

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
CENTER FOR SOCIAL POLICY STUDIES (CSPS)

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN GHANAIAN POLITICS: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE
OPPORTUNITIES AND LIMITATIONS

BY

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THIS THESIS/DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,
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DECLARATION

I declare that this Dissertation is the result of an original study conducted by me, under the supervision of Dr. Seidu Alidu of the Center for Social Policy Studies (CSPS) of the University of Ghana, Legon. References made to other people's work have been duly acknowledged. This dissertation has never been presented to any other academic institution in whole or part, for an award of any academic degree.

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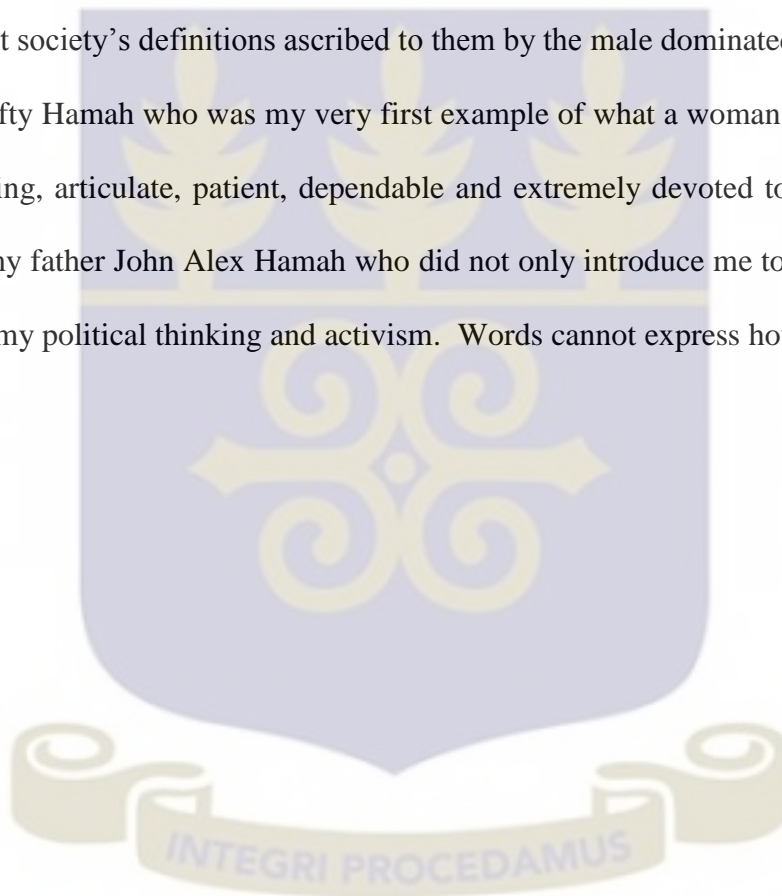
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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all women everywhere in the world. To the women who are famous for their celebrated contributions to the struggle of gender equality and those women who silently struggled along with them through activism and protest. To our poor sisters and mothers who work tirelessly every day under deplorable conditions and discrimination. It is also written in honor of all our mothers and grandmothers throughout history who struggled so defiantly and heroically to resist society's definitions ascribed to them by the male dominated world.

To my mother Gifty Hamah who was my very first example of what a woman should be: loving, strong, hardworking, articulate, patient, dependable and extremely devoted to her family. Last but not least, to my father John Alex Hamah who did not only introduce me to my spiritual path, but also inspired my political thinking and activism. Words cannot express how much I love you both.



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The writing of this dissertation has been one of the most important academic endeavours I have ever completed. Without the guidance, support and patience of the following people, this research would not have been completed. I am eternally grateful for all your help.

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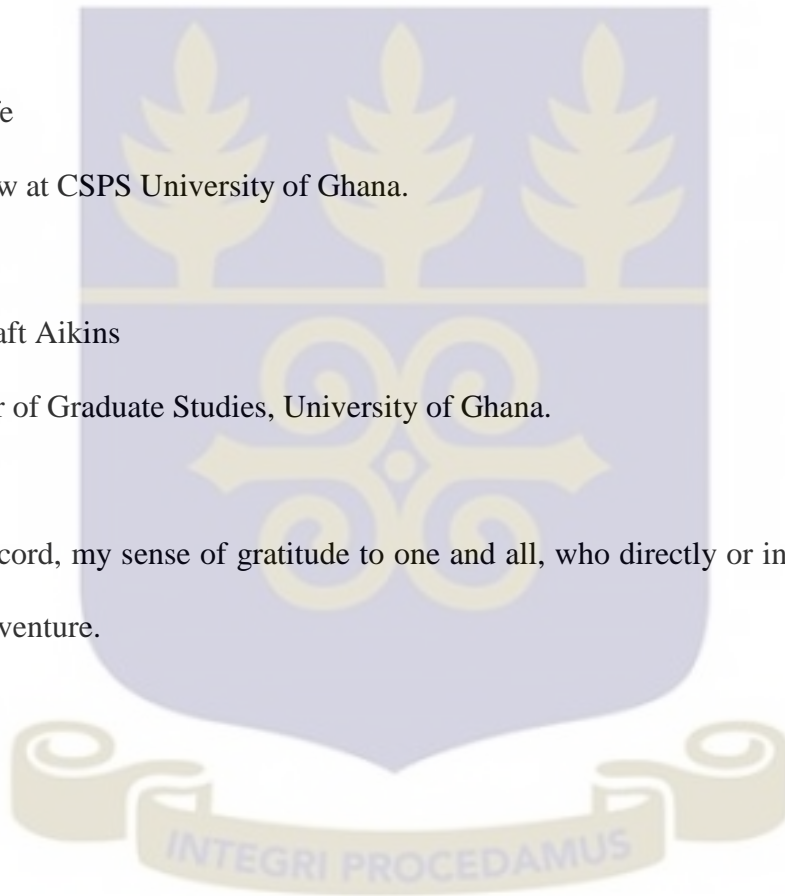
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I also place on record, my sense of gratitude to one and all, who directly or indirectly, have lent their hand in this venture.



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS



BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CPP	Convention People's Party
DWM	December Women's Movement
EC	Electoral Commission
FEGAWO	Federation of Ghanaian Women
GCPP	Great Consolidated Popular Party
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
IDEG	Institute for Democratic Governance
MMDAs	Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies
MP	Member of Parliament
NCCE	National Commission for Civic Education
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NDP	National Democratic Party
NEC	National Executive Committee
NFC	Non Formal Education
NPP	New Patriotic Party
PHC	Population and Housing Census
PNC	People's National Convention
SHS	Senior High School
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social sciences

- UFP United Front Party
UN United Nations
WILDAF Women in Law and Development African Foundation



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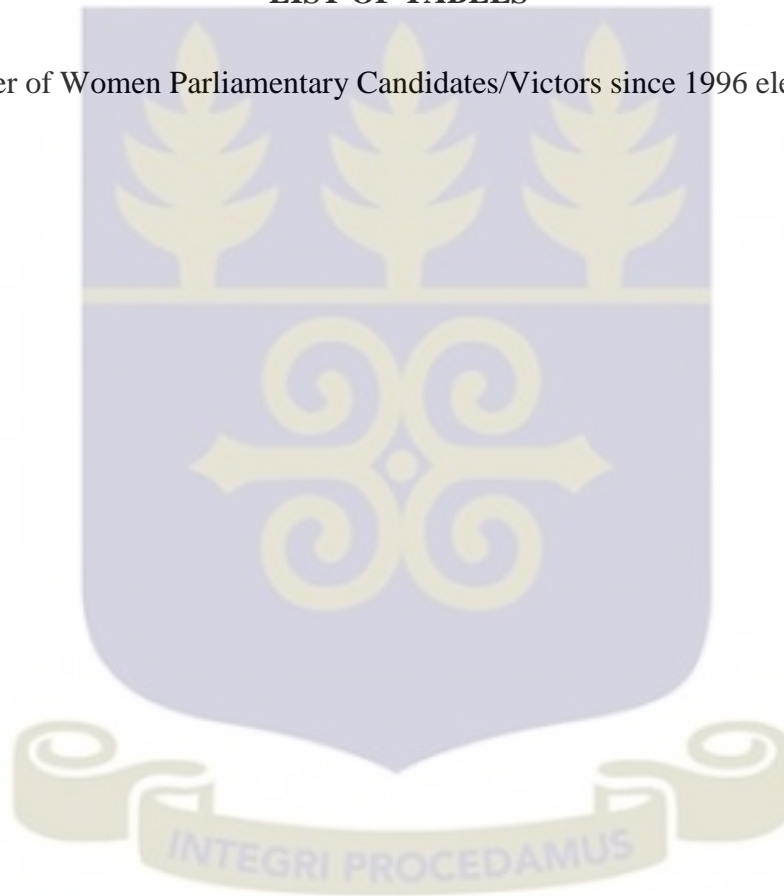
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ABSTRACT

The historical subordination of women especially in public life has been widely discussed and efforts are being made globally to reverse this trend. Ghana is not insulated from this global trend. Thus, this study selectively focused on examining women's participation in national politics in Ghana, an attempt to find out factors accounting for their low participation and the opportunities that exist to promote their effective involvement. The methodology was qualitative in design and involved interviews with women parliamentarians, ministers, council of state members, national executive members of political parties and heads of corporate institutions.

Apart from relying on primary data from these respondents, the study also used secondary data from available literature to reinforce the findings. This study found that despite the incessant discussions on women's underrepresentation in national politics and the global call to support women's increased participation, their numbers in national politics are still considerably low. In the national parliament for instance, the proportion of women since 1992 has not gone beyond eleven per cent although they constitute over fifty percent of the national population. The study realized that in part, factors such as male dominance in institutions of authority, systematic discrimination against females on the basis of age, public vilification and attacks on women's personalities, lack of commitment in implementing affirmative action promises as well as the increasing monetization in politics contribute to the low participation of women in politics.

These factors, however, are not insurmountable. It is a wakeup call on government, civil society, women groups and political parties to engineer the adoption of a national affirmation action policy which will have the endorsement of all political parties. Political parties should also abolish unfair and very high nomination fees for women. It is believed that the adoption of these

strategies including the establishment of a special fund to support women in politics will help to reverse the trend.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Contemporary debates in the global media landscape have been very much focused on achieving equality and equity for all citizens including women. Issues about women's rights for instance have progressively gained prominence in governmental policy discourses, civil society advocacies and academic literatures due to the low representation of women in political governance.

The growing wave of this consciousness towards women's participation in political governance across the world is anchored by legal and policy frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and the Beijing Platform of Action (1995). Karam (2010) asserted that the Beijing Platform for instance committed signatories to the Beijing declaration and plan of action which is embodied in a comprehensive set of recommendations for the global community to advance women's participation in political decision making process and increase women's representation in political power structures. However, in spite of the progressive global effort to advance the course of women's development, the scourge of gender discrimination and marginalization which is an unhealthy reality in most developing countries barracked women from full participation in society (Kurz & Johnson-Welch, 2000). Almost 20 years on, global statistics indicate that women account for less than 10 per cent of parliamentarians in 38 countries according to the UN Women Report, (2014).

According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), Ghanaian women constitute about 51.2 per cent of the national population. Yet these figures do not in any way reflect the power distribution between men and women especially in political governance. Yet, the contribution of women to the socio-economic advancement of African societies has long been acknowledged. The traditional African societies were devoid of stereotyping of roles against women as they performed the dual role of managing functions both in the family and community. Functions performed by women were in no means considered inferior to that performed by men. As stated by Clair (1994: 27), “there was a codependence and a balance that existed”. Women played very significant roles in every facet of the traditional African society such as imparting cultural, ethical and moral values into younger ones so as to maintain social cohesion.

Hafkin and Hanson (1976: 59-60) summed up their observation about the contributions of women as follows:

Women were treated with unparalleled respect because they were seen to be closer to the creator than men ever had the potential of being. This is because women themselves had the ability to create due to the fact that they were able to give birth. As creation of life, they were charged with the sacred responsibility of caring for the needs of the next generation, and because of this, they can be regarded as the originations of the idea that is now known as sustainable developments.

Equity in participation in the Ghanaian national political field is asymmetrical thereby limiting women’s involvement in the decision making process. Addressing the gender gap in politics especially at the national level requires critical assessment of opportunities and limitations that underpin women’s participation. A contextual analysis of the historical, structural, socio-cultural,

economic and the type of political system is relevant. This position was strengthened by Albright cited in Asante (2011:78) that: “every country deserves to have the best possible leader and this means women have to be given a chance to compete. If they are never allowed to compete in the electoral process then the countries are really robbing themselves of a great deal of talent”.

Elective politics is one area that has witnessed competitive women’s participation. Women’s representation in the Ghanaian Parliament has increased abysmally since 1996 where women constituted only 8 percent or occupied 16 seats out of a total of 200. Almost a decade on, out of 230 seats, women occupied 25 seats or 10.9 percent of the total parliamentarians (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2005). Further on, the 2012 general elections resulted in 30 women occupying seats from a total of 275 seats (10.9 percent). However, post genocide Rwanda has made a significant attempt in achieving almost gender parity with 49 percent of women parliamentarians (British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC], 2008). Sub Saharan African countries such as Mozambique and South Africa have one third of its parliamentarians being women as well as Swaziland where women hold one third of parliamentary seats in the upper house (Hassim & Meintjes, 2005). While political inclusion is necessary, Baden (1999) thought that the mere increase in women’s involvement in political governance does not necessarily mean they can advocate their interest. Rather, Baden supported equality and access in the participatory process which he considered would help to adequately address their concerns. While Baden (ibid.) was skeptical on the effects that mere inclusion of women can have he is also of the view that institutional reforms especially rules and culture surrounding politics as well as encouragement from political parties can serve as recipes for women’s effective political participation.

Perhaps, it was in the context of the latter that the New Patriotic Party sought to protect its women parliamentarians by pushing a policy to bar men from contesting in constituencies where its members of parliament are women. Unfortunately, this policy was immediately withdrawn after a stiff opposition by some concerned members of the party.

Foundation for International Relations and Dialogue Exterior (FRIDE), an international think tank and campaigner for Good Governance, (2009) posited that the dynamics of a political system has a huge impact on the extent of women's participation in politics. In their publication on women's political participation and influence in Sierra Leone, these institutions point out that more women were elected to Parliament in the aftermath of the first post-conflict national elections held in Sierra Leone in 2002. The reason attributed to this was because Sierra Leone had employed the proportional representation system contrary to the traditional majority system of elections held in 2007 which resulted in a significant drop in the number of women elected to Parliament (ibid.). The heterogeneity of women as a group is also relevant to the discourses as these differences of class, cultural background, ethnicity and educational differentials allure more insight into the discussions as well as critical for policy consideration. Politics is seen as a very machismo and a hostile terrain for women, a view that seem to be shared by both men and women.

According to the Ghana Women's Manifesto (2004:32),

Traditional prejudices, beliefs and perceptions, gender discrimination and low levels of literacy have contributed to the low level of women's participation in the policy-making process. There is also evidence of the lack of political will and commitment by

political parties and the executive arm of various governments to facilitate women's effective participation in politics and decision-making.

The Ghanaian women's right to vote was achieved right from the pre-colonial struggles for self-rule as women were actively involved in the struggle and participated in the electoral process which subsequently led to the historic leap of affirmative quota for women's representation in the first republican Parliament.

Allah-Mensah (2005) emphasized in the publication: *Women in Politics and Public Life in Ghana*, that there were ample evidence to substantiate the indispensable role women played in the prelude to independence and immediately after it. Further in the study, the enormous contributions of women such as Hanna Cudjoe, Letitia Quaye, Ama Nkrumah and Sophia Doku to the independent struggles were appreciated.

The post Kwame Nkrumah era witnessed turbulent political system characterize by military takeovers. The 1992 Constitution ushered in the fourth Republican Democracy clearly giving every citizen the opportunity to freely exercise their social, economic and political rights and this provision did not afford any limitation in respect of gender. However, despite the fact that Ghana has achieved universal suffrage for the past five decades as well as a sustainable democratic dispensation, inequalities in power relations still exist at the national level of political participation. These uneven power dynamics limit the gender influence in policies on allocation and distribution of national resources for development.

According to Baden (1999:7), to increase the participation of women in politics, it is necessary to encourage an interaction and dialogue between women both within and without the political

process so as to enable accountability. This study aims to assess opportunities and limitations that influence Ghanaian women participation in Politics.

1.2 Problem Statement

Historically, women's participation in the socio-political spheres in the traditional Ghanaian society is not unusual. This is premised on the matrilineal system of succession of some major tribes which gives the material based for the relative independence of women in the same compared to the patriarchal ethnic societies. The matrilineal tradition traces the lineage of a child from the maternal blood line as reiterated by Bleeker (1996) that under the Akan matrilineal tradition a person is believed to inherit their "flesh and blood" from the mother blood lineage.

According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, the Akan ethnic group constitute about 48 percent of the entire Ghanaian population and it is considered an archetypical matrilineal society. The theory of matriarchy as a primordial family structure system in old Africa is supported by Afrocentric scholars such as Clarke (1984), Van Sertima (1984), William and Finch (1984) whose writings assert that matriarchy gave the material basis for women's social and political power in ancient Africa.

However, despite the historical cultural disposition for women to engage in power structures, progressively, women have only gained marginal positions in the modern multi party democratic politics in Africa in general and Ghana specifically. The postcolonial Africa politics has been characterized by military take overs and states conflicts fuel by identity crisis and ethnic divisions as stated by Blanton et al (2001) and these phenomenon further heightened the gender complexities undermining women's participation in politics however the emergence of democracy beamed women's role in politics.

Enhancing women participation in the political process is necessary and fundamental to the sustainability of the democratic culture as spoken by Madeline Albright at the National Democratic Institute (2010:12),

If democracy is going to put down strong and healthy roots, it must profit from all the full and equitable participation of women in national and local leadership positions and in a full range of advocacy roles.

The commitment to strengthened women's participation in the Ghanaian democratic process has insufficiently been tabled as legitimate policy concern by successive governments. Ghana has ratified and endorsed series of commitment towards women's rights under the UN such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as the Millennium Development Goals. At the continental level Ghana has adopted both the African Charter Protocol on Women's Rights (2003) and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality (2003). The Article 17 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana prohibits gender discrimination. Furthermore, Ghana's commitments to bridge the asymmetrical gap between men and women in politics decision making process informed the 1998 Affirmative Action Policy which indicates a 40% quota of women's in all public political platforms. However prior to the above affirmative policy, as far back as 1960 during the First Republic under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah the Representation of the People's (Women Members) Bill was promulgated into law which afforded women the platform to compete in a democratic election across the 10 Regions of the country where 10 women were elected to be part of the National Legislative Assembly which then constituted only men as noted by WiLDAF, (2010). Ranging debates affirms that the Representation of the People's Bill is the

most successful attempt by government to increase the participation of women in parliament and political decision making structures (WiLDAF, 2010).

Affirmative quotas for women have since been topical on the agenda of political parties the highlight was during the 2008 general elections. The 2008 campaign manifesto of the NDC promised 40% of women representation in all government political public positions upon assumption of power; however this could not be achieved. Noticeably under the leadership of Prof. Mills, 29 men were appointed into the various ministries between the period of 2009 to 2012 while only 6 women were appointed for the same period. Similarly only Ama Benyiwa-Doe represented a feminine slot in the Regional Ministers appointment during the same period and this is obviously not representation of the promised 40% quotas to women. Although the gender composition of the sixth Parliament of the fourth Republic is an improvement from the previous Parliaments, only 21.8% representing 29 seats were occupied by women.

The report from the Roundtable Conference of the Pathways to Women's Empowerment (2009), which was held in Malawi, has thrown some lights on the undercurrents that account for the low representation of women in politics citing deep-rooted socio-cultural factors, demographic, education, economic factors as well as character assassination, violence and sexualisation of women in politics among others. This situation is not alien to Ghana such as the recent public outcry towards the affirmative policy introduced by the National Executive committee (NEC) of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) to allow only women to contest incumbent female Members of Parliament in the recent parliamentary primaries prior to the 2016 general elections. The affirmation action was eventually withdrawn.

Achieving equity and equality in female representation is still an uphill task and these have arisen the curiosity of scholars to investigate and understand the reasons why despite the provisions of constitutional support to every citizens to freely engage in politics women are still under represented at the national level. The research therefore would interrogate the opportunities available to enable women to participate at the national levels of Ghanaian politics as well as analyze the factors that undermined their participation at these levels.

1.2.1 Research Questions

Based on the problems identified above, the study seeks to answer the following questions;

- a) What factors account for the low participation of women in politics at the national level?
- b) What can be done to increase the participation of women in the participation of politics at the national level?

1.2.2 Research Objectives

The general objective of this research study is to explore and analyze factors that influence women's participation in the Ghanaian political process.

Specifically, the study aims to:

- a) Find out the factors that account for low participation of women in politics
- b) Examine the trend of women's participation in national politics
- c) Examine opportunities available to promote women's participation in national politics

1.3 Justification of the Study

The research sought to assess the opportunities and limitations that underpin the participation of Ghanaian women in politics at the national level. The study also examined factors that account

for the low women's political representation at the national level. There has been different policy frameworks aimed at addressing the low representation of women in politics. These policies have come in the form of affirmative action, elicited momentum at the initial stages but died down in the process. Research findings like this will whip up public momentum and provide the basis to hold policy owners like the political parties and government to their policy promises. It is hoped that the research findings will add to existing literature on the Ghanaian women's participation in the super-structure level of politics. The outcome of this study will be a relevant academic material for policy makers, students of research and civil society organizations. Also women politicians will find the findings useful as it will inform them about the factors that affect their participation in national politics.

1.4 Limitations and Scope of the Study

The research study ideally should have drawn respondent across the entire country but due to limitation of time and money the study was conducted in Accra, the capital of Ghana. Accra was chosen as the location for the study because it holds the major organs of Government including the Flagstaff House (Office of the President), the Parliament House, the Ministries, Agencies and Departments of Government. Similarly, the study ideally should have covered all females who are participating in National level of politics as well as all females who wish to participate in politics but are not interested in participating at the National level. A longitudinal study would have been more appropriate, however, the study is limited with time because it is an academic work with a specific deadline for submission. Although the discussion of findings would have been enriched by analyzing trends of women representation in government boards, Council of State and Ministerial positions over time, it did not adequately cover those areas due to the limited nature of the research time.

1.5 Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one is an introduction to the main dissertation and it consists of the background of the study, problem statement and the objectives of the study. Chapter Two follows with a review of a related literature. Chapter Three discusses the various methods of the study while Chapter Four analyses the data based on the main themes. Chapter Five then concludes with policy recommendations.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter reviews the literature on women's participation in politics, particularly those in the sub-Saharan Africa. It begins with the discussions on the theoretical framework. Theory provides explanation about some characteristics of human behaviour and therefore allows for predictability. This is followed by discussions on the definitions and explanations of the various concepts and the empirical literature.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

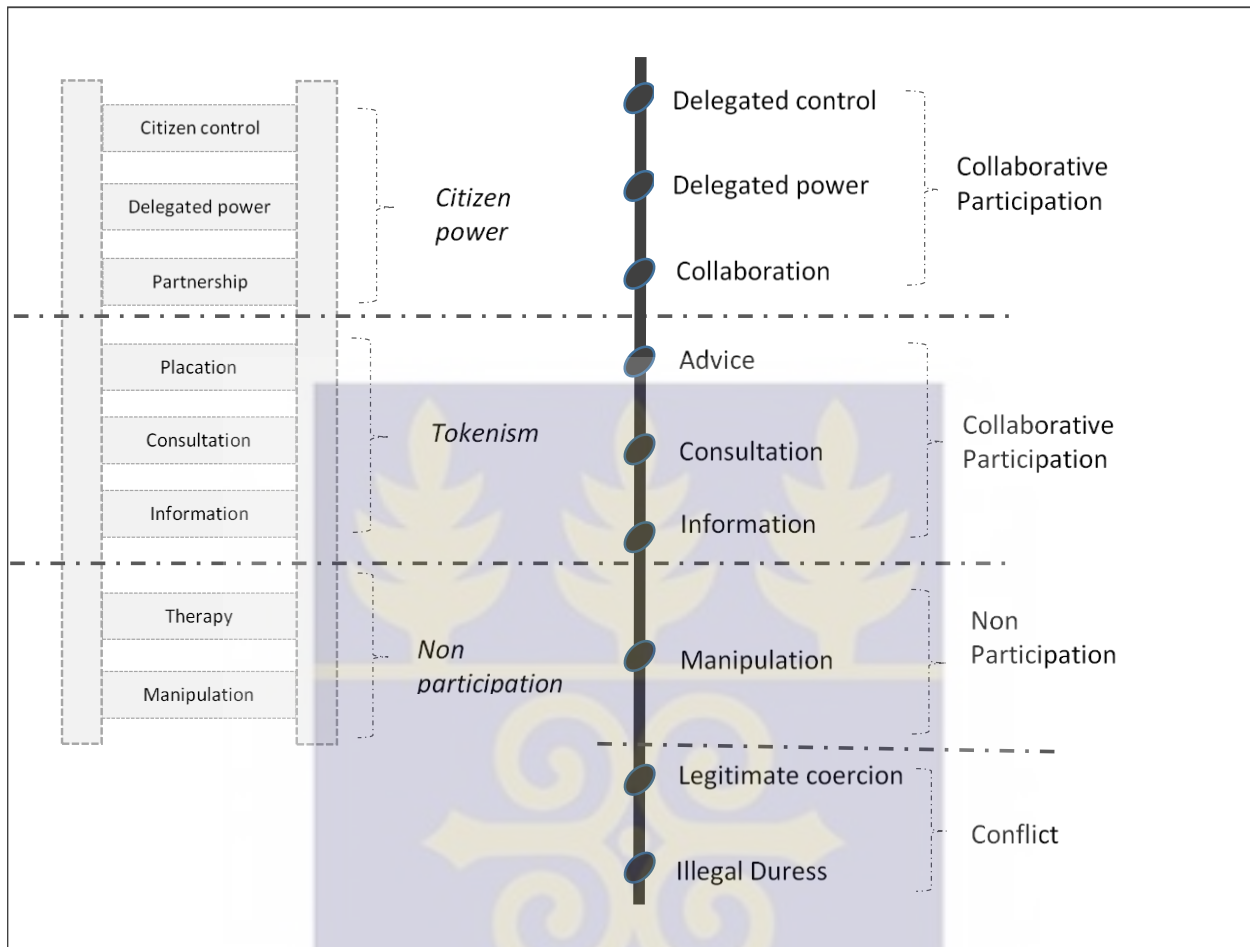
The Theory of Participation developed by Arnstein (1969) and the Glass Ceiling theory developed by Lorber (1994) form the basis for this study. Arnstein's work advances a typology of eight stages of participation which reflects different degree of citizen's power from a relatively non participatory stage to a final stage of citizen control. Arnstein illustrated the various stages of participation with a eight tier pattern, emphasizing that the different stages of participation is a reflective measure of the extent of power, influence and control by citizens. The first stages of participation in a chronological order, Manipulation and Therapy is regarded as "nonparticipation", reiterated by Arnstein to imply a false substitute for real participation as citizens' involvement in decision making process is negligible, consequential of top down power dynamics between the power holders and the citizens.

Further on, the levels of Informing, Consultation and Placation affords citizens a “tokenistic” participation whereby their interests are promised but does not results in any guarantee of it being addressed. Uneven power relations imply the underdog-citizens lack the ability to command response to their interest from the prevailing order. An increasing degree of participation by the underdog citizens is represented further up the ladder from the stage of Partnership through to delegated Power to the final stage which is citizen’s control. The level of Partnerships empower the underdog citizens to negotiate with the prevailing power holders whereas the degree of participation at the stage of Delegated Power and Citizens Control affords the underdogs citizens a majority stake within the power circles limiting the hitherto authoritative power of the former.

Evidently, although Arnstein’s participatory framework appears too simplistic nonetheless it is relevant to this study as it could explain the dynamics of women participation in Ghanaian Politics at the national level. Inferring from the theory, the participation of women in Ghanaian politics at the national level can at best be described as “tokenistic”, in the sense that only few women participate in politics at the national level relative to men, also their extent of influence to ensure any real meaningful changes in decision making at executive and legislative arms of government is overtly inconsequential.

Using Arnstein’s participation theory, Ghanaian women engaging in national level politics operate at the stages of Informing, Consultation and Placation; characterized by low female representation, low influence in decision making process at the national level and low outcomes in terms of articulating their interest.

Figure 2.1: Demonstration of Arnstein’s participatory framework



Source: Sherry Arnstein Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969), Prieto-Martin & Ramirez-Alujas Participation Schemas (2013)

Underpinning the uneven power dynamics of political participation at the national level is described by some scholars as the evidence of glass ceiling effects. According to Lorber (1994), the Glass Ceiling theory explains the many structural, socio-cultural, gender related inequalities that inhibits the advancement of women into high power positions.

The Glass Ceiling theory further underscores the reasons why women’s participation is marginalized within the power circles relative to men. Although Ghanaian women have achieved relative success in altering their socio-economic and political positions, the historical

marginalization and discrimination of women especially in the developing countries including Ghana cannot be overemphasized (Kurz & Johnson-Welch, 2000). The Glass Ceiling theory adequately supports Arnstein's participation theory to analyze the limitation of Ghanaian women's progression in the political process to the level of partnerships, delegated power and citizen control at which stage women would attain an equal or a dominant stake in the power circles. These limitations are described as 'those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization into management level positions' (Martin, 1991, apud. Lorber, 1994:227). The Ghanaian woman is confronted with multiple discriminations, marginalization and even in some cases isolation, sustained by the cultural fabric of the society.

The contemporary fields of politics and leadership circles is no different despite the international effort to ensure equity of representation of genders in decision making spheres, women are still faced with discrimination such as stereotypes like incompetence and using sexuality to ascend to the positions of power. According to Gidengil (2003) the media is very significant in defining ethics and stereotypes of women political candidates.

The uneven participation of women in politics at the national level can be attributed to the many invincible barriers that hinder their accession to the high echelons of power despite the provisions of legal and constitutional frameworks that give every citizen the rights to engage in politics. These Glass Ceiling barriers as suggested by Leya (2010) as socio-economic, cultural and structural, strangulates women's effective participation beyond the level of "tokenism". Therefore this study attempts to unearth the opportunities and limitations that underpin women's participation in politics at the national level.

In summary, it is important to note that, the Participation and Glass Ceiling theories reinforce the point that in order to enhance the participation of women in Ghanaian politics beyond the level of Informing, Consultation and Placation characterized by tokenism, invincible barriers of gender based discriminations must be removed.

2.3 Concepts of the Study

This section provides an overview of key concepts used in the study. The operational definitions of these concepts are important because they help to eliminate potential confusion about the exact meaning of terms. Jakobsen, Hels and Mchaughlin (2004) argued that the lack of common understanding of concepts is a key barrier because research outcomes and approaches cannot be compared. In other words, the same research cannot be replicated if there is lack of common understanding in the use of terminologies. Three key terms which are repeatedly mentioned throughout this study are operationalized as follows:

Participation: Is a process where citizens are actively involved in expressing their views on issues of governance and development. Participation here goes beyond merely including citizens in governance but giving them the power and authority to influence decisions that affect their lives.

Politics: The activities associated with governing, with obtaining legislative or executive power. This includes taking part in political party campaigns, seeking for election or being associated with an organization that seeks to promote governance by holding government accountable through policy engagement, demonstrations and processions.

Inequality: Unequal power relations between men and women where the latter is under represented in political governance at both national and local levels.

2.3.1 Women's Political Participation

Participation is a broad term but often used widely within the context of development, where people are expected to have influence and take joint decisions associated with every phase of their development. According to the African Development Foundation (ADF), a non-governmental organisation, development projects are most likely to succeed when there is active involvement and commitment of people who are affected by and have a vested interest in the activity to be pursued. In other words, traditional development approaches often failed because interventions relied on prescriptions without the active participation of the affected people. The AFD proceeds to argue that when all of the control and authority is in the hands of a donor, whether government or institution, the recipients are disempowered, making development efforts uneven, inequitable, and restricted to those who control the resources.

The reference to participatory development is to help shed light on the importance of participation but the focus of this study is on political participation which is even older than the generic concept of participatory development. According to Binder (1976) though the concept of political participation largely gained currency through the works of Verba and Nie around 1972, its relevance for democratic theory are not of recent vintage. Binder (*ibid.*) points out that even before researchers began to highlight political participation, it was a focal point in the evaluation of democratic claims of liberal regimes as well as embedded in attempts to formulate a non-Marxist theory of political democracy.

In Binder's view, despite the fact that political participation has been broadened to include other levels of participation aside voting, almost every activity has some resemblance to voting. The definitions offered by Verba et al. (1978) as well as Kaase and Marsch (1979) support Binders's

assertion. For instance, Verba et al (1978:1) refer to political participation as legal acts of private citizens that are directly aimed at influencing the selection of government personnel. Although acts of citizens such as demonstrations, involvement in civil society campaigns and petitions collectively have the power of influencing the selection of governmental personnel, the fact that Verba et al. (ibid.) refer to selection as the end result means that voting is a central theme in their definition.

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

In the view of House-Miamba (1990), women's participation in politics is not only in the exclusive domain of elections. According to her, their invincibility in Ghana can be documented at all levels of government. The levels of government here refer to the executive with all its decentralized departments and agencies, the legislature as well as the judiciary. House-Miamba gives two reasons for women's political underrepresentation in Ghana. First, she argues that politics is viewed by most people including women as a typical male sphere of action where, women are both unwelcome and ineffective. Secondly, she sees most politically active women to be members of the elite group who are wealthier and better educated. This elitism in her view pushed women to pursue a political agenda that reflects their class rather than their gender interests.

Types of Political Participation

According to the United Nations guide on Women and Elections (2005), political participation involves much more than just voting. Political participation means having the freedom to speak out, assemble and associate; the ability to take part in the conduct of public affairs; and the opportunity to register as a candidate, to campaign, to be elected and to hold office at all levels of government. The position of the UN is expressed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Article 25 of the ICCPR specifically states that:

Every citizen shall have the right and opportunity to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives; to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors.

Shamatha (2014:196) held a similar view where he referred to political participation as simply the way through which the citizens of a country take part in the electoral as well as in policy making process. Shamatha further explains that political participation comprises:

Those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly in the formation of public policy. These activities include casting votes, seeking information, holding discussions, attending meetings, staging strikes and demonstrations, communicating with the legislators and the like.

Although it is recognized in both national and international legislative frameworks that men and women have equal rights to political participation, the United Nations say women find it difficult to exercise this right and therefore special attention should be accorded them to realize this right.

To contextualize the challenges women face in political participation, the different levels of political participation as highlighted by the UN will be examined.

2.3.3 Participation in Political Party Activities

In multiparty democracies, the role of political parties is that of a significant one. They have great influence on governance especially when they are voted into power. Mainwaring (1999) advanced a point that citizens may be dissatisfied with political parties and their actions in some countries, the parties nonetheless remain the key agents of representation and perhaps, the only actors with access to elected positions in democratic politics. While in government with legitimacy bestowed on them by the citizens, they have access to state power and can affect policy processes and implementation. In the context of Ghana where there is not a national development plan, political party manifestoes become the primary short to medium term development frameworks which are translated into policies for national development efforts (Allah-Mensah, 2001).

The power and influence of political parties in catalyzing women's participation in politics or political governance is succinctly advanced by Allah-Mensah (2001). According to her, affiliation to political parties can increase a woman's chances of winning elections because it has been argued that women candidates in the tickets of ruling parties have better chances than those in opposition parties but more importantly, their chances are far better than those without party affiliation. In other words, party affiliation helps to identify women with the major players in the political game who control large following.

Affiliation to political parties can be done in different forms. Women can register to obtain membership identity status with political parties but the chances on winning an election or

gaining political appointment with just membership status is insignificant. Members are expected to play active roles such as participating in political discourses, party electioneering campaigns, involvement in processions or demonstrations amongst others. But most importantly, women can participate in the governance of political parties by contesting for party executive roles. Allah-Mensah (2001) noted that political parties in Ghana have created women wings in their governance structures to get more women to participate in politics or political party activities. However, he adds, the intention of political parties for creating these executive positions for women is not about encouraging participation of women but to avoid being labeled as gender insensitive. In the view of Allah-Mensah, this is a tokenistic approach being adopted by political parties and that single act of creating women wings neither makes them gender sensitive nor gender friendly. Chigudu and Tchigwa (1995:2-4) revealed a more self-centered agenda of political parties in creating these wings. In their view, the creation of women's wings is just "a way of legitimizing the existence of political parties and serve as the party's leadership acknowledgement of the need to secure electoral victories by capturing women's votes".

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

2.3.4 Participation in Electoral Processes

The widely acknowledged form of political participation is perhaps participation in electoral processes. The participation of women in electoral process will be examined in two ways: their participation in voting and participation to be elected. The former is a fundamental right of citizens in modern democratic practice where citizens are granted equal rights by their Constitutions and/or Constitutional Instruments. Article 42 of the Ghanaian Constitution (1992) for instance specifically states that “every citizen of Ghana of eighteen years of age or above and of sound mind has the right to vote and is entitled to be registered as a voter for the purposes of public elections and referenda”. The only conditions for exclusion in this article are age and the state of mind of citizens which cut across both sexes.

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

After Nkrumah’s government, it has been observed that no deliberate attempt has been made by successive governments to improve women’s role in politics. Out of 140 members of Parliament who were elected in the 1969 election, only 1 member was a woman. This number increased to 2

through a bye election in 1970 (Nkansah, 2009). Although the number of women representatives improved in the 1979 elections, the proportion was still less than 5 percent. Out of 140 parliamentarians elected, only 5 were women.

Since 1992, women's representation in Ghana's Parliament has always been less than 12 percent. Meanwhile, Allah-Mensah (2005) argued that the presence of significant number of women in parliament can help improve the quality of debate and policymaking. History has shown that when given the chance, women can demonstrate their might. In traditional Africa for instance, Afisi (2010) attested to the fact that women played significant roles in the economic, social, educational and political development of societies. Afisi (ibid.) argued that in traditional Africa, there was nothing like gender inequality; rather, there were gender complementarities because both men and women played complimentary roles towards the development of society.

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

As Allah-Mensah observed, although the actual number of women who eventually become victors in elections over the years has seen minimal increases, there is hope because the number of women who express interest in both local and national elections keeps increasing election after election. This is evident in records of past parliamentary elections as illustrated by Table

3.1. In 1996 for example, 53 women contested for parliamentary elections in the 200 seats parliament. This number increased to 95 in 2000; 104 in 2004; 103 in 2008 and 133 in 2012 (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Number of Women Parliamentary Candidates/Victors since 1996 elections

<i>Year</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2012</i>
Total parliamentary seats	200	200	230	230	275
Women contestants	53	95	104	103	133
Women victors	18	19	25	20	30
% of women victors out of total	9%	10%	11%	9%	11%

Source: Adopted from different sources (Allah-Mensah, 2000; www.ghanaweb.com)

Women's rate of success in local government elections is quite dismal in Ghana as it is with national level elections. Beall (2007) argued that while local government is usually seen as easier for women to enter, as it is closer and more relevant than national politics, the fact is that cultural norms against women's participation are often strongest at local level and therefore women entering local politics can face a big backlash.

In 2010 local government elections in Ghana, 1,376 women contested to be elected to the District, Municipal and Metropolitan Assemblies. Out of this number, only 412, an equivalent of 30 percent was elected. Buadi (1999) made a point that the level of success in the local level election shows that women are unable to contest with men on such uneven playing field.

There is a mismatch between the efforts made to scale up the participation of women in politics against the number of women who actually gain the mandate to participate on a level that they can influence policy and governance. Different groups have been formed to help promote equal rights and opportunities for woman. In 1982, the Federation of Ghanaian Women (FEGAWO) was inaugurated. This was followed by the formation of the 31st December Women's Movement (DWM) in May 1982. According to Deku (2005), the emergence of these groups and/or movements was significant milestones for Ghanaian women. Deku supported his claim by arguing that women who had some political experience and contested in the district level elections in 1988 and subsequently in the national elections in 1992 were in one way or another connected to the DWM. Even more evident was the fact that majority of the women parliamentarians were on the side of the NDC because the DWM had some links to the NDC (ibid.).

2.3.5 Participation in other functions of Government

Ghana operates a multiparty constitutional democracy founded on elections by universal adult suffrage, that is, one man one vote principle for citizens aged 18 years and above. The constitution provides for three arms of government comprising the Executive, Legislature, and the Judiciary. The opportunities and challenges for women's participation in these three arms of government will be discussed. Also, women's representation in statutory institutions and boards as well as the local government and customary levels will be examined.

2.3.6 The Executive Arm of Government

The executive arm of government is made of the President, the vice President and appointed ministers of state. The president receives advice from the Council of State which is made of

appointed members and elected representatives from the ten regions of Ghana. The authority of the President is so enormous that he could change the proportion of women representation in political governance through direct appointments.

Article 70 clauses 1 and 2 confer on the President authority to appoint heads of statutory institutions such as the Human Rights and Administrative Justice and the deputies, the Auditor General, the District Assembly Common Fund Administrator, the Chairman and other members of the Public Service Commission, the Lands Commission, governing bodies of Public Corporations, National Council for Higher Education, Chairman and deputies of the Electoral Commission as well as other office holders.

Also, the President has the authority to appoint all ministers of state and their deputies with the approval of Parliament where majority shall come from members of Parliament. It is important to note that the executive powers of the President to make appointments is not only limited to the Executive Arm of Government. The powers of the President also extend to the appointment of the Speaker of Parliament, the Majority Leader and minister of government business in Parliament as well as the appointment of the Chief Justice and Justices of the Supreme Court of Ghana.

At the local government level, the President appoints all Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives and some members of the Assemblies. Looking at these enormous powers of the President to appoint, it is arguably clear that gender parity can be achieved if the executive President of Ghana is committed to seeing that happen. Although women make up about 51 percent of the entire population of Ghana, their numerical strength is not reflected in any of the appointments outlined above. Political parties have acknowledged this fact in their manifestoes

by promising to take steps in increasing women representation in government. The reality is that, women are still under represented.

In the 2012 manifesto of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the party made an observation that women occupied less than 10 percent in public office and about 8 percent in Parliament against their national population of about 51 percent (Population and Housing Census [PHC], 2010). This insignificant proportion was a source of worry to the extent that the NPP promised to introduce programs to encourage women and bring women into mainstream of economic and political activities. While outlining the party's plan for the future, the NPP prides itself for creating the Ministry of Women Affairs and appointing a woman as first minister of state in charge of the ministry (2012 Manifesto). But the question is: how do these acts of tokenism constitute serious efforts toward achieving gender equality?

Like the NPP, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) also captured an elaborate plan towards increasing women representation in their 2012 manifesto. Amongst the commitments is to achieve 40 percent women's representation in all public appointments and at the Party's Conferences and Congresses. Key strategies outlined by the NDC manifesto was to establish a special fund to support the participation of women in national and district level elections, as well as take steps to scale up the number of women Presidential appointees in the MMDAs. To realize the latter, the NDC promised to amend the Local Government Act 1993, Act 462 to reserve 40% of the President's appointees to the MMDAs to women. Of importance to the NDC in the manifesto was also to consider sustained public sensitization and advocacy with the aim of reforming outmoded socio-cultural practices, beliefs and perception that promote gender discrimination. Clearly, this is an admission that the level of women representation in public

political life is dismal. Allah-Mensah (2005:17) blamed successive coup d'états since 1966 for low representation of women. In his view, the overthrow of legitimately elected governments “pulled down with it, the rare opportunity for women to participate in political and public office”.

Allah-Mensah's (2001) argument is not far being the truth because women were rarely appointed by the military governments into any position. Moreover, when Ghana returned to constitutional rule in 1992, there has been noticeable attempt to address the imbalance in gender presentation in politics. Even before the 2012 campaign manifesto of the NDC, in 1998, the NDC government adopted the programmes of Affirmative Action for Women which made a commitment to forty percent women's representation in executive positions and at all levels of government. Deku (2005) noted that ‘A women's Desk was also established in the Presidency as part of the efforts to demonstrate how committed the NDC government was to women issues.

In 1998, cabinet passed an Affirmative Action Policy which sought to establish a 40% quota for women's representation on all government boards, commissions, committees and other official bodies, including the cabinet and Council of State – the highest advisory body to the President. However, implementation of this Affirmative Action Policy has not been effective. According to Hayford and Awori, (2008) cited in Abdul-Gafaru, (2009: 6-7), while women make up 51 percent of the population, they accounted for 16 percent of cabinet positions, 15% Chief Directors in the Civil Service, 8% ambassadorial positions, and 12% of the Council of State.

Currently, out of the 23 ministers of state in John Mahama's government, only 7, an equivalent of 30 percent are women. The fund to support the participation of women is yet to be established

after three years in government. The question that begs for answers is: how difficult is it that women's inclusion in political governance does not receive the needed commitments it deserves? The opportunity to increase women's representation in political governance is not farfetched. The political parties that eventually form governments are not unaware of the institutionalized gap between men and women in terms of participation in political activities. Their manifestos, which literally serve as social contracts with the electorates contain promises that can improve the proportion of women in governance. While government policy is not entirely dependent on political party manifestos, a lot of government policies are mostly derived from the manifestos. Thus, citizens, women groups, opposition parties, and civil society groups can hold political parties accountable for promises made in their manifestos. This way, they will be compelled by pressure from these groups to honour their promises of scaling women's participation in governance.

2.3.7 Increasing Women Contestants

It is believed that as many women as are encouraged to contest elections, the likelihood that more women will be elected. But Cusack et al. (2005) cited in Tsikata (2009) held the view that the number of women contestants in an election does not necessarily lead to an increase in those who are elected. This assertion was examined by Tsikata (ibid.) using secondary data from district level elections in Ghana. In the analysis, Tsikata observed that although the number of women contestants in the district level elections has been rising since 1998, the proportion of women who eventually win are disappointing. For example, in 1998, 547 women contested in the district level elections. This number, which represented 4 percent of the total contestants increased to 7.4 percent in 2002 and then to 9.6 percent in 2006. Meanwhile, the percentage of

women who won these elections has been declining. From 35.8 percent in 1998, it dropped to 35.3 percent in 2002 and subsequently to 26.98 percent in 2006.

2.3.8 Gender Inequality

Gender inequality arises when males and females do not have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities based on their biological makeup. Meissner cited in Tsikata (2009) argued that this inequality leads to discrimination and social injustice. Most often, gender equality is misconstrued to mean women's issue but it addresses the concerns of both men and women. Gender equality ensures that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration. This principle of non-discrimination on the basis of sex is captured in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as in the 1979 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights specifically proclaims that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, including distinction based on sex". This is reaffirmed in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979:1) as follows:

... discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity, is an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hampers the growth of the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity.

According to Eide (1995) ‘in principle everyone is a beneficiary of rights’ but in practice some groups are more vulnerable to human rights abuse than others. To address the vulnerability of certain groups, like women, one sometimes calls for affirmative action. Although various legal frameworks provide for equal rights and opportunities, women are underrepresented in political governance because of cultural stereotypes, lack of financial resources, political party restrictions, and sometimes male dominated power structures. This therefore requires deliberate policy frameworks like affirmative action as suggested by Eide (ibid.) to promote the participation of women.

Tsikata (2009) pointed out that very few countries around the world have equitable representation of women and men in decision making positions. Ghana is certainly not part of these few countries. First, out of the 275 seat parliament, women occupy only 30 seats representing 11 percent. Also, at the executive level, there are only 7 women (30 percent) who are ministers of state out of a total of 23. Sendukas (2010) argues that many countries that fail to elect a large proportion of women to political office, there are notably higher proportions of women in the appointed executive posts. This is not the case in Ghana since males dominate the executive appointments. The situation is compounded by the Constitutional requirement that majority of ministers shall be appointed from Parliament. Obviously, women are the most disadvantaged in these executive appointments because their representation in Parliament is abysmally low. Meanwhile, the contribution of women in the economic, social, political and educational development of the continent of Africa is a recognized fact (Allah-Mensah, 2005). Before colonialism, Allah-Mensah argues that gender inequality was not an issue for discourse because both men and women had their traditional roles to play in the family as well as in the larger society. These roles were respected and considered important regardless of whether a

woman or a man performed it. Thus, the phenomenon of gender inequality is the legacy of colonialism.

In the views of O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers (1995), African women had varied political positions with some commanding extensive authority than others. But their political positions were weakened with the advent of colonialism. To them, the existing gender inequality is a result of the imposition of legal and cultural apparatus by the colonialist and this undermined women's traditional bases of power thereby subordinating them both politically and economically (ibid.)

Using the educational system as an example, Konde (1992) explains how the colonial administration succeeded in widening the gender gap between men and women. From Konde's account, when education was introduced to the colonies, girls were excused because of the interest of the colonial administration in training and equipping young men to be prepared in the art of governance and statesmanship. Eventually when the girl child was allowed access to education, they were more likely to pursue courses like home economics that related to homemaking than courses that introduced them to the art of governance and politics.

Manu (1991) and Tsikata (1999) observed that the structure of the educational system for both men and women highlighted the gender discrimination against women. Menu (ibid.) argues that the course structure of the educational system for women underscored feminine skills like needlework, crocheting and cooking which aimed at producing a human resource pool of "better wives". It follows that once women did not have the requisite training they could not occupy important positions in the political and public spheres. Supporting the above assertion, Allah-Mensah mentions that women were visibly missing in the process of constitution making in Ghana since the initial efforts in 1916. While this was considered a process of constructing a

political consensus around constitutionalism where the latter was viewed as the art of providing a system of effective restraints on the existence of governmental power, women's participation was hardly noticed.

This was peculiar to women alone because other social groups were represented. For example, Allah-Mensah recounts that from 1916, there were two chiefs and three educated Ghanaians in a twenty-one member legislative council. According to him, this qualification based representation continued throughout the colonial period and that meant women were systematically and formally excluded because of the gendered educational system and the patriarchal traditional ruling system.

2.4 Empirical Literature

Somehow, there is always a point where theory and empirical fact agree or disagree. While theory provides the foundation upon which a concept is built, empirical studies give evidence based on experience, experimentation or observation. Though empirical studies do not give a formal proof of a fact, it proves the relevancy of theory by working in a real world environment. Having reviewed the theoretical ideologies on women's participation, it is important that this study examines the empirical findings on the state of women participation in political governance.

2.4.1 Education and Women's Political Participation

A lot of researchers have placed emphasis on education as a precursor to one's success in society. Whereas education may not be the only determinant of success, it empowers one with the capacity to fully engage or participate in any sector of society. Acknowledging that it is

unlikely for the full range of gender issues to be addressed without women in prominent positions such as national legislatures, local government and major economic activities, McLendon and Eddings (2002) argue that there is evidence to confirm that women's education plays paramount importance to enhancing their participation in politics and economic activities. A study conducted by Ahmed (2000) on the impact of Non Formal Education (NFE) among women from the village of Srefultoli, Bangladesh found that the NFE program helped to empower women leading to their visibility in political and economic activities. Using a social mapping methodology to pattern these women's perspectives, the study concluded that education gives women a voice against social and political injustice because it enhances their empowerment both in the family and societal affairs. In Ahmed's findings, education increases women's understanding and awareness of the situation in which they live, and their cognitive and psychological realm of empowerment. This supports Mulwa's (1999) argument that there will be increased women's political participation when there is gender equity and equality in education.

In another study by Bishaw (2014) to examine the impacts of education on women's political and economic activities, similar findings were found. Bishaw compared women's varied educational backgrounds using One Way ANOVA to determine impact of education on participation in leadership, associations and governance as well as the benefits they secured as a result of their participation. Analysis of the study found that the mean score of the variables was considerably significant at $P < .001$. In other words, women with better educational backgrounds had the perception that they have contributed to ensure good governance in the society. Taking into consideration self-initiated projects and projects initiated by other organizations, it was realized that women with primary and secondary education participated in self-initiated projects

like local textile, tea cafes, and horticulture. For projects initiated by non-government organizations such as Water Conservation, Soil Conservation and Other Natural Resource Conservations, there were women participants with primary and secondary education compared to illiterate women.

By these empirical observations, women are more likely to enhance their political participation with increased level of education. As already alluded to, education may be a precursor to women's political participation, but scholars like Godwin (2013) argue that despite the level of education, the dominance of male patriarchy will subordinate women's efforts towards political participation. In the Population Data analytical report by the Ghana Statistical Services (2005), male dominance has been clearly acknowledged. The GSS stated as follows:

Male-dominance is a key aspect of the Ghanaian social system and the woman's role and status are recognizably inferior to those of the man in almost all aspects of social, political and economic life. Custom, law and even religion have been used to rationalize and perpetuate these differential roles to the extent that women themselves seem to have accepted and internalized them.

2.4.2 Male Patriarchy and Women's Political Participation

In trying to understand the need for women's participation in local governance in Nigeria, Godwin (2013:65) analyzed studies on women's participation and came to the conclusion that "marginalization of women in local governance is nothing but an elongation of male dominance in virtually all political affairs". Godwin (ibid.) does not only see this as a historical fact but

something that is deeply reinforced by attitudinal views which most often impede the visible quest of women to increase their political representation at the local government level in Nigeria.

In Sierra Leone, FRIDE (2009:3) observed similar outcomes. Despite the country's shift in social attitude and re-orientation on women's role and the observation that women now possess the right to participate in governance after 2002 civil war, it was found that women still experienced high levels of exclusion and unequal gender relations. According to FRIDE, the bases for these unequal gender relations are endemic patriarchal, cultural and religious values especially in the north of Sierra Leone. The extreme nature of this patriarchal dominance is such that women are barred from participating in public life or speaking in public (ibid.). It is important to note that while women themselves acknowledge the attitudinal and cultural shift, some respondents of the study still argued that this change is just mere rhetoric because women still "face resistance and harassment for taking on a more public role, particularly from customary authorities who argue that it is against tradition".

Arguably, women's visibility in politics in post-civil war Sierra Leone saw an improvement. In its first election held after the 2002 war, FRIDE (ibid.) documents that 18 women were elected members of parliament out of 124 but this subsequently dropped to 16 women in 2007 being another setback to women's political inclusion. The reason for this decline as FRIDE observes was due to the use of proportional representation system as opposed to the traditional majoritarian system which was used in 2007 elections. Being self-centered and power hungry as they are, political parties fielded fewer women because of the concern that electorates will vote against them.

At the local government level, 56 women were elected as District Councilors out of 456. The number of women councilors increased to 86 in the 2008 elections. At the Ward Committee level, it is mandatory that women constitute 50 percent. While this 50 percent may show that at the ward committee level, there is gender equality, it is argued that these committees are relatively smaller with very little power. Consequently, the adoption of a 50 percent mandatory representation at the ward committee level smacks of tokenism since at that level, there is very little influence committee members can have on critical decision making.

2.4.3 The Political Party Hurdles

Allah-Mensah's (2005) argument that political party affiliations can enhance women's chances of being elected is not gainsaid. In the study done by FRIDE (2009) in Sierra Leone, two major obstacles to women's political participation were identified. Women raised the issue of gaining social space and acceptance to play a role in the public sphere, as well as getting selected and supported to run for office. The latter is more of a reserved power for political parties because candidates wishing to offer themselves for politically elected post need to first gain approval from their political parties if they are not independent candidates. As demonstrated in the 2007 elections in Sierra Leone, the number of elected women reduced to 16 from a total of 18 elected women because political parties fielded fewer women due to fears of being rejected during elections. On the contrary, as FRIDE found in Sierra Leone, the strong regional support bases enjoyed by political parties was more than likely to increase a woman's chances of being elected when selected by the political party because gender discrimination was unlikely to override the strong political regionalism. While the parties supported the 50 percent quota for women at the ward committee level, respondents in the study revealed that they faced a lot of challenges securing party nominations to contest as Councilors. Below is what FRIDE (2009:5) observed:

At Ward Committee level women reported no problems in getting party nominations, as would be expected given that women's equal participation is mandatory and therefore women Ward Committee members are not seen as "taking men's place". However, women attempting to enter both national parliament and district councils faced significant hostility and obstruction. Women councilors appeared to have faced the most difficulties in getting a party nomination, and were the group that most frequently reported experiencing hostility from local men while campaigning.

2.5 Constraints for Women's Political Participation in Ghana

The misery of women's political participation particularly in Africa is both a fact of history and a reality of the present. Since 1960, women's representation in Ghana's Parliament has been under 20 percent while their representation in district level elections hover around 35 percent (Electoral Commission cited in Tsikata, 2009). Even with this, Tsikata (2009) believed this numerical representation does not constitute substantive or strategic representation despite being a good step. By strategic representation, Tsikata refers to political decision making where gender inequality is most pervasive and intractable. In the view of Tsikata, the reasons given for women's poor showing in political governance are systemic and structural. These reasons include disadvantages in the control of resources, gender ideologies which reinforce inequalities, problems of the political system and failure of public policy.

2.5.1 Control of Resources

In all spheres of life, women have been seen to possess weaker voice as compared to their male counterparts (Tsikata, 2009). At the household level, Tsikata argues that society has ascribed the responsibility of handling visible, formal and predictable expenditures such as rent, school fees

and electricity to men while women control only invisible and unpredictable expenditures. This customary demarcation of expenditure according to Tsikata defines the level of control a woman has over resources. Apart from this, the Ghana Living Standards Survey cited in Tsikata point out that women undertake the bulk of domestic work aside income generating activities. This increases their workload and limits their available time for their participation in public life as well as engaging in activities in the productive sector to raise resources. This disadvantaged position restricts their effectiveness in political contestations since a lot of resources are needed to prosecute their political campaigns.

2.5.2 Emergence of Gendered Occupations

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

2.5.3 Problems of the Political System

According to Allah-Mensah (2009), political parties should receive some blame for women's low representation in political governance. Allah-Mensah cites factors such as steep financial conditionalities, male dominated structures in political parties which tend to favour men as well

as consideration of ethnic, religious, and regional factors over gender. While recognizing that women are involved in the political party structure through the creation of women wings, Allah-Mensah believes that such action is a tokenistic and clandestine approach aimed at persuading women to vote for them. As already noted by Tsikata (2009), because women are unable to mobilize financial resources due to their domestic work and lack of time, the imposition of hefty financial conditions as a precursor to contest in an election further worsens their attempt at reversing the trend of male dominance within the political sphere.

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

2.5.4 The Influence of Socialization

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

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research strategy adopted by this study and the empirical techniques applied. The strategy will include the research design, data collection tools and techniques, data sources, sample size and sample selection processes. Beyond stating the strategies, this chapter explains the rationale for selecting each research method.

3.2 Research design

In the view of Kothari (2004), research design helps in the smooth sailing of the various research operations whereby the research efficiency is enhanced and misleading conclusions avoided. Thus, this study adopted a research design called the qualitative design. Unlike quantitative research approach which relies on the measurement of quantity or data that can be expressed in terms of quantity, qualitative design focuses on the subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviour (Kothari, 2004). Both quantitative and qualitative research approaches hold independent research purposes but Creswell and Garrett (2008) argued that the two research designs work to complement each other. Therefore, this study used a mixed method where demographic information of respondents was analyzed quantitatively while the qualitative approach examined respondents' views about the factors inhibiting the participation of women in politics. The qualitative design also gathered information on the strategies that can be leveraged upon to improve women's participation. According to Kothari (2004), qualitative design is

particularly important where the aim is to discover the underlying motives of human behaviour rather than seeking to establish numerical facts.

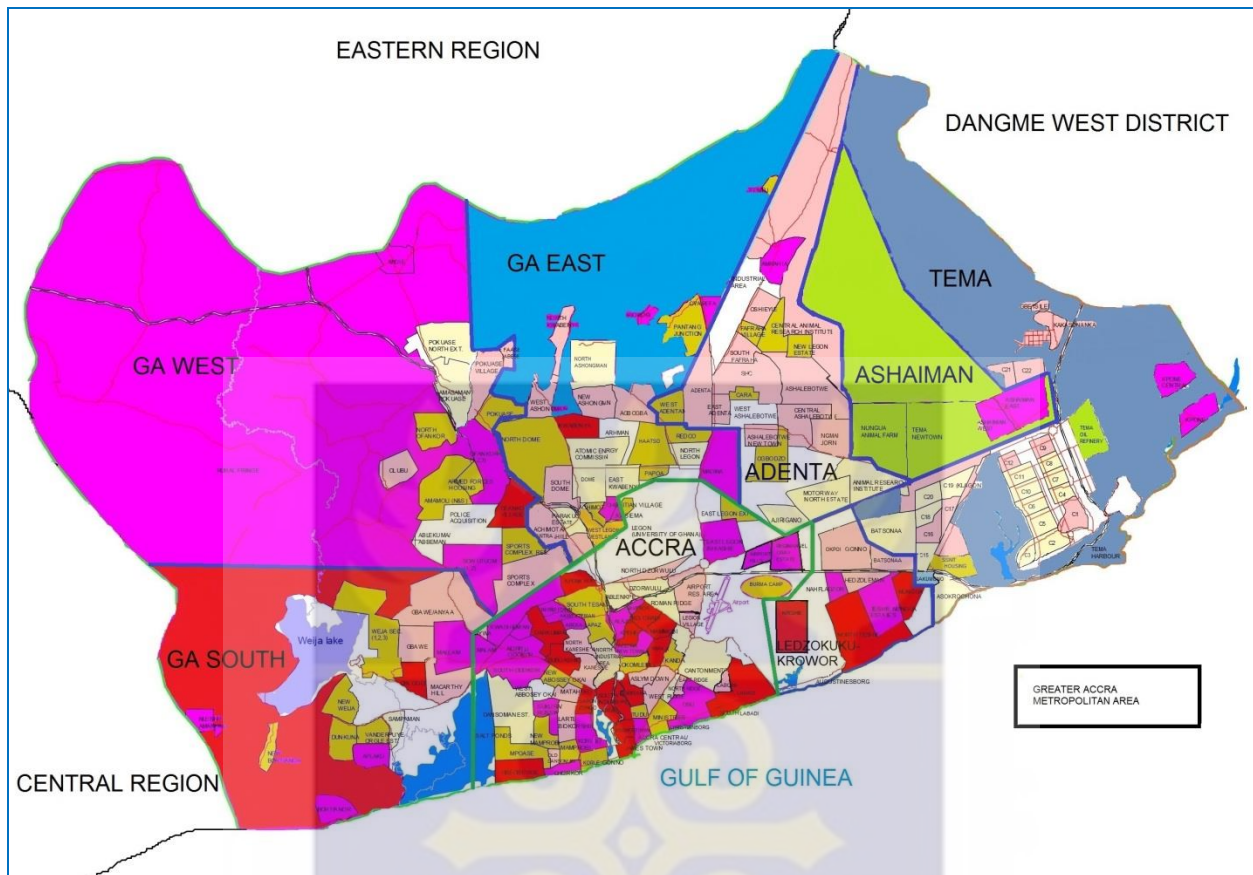
3.3 Study Area

The research was conducted in the Greater Accra region. The region is the seat of *Ga* State, but virtually a home to all ethnic groups in Ghana as well as foreign nationals. It is the smallest region amongst the 10 administrative regions in terms of land mass covering a total land area of 3,245 square kilometers or 1.4 per cent of the total land area of Ghana. Despite the fact that it is the smallest of the ten (10) regions, it is the second largest in terms of population density after Ashanti Region. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, the Region accounts for 15.4 percent of Ghana's total population or its equivalence of 4,010,054 people.

The Region was selected for this study because it is the seat of government where major political decisions and activities take place. It is home to the head offices of all the political parties as well as accessible to most women who have participated and/or continue to play roles in political governance. Therefore, to get a cross-sectional representation of views concerning women's political participation, it was important to settle on Greater Accra Region.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the sixteen administrative districts in Greater Accra: Accra Metropolitan Area, Tema Municipal Area, Ga East District, Ga West District, Ga Central District, Dangme West District, Dangme East District, and Ga South. The rest are Adenta Municipal, Adenta West, La Dade-kotopon, La-Nkwantanang Madina, Ledzokuku-Krowor, Kpone Katamanso, Ningo Prampram and Ashaiman.

Figure 3.1: Satellite image of Districts in Greater Accra Region



Source: Accra Metropolitan Assembly, 2015

3.4 Data collection tools and techniques

Data collection was done through in-depth interviews and the use of questionnaires. The questionnaires were used to collect demographic information of respondents while the in-depth interviews gathered subjective viewpoints of respondents. Unlike the quantitative approach, the interviews were audio recorded using a digital voice recorder. Audio recording during interviews is recommended in qualitative research to allow for replaying to respondents for clarifications, additions or subtractions. According to Maynard and Purvis (1994), repeated listening to

recorded interviews with participants is vital; however, this has been a neglected focus for analysis.

3.5 Data sources

Primary and secondary data sources were relied upon in this study. The study held in-depth interviews with respondents to collect primary data. This helped to understand the nature of women's marginalization in politics and the opportunities that exist to promote their participation in politics. The primary data was complimented by secondary data in the form of statistics on women's involvement in politics. These were obtained from Government of Ghana official website, Parliament of Ghana official website, Electoral Commission's official website, Political Parties, available legal and constitutional frameworks as well as relevant literature.

3.6 Research Population

The study targeted all women who have participated in national politics or are still active in national politics since the year 1992. They comprised women in national executive positions in the various political parties, women in Parliament, and women in the executive arm of government (past and present ministers and heads of public institutions appointed by the President). The population also extended to all women who have contested Parliamentary elections as well as national executive positions of all the political parties in Ghana.

The basis for choosing 1992 as the base year is significant because Ghana returned to constitutional rule during that period allowing for multiparty democracy. Since 1992, there have been six (6) successful democratic elections and political transitions involving different civilian governments and political parties as well as members of parliament belonging to different political parties. It is believed that over this 20 year period, there has been increased political

enthusiasm at the political party level and among individuals. At the Presidential level, only five (5) political parties contested the elections with voter turnout of 53.75 percent. This number reduced to three (3) in 1996 with turnout of 76.09 percent. In the 2000 general elections, the number of political parties who contested shot up to six (6), and then nine (9) in 2004, 8 each in 2008 and 2012 (including independent candidate). As compared to voter turnout in 1992 which stood at 53.75 percent, the 2012 elections recorded a voter turnout of 79.43 percent, an increase of 25.68 percent (Electoral Commission, 2000-2012).

3.7 Sample size and sample selection processes

The sample size considered for this study was 60 women respondents comprising MP Ministers, non-MP ministers, parliamentarians who are not MPs, Council of State members, political party executives and corporates heads. The sample was determined using the Yamane's formula for proportion (Yamane, 1967).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N e^2}$$

n= the minimum sample size,

N= is population of women in politics (party level, ministerial positions, MPs, district level elections, government boards, Council of State and Corporate heads) estimated to be 1,250 (Alla-Mensah, 2001).

e= is the degree of precision which would be assumed to be 5%, hence $p=0.05$

However, out of these 60 women who were interviewed, only 30 interviews were transcribed. The breakdown of the 30 respondents comprises 2 respondents from Council of state, 8 MPs, 5 respondents each as MP Ministers of State and non-MP Ministers of State respectively. The rest

were 8 executive members of political parties and 2 heads of corporate institutions. The 30 other interviews were not transcribed due to time constraints and also because some of the recordings were inaudible. Only political parties who participated in the 2012 elections were included in the sample because they were deemed to be the active political parties on ground. These parties include: The National Democratic Congress (NDC), New Patriotic Party (NPP), Convention People's Party (CPP), People's National Convention (PNC), Progressive People's Party (PPP), United Freedom Party (UFP), Great Consolidated Popular Party (GCPP) and the National Democratic Party (NDP). With the exception of NDP, all these political parties contested the 2012 general elections.

Purposive sampling was used in selecting the research participants. With purposive sampling, the selection of respondents are based on particular characteristics of the respondents within the universe where the known characteristics are to be studied intensively (Kothari , 2004; Kumekpor, 2002).

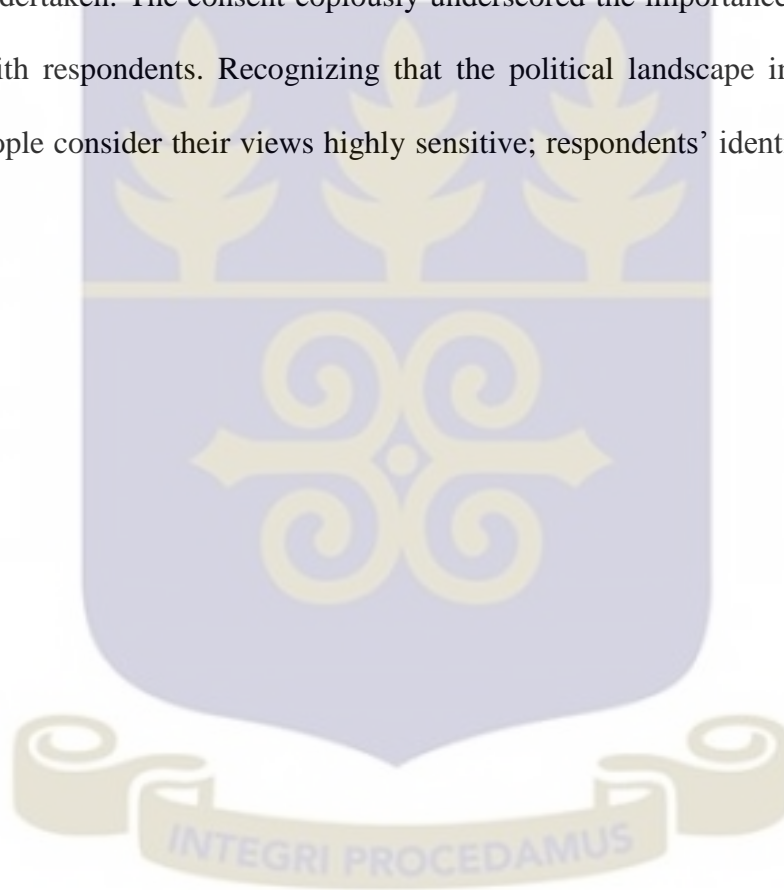
3.8 Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed by transcribing the recorded interviews. This was then grouped into thematic areas for analysis in the form of narrative. In the analysis of the thematic content, saturation set in on the 18th transcribed response. Nonetheless, the transcription continued to the 30th response with the view to discovering new ideas from the respondents. Although Glaser and Strauss (1967) posited that sample size in qualitative studies should generally follow the concept of saturation especially when analysis of new data does not lead to any discovery of new data, it is argued that the longer researchers examine and analyze data, there is the potential of new information being discovered (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Also, this study used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze the demographic data by generating simple statistical charts and tables. Where appropriate, respondents' views are quoted anonymously to enrich the discussion.

3.9 Ethics

In carrying out the research, the consent of all the respondents was sought before the audio recording was undertaken. The consent copiously underscored the importance of confidentiality and discussed with respondents. Recognizing that the political landscape in Ghana is highly polarized and people consider their views highly sensitive; respondents' identity in this report is not disclosed.



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter presents analysis and interpretation of the data collected through the in-depth interviews. Data analysis is one of the fundamental processes in statistical operations. Failure to analyze the collected data from research renders them useless to policy makers and undermines the real advantage of research (Muwonge, 2006). The study focused on examining the nature of marginalization Ghanaian women faced in political participation at the national level, the challenges encountered and opportunities that exist to promote their participation in mainstream national politics. Therefore, this analysis has been grouped based on these three thematic areas in addition to some demographic characteristics relevant to this study.

4.2 Demographic Information

The demographic characteristics examined were age, marital status, educational background and occupation of respondents. This demographic information was included to highlight the kind of women who are involved in national politics and whether their characteristics are homogenous or varied.

4.2.1 Age of Respondents

Majority of respondents were in their early-to-mid 40s. Out of the 4 respondents who were interviewed, 26 respondents (55%) were between 41 to 45 years. Nineteen percent were between 46 to 50 years while less than 10 percent were under 40 years (Table 4.1). Although the youth

has been described as the vibrant human resource, the youth were under represented in the sample. This may be due to their low involvement in politics. For instance, one of the respondents between 36 to 40 years remarked that ageism is among the several reasons marginalizing the participation of young women. “Culturally, young women are unexpected to hold positions of authority/leadership and therefore not encouraged to engage in activities that will catapult them into visibility”, a respondent said. Beyond being marginalized by sex, young women also face a daunting task of overcoming the cultural values frowning on their involvement in politics.

Table 4.1: Age Distribution of Respondents

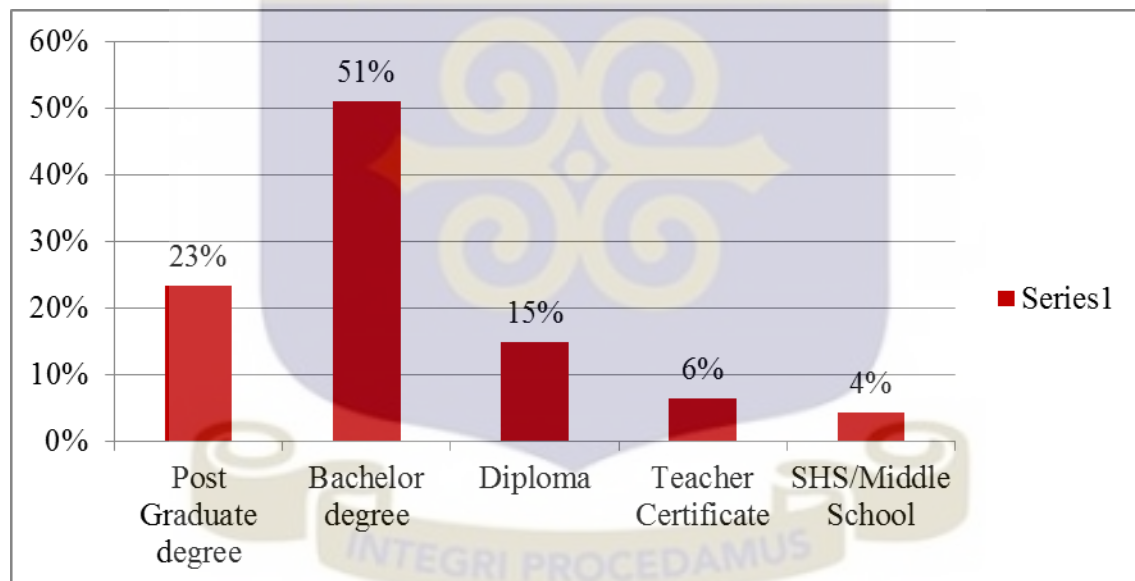
Year	Count	Percent
31-35	0	0%
36-40	4	9%
41-45	26	55%
46-50	9	19%
51-55	7	15%
56-60	1	2%
Above 60	0	0%
Total	47	100%

Source: Field Interview, 2015.

4.2.2 Educational Background of Respondents

All the respondents who were interviewed had some form of formal education although in varying degrees. As shown in Figure 4.1, 51 percent had at least first degree, 23 percent with post-graduate degree, and 15 percent with diplomas. The rest of the respondents held teacher certificates (6 percent) and SHS (4 percent). From these findings, it appears that literacy is needed for women to engage in politics. This is in line with McLendon and Eddings' (2002) argument that education enhances women's participation in politics and economic activities. Evidence of this was found in Bangladesh where Ahmed (2000) realized that the introduction of Non-Formal Education for women led to their visibility in the family and in social affairs.

Figure 4.1: Respondents Level of Education



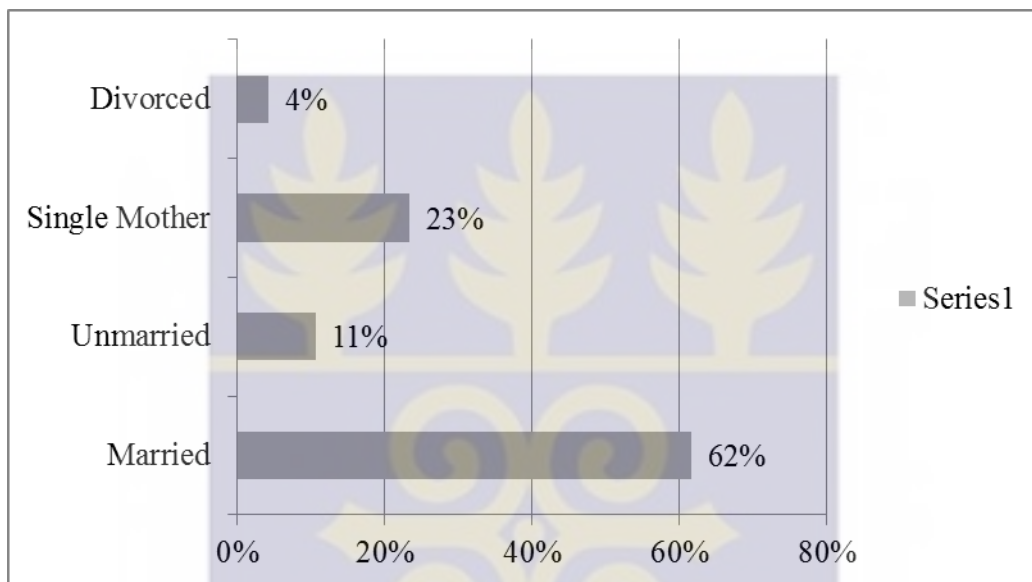
Source: Field Data, 2015.

4.2.3 Marital Status of Respondents

Marriage is an important and revered social institution in Africa. It serves as a tool for ensuring social reproduction, raising of families, socializing children and caring for the sick and elderly. Because of these roles associated with marriage, it is sometimes argued that women's

participation outside the domestic space is restricted since women carryout most of these responsibilities. Therefore, women who participate in politics are mostly likely to be unmarried, divorced or single mothers. From this study, over 60 percent of respondents were married while 37 percent were single mothers or unmarried (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2: Marital Status of Respondents



Source: Field Data, 2015.

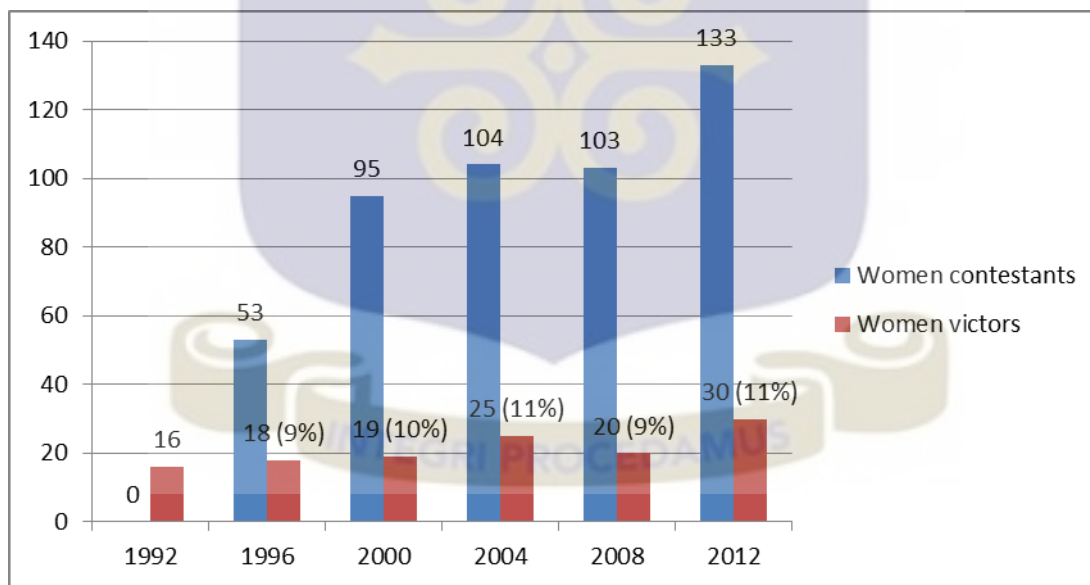
4.3 Trend of Women’s involvement in Parliamentary Contest

Since 1992, the proportion of women who have been elected as members of parliament has not gone beyond 11 percent, a phenomenon which is quite worrying given their proportion in the national population. As shown in figure 4.3, the highest representation has been 11 percent in 2004 and 2012. Incidentally, it does appear that as more women contestants are recorded the likelihood is that more women will be elected as members of parliament. From the data, the number of women contestants in parliamentary elections has been increasing since 1992 except in 2008 when the number dropped from 104 in the previous year to 103. This decline also

reflected in the number of women who eventually won their seats. Therefore, it can be argued that efforts targeted at increasing the number of women in parliament should first of all seek to encourage as many women as possible to contest in parliamentary elections. Although this is not an end in itself, it will be an important step towards equalizing male representation or involvement in national political activities.

This trend is a wakeup call for political parties on whose tickets majority of candidates stand to be elected as members of parliament to adopt deliberate policy measures to increase women contestants. As observed by Allah-Mensah (2009), the chances of being elected as a member of parliament is high if a contestant is affiliated to a political party and especially so for the two major parties in Ghana i.e. the NDC and NPP.

Figure 4.3: Trend of Women's involvement in Parliamentary Contest



Source: Electoral Commission, 2015

4.3 Reasons for Participating in National Politics

There is a main reason why there is continuous advocacy for women to be involved in political governance or decision making. That is, to promote good governance through decisions that reflect the different needs of all citizens especially women and children who are mostly subjects of marginalization. People however may have their individual goals for participating in national politics. This study sought to find out why the respondents choose to participate in national politics. The reason for this inquiry was to contrast the individual objectives with the general objective of promoting good governance through inclusive participation.

It was found that, some women opted to join politics to help address the inequalities they have experienced in life. According to a respondent, she was personally compelled to participate in politics because in most institutions where she went scouting for job, men demanded for sexual pleasures. She felt this was unfortunate and needed to be addressed at the national level through their involvement in national politics because that is where you can obtain a legislative or executive authority to change the status quo. Others joined politics so that they could contribute to the overall development of their constituencies. For some respondents, they became party executives to mobilize women from the grass roots to begin expressing their political rights because it is through political power that women can overcome the challenges they face.

4.4 Reasons for Low Participation of Women in National Politics

All respondents in this study agreed that the proportion of female participants in national politics is very low compared to their male counterparts. Reasons that were summed up during interviews for the unequal representation of women in national politics were structural, cultural, and socio-economic.

To understand the context accounting for the low participation of women in national politics, respondents were asked to give their opinions on the reasons accounting for the unwillingness of qualified women to participate in national politics. This was followed by another question which sought to probe further on the factors that deter women from participating in national politics. Because this study relied on extensive use of the qualitative design, the views of the respondents are presented in a manner that reflects the different groups of respondents interviewed.

4.4.1 Labeling

An observation which was generally held by all respondents was the pervasive perception in society that the female gender is incompetent. Some of the respondents recounted being labeled as incompetent when they were appointed into executive positions in government. They reportedly faced the daunting challenge of proving to society that they were not incompetent. As the respondents argued from the onset, “women were not accorded that positive platform like men and therefore felt marginalized”.

In particular, respondents who had participated in elective politics and were appointed as ministers cited how the media over sexualized women in their discussions to the extent that the personalities of women were equated to their abilities to perform on the job. This prejudice against women undermine their capacity in terms of academic qualification, work experience, and ability to think logically and take independent decisions. As Gidengil (2003) pointed out, the media is very significant in defining ethics and stereotypes of women political candidates. This is what a minister of state had to say about the media:

Instead of the media being progressive and supportive in terms of educating the public on the participation of women in politics, the media is a reflection of society and they also

expound conservative ideas. You know un-liberated society means un-liberated media. The media end-up cultivating or perpetrating the stereotypes society has about women in politics (In-depth interviews in Accra, May, 2015).

This viewpoint that women are generally labeled as incompetent was not just held by only the ministers but other respondents such as members of the Council of State as well as heads of corporate institutions. Some heads of corporate institutions disclosed how they turned down offers to serve in different state institutions when they were approached by government, citing the murky coloration of women in politics. As one rightly said:

“I don’t overtly play active party politics but subscribe to a broad political ideology; I refused to take up certain offers in government because people tend to brand you as a political activist and not look at your competence. This has undermined people’s career progression when government of the day goes into opposition (In-depth interview, May, 2015).

4.4.2 Male Patriarchy/Affirmative Action

A situation where men hold primary power, and dominate in political leadership came out visibly during the interviews with political party executives and female MPs. At the party level, although respondents agreed that the creation of women wings within the structure of the political parties did not limit their horizon to such positions alone, they felt that indirectly, women were being told to concentrate on such reserved positions within the party structure. Their argument was against the backdrop that very few women or none at all are elected into executive positions within the party structure apart from the specific roles created for them. This is explained by the male dominance among the voting delegates of the various political parties. This also highlights an interesting twist to the motive behind some affirmative action policies.

Clearly, respondents have discovered that even though the manifest intent of creating women wings is to help increase the numbers of women executives in the party structure, the latent objective is to restrict them to positions with little influence. A respondent observed as follows:

“The gender stratification of positions within the party structure is unfavorable for women across all the political parties. Positions like national chairman, national organizer and general secretary roles are seen as positions for men”, a woman national executive pointed out. The respondent continued, “with the exception of Samia Nkrumah who occupies the Chairperson’s role in the Convention People’s Party (CPP), the best role women could get within the political party structure is to deputize a substantive national officer, a role with marginal influence within the party structure”.

Another important reason that came out of the discussions was ageism where young women compared to young men are seen to be unfit regardless of their qualifications. This view was expressed by some MPs and non-MPs who were ministers. The open disapproval of young women in politics continues to reinforce the endemic prejudices against women. The issue of ageism became a serious subject matter after the NPP parliamentary primaries held on June 13, 2015. The primaries which elected a 22 year old woman, Francisca Oteng-Mensah as parliamentary candidate for Kwabre East Constituency in Ashanti region was met with mixed reactions. While a female MP for Dome Kwabenya constituency in Accra, Adwoa Safo saw the election of Francisca as a testimony of the party’s appeal to the youth, a former male general secretary of the NPP, Kwadwo Owusu Afriyie described the young parliamentary candidate as a novice and questioned her marketability to the voting public (Sankofa, 2015; Brobbey, 2015). In the views of Kwadwo Owusu Afriyie, the electorates who voted Francisca were influenced by

monetary rewards. This goes to question the capability of Francisca Oteng-Mensah and reveal the male biases against females into politics.

Again, in an article written by Pasinoman (2015) and published on online news portal: www.citifmonline.com, the author sought to attack the social status of Francisca instead of highlighting her capability to perform as a young female legislator if elected. Despite Pasinoman's assertion that the election of young Francisca is great news because it is an effort everywhere in the world aimed at shuttering the glass ceiling, he nonetheless preached against her election due to her social status. This is how Pasinoman (2015) puts it:

I was happy for her, but only till I heard she was not married. People who are not married sometimes refer to themselves as being single. Being single however could mean one of two things: that she is currently not attached to any man, or that even though she has a boyfriend, they are not married yet. Well, if she is single because she is not attached to any man, that's her choice and I respect that but if this Francisca lady says she is single because she is not married, though she has a boyfriend then she has lost my vote... She will not get my support to become a legislator, never.

From the accounts of respondents, it is obvious that the issue of discrimination against the female gender is not limited to the power blocs within the political circles but extends to important institutions like the media and the cultural orientation of majority of Ghanaians including women themselves. According to one respondent, the nature of socialization that is passed down to the younger ones is such that everyone is made to believe men should naturally be in leadership positions while females remain at the core of domestic work.

4.4.3 Constitutional Discrimination

Respondents who had participated in grassroots politics, contested parliamentary elections but failed to win their seats were very emphatic that the 1992 Ghanaian constitution discriminates in some respect against non-MPs. The respondents quoted article 78 clauses 1 and 3 of the 1992 to buttress their point. Article 78(1) reads: “ministers of state shall be appointed by the President with the prior approval of parliament from among Members of Parliament or persons qualified to be elected as Members of Parliament, except that the majority of ministers of state shall be appointed from among members of parliament”. In article 78 clause 3, it continues: “a minister of state shall not hold any other office of profit or emolument whether private or public and whether directly or indirectly unless otherwise permitted by the Speaker acting on the recommendations of a committee of Parliament on the ground, 3(a) that holding that office will not prejudice the work of a minister”.

These provisions in the views of the respondents impose some restrictions on getting more women in the executive arm of government. Their argument was that because there is already disproportionate representation of women in parliament, that constitutional provision tend to favour majority of men than women. While article 78 clause 1 which is the provision relating to the appointment of ministers of state is not in itself discriminatory against women, it limits the executive powers of the Presidents to reach out to the majority of women who are outside parliament. The respondents further stated that the fact the constitution says a minister of state shall not hold another public or private but tends to grant powers to the Speaker to allow MPs to be appointed as ministers is in itself discriminatory and women are the worse hit.

Notwithstanding, one respondent remarked that intra party power blocs impose some challenge on the President in honoring his commitment of increasing women appointees. She said: “my appointment into government was not without dogmatic opposition by some cabal within the party. But the President stood his grounds”.

On the other hand, respondents who doubled as MPs and Ministers at the same time also argued that, although being an MP should place them on equal footing with their male counterparts in terms of getting a ministerial appointment, certain ministries are seen as male controlled ministries. Names of ministries that were mentioned during the interviews are: Interior Ministry, Ministry of Defense, Energy Ministry and the Ministry of Communications.

As recounted by a respondent, “when we were lobbying for ministerial appointments, certain ministries were earmarked as anti-women ministries and so, we did not even think of them. Moreover, because there are more men in parliament than women, even the female tagged ministries are intensely being lobbied by the men too”.

The mere perception created that women are not fit for certain ministries and whereby coincidentally, no woman has ever been appointed to these ministries means that patriarchy is still a structural problem even in our democracy.

4.4.4 Political Funding

At the electoral level, it was found that women are unable to compete on the same level with men due to limited financial resources, lack of interest among majority of women and the violent nature of multi-party democracy in Ghana. Because political parties are not funded in Ghana, all respondents who participated in elective politics at the parliamentary and party executive levels expressed deep concerns on the expensive nature of running a political campaign or raising

money for nomination fees. They argued that where women do not have the financial muscle or incapable of identifying and/or mobilizing funding strings, they are unable to prosecute an effective campaign or even get approval at the party level to contest. A respondent had this to say about funding:

Democratic politics demand campaigning and it is quite empirical that the bigger your pocket the more likely your chances of being elected. The people have more confidence in you because you are able to solve some of their immediate problems before you go for the elections and most women are relatively poor because they are not employed in both formal and informal sectors like men. And even where all candidates go looking for money, such places are usually controlled by men too and thus undue sexual demands are being made of you in order to access this funding. This is a challenge women face.

Interestingly, even respondents in the category of non-elective political roles (non-MP ministers who have not contested elections) also cited political funding as a major concern that threatens the future involvement of women in national politics. In a remark, one of them said:

Our politics has become so money inducing such that if you campaign only on ideas which should be the ideal case, you are not taken seriously. One of the reasons why this is happening is because we have a large illiterate population who do not appreciate issue-based campaign because they see the campaign season as the time to get paid for voting. This is how our democracy has become.

Party executives who were interviewed pointed out that nomination fee charged for seeking national executive positions was not the real challenge for them. Instead they argued that because

delegates within the party structure are not paid, they tend to rely heavily on candidates seeking for national executive positions. This imposes a lot of financial burden on political aspirants because you are expected to milk the mouths of so many delegates sometimes over thousand in order to win their support. One of the national executives had this to say: “everywhere you visit; at the constituency, polling station and ward committee executive levels, delegates look up to you for financial inducements and you have to give, otherwise you risk losing the election. Women who cannot give out money eventually lose out”.

4.4.5 Assertiveness

It was also observed that self confidence among some women affected their desire to participate in national politics. Generally, all respondents attributed the level of education among women as an inhibiting factor contributing to lack of assertiveness and their effective involvement in political governance.

4.4.6 Political Violence

The respondents also added that even those who are educated, a lot of them stay away from politics due to the violent nature of multi-party politics in Ghana. To them, the denigration, insults and name calling affect their self-esteem and only courage and determination motivate them to be in politics.

4.4.7 Cultural Factors

Apart from the funding, respondents argued that elections confer an element of authority on people when they win elections and because traditionally women are not encouraged or supported outside the domestic space, where there is power, authority and leadership even in our traditional environments, those areas are seen as male dominated fields. Some of the respondents

even posited that the few women who are now breaking the glass ceiling and venturing into politics are viewed as morally bankrupt because they hang around male politicians. This labeling coupled with the obsession men have towards marrying women politicians discourages so many women from showing interest in politics. Since marriage is a cultural expectation by society for one to be accepted and recognized, women who are desirous of getting married sacrifice their political interest in order to fulfill that cultural expectation.

4.5 Opportunities to Increase Participation of Women in National Politics

Increasing women participation in national politics is not an impossible task. Despite the several challenges women face in participating in national politics, respondents for this study believe that the trend can be reversed through change in attitude and the right policy framework.

4.5.1 Adopting Affirmative Action

All respondents subscribed to the adoption of a national affirmation action policy in favour of women especially in executive appointments. They proposed a quota system where a specific percentage of appointments will be reserved for qualified women. As observed by Jones (1996), quota system is used as an immediate strategy for correcting the imbalances in political representation. Writing on the intent of quota system, Aggio (2001) stated that quota system was used to increase women participation in politics and the inherent assumption was that increased number of women will translate into having influence on policy and correcting the inequalities women confront.

Quota system is not new in Ghana. The CPP government led by Kwame Nkrumah introduced a quota system in 1960 where 10 women were elected through a special ballot. In 1998, the NDC government also approved an affirmation action policy at the cabinet level which sought to

establish a 40 percent quota for women's representation on all government boards, commissions, committees and other official bodies, including the cabinet and Council of State. The difference between the quota system introduced by the CPP government and that of the NDC is that, the latter was not backed by any law. Because it was not enforceable by law, it did not attract the political commitment it required. For this reason, respondents were further asked if the proposed affirmative action should be a legal framework or a mere policy with no legal effect. Noting that the 40 percent quota system adopted by the NDC did not yield any concrete outcome, respondents still insisted that the proposed affirmative action should be a policy but citizens including women groups and civil society should demand commitment from government.

4.5.2 Funding Women Politicians

The expensive nature of multiparty democracy is affecting the participation of poor political aspirants, majority of whom, are women. To financially empower women to compete on equal footing with their male counterparts, respondents proposed state funding for women politicians. Apart from the proposal for a national fund, they are also asking political parties to scrap nomination fees for women. They believe that when these measures are taken, more women who otherwise have been constrained by financial resources will avail themselves for political activities.

4.5.3 Building Political Capacity of Women

According to respondents, formal education is not enough to build the confidence of women to participate in national politics. To fully empower women, respondents think there is the need for state institutions like the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), the Electoral Commission (EC) and other civil society organizations like Institute for Economic Affairs and

Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG) to hold series of capacity building workshops for women aspirants. They also suggested that government should take advantage of the 30 percent government quota at the district assembly level to appoint more women to the assemblies. According to them, this will help to prepare women for national politics as well as enrich their political experience to effectively influence policy through constructive contributions.

4.5.4 Orientation of the Media

As a tool for education, information and entertainment, respondents suggested a reorientation of the media because they feel the media does not discharge its traditional ascribed roles. Council of state members and ministers of state expressed strong views about the anti-women campaign being run by some journalist in the news media. In their views, media organizations should be the conduits through which issues about women will be promoted. But most at times, the media tend to attack the personalities of women instead highlighting the historical roles women have played and how they can contribute to the current development efforts and the democratization process. This is what a respondent had to say:

The media shapes the opinion of a lot of people in society through its programming and content and for instance because the FM radio has a large audience, whatever is discussed can have some influence on people's perception towards women. Today there are a lot of community FM radios with programmes in the local language, so the audiences follow keenly what is being discussed. A cultural shift in terms of media posturing towards women need to change because that in itself has the tendency of discouraging women who are nursing ambitions to participate in national politics (In-depth interview, May, 2015).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Historically, literature has shown that women in pre-colonial Africa were equally dominant in the public space as their male counterparts. Women performed roles that were important as those undertaken by men where, these roles were seen to be complimentary. However, Konde (1992), O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers (1995) as well as Allah-Mensah (2005) have all blamed the colonial government for its role in widening the gender gap between men and women. After colonialism, there has been a lot of advocacy around women's subordination in public sphere and the need to dismantle patriarchy which continues to widen the gap between men and women.

One of the areas where this gender gap has reflected quiet phenomenally is political representation. The question that has remained relevant is why the participation of women in national politics is still low despite gaining political freedom over 50 years ago. To answer this question, this study began by looking at the trend of women's political representation and then using qualitative personal interviews tried to document the reasons accounting for women's low representation. This Chapter presents the summary of the findings from this study, conclusion derived from the findings and recommendations to help promote women's representation in national politics.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The summary of findings is presented in order of the objectives set out in this study.

5.2.1 Trend in Women's Representation in National Politics

Since 1992, the proportion of women in the national parliament has not gone beyond 11 percent although their national population has consistently been higher than men. The proportion of women representatives in nominal terms has been increasing as more and more contest in elections, either at the national or district levels.

It was realised that commitment to affirmation action could be an effective mechanism for boosting women's participation in national politics. This was evident in the 1960 affirmation action adopted by the Nkrumah's regime which saw 10 women elected from the 10 regions of Ghana to the National assembly.

5.2.2 Factors Accounting for Low Representation of Women in National Politics

All respondents agreed that women's representation across all facets of national life is still unsatisfactory considering their historical role in national development efforts.

Generally, the respondents held the notion that society is highly bias because they equate women to incompetence and mostly are hesitant in allowing women to occupy key roles. This notion in their opinion presents another challenge for women where they are expected to prove that they are not incompetent rather than demonstrating how competent they are. It became clear that this phenomenon appeared to deter women from availing themselves for national political life especially accepting executive appointments.

The media was cited as one of the powerful mediums through which women's personalities are being attacked in unprovoked manner with the aim of scandalizing their positive achievements and eventually confining them to the silent roles.

It was also found that lack of financial resources affected women in elective politics because they are unable to compete with their male counterparts given the increasing expensive nature of multiparty democracy in Ghana and many other jurisdictions.

Surprisingly, the 1992 constitution of Ghana which is expected to be non-discriminatory was cited as discriminating against women. Article 78 clauses 1 and 3 were referenced where they argued that the constitutional limitation imposed on the President to appoint majority of ministers from parliament meant that women were disadvantaged given their low numerical presence in Parliament.

Aside this, respondents believed that society's reverence for marriage scares young unmarried women from participating in national politics because they are perceived to be irresponsible.

Most respondents also attributed the low participation of women in national politics to lack of assertiveness among some of their colleagues. The factors likened to this were illiteracy and insufficient political capacity building for women.

The study also made a very important observation relating to the intent of affirmation action policies. Despite the fact that affirmation action is widely recommended as one of the effective ways of promoting women's participation, respondents from the political parties held a contrary view, citing the creation of women wings within the political party structure as an example. To them, rather than see these women wings which are exclusively for females as an opportunity,

they think such actions aim at maintaining the existing patriarchy where men will continue to occupy the influential positions. The position of women wings tend to shift the focus of women away from the key positions within the party structure. At best, women end up deputizing other national officers apart from the women wings.

Finally, ageism which is a systematic discrimination on the basis of age was also cited. Respondents argued that where young women are given executive appointments or participate in national elections, they are not supported but perceived to be trespassing their traditional roles and venturing into male dominated spheres. The election of the 22 year old parliamentary aspirant during the 2015 NPP primaries was referenced as an example.

5.2.3 Opportunities to increase women's Representation

All respondents embraced the concept of affirmation action as an effective way of increasing women's participation in national politics. Although majority of respondents held the view that it should not necessary be a legal framework, they believed that it could have significant bearing on women's representation if given the needed commitment.

Respondents especially in elective politics suggested the establishment of a special fund to support political activities of women including funding campaigns and political capacity building.

At the political party level, most respondents were of the view that party nomination fees should be scrapped for women in order to boost their moral in contesting national elective positions.

Lastly, respondents believed that the media could be a good partner in the drive towards dismantling the exiting patriarchy in society by promoting their achievement and holding political parties to their commitment of affirmation action promises.

5.3 Conclusion

It is no doubt that women are still lacking behind in terms of their effective participation in national politics. The glass ceiling is a reality but the battle is not lost since there is a lot of potential in women that can be harnessed to increase their participation in national politics. It is a wakeup call on government, political parties, women groups, and society at large to show interest in the potential of women so that their participation in national politics can be promoted. Despite the fact that Ghana is no more under colonial rule and there is evidence at attempts made to increase women's political participation, their representation is still marginally low. For instance, since 1992, the proportion of women in the national parliament has not gone beyond 11 percent although their population has consistently been higher than men.

The evidence shown in the 1960 affirmative action policy during the Nkrumah regime is a clear demonstrative of how effective action can be. Though different affirmative action policies have been adopted at the political party level, the approach has contributed to its little impact in terms of scaling the statistical numbers of women representation in politics. Even so, the de-emphasis on the richness of women's involvement has made the affirmative action policies less appealing to the public who would help push the agenda forward.

5.4 Recommendations

On the basis of findings from this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

Special fund should be established with the Electoral Commission (EC) as an independent arbiter to sponsor identified political activities including political campaigns for women candidates. This fund should be backed by law with statutory allocations to ensure the constant flow of resources. The National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) is not

proposed because it is the EC that registers the political parties, take custody of their audited accounts and has deeper information about their national representation in accordance with the Political Parties Act.

National affirmation action policy should be adopted and signed off by all political parties to affirm their commitment to its implementation. Women groups should commit to using this policy as strong basis for national political elections.

Political parties should introduce a policy exempting women from paying for nomination fees at both the national and local levels.

As part of the constitutional review process, a consideration for amendment of article 78 (1) should be adopted to give an open door to the President of the Republic of Ghana to make ministerial appointments from all quarters and not requiring that majority should come from among members of Parliament.

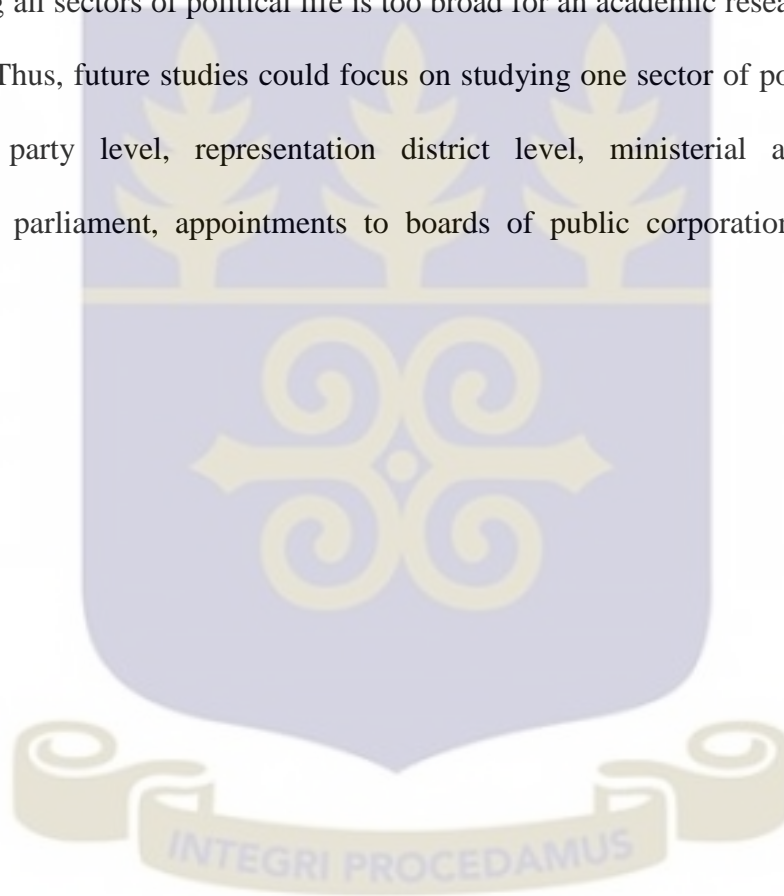
The monitoring of hate speech by the West African Foundation for Media should include in its name and shame” programme during elections to openly criticize media organizations who attack the personalities of women without any basis.

Finally, women themselves should defy the odds at breaking the exiting patriarchy by resisting any form of insults, vilification and labeling and offer themselves for national political positions.

5.5 Suggestion for Future Studies

Future studies should consider conducting a longitudinal study so that specific women into politics can be monitored over time. This type of study will allow for better analysis of the contribution of women participants as well as the trend of their involvement in politics over a period of time.

Again, examining all sectors of political life is too broad for an academic research which is often limited by time. Thus, future studies could focus on studying one sector of political life, that is, participation at party level, representation district level, ministerial appointments, and representation in parliament, appointments to boards of public corporations and diplomatic appointments



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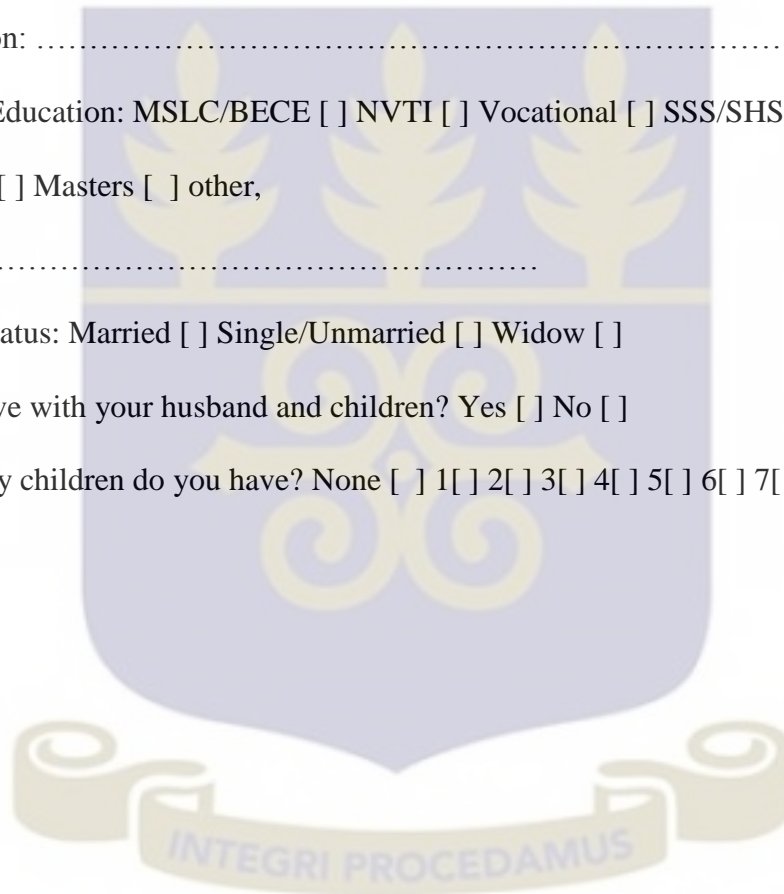
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APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

A. Demographic Data

1. Age group: 21-30 [] 31-40 [] 41-50 [] 51-60 [] 61+ []
2. Occupation:
3. Level of Education: MSLC/BECE [] NVTI [] Vocational [] SSS/SHS [] HND []
Diploma/Degree [] Masters [] other,
specify.....
4. Marital Status: Married [] Single/Unmarried [] Widow []
5. Do you live with your husband and children? Yes [] No []
6. How many children do you have? None [] 1 [] 2 [] 3 [] 4 [] 5 [] 6 [] 7 [] other,
specify.....



APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE

B. Participation in Politics

- 7. How did you join politics?.....
- 8. How long have you been in politics?.....
- 9. List the roles you have held in politics (in government or at party level)?.....
- 10. Do you have political mentor? Yes [] No []
- 11. Why are you into politics?.....
- 12. What is your motivation for being in politics?.....
- 13. Do you intend to quit some day? Yes [] No []
- 14. If Yes/No, why?.....
- 15. Have you ever taken part in national politics? Yes [] No []
- 16. If yes, what role did you play?.....
- 17. If No, Why?.....
- 18. Why are most qualified women unwilling to participate in national politics?.....
- 19. Have you ever taken part in local level politics? Yes [] No []
- 20. As compared to national politics, what is your experience with local level politics?.....
- 21. What do you think may deter women from participating in national politics?.....
- 22. What are the general constraints affecting women’s participation in national politics?.....
- 23. How do these constraints affects you?.....
- 24. Do think your level of education affects your political career?.....
- 25. Do you have any regrets for participating in politics?.....

26. What motivates you to continue to be in politics?.....
27. What opportunities are available in Ghana that can promote and inspire eligible women to avail themselves for national politics?.....
28. What do you suggest is done to promote women's political participation at both the local and national levels?.....

