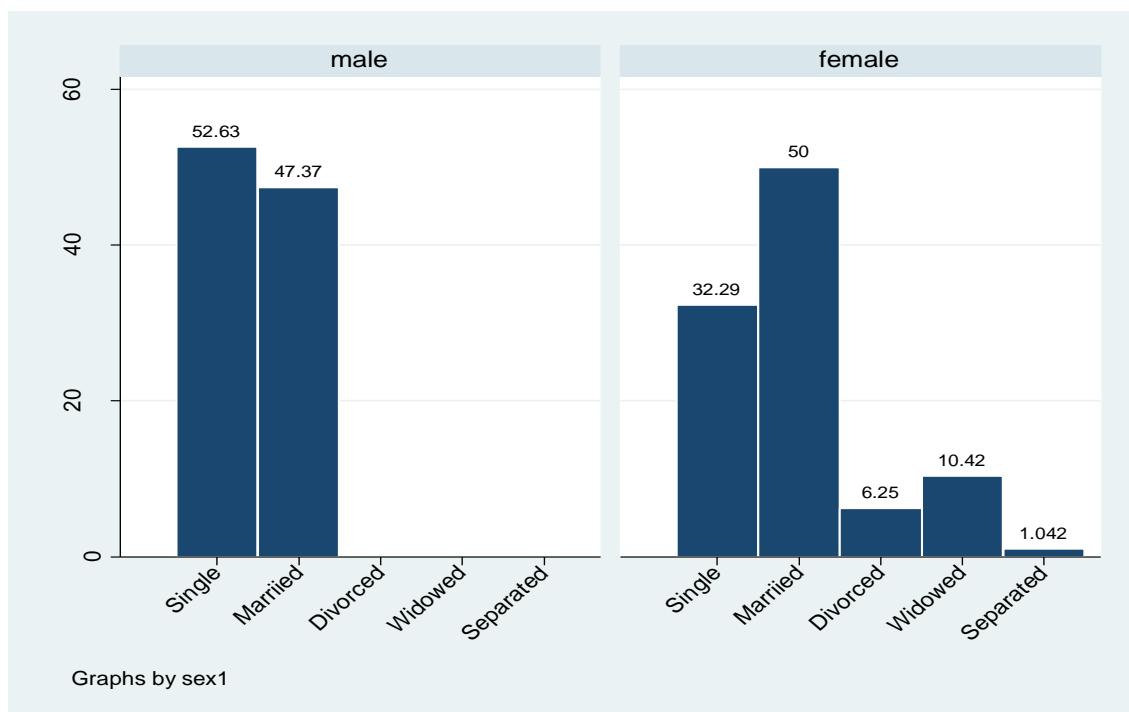
Figure 4.3: Educational and Religious scale



Source: Fieldwork, 2014

From figure 4.7 which is a statistical representation of the marital status of respondents, it can be observed that a greater proportion of the sampled population were married 57(49.6%). Forty one respondents representing 35.7% were single, and 8.7% (10) out of the 115 sampled respondents were widowed. 5.2% (6) were divorced and only one respondent (1%) was separated. More men than women were single. Higher share of women not being single may account for lower participation due to family obligations.

Figure 4.4: Marital status



Source: Field work, 2014

From the table 4.2, on the number of years respondents had been resident in the Tamale metropolis, 45 of the 115 respondents, representing 39.1%, had stayed in the community for more than 30 years. 38 respondents representing 33% had been resident in Tamale for periods spanning 16 to 30 years while 18 had stayed in the metropolis for 6 to 15 years. The remaining 14 respondents which

translated to 12.2% of the 115 sampled respondents had stayed in the metropolis for less than five years. This means a huge percentage of respondents were either born in Tamale, or had been living there for a long time. It is therefore safe to assume, that the views of majority of the respondents will be reflective of the general societal, and cultural values of the people of Tamale, and opinions.

Table 4.2: Number of year's respondents have been resident in Tamale

Years of Residence	Frequency	Percentage %
0-5 years	14	12.2
6-15 years	18	15.7
16-30 years	38	33.0
30 years	45	39.1
Total	115	100.0

Source: Field work, 2014

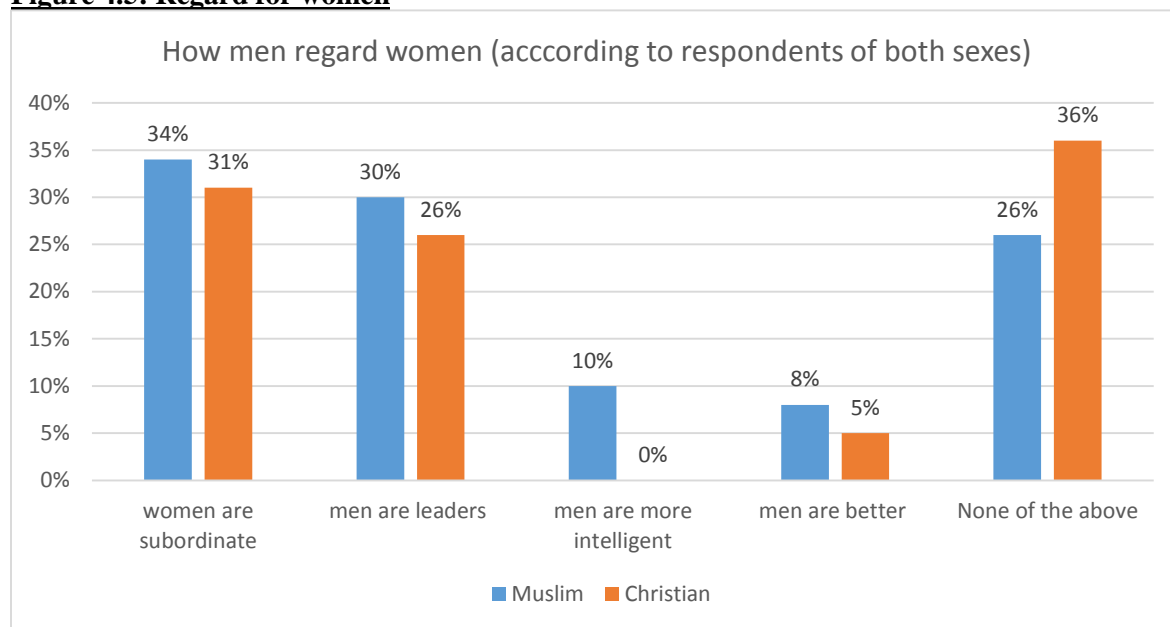
4.3 REGARD FOR WOMEN

Questions to measure how respondents regarded women were asked to measure societal perceptions on the role of women. The answers to the questions asked under this category were subsequently analyzed and helped the researcher draw conclusions on societal perceptions and how they affected the political participation of women in Ghana.

The data on how men regard women is presented in the graph below. In terms of how the respondents regard women, the data showed that most respondents thought of women as subordinate to men; 33.9% (39) of respondents held this view. 34 respondents, viewed men as leaders and women as followers and 9 respondents representing 7.8% of respondents said men

were better than women Interestingly, a significant percentage of Muslims considered women as subordinate to men. From the data gathered, it was observed that the attitudes of inequality are more widespread among Muslims in Tamale (see Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5: Regard for women



Source: Field work, 2014

4.3.1 Best Occupation for Women

On the respondents opinion on the kind of occupation that best suits women, a lot of interesting responses were obtained. A group of respondents had the view that, women because of their role as mothers should be teachers so they could have much more time for the home was trending. This shows how the political participation of women in Tamale may be affected by their responsibilities as mothers. Twenty three respondents representing 20% of the total 115 respondents agreed that women are best suited as housewives and 52.2% (60) of the 115 respondents considered trading as the best occupation suited for women living within the Tamale metropolis.(see Table 4.3 below

Table 4.3: Distribution of respondents by most appropriate occupation for women

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage%
Trading	60	52.2
Teaching	14	12.2
Nursing	12	9.4
Housewife	23	20.0
Politics	4	3.5
Medicine	2	1.7
Total	115	100.0

Source: Field work, 2014

4.4 OPINIONS ABOUT THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN DECISION MAKING

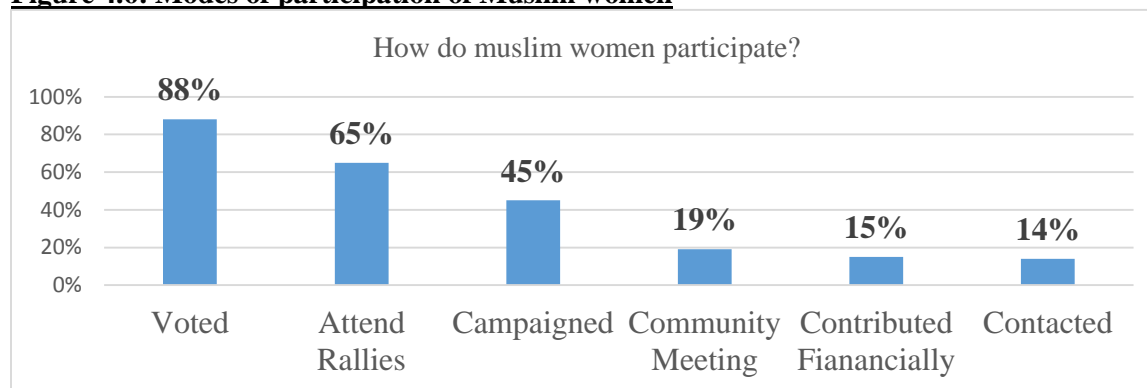
The researcher sampled the opinions of respondents on the participation of women in decision making. This was to enable the researcher determine societal perceptions on the political participation of women in Tamale.

The data on how women can participate in politics is shown in figure 4.6. Majority of respondents representing 59.1% indicate women can participate in politics through voting, 11.3% (13) indicate that attending political meetings will mean women's participation in politics, 11.3% (13) think that when women stand for political office for various portfolios it means they are participating in politics. About 9.6% of respondents assert women can partake in politics by speaking out at community meetings and campaigning for candidates during elections. Joining protests is also considered a means by which women can participate in politics by 5 respondents (4.3%). Out of the remaining number of respondents, 3 respondents representing 2.6% considered women

financially contributing towards political campaigns as political participation, and 2 respondents representing 1.7% considered the contacting of public officials about a public issue as political participation.

The researcher sought to investigate how Muslim women participate in politics in Tamale. Respondents were thus asked to state the manners and avenues through which they had participated in politics. Out of the total number of respondents, 88% had participated through voting. 65% of Muslim women respondents had attended rallies. 45% had actually campaigned for political office seekers, 19% had attended community meetings and 15% had contributed financially. 14% of respondents had also one time or the other contacted political officials directly (see figure 4.6).

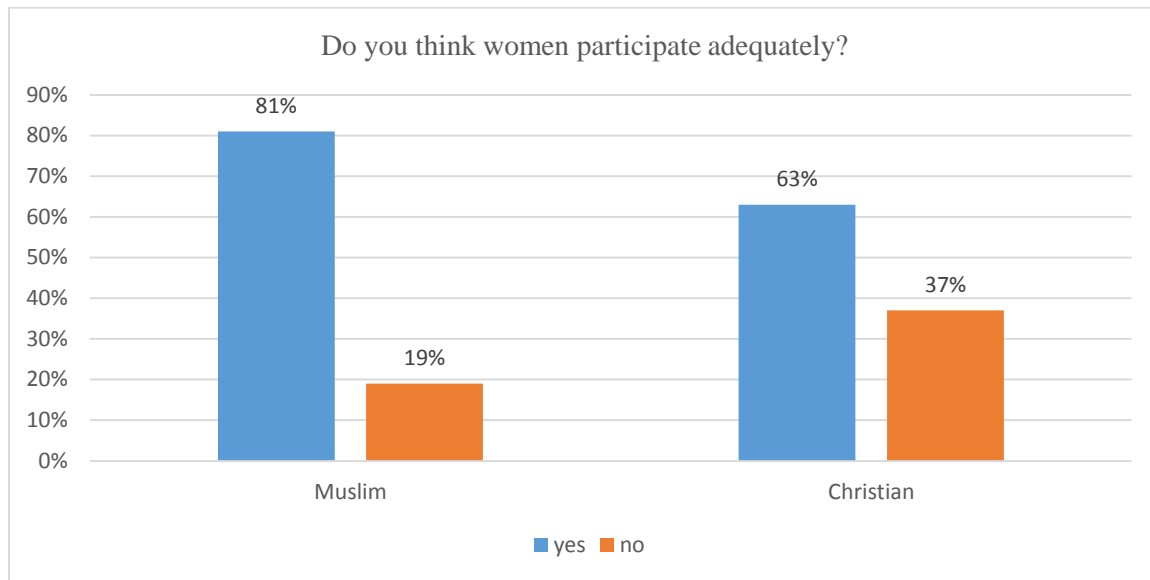
Figure 4.6: Modes of participation of Muslim women



Source: Field work, 2014

Respondents were asked how they view the adequacy of the participation of women in politics (see figure 4.7). Their views are represented on the figures below. This was represented on the basis of religion to see if views on the adequacy of women’s participation in politics differed across the religious divides.

Figure 4.7: Perceptions on the adequacy of female participation in politics



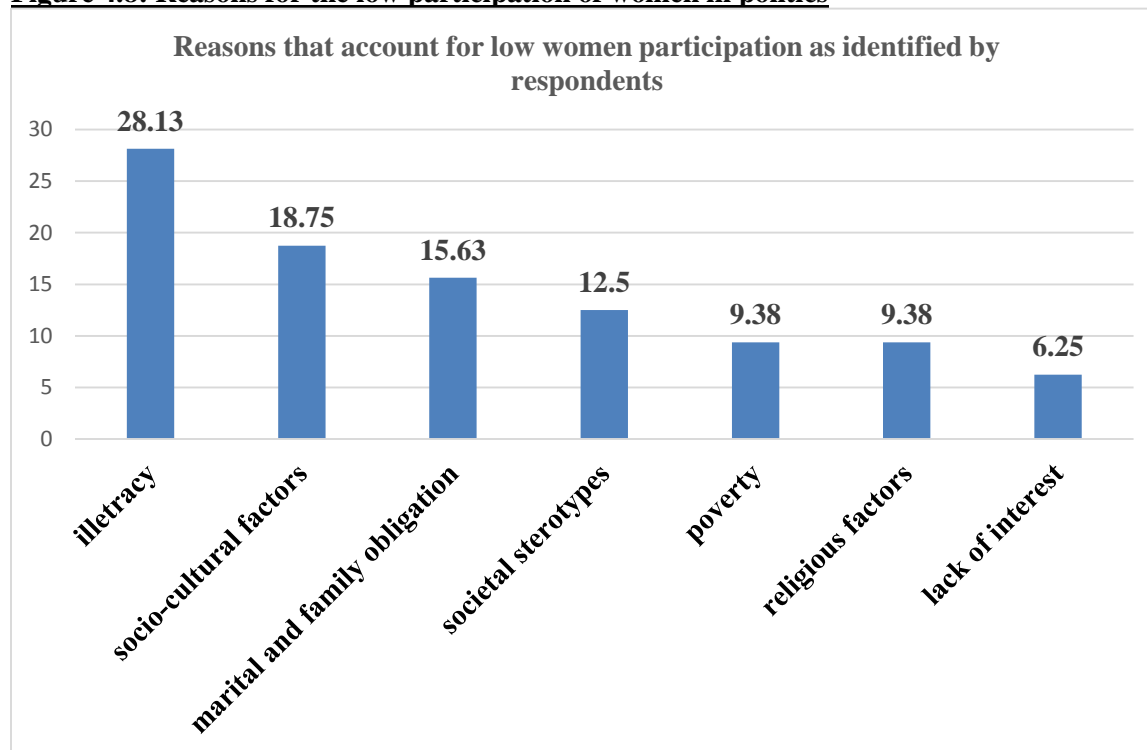
Source: Field work, 2014.

Muslims seem to be more satisfied with unequal participation as 81% say current women participation is adequate compared to only 63% of Christians.

Ultimately, the researcher was seeking to find out the reasons that account for the low participation of women in politics in Tamale, under the backdrop of Islam. Respondents were thus asked their views on what they thought was the reason for the poor political participation of women in Tamale.

Below is a representation of their answers on figure 4.8

Figure 4.8: Reasons for the low participation of women in politics



Source: Fieldwork, 2015

From the figure, it can be seen that, whilst a large number of respondents, blamed socio-cultural factors for the low participation of women in politics, a higher number of respondents attributed the problem to illiteracy.

To enable the researcher make recommendations to improve the political participation of women in Tamale, respondents were asked how they thought the political participation of women could be improved. Below is a representation of their answers (see table 4.4).

Out of a total of 115 respondents, 20 representing 17.4 percent thought a reorientation of society will lead to the higher participation of women in politics. 43 respondents, representing 37.4 percent stated the economic empowerment of women could lead to greater participation of women in politics. Another 43.5%, thought the empowerment that could enhance the participation of women

in politics was educational empowerment. Two (2) respondents, were more pessimistic about the future of women in politics. In their opinion, nothing can be done to improve the participation of women in politics in Tamale. This means that, the majority of respondents believe the way to enhance the political participation of women is through education.

Table 4.4: Perceptions on how participation can be improved

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid societal re-orientation	20	17.4	17.4	17.4
economic empowerment	43	37.4	37.4	54.8
education empowerment	50	43.5	43.5	98.3
cannot be improved	2	1.7	1.7	100.0
Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field work, 2015

4.5 PRESENTATION OF INTERVIEW DATA

The focus of this thesis was to explore the reasons for the seemingly low women participation in politics especially in the Ghanaian Muslim communities. The reasons for the low participation of women in politics in Tamale have been presented and discussed under themes. These are: Socio-cultural and Religious beliefs; Male domination of politics; Attitude of Women; Limited resources; and Restricted Party Support.

4.5.1 Negative socio-cultural and religious beliefs

Religion, for instance, was seen to play a big role in the low levels of female political participation in Tamale. There was consensus between both female and male Islamic scholars on the inappropriateness of female political participation in politics. According to these scholars, if

women participate actively in politics, it means they are contradicting Islamic prescriptions on the behaviors of women, and going against Allah's wishes. This is tantamount to what scholars have described as patriarchal interpretations of Islamic text. Among the respondents, the researcher found that religion was often used as justification to bar the political participation of women. Women were told not to contest because God intended men to be leaders over women. The predominant view in Tamale is that women are not supposed to lead. Reference is easily made to the fact that only men are allowed to lead prayers. The argument is also made that men bury the dead, and since women culturally cannot bury the dead, only men should be chosen as leaders. To a large extent thus, the socio-cultural and religious nature of the community affects the participation of women in politics. Women are considered to be the property of their husbands (Alhassan, 2014).

One Islamic scholar stated, "Women do not need to participate in politics by themselves. They should avoid the kind of politics that exposes them to strange men. If they have concerns that they need to have addressed they can channel it through to their husbands (Ahmed, 2014)." Women who want to be leaders were encouraged to seek leadership positions among their colleague women.

4.5.2 Male Domination of Politics

From data gathered, it was clear men largely dominated the political arena in Tamale. The regional minister and his deputy were both men, all regional coordinators were men, and only women organizers were female constituency executives in both NDC and NPP (Alhassan, 2014). This created a situation where women were almost afraid to participate actively in politics for fear of being seen as pursuing roles which were the preserve of men. According to a constituency women's organizer of the NPP, "men largely dominate the political arena. We are just followers.

Sometimes they include us so they can state we were given a chance to participate. However, they leave us out in most major decisions”.

4.5.3 Attitude of Women

Women who sought for political offices are themselves not courageous. When the magaziyas of political parties were interviewed, there was consensus among them that the time was not ripe for women to contest and win positions like party chairperson. The surest way for a woman to win elections in a political party, they argued, was by contesting as a women's organizer. Respondents stated they will rather be led by a male chairperson than a woman. The researcher observed that, the women who participated in politics in Tamale were not interested in changing the status quo. They seemed content playing supportive political roles as long as they had a little influence and were able to get favors granted them by leaders.

Table 4.5: Representation of Party Constituency Executives by Sex

POSITIONS	NDC			NPP		
	TAMALE NORTH	TAMALE SOUTH	TAMALE CENTRAL	TAMALE NORTH	TAMALE NORTH	TAMALE CENTRAL
1. Chairperson	male	male	male	male	male	male
2. 1st vice-chairperson	male	male	male	male	male	male
3. Constituency Women's Organizer	male	male	male	male	male	male
4. Deputy Women's Organizer	female	female	female	female	female	female
5. Constituency organizer	male	male	male	male	male	male
6. Youth Organizer	male	male	male	male	male	male
7. male	male	male	male	male	male	male
8. Treasurer	male	male	male	male	male	male
9. Communications Officer	male	male	male	male	male	male

Source: Fieldwork, 2015

4.5.4 Limited Resources

Women often lack the resources and civic skills to enable their successful political participation. Most women claimed they had great difficulty meeting their personal financial obligations, and could not spare their time or money to participate actively in politics. They bemoaned the unwillingness of their husbands to support their political ambitions. One woman noted, “My husband asked me to choose between my marriage and attending a community meeting. I chose my marriage. I have kids, and cannot subject them to a life of financial uncertainty because of my political ambitions”. The lack of resources among other factors thus contributes significantly to the low participation of women in politics in Tamale.

4.5.5 Restricted Party Support

Women play important roles in campaigning and mobilizing support for their parties, yet they rarely occupy top decision-making positions in these structures. There was consensus among women leaders, party structures do not support the active political participation of women in politics. There was general disenchantment with party leader’s, men and women inclusive. There was also the unanimous belief that women are sidelined when it comes to appointments. Male leaders and female leaders within the party leadership in Tamale were blamed for not promoting adequately the participation of women in politics (Refer to table 4.5). The positions held by women within the constituency party structures of the main political parties, NDC and NPP, were the position of Women Organizers and their deputies.

4.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has contained a presentation of data findings. The quantitative data was presented on tables and figures. The qualitative data gathered was presented and discussed under themes. This has effectively laid the groundwork for research conclusions to be drawn.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study. It starts with the summary of the key findings of the study, draws conclusions on those findings, and then makes recommendations that are necessary for improving the participation of women in politics in Ghana. The study is to examine the participation of women politics in Ghana, by undertaking a study of Tamale as a Muslim community. The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the findings of the study and emphasize the lessons that can be drawn from them. Some recommendations are subsequently made based on research findings. The chapter will be seeking to address the following research questions:

Main Question

What accounts for the low political participation of women in politics in Ghana?

Supporting Questions

1. To what extent do socio-cultural and religious factors affect the participation of women in politics in Ghana?
2. How has the practice of Islam influenced the political participation of women in Tamale?
3. What other factors account for the low participation of women in politics in Ghana?

4. What appropriate recommendations can be made to enhance the participation of women in politics of Ghana?

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The participation of women in politics is an issue that is gaining currency worldwide because of the importance of inclusive participation to any sustainable development agenda.

At the international level, there have been several multi-dimensional and multi-faceted attempts to incorporate the issue of women empowerment into the global agenda. This has included the passage of treaties and conventions relating to women. In Ghana, successive Ghanaian governments have adopted several strategies to empower women to participate in politics and public decision making in the country. These have included the ratification of several international treaties and the putting in place of several constitutional provisions to protect and promote the right to decision making of women. Political parties have given voice to this need in their various manifestoes. This is to say that aspiring ruling parties have as a key component of their governing policies issues of women empowerment and the political participation of women.

Civil society has championed the calls for the increased political participation of women in Ghana. The women's movement is now more vibrant than ever. There have been emphatic stakeholder demands for the increased political participation of women. This has led to a greater re-examination of scholars on the nuances of political participation; what makes people participate in politics? Why do some people tend to participate more in politics than others? Why is there a comparative low level of women participation in politics in relation to men? The questions are endless and thus there is a continuous loop of hypothesis formulation, thesis proclamation, and hypothesis testing.

There are also religious dimensions to the political participation of women in politics. In the case of Tamale, Ghana, the low participation of women in politics can be attributed to patriarchal interpretations of Islamic text and how these interpretations have translated into Islamic practice. Women are considered subordinate to men and cannot participate in politics in the manner and degree men do. Scholars regard Islamic prescriptive behavior for women as Godly commands which cannot be questioned. This impacts the political participation of women in Muslim communities negatively.

Socio-cultural factors also militate against the participation of women in Ghanaian politics. In Tamale, there is a general low regard for women with the majority of people considering women intellectually inferior to men and better placed for jobs like trading, nursing and teaching. Politics is considered better suited for men. The Islamic practice of men leading prayers is seen as testament to the fact that men should always lead and women should follow. The socio-cultural practice of keeping women away from burial grounds has also been touted as proof that women cannot deal with intense situations, and also cannot effectively partake in some important societal events if they are selected leaders.

It is challenging for women to contest for top hierarchy positions within parties. The women who are in politics do not feel they are making adequate inputs into public discourse. Several factors serve as impediments to the successful political participation of women in Tamale. They include socio cultural and religious factors, low level of education and societal and family commitments. Increased government and civil society commitment to increasing women participation in politics has not translated into increased political leadership and representation for women in Tamale.

Currently, there is no woman among the four women MP's in Tamale and no elected assembly woman in Tamale.

5.3 CONCLUSION

From the above, it has been observed that participation is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. There are several ways to participate in politics and the dynamics of political participation differ from context to context. Any meaningful quest for popular participation has to come with increased calls for empowerment: political, economic and social empowerment.

Another lesson drawn from the research is that the socio cultural and religious setting within which people participate in politics determines to a large extent the level at which they participate in politics. This emphasizes the point that, man is a social being and participation does not happen in a vacuum.

Substantially, a lot needs to be done to empower women for political participation. At the center of the low level of female participation in politics are socio-cultural and religious inhibitions.

These situations go to reiterate the accepted fact that empowerment is multifaceted, comprising of social, economic, cultural and political lifestyles of individuals and groups. It must be noted that empowerment involves the difficult and hazardous task of constructing political institutions. Despite the high levels of democracy the country has achieved, there are still fundamental issues that have to be considered. That is, balancing the equation of fifty- fifty representation of both men and women in all levels of decision making; from unit level to the national level.

The general trend of our social life confirms the biases the society has on the women population.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings of the research, the study proceeds with the following recommendations which could be considered by policy makers, government, opinion leaders, academics, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and researchers to enhance women's participation in the politics of Ghana.

The approach to increasing the participation of women in politics in Ghana has to be multi-dimensional.

First, there is the need to work with traditional and religious leaders to break the socio-cultural and religious challenges to the participation of women in politics in Tamale. The main constraint to political participation, and perhaps Ghana, is socio-cultural. For this challenge to be overcome there's a need to liaise with religious and traditional leaders. The point that culture is still evolving needs to be put across to them. The benefits of female political participation should be explained to them in the context of evolving democracy and more progressive Islamic text interpretations. These benefits should be weighed against the benefits of long held cultural perceptions about women. The participation of women in politics should also be put into religious contexts they can relate with. If Islamic leaders in Tamale are convinced the increased political participation of women in politics will not incur God's wrath, their position on the women will begin to change, and society at large will come to understand that inclusive and equal political participation is significant to every democracy. Community based organizations (CBOs) should take a lead in this.

Secondly, strategic targeting should be done. Strategic targeting in this context means women with potential for leadership should be identified and groomed to enable them take up leadership roles. The argument often made against the calls for equal political representation for women is if the quality of leadership should be sacrificed just so women can have equal representation. If women

are identified and trained, this argument can be put to rest. An existing organization in Africa that does strategic targeting is the Moremi Initiative for Women's Leadership in Africa (Moremi Initiative for Women's Leadership in Africa, 2010). This initiative is worthy of emulation and can be implemented on a smaller scale by NGOs in Tamale and across Ghana.

Women need to be empowered. Historically, there has been a marginalization of women in several spheres of life. For this ill to be corrected, there is an urgent need to empower women. The empowerment should be all encompassing. It should be educational, economic, political and socio-cultural. It is only after this is done that there will be an increase in the participation of women in politics.

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APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRE

**TOPIC: PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICS IN MUSLIM COMMUNITIES: A
CASE STUDY OF THE TAMALE METROPOLIS**

QID:

Name of Interviewer

Dear Respondent,

This is a study being conducted by Shiraz Saajida, a Political Science student of the University of Ghana on the above topic. This is in Fulfillment of conditions for the award of a Master of Philosophy degree in Political Science. The survey seeks to find out more about the political participation of women in Muslim communities, specifically Tamale. The information being sought is purely for academic purposes. Any information provided will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. Your name is not in any way required. Please tick where necessary. Thank you for your participation.

Section A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

- 1. Sex** 1. Male [] 2. Female []
- 2. Age** 1. Under 20 [] 2. 20 – 29 [] 3. 30 – 39 [] 4. 40 – 49 [] 5. 50 – 59 () 6. 60
& above ()
- 3. Religion** 1. Muslim [] 2. Christian [] 3. Traditionalist []
- 4. Ethnicity** 1. Dagomba [] 2. Mamprusi [] 3. Gonja [] 4. Frafra [] 5. Dagarti []

5. Marital Status 1. Single [] 2. Married [] 3. Divorced 4. Widowed 5. Separated
6. Educational Status: 1. No formal education [] 2. Primary/JSS/Middle School [].
3. Secondary/O/A 'Level [] 4. Tertiary/University and above [] 5. Vocational and
Technical school [] 6. Other [] Please specify []
7. Occupation 1. Public sector [] Specify... 2. Private Sector... Specify
8. How long have you lived in this community? 1. 0-5 years [] 2. 6-15 years [] 3. 16-30
[] 4. 30 years & above.

SECTION B: SOCIETAL AND CULTURAL VALUES

9. How does your society regard women in relation to men? (tick the ones that apply)
 1. Women are subordinate to men []
 2. Men are leaders and women followers []
 3. Men are more intelligent than women
 4. Men are better leaders than women []
 5. None of the above [] Explain...
10. What type of occupation are women most suited for? (tick the ones that apply)
 1. Trading [] 2. Teaching [] 3. Nursing [] 4. Housewives []
 5. Catering [] 6. Politics [] 7. Engineering [] 8. Medicine [] 9. Other []Please Specify.....
11. Do you think women should be allowed to take part in decision-making in the community?

1. Yes [] 2. No [] Give reason for answer.....
.....
.....
.....

12. How should women participate in politics in the Tamale Metropolis?

1. Vote [] 2.Campaign for candidate's [] 3.Meet Political leaders to discuss public issues [] 4.Contribute financially to political campaigns [] 5.Attend political meeting's [] 6.Stand for political office [] 7.Join protest's [] 8. Speak out at community meeting's [] 9. Other [] Specify.....

SECTION C: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN (For women respondents)

13. Have you ever voted in any general election since 1992? 1. Yes [] 2. No []

14. If yes how many times have you voted? 1. Once [] 2.Two times [] 3.Three times []
4.Four times [] 5.Five times 6.Six times []

15. If no why? 1. Unqualified [] 2.Busy [] 4.Lack of interest [] 5. Other (Please specify).....
.....

16. Have you ever campaigned for a political candidate? 1. Yes [] 2. No []

17. If yes what was your motivation. 1. Belief in the candidate [] 2. Family member [] 3. Financial reward [] 4. Other [] Please specify.....

18. Have you ever contacted a political figure about a public issue? 1. Yes [] 2. No []

19. If yes please give details:
.....
.....
.....

20. Have you ever attended a community political meeting? 1. Yes [] 2. No []

21. If yes please give details:
.....
.....
.....

22. Have you ever spoken out at such meetings? 1. Yes [] 2.No []

23. If yes please give details:
.....
.....
.....

24. 21. Have you ever contributed financially to support a candidate? 1. Yes [] 2.No []

25. Do you attend campaign rallies before elections? 1. Yes [] 2. No []

26. If no why? 1. Rally grounds not safe [] 2.Busy [] 3. No interest [] 4. Other (please specify)
.....

27. In what other ways have you participated in politics in your community?

Please

specify.....
.....
.....

SECTION D: VIEWS ON THE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

28. Do you think women in the Tamale Metropolis participate adequately in politics? 1. Yes

2. No

29. If no, what reasons account for the low participation of women in politics in the Tamale metropolis? Select the ones that apply

1. Poverty 2.Socio-cultural factors . 3. Religious factors . 4. Illiteracy 5.Societal Stereotypes 6.Marital and Family Obligations 7.Lack of interest 8. Other Please specify.....

30. How do you think the level of female political participation in the Tamale Metropolis can be improved? Tick the ones that apply

31. 1. Societal re-orientation 2. Economic empowerment of women 3. Educational empowerment of women 4. It cannot be improved 5. Other Please specify.....

.....
.....

Thank you again for your time