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WOMEN AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN SELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF KWARA STATE, NIGERIA 1999-2015

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Abstract
Women are said to have almost half of the world population but they are not adequately represented in the governance. This study therefore focused on women and political participation in Nigeria with specific reference to Offa, Baruten and Ilorin West Local Government Areas of Kwara State, with the aim of determining . the impact of socio-cultural and economic influence on women political participation, To achieve the stated objectives the study adopts both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis. The study found out that most women in the selected local government do not see themselves capable enough to hold political positions as a result of low self-esteem, lack of courage, zeal and inferiority complex. The study also found out that, the perception of the society about women politicians also contributes to low women political participation. As the society generally regard women politicians as irresponsible. Also, the study revealed that, finance is another fundamental factor contributing to the low women political participation because, the political terrain of Nigeria is structured into money politics, that even the fellow women cannot support women political aspirants without money. It thereafter recommend that, there is an urgent need Government should embark on mass campaigns for awareness and sensitization for the need of women to get involved in politics. This will help in eroding the erroneous believe that women in politics are irresponsible and adulterous. Also, the national assembly should ensure that the issue of money politics and vote buying is criminalize in the ongoing electoral reforms and so on.

Keywords: Constitution, Development, Gender, Policy, Political Party

Introduction

In every democratic society both men and women have equal opportunity to vote and be voted for. Agbalajobi (2010:077) stated that the possibility for all citizens - both males and females participation in the management of public affairs, otherwise known as mass or popular participation is thus at the very heart of democracy. Putting it more clearly, the Inter-Parliamentary Union incorporated in the Universal Declaration for Democracy (1999) states that the achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society in which they work in equality and complementarity drawing mutual enrichment from their differences.

However, these seems not to be achieved based on the report of the Inter-Parliamentary Union of 2015 whichstated that there were only forty-one countries in the World where women attained the critical mass of 30% women representation in the parliament, out of which Rwanda, Bolivia, Andorra, Cuba, Seychelles, Sweden, Senegal, Finland, Ecuador, South Africa, Iceland and Spain are a handful of countries that have elected more than 40% women to their legislative body. On the other hand, in terms of ministerial appointment, according to IPU (2015) report, Nigeria was ranked 24.1% with 7 appointed Mministers out of 29 while Finland,

Cape Verde, Sweden, France are countries with more than 50% of appointed women ministers; even in respect to the Beijing Declaration that was adopted by participating governments at the world conference on September 15, 1995, admits *inter alia*: the status of women has advanced in some important respects in the past decades, but that progress has been uneven, inequalities between women and men have persisted and major obstacles remain with serious consequences for the well-being of all people.

According to Bruce (2004:101), governments that are signatories to the agreements are bound to take specific measures to ensure women's access to full participation in political activities. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria by virtue of Section 40 states that: "Every person shall be entitled to assemble freely and associate with other persons, and in particular, he may form or belong to any political party, trade union or any other association for the protection of his interests...indent properly". Section 42 of the same Constitution states further that: "Any citizen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion, or political opinion shall not, by reason only that he is such a person be subjected to any form of discrimination" Kwara State has a population of 2,385,353 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2011) out of which the male population is 1,193,783 and the female population is 1,171,570. With this massive number of women in Kwara State, in 2015 general election, out of the 24-members of the Kwara State House of Assembly, only 4 are women while in the same year the 19-member State Executive Council had only 4 females; and there was no women representative in the National Assembly. The question now is, despite the large population of women in Kwara State, why is it that there is low women political participation? Other question seeking for answer includes: Is there any relationship between socio-economic cum cultural what? and women political participation in Kwara State?

Research Hypothesis

H0: There is no significant relationship between cultural cum socio-economic factors and women's political participation in Kwara State

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This paper focused on Baruten (Northern zone), Offa (Southern zone) and Ilorin-West (Central zone) local government areas in Kwara State out of the sixteen (16) local government areas of the State. The selection is based on senatorial zones. The study spans from 1999-2015 being a period of democratic dispensation.

Research Methodology

For the purpose of this study, the researcher adopts the survey and documentary research method. The researcher made use of oral interview, questionnaire textbooks, internet, journals, and other published and unpublished materials. In order for the researchers to analyse data collected, the use of qualitative and quantitative method was explored using chi-square (X^2) statistical tool to test the hypothesis. The population size of the research work cover the entire population of Offa, Baruten and Ilorin West local Government Areas in Kwara state. Offa has a population of 113,830,Baruten has an approximate population of 209,459 as at December 2015, when the figure was released while Ilorin West Local Government has an approximate population of 346,666 as at December, 2015 when the figure was released. The entire population for this study is 669,955.

In selecting the sampling size for this study, the Yamane's formula was employed. The Yamane's formula as expressed by Israel (1992) is denoted by:

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

Where:

n = Sample size

N = Population

e = Significant level (95%)

$$n = \frac{669,955}{1 + 669,955\ (0.05)^2} = \frac{669,955}{1 + 1674.888} = 399.99988 = 400$$

Based on the Yamane's formula computed above, the sample size for this study is four hundred (400) out of which 58, 213 and 129 questionnaires were administered using random sampling technique to residents of offa,Ilorin west and barutin local government areas respectively .

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The concept of politics has been viewed in different perspectives by scholars who have written on the subject matter. Easton (1990) defines politics as the 'authoritative allocation of values' in a political system. By this Easton sees politics as encompassing the various processes through which government responds to the pressures and demands of allocating benefits, rewards or penalties in a society. This is why Lasswell (1958) sees politics as the determination of who gets what, when and how. It is, however, observed that the various definitions above, consider the concept of politics from the viewpoint of the normative function of politics which is the resolution of conflict of interests. However, it is necessary that it ascribes value be also put to bear. In doing so, the concept of politics will not just be limited to the view of the developed countries, but will also be relevant to the context of the developing countries particularly Africa. The opinion of Sodaro, (2001) that politics is a process connotes its continuing sequence of events and interactions among various actors (individuals, organisations, and government) which generally take place within a structure of rules, procedures and institutions rather than haphazardly. Following this view, therefore, Dahl (1963) defines politics as any stable pattern of human relationships that involves power and influence.

In any case, however, it can be said that in modern democracies there cannot be political power without the political participation and adequate group representation. And by extension, political participation connotes a variety of ways in which people try to (and of course are supposed to) exercise influence over the political process, the kind of political process which has the potential of attracting the best brains cutting across all genders, whether male or female (Erunke, 2013:04).

Anifowose (2004) observed that the definition of political participation is far from being straightforward and that one problem of the various definitions is that they are more or less exclusive. Anifowose (2004) argue that the perception of political participation as a voluntary action through which people seek to influence the making of public policy excludes those forms of participation that are coerced. Bari (2005), suggested that political participation consists of taking part in the process of formulation, passage and implementation of public policies. This conception, however, did not take into account the passive form of politics, such as discussing political issues with colleagues or making a joke about a politician and his political activities. Herderson (2006), considered citizen participation in a decision that affects them as being imperative for democratic consolidation in any society. According to Awolowo and Aluko (2010), the essence of political participation in any society, either civilized or primitive, is to seek control of power, acquisition of power and to influence decision making. That is, Political participation is a means of contributing ones quota to the political system and overall development of the nation. Hence, Political participation is one of the fundamental requirements of democratic governance.

Mechanisms for Increasing Women's Participation, Representation and Leadership

Experts considered the various mechanisms to increase women's presence in legislatures and discussed the impact of electoral quotas. They noted that in general, *political parties* may develop incentives to attract women to the party such as providing funding to run an election campaign, providing access to networks, training and skills development for women candidates to stand for election, or setting targets within the party for a certain number of executive positions to be held by women.

The most common mechanism for increasing women's participation in politics is an *electoral quota*, which is defined as a mandatory percentage of women candidates for public elections. While in a few countries reserved seats for women existed as far back as the 1950s, the real push for quotas came in the 1990s with the introduction of quotas in Argentina in 1991 and the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action at the United Nation's Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. While quotas were met with great hope by women throughout the world, their history is decidedly mixed. In mapping the implementation of quotas, International IDEA found nearly 100 countries that had either implemented quotas, previously used quotas or were considering implementing quotas. Of these, 10 countries had adopted reserved seat guarantees and30 countries had adopted legislation mandating quotas. In addition, 130 political parties in 61countries had voluntarily adopted quotas. The most up to date information is made widely accessible through International IDEA/Stockholm University Global Database on Electoral Quotas for Women website (www.quotaproject.org).

Thus, "Quotas" can be effective as evidence showed in countries of the world that practice it, examples of where quotas have had immediate and direct effect on women's participation were Argentina, women's participation increased from 5 to 25 and then to 30 percent in the space of two elections. Rwanda is now the world leader in women's representation, with 48.8 percent of women in the Parliament. The increase in women's representation in Rwanda is in part due to the adoption of quotas.

Training and skills development; in order for quotas to be effective, both women and men need access to training and skills development. Given that many women have had little experience with running for political office, it is of utmost importance that training be made readily available to allow women to develop and fine-tune their political skills. Once in office, women may also benefit from leadership training and mentoring to increase efficiency and ensure sustainability. Training programs should also target men, to expose them to the complexities of gender discrimination and the necessity of and mechanisms for promoting women in public office (Kasamo, 2012).

Theoretical Framework

The prominent founders of the theory terms "feminism" were Betty Friedan,(1921)An America Feminist and social critic; Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) French philosopher, novelist, and feminist; Jean-Paul Sartre; the Second Sex 1949; Kate Millett, (1934) American feminist theorist and artist cum founder of Radical Feminism; Germaine Greer (1939): an Australian feminist and cultural critic; Juliet Mitchell (1940) British feminist and psychoanalyst. Jesse Bernard (1903-1996); Janet Saltzman Chafetz (1974) masculine/feminine; feminist sociology (1988); Gender Equity (1990); Heidi Hartmann (1981). The unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism Research professor on women's studies, George Washington University; Rae Lesser Blumberg, (1984) An American Theorist of Gender and Stratification.

The term feminism can be used to describe a political, cultural or economic movement aimed at establishing equal rights and legal protection for women. Feminism involves political and sociological theories and philosophies concerned with issues of gender difference, as well as a movement that advocates gender equality for women and campaigns for women's rights and interests. Feminism is generally opposed to patriarchy and sexism (Igube, 2004). In addition, Abdulkadir (2003) define feminism as an ideology which seeks to assert the principle that women should have political, economic, and social rights equal to those of men. It is a movement that entrenches these rights through the emancipation of women, liberating them from class and gender exploitation and oppression.

Consequently, feminists advocate for equal rights for men and women in all spheres of life. Iwuchukwu (2006) in his contention, define feminism as the belief in the importance of gender equality, invalidating the idea of gender hierarchy as a socially constructed

concept. Feminism is mainly focused on women's issues, but because feminism seeks gender equality, some feminists argue that men's liberation is therefore a necessary part of feminism, and that men are also harmed by sexism and gender roles. Feminist scholars have always presented meticulous exposition on sexual inequalities and patterns of feminine science, all of which focus on questions of different oppressions and injustices (Nwagwu and Ifeanacho, 2009 in Fatile et al, 2012). In whatever form or manner feminism displays or distinguishes itself, what is constant in all its shackles is the determination of every group to uplift womanhood and strive towards liberation and emancipation of women (Ezeigbo, 1996). Feminist ideology contends against the subjugation and oppression of women. Feminists advocate for equal rights for men and women in all spheres of life.

Ezeigbo (1996), rightly argued that feminism is often misunderstood. In some people's mind, feminism conjures up visions of aggressive women who try to be like men, dress carelessly and abandon essential feminine attributes. Feminist ideology means agitation for women"s economic, social, legal, political, educational rights which will lead to their empowerment vis-a-vis development. Indeed, the concept has been defined as a collection of movements aimed at defining, establishing, and defending equal political, economic, and social rights and equal opportunities for women (Adadevoh, 2001).

Theoretically, the subject matter of the paper predicated on feminist theory.We anchor the paper on an eclectic approach of feminist theory. This is because of advantages it present in analyzing the issues raised in the paper. Feminist theory aims to understand gender inequality and focuses on gender politics, power relations and sexuality. Feminist theory also focuses on the promotion of women's rights and interests.

Data Presentation, Analysis, Conclusion and Recommendation

In this session, the researchers tested the hypothesis by the use of tables, simple percentages and chi-square statistical tool after which recommendations were made based on the findings. A total number of 400 questionnaires were distributed to respondents and 347 (86.75%) questionnaires were duly recovered for analysis. The questionnaire revealed that, about 21.04%, 35.16%, 7.2%, and 36.60% of the respondents held primary school certificate, S.S.C.E, Diploma/NCE and Degree/HND respectively. These manifestly show that most of the respondents were adequately literate.

1. Most women in these local government areas do not see themselves capable enough to hold political office

Table 1 Distribution of Respondents on Women's Low Self-esteem

CULTURAL FACTORS	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Non-Response		Agree		Strongly Agree		TOTAL
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Ilorin West	9	5.4	12	7.2	8	4.8	65	39.2	72	43.4	166(100%)
Baruten	19	18.4	26	25.2	8	7.8	19	18.4	31	30.1	103(100%)
Offa	1	1.3	12	15.4	4	5.1	30	38.5	31	39.7	78(100%)

Source: *Field Reports, 2016*

Table 1 above illustrates the percentage response of respondents; thus, in Ilorin west 12(7.2%) and 9(5.4%) disagree and strongly disagree on the statement that most women in Ilorin west local government do not see themselves capable enough to hold political office while 65(39.2%) and 72 (43.4%) agreed and strongly agreed respectively with 8(4.8%) non-response. As reflected in the above table, it was also indicated In Baruten local government 26(25.2%) and 19(18.4%) disagree and strongly disagree on the assertion that most women in the local government do not see themselves capable enough to hold political office while 19(18.4%) and 31(30.1%) agree and strongly agree as 8(7.8%) non-response. Lastly, in Offa

61(78.2%) of respondents were in support that most women in the local government do not see themselves capable enough to hold political office as 13(16.7%) of respondents argued against the assertion. Without an iota of doubt, the above data indicated that women in the selected local government area exhibit low self-esteem toward political power acquisition.

Furthermore, structure interviewed conducted with women political leaders and aspirants supported the above statistical data collated. This is presented as follow:

Hajia Sa'a Kwara State House of Assembly (KWHA, Aspirant, 2015) opined that:

> *Most of the women lack courage and determination, as this factor also served as detriment to her defeat; being the first women political aspirant in the local government; that she lack genuine support to boost her courage and enthusiastic toward politics (Fieldwork, 2017)..*

Women leader APC in Offa Local government connotes that: Most women lack the zeal to contest as majority of the women are basically hindered by inferiority complex and subordinates to the men counterparts.

Following the presentation of the respondents in this study, it was inevitable that most women in the selected local government do not see themselves capable enough to hold a political positions; As entrenched by the interviewed respondents; low self-esteem, lack of courage, zeal and inferiority complex of women served as detriment to low women political participation cum power acquisition (Fieldwork, 2017).

ii. The society generally regards women politicians as infidelity/irresponsible

Table 2 Distribution of Respondents on Society myth

CULTURAL FACTORS	**Strongly Disagree**		**Disagree**		**Non-Response**		**Agree**		**Strongly Agree**		**Total**
	F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	
Ilorin West	29	17.5	27	16.3	1	0.6	45	27.1	64	38.6	166(100%)
Baruten	14	13.6	32	31.1	2	1.9	25	24.3	30	29.1	103(100%)
Offa	11	14.1	16	20.5	-	-	26	33.3	25	32.1	78(100%)

Source: *Field Reports, 2016*

Table 2 above table showed that in Ilorin west, 27(16.3%) and 29(17.5%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that the society generally regards women politicians as infidelity and irresponsible were as 45(27.1%) and 64(38.6%) agreed and strongly agreed that the society generally regards women politicians as infidelity cum irresponsible with 1(0.6%) non-response. Furthermore, in Baruten 32(31.1%) and 14(13.6%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that the society generally regards women politicians as infidelity /irresponsible while 25(24.3%) and 30(29.1%) respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the society generally regards women politicians as infidelity and irresponsible with 2(1.9%) non-response. Finally in Offa, 16(20.5%) and 11(14.1%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed on the statement that, the society generally regards women politicians as infidelity/irresponsible while 26(33.3%) and 25(32.1%) of respondents supported that the society generally regards women politician as infidelity and irresponsible.

Hence, as reflected in the above data analysis, majority of the respondents in the selected local government supported the assertion that, the society generally regards women politicians as infidelity and irresponsible. To buttress the data presented, here are comments made by some selected interviewed respondents.

Alhaja Iyabo APC women leader in Offa posited that:

> *The perspectives which members of the society viewed women politicians are not encouraging; particularly the married women. Most of them, their husbands curtail their participation (Fieldwork, 2017).*

In addition, the Baruten PDP women leader also supported the assertion that:

> *Most women disengage themselves from political participation so as not to be stained by barbaric words of the societal members regarding them; as infidelity and irresponsible. Thus in addition, she confirms that the society only recognized women roles to be solely family/domestic work at home (Fieldwork, 2017).*

Sequel to the respective views of respondents in the selected local government areas, it was confirmed that, the society generally regards women politicians as infidelity cum irresponsible to their home, family and husband. With this, most of the women disengage themselves from any form of political participation so as not to be called by those barbaric words *(Author, 2017).*

iii. On the basis of political competence, our society rate men over women

Table 3 Distribution of respondents on women incompetency and inequality

Cultural Factors	**Strongly Disagree**		**Disagree**		**Non-Response**		**Agree**		**Strongly Agree**		**Total**
	F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	
Ilorin West	**70**	**42.2**	**43**	**25.9**	**3**	**1.8**	**29**	**17.5**	**21**	**12.7**	166(100%)
Baruten	16	15.5	31	30.1	1	1.0	32	31.1	23	22.3	103(100%)
Offa	7	9.0	13	16.7	4	1.1	38	48.7	20	25.6	78(100%)

Source: Field Reports, 2016

Table 3 above table showed that in Ilorin west 43(25.9%) and 70(42.2%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that on the basis of political competence, our society rate men over women while 29(17.5%) and 21(12.7%) agreed and strongly agreed that on the basis of political competence, our society rate men over women with 3(1.8%) non-response. Furthermore, in Baruten 31(30.1%) and 16(15.5%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that on the basis of political competence, our society rate men over women while 32(31.1%) and 23(22.3%) respondents agreed and strongly agreed that on the basis of political competence, our society rate men over women with 1(1.0%) non-response. This table also showed that in Offa 13(16.7%) and 7(9.0%) of respondents disagree and strongly disagree on the statement that on the basis of political competence, our society rate men over women while 38(48.7%) and 20(25.6%) of respondents supported that on the basis of political competence, our society rate men over women.

Thus, respondents reacted to this question based on the societal setting; as the statement was rejected in Ilorin west indicating that the society perceived the women to possessed high potential and competency while in Baruten and Offa it was supported as majority of the respondents argued in support that our society rates men over women on the basis of political competency. This showed that, women were only given little or no chance to participate in the political affairs of the state. To buttress the data presented, here are comments made by some selected interviewed respondents:

The **respondents A1** from Ilorin West local government area of Kwara state, rejected the assertion, she opined that based on the civilization and myriad of awareness in the area; women were perceived to be political competence if they were fully empowered and guide right towards political power acquisition; she added that Ilorin west have install women as vice chairman in the local government and many women were also on the race to political aspirant in the forth coming local government election.

The **respondents B1 and C1** in Baruten and Offa local government lamented that the societal setting have allowed men to be rate more d as per political competency. Thus, they explained that the society rated women to be under controlled of the male counterpart and have political assurance cum confidence on the men than the women.

In summary, societal milieu also played credent role in this situation as majority of respondents in Ilorin west local government rejected the assertion that on the basis of political competence, our society rates men over women. While Baruten and Offa local government expressed bitterness on the rate at which the society rated men over women on the basis of political competence.

iv. The domination of men in politics discourage women from participation

Table 4 Distribution of Respondents on male political dominance

Cultural Factors	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Non-Response		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Ilorin West	19	11.4	41	24.7	4	2.4	83	50.0	19	11.4	166(100%)
Baruten	8	7.8	30	29.1	1	1.0	34	33.0	30	29.1	103(100%)
Offa	6	7.7	16	20.5	-	-	36	46.2	20	25.6	78(100%)

Source: Field Reports, 2016

Table 4above table showed that in Ilorin west 41 (24.7%) and 19(11.4%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that, the domination of men in politics discourages women from participation while 83(50.0%) and 19(11.4%) agreed and strongly agreed that the domination of men in politics discourages women from participation with 4(2.4%) non-response. Likewise as it was indicated in Baruten local government 31 (29.1%) and 8(7.8%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that the domination of men in politics discourages women from participation while 34(33.0%) and 30(29.1%) respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the domination of men in politics discourages women from participation with 1(1.0%) non-response. This table also showed that in Offa local government 16(20.5%) and 6(7.7%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed on the statement that the domination of men in politics discourages women from participation while 36(46.2%) and 20(25.6%) of respondents supported that the domination of men in politics discourages women from participation.

Consequent to the above data analysis, it was denoted that majority of respondents in the three selected local government opined that the domination of men in politics discourages women from participation as various political positions were occupied by men and even to some extent only few women aspirants as against numerous men counterpart.
To buttress the quantitative data presented above, here are response made by some selected interviewed respondents.

The **respondents A2** from Ilorin West local government area of Kwara state, stated that male dominance in the political terrain have discouraged most of her fellow women who have the interest; she pin-pointed on god-fatherism syndrome in Nigerian politics; as most of the people to rally-around for support in nursing political ambitious were men possessing selfish interest (Fieldwork, 2017).

The respondent B2 from Baruten local government emphasized that; it's hardly women nurse political ambition as politics are majorly categorized to be solely for men; that the only areas women were needed is for rally, she also prostrate that even in the rally female seen found themselves un-fits as against their male counterpart.

Reference to the above views by respondents in the selected three (3) local governments of Kwara State, evidence showed that the domination of men in politics discourages women from

political participation; despite the proclamations of section 42 of 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended, declare equal participation of all citizenry in respective of tribe colour, gender and religious.

v. **Our culture does not encourage women's involvement in politics**

Table 5 Distribution of Respondents on cultural discouragement

Cultural Factors	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Non-Response		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Ilorin West	62	37.3	48	28.9	4	2.4	34	20.5	18	10.8	166(100%)
Baruten	19	18.4	37	35.9	1	1.0	31	30.1	15	14.6	103(100%)
Offa	10	12.8	22	28.2	2	2.6	21	26.9	23	29.5	78(100%)

Source: Field Reports, 2016

Table 5 above showed that in Ilorin west 48(28.9%) and 62(37.3%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed on assertion that our culture does not encourage women's involvement in politics while 34(20.5%) and 18(10.8%) agree and strongly agreed that our culture does not encourage women's involvement in politics with 3(1.8%) non-response. Furthermore, in Baruten 37(35.9%) and 19(18.4%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that our culture does not encourage women's involvement in politics while 31(30.1%) and 15(14.6%) respondents agreed and strongly agreed that our culture does not encourage women's involvement in politics with 1(1.0%) non-response. This table also showed that in Offa 22(28.2%) and 10(12.8%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed on the statement that our culture does not encourage women's involvement in politics while 21(26.9.7%) and 23(29.5%) of respondents opined that our culture does not encourage women's involvement in politics.

As reflected in the above table, evidence showed that majority of respondents argued against the aforementioned statement which stated that our culture does not encourage women's involvement in politics. As this quantitative data were also supported by the comments of interviewed respondents.

The respondent A3 from Ilorin west make some declaration that the culture of the land does not forbids them from acquiring political position; but it was just lacked of awareness on the importance of political participation among women. In addition she buttress that the male counterpart in the society forged unspoken words so as to scare the women politicians cum aspirants.

The respondents C3 from Offa; also connotes there is nothing like culture restricting them from participating but poor finance and lack of empowerment among women as politics cannot be fully practiced without finance. Without an iota of doubt, evidence showed clearly in response to respondents' opinions that the culture naturally does not forbids women from political power acquisition.

vi. The majority of women in this local government are not educated enough to participate in politics

Table 6 Distribution of Respondents on women's educational resources

Socio-Economics Factors	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Non-Response		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Ilorin West	29	17.5	54	32.5	4	2.4	30	18.1	49	29.5	166(100%)
Baruten	22	21.4	31	30.1	1	1.0	35	34.0	14	13.6	103(100%)
Offa	8	10.3	20	25.6	-	-	23	29.5	27	34.6	78(100%)

Source: Field Reports, 2016

Table 6 above table showed that in Ilorin west 54 (32.5%) and 29(17.5%) respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that majority of women in the local government are not educated enough to participate in politics while 30(18.1%) and 49(29.5%) agree and strongly agreed that the majority of women in this local government are not educated enough to participate in politics with 4(2.4%) non-response. Also the table showed that in Baruten 31(30.1%) and 22(21.4%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that the majority of women in this local government are not educated enough to participate in politics while 35(34.0%) and 14(13.6%) respondents agreed and strongly agreed that on the basis of political competence, our society rate men over women with 1(1.0%) non-response. This table also showed that in Offa 20(25.6%) and 8(10.3%) of respondents disagree and strongly disagree the majority of women in this local government are not educated enough to participate in politics while 23(29.5%) and 27(34.6%) of respondents the majority of women in this local government are not educated enough to participate in politics.

Considering the opinion of respondents; as depicted by the above illustrations, respondents in Ilorin west and Baruten local government make it clear that women possessed the academic qualification required for them to contest and participate in politics that educational qualification does not affect or hinder women political participation. Thus this opinion was further explained by interviewed respondents' comments:

The **respondent A4 and B4**; comment that most of the women in their ward possessed at least O' Level and above which it is constitutional requirement for an elective positions particularly at the grass-root level.

The **respondent C4** in Offa local government posited that the few learner women in this local government don't even show interest to lest of participation. She lamented most of the women that developed interest in becoming political aspirant were something curtail and pull down as regards to not possessing the academic qualification

A cursory look at the opinion of the respondents in this study, it is apparently that educational resources only affected women in Offa while in Baruten and Ilorin west showed that majority of the women possessed the educational qualification for power acquisition and politics

vi. **The kind of occupations of women in this local government does not afford them the opportunity to participate in politics**

Table 7: Distribution of respondents on women's occupational resources

Socio-Economics Factors	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Non-Response		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Ilorin West	70	42.2	64	38.6	1	.6	19	11.4	12	7.2	166(100%)
Baruten	19	18.4	38	36.9	1	1.0	26	25.2	19	18.4	103(100%)
Offa	10	12.8	12	15.3	-	-	28	35.9	28	35.9	78(100%)

Source: Field Reports, 2016

Table 7 above table showed that in Ilorin west 70(42.2%) and 64(38.6%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree that the kind of occupations of women in this local government does not afford them the opportunity to participate in politics while 19(11.4%) and 12(7.2%) agree and strongly agreed that the kind of occupations of women in this local government does not afford them the opportunity to participate in politics with 1(0.6%) non-response.

Also the table showed that in Baruten 38(36.19%) and 19(18.4%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that the kind of occupations of women in this local government does not afford them the opportunity to participate in politics while 26(25.2%) and 19(18.4%) respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the kind of occupations of women in this local government does not afford them the opportunity to participate in politics with 1(1.0%) non-

response. This table also showed that in Offa 12(15.3%) and 10(12.8%) of respondents disagree and strongly disagree on the fact that the kind of occupations of women in this local government does not afford them the opportunity to participate in politics while 28(35.9%) and 28(35.9%) of respondents the kind of occupations of women in this local government does not afford them the opportunity to participate in politics.

In addition to the above anlaysis here are the opinions of interviewed respondents;
Respondent C5 responded that the kind of occupation women engage in Offa were either petty trading or working the government which without doubt have no restrictant to their participation in politics; she even mere mention of the roles of market leader towards supporting politician.

Respondent A5 and B5 in Ilorin west and Baruten shows that the occupation of women does not afford them the financial strength to contest for any political position; That most of the women were regarded as fellowship. Evaluating the responds of respondents from the selected local government, evident showed that educational qualification affect women in Baruten and Ilorin but does not affect women in Offa Local government.

Viii Lack of financial strength makes it difficult for women in this local government to participate in politics

Table 8: Distribution of Respondents on women's financial sponsorship

Socio-Economics Factors	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Non-Response		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Ilorin West	19	11.4	36	21.7	3	1.8	57	34.3	51	30.7	166(100%)
Baruten	9	8.7	25	24.3	2	1.9	39	37.9	28	27.2	103(100%)
Offa	5	6.4	17	21.8	-	-	24	30.8	32	41.0	78(100%)

Source: Field Reports, 2016

Table 8 above table showed that in Ilorin west 36 (21.7%) and 19(11.4%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree that lack of financial strength makes it difficult for women in this local government to participate in politics while 57(34.3%) and 51(30.7%) agree and strongly agreed that the kind of occupations of women in this local government does not afford them the opportunity to participate in politics with 3(1.8%) non-response.

Also the table showed that in Baruten 25(24.3%) and 9(8.7%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that lack of financial strength makes it difficult for women in this local government to participate in politics while 39(37.9%) and 28(27.2%) respondents agreed and strongly agreed that lack of financial strength makes it difficult for women in this local government to participate in politics with 2(1.9%) non-response. This table also showed that in Offa 17(21.8%) and 5(6.4%) of respondents disagree and strongly disagree on the fact that lack of financial strength makes it difficult for women in this local government to participate in politics while 24(30.8%) and 32(41.0%) of respondents that lack of financial strength makes it difficult for women in this local government to participate in politics.

The Respondent A6 highly discussed extensively on the role of finance to women political participation; she lamented that women were only entitle to little or no financial support the most of the appointment and empowerment that will elevate women financial buoyant were being deny. Thus, she entrench that the political terrain of Nigeria was structured into money politics that even their fellow women cannot support candidate that cannot entice them with money.
In addition, **Respondent C6** from Offa, opined that the cost of campaign, party form and other logistic expenses scare majority of the women in the ward from being contesting from any political positions.

Furthermore **Respondent B6** from Baruten, as she explain based on her experience, that the money and other economic items she budget to nurse her political ambition was not enough and there was no external financial support.

Following the response from respondents; evident shows that Lack of financial strength makes it difficult for women in the selected local government local to participate in politics. Consequently, the only way through women political participation can enhance is by supporting the women financial particularly by the political party they belong and subsiding the cost of purchasing form.

ix.The level of women's literacy in this local government hinders them from participating in politics

Table 9: Distribution of Respondents on women's literacy

Socio-Economics Factors	**Strongly Disagree**		**Disagree**		**Non-Response**		**Agree**		**Strongly Agree**		**Total**
	F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	
Ilorin West	24	14.5	28	16.9	1	0.6	55	33.1	58	34.9	166(100%)
Baruten	11	10.7	43	41.7	-	-	29	28.2	20	19.4	103(100%)
Offa	8	10.3	18	23.1	-	-	27	34.6	25	32.1	78(100%)

Source: Field Reports, 2016

Table 9 above table showed that in Ilorin west 28 (16.9%) and 24(14.5%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree that the level of women's literacy in this local government hinders them from participating in politics while 55(33.1%) and 58(34.9%) agree and strongly agreed that the level of women's literacy in this local government hinders them from participating in politics with 1(0.6%) non-response.

Also the table showed that in Baruten 11(10.7%) and 43(41.7%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that the level of women's literacy in this local government hinders them from participating in politics while 29(28.2%) and 20(19.4%) respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the level of women's literacy in this local government hinders them from participating in politics. This table also showed that in Offa 18(23.1%) and 8(10.3%) of respondents disagree and strongly disagree that the level of women's literacy in this local government hinders them from participating in politics while (34.6%) and 25(32.1%) of respondents agree and strongly agree that the level of women's literacy in this local government hinders them from participating in politics.

As depicted by the above table; it's inevitable to say that the level of women's literacy in Ilorin west and Offa local government hinders them from participating in politics. This means that adequate awareness are not readily made available to change the mind set of people towards politics while Baruten as explained by the statistical data showed that the level of literacy among women were very high; as most of the women knows the importance of political participation.

To buttress the data, here were the comments made by interviewed respondents:

Respondents A7: she explained than more education and political mobilization is needed to be carried out; particularly among the market women; explaining the significant of their participation.

The Respondent B7 from Baruten denoted that the literacy level among the women in the local government is not significant as more awareness is needed to be created so as to sensitize women.

x **Our religious heritage do not encourage women to participate in politics**

Table 10: Distribution of Respondents on Religious beliefs

Historical Heritages	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Non-Response		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Ilorin West	109	65.7	29	17.5	1	.6	18	10.8	9	5.4	166(100%)
Baruten	16	15.5	38	36.9	2	1.9	29	28.2	20	19.4	103(100%)
Offa	3	3.8	22	28.2	-	-	34	43.6	19	24.4	78(100%)

Source: Field Reports, 2016

Table 10 above table showed that in Ilorin west 29 (17.5%) and 109(65.7%) respondents disagree and strongly disagree that our religious heritage do not encourage women to participate in politics while 18(10.8%) and 9(9.4%) agree and strongly agreed that our religious heritage do not encourage women to participate in politics with 1(0.6%) non-response. Also the table showed that in Baruten 38(36.9%) and 16(15.5%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that our religious heritage do not encourage women to participate in politics while 29(28.2%) and 20(19.2%) respondents agreed and strongly agreed that our religious heritage do not encourage women to participate in politics with 2(1.9%) non-response. In Offa 22(28.2%) and 3(3.8%) of respondents disagree and strongly disagree that our religious heritage do not encourage women to participate in politics while 34(43.6%) and 19(24.4%) of respondents agree and strongly agree that our religious heritage do not encourage women to participate in politics.

Sequent to the above data, evidence showed that religious relief does not affect women political participation in Ilorin west; but different is the case in Baruten and Offa local government as Respondents lament on the effects of socio-cultural cum religious belief which restricted majority of interested women into participating in politics.

Hypothesis: (H0)- There is no significant influence between cultural cum socio-economic factors and women's political participation in Baruten Local Government Council

Table 11. Chi-square test statistics

Cultural Believes	Chi-Square	Df	Asymp. Sig.
Ilorin West	26.346[a]	3	.000
Baruten	12.353[a]	3	.006
Offa	5.786	3	0.122

Chi-square test statistics

Socio-Economic Believes	Chi-Square	Df	Asymp. Sig.
Ilorin West	21.221[b]	3	.000
Baruten	18.248[b]	3	.000
Offa	3.930	1	.047

a. Local govt. of respondents: Baruten local govt.
b. Independent Variable: cultural and socio-economic factors
c. Dependent Variable: Women political participation

The table 11 showed the influence of each of the independent variable to the model and its significance. As depicted in the above data analysis; hypothesis (H0) was rejected in Ilorin west local government with Chi-square value of 26.346 and 21.221 with a corresponding p-value of 0.000 and 0.000 respectively which is less than the conventional significant value (0.05) so therefore, the result showed that there is a significant influence between Culture cum socio-economic and women political participation.

In Baruten local government; hypothesis (H0) was also rejected with Chi-square value of 12.353 and 18.248 with a corresponding p-value of 0.006 and .000 respectively which is less than the conventional significant value (0.05) so therefore, the result above also showed that there is a significant influence between Culture cum socio-economic and women political participation.

In Offa however; the hypothesis was accepted with Chi-square value of 5.786 and 20.154 with a corresponding p-value of 0.122 and .000 respectively which is above the conventional significant value (0.05) so therefore, the result showed that there is no significant influence between Culture cum socio-economic and women political participation. NB: as the case may be majority of the respondent dissatisfy on the influence of the societal culture to the level of women political participation. While it was confirmed that socio-economic status influences the level of women political participation in term of elective positions.

Decision: Hypothesis (H0) was rejected in Ilorin west and Baruten but accepted in Offa local government area. The result of interview conducted is analysed below to buttress further the argument of respondents.

The Interview Conducted on the significant influence between cultural cum socio-economic factors and Women's political participation in Baruteen Local Government Council

Respondent A:Baruten PDP Women Leader envisage on the significant influence of culture towards women political engagement. She responded that most women disengage themselves from political participation so as not to be tarnished by barbaric words of the societal members. In addition she further entrenched on the social stratification, as the society is structure to be patriarchy where the men were regarded to be more relevant in political hemisphere as against the women counterpart.

Respondent B: Kwara State House of Assembly Aspirant stated that despite the constitution stipulation on equal political right for both gender irrespective of religious believes, race or ethnic yet some syndrome known to be mere-cultural believes couple with god-fatherism were hallowing Nigerian political system making women weakling women aspiration and inspiration towards politics.

Respondent C:APC women leader Ogidi ward; make some declaration that shed more light to the study, Thus according to her she explained that:"that the culture of the land does not forbids them from acquiring political position; but it was just lack of awareness on the importance of political participation among women" In addition she buttress that "the male counterpart in the society forged unspoken words so as to scare the women political or aspirant".

Respondent D: Secretary to Offa local government Chairmanship acted on and complement Respondent C views that 'there is nothing like culture restricting women from participating but poor finance and lack of empowerment among women as politics cannot be fully practiced without finance".

Respondent E: Former Vice-chairman Offa local government opined that "the cost of campaign, party form and other logistic expenses scared majority of the women in the ward from contesting for elective positions".

Respondent F: Former Baruten supervisory councilor on Welfare; she highly discussed extensively on the role of finance to women political participation; and lamented on the fact that women were only entitle to little or no financial support. She further explains that most of the appointment and empowerment that will financially support their political ambition were being deny. In addition she also pointed that the political terrain of Nigeria was structured into money politics that even their fellow women cannot support female political aspirants' without money.

Major Findings

From the analyses of the questionnaires and interviews above, the following are the findings :

1. it was observed that most women in the selected local government do not see themselves capable enough to hold a political positions
2. We also found out that, there is often low women participation in politics as a result of the fact that, the society generally regards women politicians as irresponsible and unfaithful to their marital vows.
3. We also found out that cultural practices in kwara state does not in any way hindered women in political participation but ignorance on their part do affect them. Many of the women believed that godfather is needed or one has to be financially buoyant before she can involve in political participation forgetting about their population.
4. We also found out that illiteracy play a key role in low women political participation.
5. We also found out that religion is considered as a reason for many of the women low political participation.

Conclusion

The imperative of democratic consolidation in Nigeria requires that women, who constitute half of the national population, should find prominence in the mainstream political development of the nation since democracy is only achievable on the altar of popular participation of every citizen of the society, males and females alike.

Recommendations

In order to achieve the goal of improved women's political participation, the following policy recommendations are suggested.

1. Government should embark on mass campaigns for awareness and sensitization for the need of women to get involved in politics. This will help in eroding the erroneous believe that women in politics are irresponsible and adulterous.
2. The national assembly should ensure that the issue of money politics and vote buying is criminalized in the ongoing electoral reforms. In addition, the Political Parties and gatekeepers within the parties should operate internal democracies so as to select women as candidates and flag bearer for elections by complying with the affirmative action policy. Furthermore, on the finance, the political parties should waive for the women the payment of pre-registration levies for political aspirants in the country as a way of supporting and encouraging women who are politically inclined. This will help in motivating women to actively participate in politics without intimidation of male politicians.
3. Nigerian Governments should domesticate, incorporate and implement CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against women) policies and programmes that was signed and ratified in June 13, 1985; as it would advance gender equality, including in leadership positions, giving women full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making.
4. Government should reform the customary and religious institutions of the states so as to avoid discrimination against women's involvement in public life.

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