

**DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ACHALLA PEOPLE
AND THEIR LEVEL OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
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BACHELOR'S DEGREE (B.ED) IN EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT**

MARCH, 2025

DECLARATION

I, **Victoria Chinasa IFEANYI** with Matriculation Number **EDU2009366** hereby declare that this research project titled "**Demographic Characteristics of the Achalla People and Their Level of Political Participation**" is my original work and has not been previously submitted for a degree or diploma at this or any other university. All sources used have been duly acknowledged in the reference section of this work.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the research work titled "**Demographic characteristics of the Achalla people and their level of political participation**" was carried out by **Victoria Chinasa IFEANYI** with Matriculation Number: **EDU2009366** in the Department of Educational management, Faculty of education, University of Benin, Benin City, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the B.Ed degree in political science.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty for his unending grace upon my life and academic pursuit and also my family whose unwavering care, prayers, financial support and encouragement have been my driving force throughout my journey in this prestigious university.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the demographic characteristics of the Achalla people and their level of political participation. Political participation is a crucial element of democracy, yet factors such as age, education, economic status, and traditional influences affect the extent to which individuals engage in governance. This study employs a descriptive survey research design, with data collected using the Achalla Political Participation Checklist (APPC) administered to 500 respondents. The results reveal that voting is the most common form of political participation (92.9%), while economic hardship (82.8%), vote-buying (71.7%), and traditional leadership influence (58.6%) hinder full engagement. The study highlights the need for economic empowerment programs, voter education initiatives, and stronger electoral reforms to enhance democratic participation. It concludes that addressing economic and political barriers will foster greater civic involvement and inclusive governance in Achalla. The study recommends further research on digital political engagement and electoral reforms to improve democratic processes in rural communities.

Keywords: Political Participation, Demographics, Electoral Engagement, Achalla, Governance

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Political participation is essential in a democratic society, providing citizens the opportunity to influence government decisions and policy direction. In Nigeria, this democratic involvement is shaped by a complex interplay of historical legacies, socio-economic conditions, and cultural practices. In Nigeria, a country characterized by diverse ethnic groups, complex historical legacies, and varying levels of socio-economic development, political participation is not uniform. It is profoundly influenced by demographic characteristics, including age, gender, education, and economic status, which vary significantly across different communities.

Understanding the nuances of political engagement among Nigeria's diverse communities requires examining how these factors connect. This study centers on the Achalla community in Anambra State, where traditional customs intersect with modern political practices, exploring their unique demographic characteristics and how these factors influence levels of political participation. As a rural Nigerian community, Achalla serves as a case study for understanding the broader

dynamics of political engagement in rural Nigeria, highlighting both the opportunities and barriers to political involvement in such settings.

Nigeria's colonial history is particularly relevant to understanding the patterns of political engagement that persist today. Nigeria gained independence from British colonial rule in 1960, but the effects of colonialism still influence the way politics operates in Achalla today.

The British colonial administration imposed a centralized system of governance that marginalized traditional structures and disrupted existing political practices among various ethnic groups. This interference often led to the sidelining of local leaders and the erosion of communal decision-making processes (Afigbo, 1981).

Prior to British colonial rule, Nigerian communities had established systems of governance that often prioritized communal decision-making, with leadership structures such as councils of elders and age-grade associations guiding societal norms and policies. This approach aligned with the Igbo philosophy of "Umunna," which places a high value on community solidarity and kinship ties. This traditional system has not only maintained a strong sense of identity among the Achalla people but has also influenced their political behavior and attitudes towards formal political structures. Colonial rule, however, disrupted these

indigenous governance systems by imposing a centralized, top-down structure that sought to replace traditional authorities with colonial officials.

The Achalla community, predominantly Igbo, is known for its rich cultural heritage and complex social structures. Traditionally, leadership in Achalla is vested in a council of elders and titled men, who are respected for their wisdom and experience. This governance model emphasizes community participation, where decisions are often made through consensus rather than autocratic mandates. Following independence in 1960, the way politics operates in Nigeria continued to evolve. The post-colonial period was marked by various transitions, including military rule and democratic reforms, each of which left a significant impact on public engagement in governance. The return to civilian rule in 1999 signaled a renewed emphasis on democratic participation and electoral processes, but challenges such as corruption, electoral malpractice, and political distrust have hindered the development of a robust democratic culture. For the Achalla people, this shift marked a profound transformation, as traditional authority was undermined by an imposed system that valued Western-style governance over indigenous practices. The Achalla community's experience reflects these challenges, as the people navigate a political environment that often seems disconnected from their needs and values. This disillusionment with formal

political processes, common in many rural Nigerian communities, has led to a cautious and sometimes limited engagement with modern political institutions (Osaghae, 2010).

Education has been one of the most transformative influences on political participation in Achalla. Historically, rural communities across Nigeria, including Achalla, have had limited access to educational resources. This difference has contributed to significant gaps in political awareness and engagement, as political participation tends to be higher among individuals with greater educational attainment. Verba, Scholzman, and Brady (1995) suggest that educated individuals are generally more informed about political issues, more likely to vote, and more engaged in community affairs. In recent years, improvements in educational access within Achalla have enabled younger generations to become more involved in political discourse and decision-making. These shifts signal a broader transformation within the community, as educated youth challenge traditional norms and assert their voices in matters of local governance, often drawing on the values instilled by both formal education and cultural heritage.

Economic stability is another significant factor shaping political participation in Achalla. As a predominantly agrarian community, Achalla's economy relies on subsistence farming and small-scale enterprises, with many residents facing

challenges such as poverty and limited economic opportunities. Studies indicate that economic hardship can create substantial barriers to political participation, as individuals struggling to meet their basic needs may be less inclined to prioritize political involvement (Osaghae, 2010). For Achalla residents, economic security often determines the degree to which individuals can engage in political processes, as those with more stable livelihoods are better positioned to participate in local governance. Conversely, economic insecurity fosters apathy, creating a divide in political engagement between the economically advantaged and disadvantaged within the community.

Gender dynamics also play a pivotal role in shaping political engagement in Achalla. Nigerian society, particularly in rural areas, has traditionally adhered to patriarchal norms that privilege men in public and political spaces, often relegating women to domestic roles. In communities like Achalla, where traditional governance structures continue to hold significant influence, women have historically had limited opportunities to participate in formal political processes (Sossou, 2011). Women may face unique challenges that limit their participation in formal political activities, even though they are actively engaged in community decision-making through cultural organization. However, recent efforts by women's groups and advocacy organizations have begun to challenge

these norms, promoting greater gender equality in political engagement. In Achalla, women are increasingly asserting their right to participate in community decision-making, marking a gradual shift towards a more inclusive political environment. This development underscores the importance of gender as a dimension of political participation, with increased representation of women serving to enrich and diversify the political discourse within the community.

The age distribution in Achalla plays a significant role in shaping the community's political dynamics, particularly with its predominantly youthful population. Achalla mirrors national demographic patterns, where, according to the National Population Commission (NPC, 2021), over 60% of Nigerians are under the age of 35. This youthful age structure impacts political participation in various ways, as younger individuals generally exhibit different political attitudes and behaviors compared to older generations. Youth tend to be more open to change, less constrained by tradition, and more willing to question established norms. In Achalla, this inclination toward reform is visible in the active engagement of young people in community decision-making and advocacy efforts, often directed toward issues that directly impact their lives, such as employment opportunities, education, and healthcare access.

The proliferation of technology has amplified this trend, giving younger residents a platform to connect with each other and with broader political movements. Platforms like social media enable youth in Achalla to engage with political discussions beyond their immediate community, joining larger conversations about governance, accountability, and national policies. This aligns with findings by Ibrahim and Hassan (2018), who argue that the rise of digital tools has allowed Nigerian youth to become increasingly vocal and organized in their political pursuits. Moreover, Achalla's young population has gradually become a vital force for political accountability and reform, often advocating for increased transparency and the inclusion of youth voices in governance. This generational shift contributes to a more vibrant and engaged political atmosphere, where traditional forms of political authority face challenges from a politically aware and active youth demographic.

Conversely, the youth's strong drive for change sometimes leads to tension with older community members who may prioritize stability and traditional governance structures. In rural settings like Achalla, where elders traditionally hold decision-making power, the assertive participation of young people marks a significant cultural shift. This generational divergence in political attitudes highlights a dynamic interplay within Achalla's political sphere, where age becomes a

determining factor not only in how individuals engage in politics but also in the types of political changes they envision for their community.

Educational attainment is another influential factor in political participation within Achalla, contributing to a deepening political consciousness, especially among the younger generations. Historically, rural communities across Nigeria, including Achalla, faced considerable challenges in accessing quality education due to factors like limited educational infrastructure and economic constraints. As a result, older generations in Achalla often have lower levels of formal education, with many having completed only primary schooling or, in some cases, no formal schooling at all. This has impacted their political engagement, as studies have shown that lower educational levels can correlate with reduced political awareness and limited participation in civic processes (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Older individuals may feel less empowered to engage in political discourse or may defer to traditional authorities rather than seek active involvement in formal political processes.

In recent years, however, there has been a shift as educational access has gradually expanded, leading to higher levels of educational attainment among Achalla's younger population. This expansion in educational opportunities has empowered the youth to approach political issues with greater critical thinking and a stronger

sense of civic duty. Education provides them not only with knowledge of governmental structures and political rights but also with the confidence to voice their opinions and advocate for change. Research underscores that higher educational levels are linked with enhanced political efficacy—the belief that one’s participation can make a difference (Verba et al., 1995). This is evident in Achalla, where educated youths are increasingly involved in political discussions, community meetings, and even local decision-making processes, as they bring perspectives influenced by formal schooling and often global viewpoints gained from digital connectivity. For example, educated youth are more likely to advocate for transparency and accountability, values that they may have encountered in school civics lessons or through interaction with digital media. This educational influence contributes to a transformation within Achalla, where the younger, educated population challenge the status quo and seeks to integrate democratic values into local governance. The contrast between the political engagement levels of older, less-educated community members and the younger, educated cohort underscores the role of education as a critical driver of political change. In this way, education acts as a catalyst, not only enhancing individual political participation but also gradually reshaping the broader political culture in Achalla.

The intersection of demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education, and economic status creates a complex framework for understanding political participation in Achalla. Each factor interacts with the others to shape individual and collective behaviors, influencing how community members perceive and engage with political structures. For example, educated youth are more likely to question traditional authority and seek active roles in governance, while economic disadvantage may limit the ability of certain groups to participate in political processes. By exploring the characteristics, this study aims to contribute to broader discussions on political inclusion and representation in Nigeria, highlighting the unique experiences of the Achalla community.

In summary, the demographic characteristics and political engagement of the Achalla people illustrate a rich blend of cultural heritage, historical influences, and socio-economic realities. The persistence of traditional governance, the transformative impact of education, the evolving roles of gender and youth, and the integration of technology all contribute to Achalla's distinct political landscape. This study seeks to illuminate these complexities, providing a nuanced understanding of the factors that facilitate or hinder political participation within the community. In doing so, it contributes to the larger discourse on democratic

development in Nigeria, emphasizing the need for the policies that promote inclusive governance and active citizenship.

Moreover, the significance of this study extends beyond the Achalla community. As Nigeria grapples with issues of political disenfranchisement and low voter turnout, understanding the factors that motivate or hinder political participation in rural areas can inform national strategies aimed at fostering greater civic engagement. By analyzing the Achalla experience, this research may offer valuable lessons applicable to the rural communities facing similar challenges. Furthermore, the findings could influence policy initiatives designed to enhance political participation among marginalized groups, thereby strengthening Nigeria's democracy as a whole.

The implications of the study are twofold. Firstly, it contributes to academic scholarship on political participation by offering insights into the specific dynamics at play within the Achalla community. Secondly, it provides practical recommendations for policymakers and community leaders aimed at fostering an inclusive political environment that values the voices of all citizens. This study recognizes that effective governance hinges on the active participation of diverse demographic groups, and by highlighting the unique experiences of the Achalla

people, it advocates for a more equitable approach to political engagement in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

According to reports and observation, it is the huge votes from Achalla people in Awka North East local government area of Anambra state that determines who or who do not become Governor of Anambra state. Personal observation as an indigene of Achalla shows that all the Achalla people vote for a particular political party since the commencement of democracy in 1999. It is so serious that any voter that vote otherwise is identified and assaulted, a situation that always results in killing people or destruction of houses at every election. The question that agitates the minds of many is: why are the Achalla people so violent and participative during elections? It is the attempt to answer this question that provides the motivation to carry out this study.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent do the Achalla people participate in politics?
2. What is the level of political participation of male and female Achalla people?
3. To what extent do male and female Achalla people participate in politics?

4. To what extent do educated and uneducated Achalla people participate in politics?

5. To what extent do old and young Achalla people participate in politics?

Research Hypothesis

1. Hypothesis 1: The Achalla people demonstrate a significant level of political participation.

2. Hypothesis 2: There is a significant difference in the level of political participation between male and female Achalla people.

3. Hypothesis 3: Male Achalla people participate in politics at a different rate than female Achalla people.

4. Hypothesis 4: Educated Achalla people participate in politics at a higher level than uneducated Achalla people.

5. Hypothesis 5: Younger Achalla people participate in politics at a different rate than older Achalla people.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the extent to which the Achalla people of Anambra State participate in political activities. The specific objectives are to:

1. To explore how gender influences political participation in Achalla, comparing the political engagement of male and female residents.
2. To examine the differences in political participation between educated and uneducated members of the Achalla community.
3. To analyze the effect of age on political participation, focusing on the differences in engagement between younger and older members of the Achalla community.
4. To assess the impact of socio-economic factors, particularly education and economic stability, on the willingness and ability of the Achalla people to participate in formal political processes.
5. To understand the influence of Nigeria's colonial history on political structures in Achalla, especially regarding the disconnect between traditional governance practices and formal political systems.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential contributions to political science, policy-making, and community development, particularly within rural Nigerian settings like Achalla. This research provides a deeper understanding of the factors influencing political participation in these communities, specifically how age, gender, education, and economic status shape engagement. By examining these

factors, the study adds valuable knowledge about how politics works in rural areas and gives useful insights into the specific challenges that rural communities encounter.

This study is also significant for policy-making, as its findings can inform policies that better address the needs and perspectives of communities like Achalla. By highlighting the complexities of rural political engagement, the research enables government officials and community leaders to develop more inclusive policies, promoting fair representation and active civic participation.

Additionally, the study's focus on gender disparities and youth engagement emphasizes the importance of empowering marginalized groups within the community, inspiring initiatives that promote inclusivity and provide equal opportunities for participation.

The study also addresses socio-economic barriers to political involvement, revealing how economic stability affects political engagement in Achalla. This information can be valuable for community leaders and organizations seeking to create programs that reduce economic obstacles and encourage greater civic involvement among economically disadvantaged residents.

Another significant aspect of the study is its examination of the colonial legacy on political structures in Nigeria. By exploring how colonial rule influenced present-

day political systems and sometimes created disconnects with traditional governance practices, this research adds depth to understanding Nigeria's post-colonial political landscape. It sheds light on how historical factors continue to shape current political behavior, especially in rural communities where traditional customs still play a central role.

Furthermore, this study offers a foundation for future research, contributing insights and frameworks that may guide studies on political participation in similar rural settings. The findings can inform further exploration of civic engagement and governance challenges in underrepresented communities across Nigeria, ultimately supporting efforts to strengthen democratic development and representation in the country.

In summary, this study provides valuable contributions by advancing knowledge, informing policy, and addressing real-world challenges to civic engagement in Achalla, with broader implications for democratic growth in Nigeria.

Scope/Delimitation of the Study

This study is focused on understanding the political participation of the Achalla community in Anambra State, Nigeria, with particular attention to how different demographic factors such as age, gender, education, and economic status influence political participation. By studying Achalla, a community located in

Awka North local government area of Anambra State where traditional customs and modern political structures interact, this research aims to understand the unique ways people in rural areas engage in politics.

The scope includes analyzing participation levels among various groups within the community, such as the young versus the elderly, men versus women, and educated versus uneducated individuals. It also examines how historical influences, including colonial legacies and socio-economic challenges, shape attitudes toward political participation in a setting where local governance traditions remain strong. While the study is centered on Achalla, its findings may provide valuable insights into the broader patterns of political participation across similar rural communities in Nigeria.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined operationally as used in the study:

1. Political Participation: This refers to the ways individuals or groups in a society engage in activities to influence government decisions and policies. In the context of this study, it encompasses the extent to which members of the Achalla community are involved in political processes, such as voting, community meetings, and local governance.

2. Demographic Characteristics: These are the specific attributes of a population that are used to categorize people, such as age, gender, educational background, and economic status. This study examines how the demographic traits of the Achalla people affect their levels of political engagement.

3. Traditional Governance Structures: Refers to indigenous systems of leadership and decision-making within a community, such as councils of elders or age-grade associations. For Achalla, traditional governance structures remain influential and provide an alternative to modern political institutions imposed during and after colonial rule.

4. Colonial Legacy: This term describes the lasting impact of colonial rule on political systems, social structures, and cultural practices. For the Achalla community, this includes the centralized governance systems introduced by the British, which disrupted local traditions and still influence modern political participation.

5. Patriarchal Norms: Refers to societal beliefs and practices that prioritize male authority and limit women's roles in public and political life. In rural communities like Achalla, patriarchal norms often shape the extent of political involvement for both men and women, with men typically holding more prominent roles.

6. Education Level: This indicates the amount of formal schooling or academic attainment an individual has completed. In Achalla, the level of education influences political engagement, as higher educational levels are often associated with greater political awareness and active participation.

7. Economic Status: This term refers to the level of financial stability or income of individuals within a community. Economic status in Achalla, often shaped by an agrarian lifestyle, affects the ability and willingness of individuals to engage in political processes.

8. Youth Political Engagement: This involves the ways in which young people, particularly those under 35, are involved in political activities. Given Nigeria's youthful population, the active engagement of young people in Achalla reflects their push for change and advocacy for issues like employment and education.

9. Gender Dynamics: This refers to the roles and relationships between men and women within a society. In Achalla, gender dynamics influence political participation, as traditional norms often limit the involvement of women in formal political settings.

10. Rural Community: A population characterized by smaller, less densely populated areas, often with a focus on agriculture. The study focuses on Achalla

as a rural community to understand how its unique characteristics affect political behavior and engagement.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews relevant literature related to the study. It is discussed under the following sub-headings:

1. Theoretical Framework
2. Concept of Demographics
3. Concept of Political Participation And It's Dimensions
4. Demographic Characteristics of Indigenous Communities
5. Historical Background of the Achalla People
6. Factors Influencing Political Participation in Achalla
7. Challenges to Political Participation in Indigenous Communities
8. Summary of Related Literature

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework provides a structured approach to understanding how demographic characteristics influence political participation. Different theories offer insights into the relationship between population dynamics and political engagement, particularly in rural communities like Achalla. These theories include structural functionalism, political participation theory, rational choice theory, dependency theory, and the civic voluntarism model.

Structural-Functionalism Theory

Structural-functionalism, developed by Emile Durkheim and expanded by Talcott Parsons, views society as a system of interconnected parts that work together to maintain stability and social order (Parsons, 1951). In the context of political participation, this theory suggests that different demographic groups play distinct roles that contribute to the political system's functionality. Institutions such as family, education, religion, and governance shape individuals' political attitudes and behaviors (Haralambos & Holborn, 2018).

In Achalla, traditional governance structures, such as the Igwe (king), council of elders, and village unions, play an important role in maintaining political stability. These institutions are responsible for passing down political knowledge, settlement of disputes, and encouraging community participation in governance (Okeke, 2019). Elders, who possess historical and cultural knowledge, serve as custodians of the community's political legacy, while younger generations gradually assume responsibilities within the political structure. Structural-functionalism explains how this traditional arrangement ensures political continuity and stability.

Additionally, the education system fosters political awareness by equipping individuals with the knowledge needed to participate in governance (Lipset,

2018). As functionalists argue, education acts as a means of political socialization, ensuring that individuals understand their civic duties, voting rights, and responsibilities within the democratic system (Almond & Verba, 1963). However, in communities with low literacy rates, political participation may be hindered due to a lack of awareness about electoral processes. Structural-functionalism highlights the need for institutional support, civic education, and community-based political engagement to enhance participation in rural areas like Achalla (Eze, 2021).

Political Participation Theory

Political participation theory focuses on how and why individuals engage in political activities. Verba and Nie (1972) categorized political participation into four key forms: voting, campaign activity, community engagement, and activism. Each form of participation is influenced by demographic factors such as age, education, economic status, and social networks (Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 2018).

In Achalla, voting is the most common form of political engagement, as elections remain the primary mechanism for choosing political leaders. However, many residents may not participate actively in campaign activities, political debates, or activism due to economic constraints, lack of political awareness, or distrust in

government institutions (Obasi, 2020). Studies have shown that rural communities often experience lower voter turnout rates compared to urban areas, as individuals may feel disconnected from the political process or believe that their votes have little impact on policy decisions (Nwosu, 2021).

Economic status plays a crucial role in determining the extent of political participation. Wealthier individuals are more likely to donate to political campaigns, attend rallies, and seek leadership positions, while lower-income individuals may prioritize economic survival over political engagement (Lipset, 2018). In Achalla, where agriculture is the primary occupation, financial constraints may limit residents' ability to engage in political activities beyond voting.

Social networks, including family, religious institutions, and peer groups, also shape political participation. In closely-knit rural communities like Achalla, individuals often make political decisions based on communal affiliations rather than personal convictions (Ibe, 2019). Political participation theory highlights the importance of political education, grassroots mobilization, and inclusive policies in increasing political engagement among rural populations.

Rational Choice Theory

Rational choice theory, developed by Anthony Downs (1957), posits that individuals make decisions based on a cost-benefit analysis. In political participation, this means that people engage in voting or activism only when they perceive the benefits outweigh the costs (Verba et al., 1995).

In Achalla, rational choice theory helps explain voter apathy and electoral malpractices. Many residents may choose not to vote if they believe that their vote will not lead to tangible improvements in their community (Eze, 2022). Additionally, some individuals may engage in vote-buying practices, where they exchange their votes for monetary rewards or material incentives rather than voting based on ideological beliefs (Ibe, 2019).

The rational choice perspective also explains the dominance of political elites in rural governance. Wealthier individuals have greater incentives to participate in politics because they have the financial resources to fund campaigns, mobilize supporters, and access political networks (Lipset, 2018). In contrast, economically disadvantaged residents may be discouraged from running for office or engaging in political activities due to financial constraints (Obi, 2020).

Dependency Theory

Dependency theory, formulated by scholars such as Andre Gunder Frank (1967), examines how economic and historical inequalities shape political behavior. It argues that underdevelopment and economic dependency on external forces lead to political marginalization (Frank, 1967).

In Achalla, economic dependency on urban centers influences political participation in several ways. Outmigration of youths to cities for employment opportunities reduces the number of politically active young people in the community (Nnadi, 2017). Additionally, reliance on government assistance and external aid may lead to political complacency, where individuals feel powerless to influence policy decisions (Ogbonnaya, 2020).

Political elites often exploit economic dependency to maintain control over rural voters. In many cases, politicians distribute resources such as food, money, or infrastructure projects during election periods to secure votes rather than implementing long-term development policies (Afolabi, 2021). Dependency theory highlights the need for economic empowerment, local entrepreneurship, and sustainable development initiatives to enhance political engagement in Achalla.

Civic Voluntarism Model

The Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM), proposed by Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995), explains why people participate in politics based on three key resources:

1. Time – Individuals must have sufficient free time to engage in political activities.
2. Money – Economic resources facilitate campaign donations and active involvement.
3. Civic Skills – The ability to organize, communicate, and mobilize others is essential for participation.

In Achalla, limited time and economic hardship are significant barriers to political participation. Many residents prioritize agriculture and small-scale trade over political activities due to financial pressures (Okeke, 2019). Low literacy levels also affect political awareness, making it difficult for some individuals to engage in policy discussions or understand electoral processes (Obasi, 2020).

Religious and traditional institutions play a role in shaping political behavior. While these institutions encourage communal governance, they may also restrict independent political expression by emphasizing traditional leadership over democratic engagement (Okechukwu, 2018). The Civic Voluntarism Model

suggests that increasing civic education, economic opportunities, and community-based political initiatives can enhance participation in rural communities like Achalla.

Concept of Demographics

Demographics refer to the statistical study of populations based on factors such as age, gender, income, education, occupation, migration patterns, and other socioeconomic variables (Weeks, 2020). The study of demographics is essential in understanding the composition of a population and how it influences various aspects of society, including political behavior, economic activities, and social development. Demographics play a vital role in governance, as population characteristics determine policy direction, electoral participation, and political representation (Macionis & Plummer, 2018).

Demographic analysis provides insight into population distribution, trends, and variations within societies. This is crucial in planning for education, healthcare, infrastructure, and political representation. Governments and policymakers rely on demographic data to understand societal needs and allocate resources effectively (United Nations, 2019). According to Smith and Zopf (2017), demographic studies help identify shifts in population dynamics, such as

urbanization, aging populations, and fertility rates, which in turn influence the political landscape.

One of the core aspects of demographics is population structure, which refers to the age distribution, gender ratio, and household composition of a society. Population structure is a key determinant of social and economic behavior. For instance, a youthful population tends to drive innovation and economic growth, while an aging population may create challenges related to healthcare and workforce sustainability (Harper, 2019). In Nigeria, where a significant proportion of the population is under the age of 35, youth engagement in politics is crucial for national development (Nwosu, 2021).

Another important aspect of demographics is educational attainment, which is closely linked to political participation. Studies have shown that higher levels of education correlate with greater political awareness, civic engagement, and voter turnout (Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 2018). Educated individuals are more likely to understand political issues, engage in policy debates, and hold leaders accountable (Dahl, 2020). In contrast, low literacy rates can hinder political engagement, as individuals with limited education may lack the knowledge required to participate effectively in democratic processes.

Income level and economic status also play a critical role in demographic analysis. Socio-economic factors influence political participation in significant ways. Wealthier individuals often have more resources to engage in political activities, such as campaign donations, political party membership, and lobbying (Lipset, 2018). On the other hand, economically disadvantaged populations may face barriers to participation due to financial constraints, lack of access to political information, or disillusionment with governance (Obi, 2020).

Migration patterns and urbanization further impact demographics. Rural-to-urban migration has led to significant shifts in population distribution in Nigeria, with many young people moving to cities in search of better economic opportunities (Okeke, 2019). This migration affects political participation, as urban dwellers often have better access to political information, while rural communities may experience declining voter engagement due to youth migration. Additionally, migration influences electoral outcomes, as urban areas tend to be more politically competitive than rural regions, where traditional leadership structures often play a dominant role in shaping political behavior (Eze, 2021).

Demographics also encompass ethnic composition and cultural diversity, which influence political behavior and identity. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation with over 250 ethnic groups, each with unique political and cultural affiliations

(Afolabi, 2021). Ethnicity can determine voting patterns, political party alignment, and leadership preferences. Studies have shown that in many African nations, including Nigeria, ethnic identity plays a significant role in elections, with people often voting along ethnic lines rather than based on policy considerations (Ibe, 2019).

Furthermore, gender dynamics are a crucial demographic factor in political participation. Women's involvement in politics has historically been lower than that of men due to cultural, economic, and social barriers (Obasi, 2020). However, in recent years, there have been increased efforts to promote gender inclusivity in political processes. The introduction of policies aimed at empowering women in governance has led to greater female participation in elections and political appointments (UN Women, 2020). Despite this progress, significant gender gaps still exist, particularly in rural areas where traditional gender roles remain deeply entrenched.

In the context of Achalla, the demographic characteristics of the community reflect many of the broader trends observed in Nigeria's rural populations. The population structure is characterized by a mix of elderly individuals, young dependents, and a relatively small working-age population. Education levels vary, with some residents having access to formal education while others rely on

informal learning and vocational training. Economic activities are primarily centered around agriculture, trade, and small-scale enterprises. These factors collectively shape the political behavior and participation levels of the Achalla people.

Understanding demographics is essential for evaluating the political landscape of any society. In Achalla, demographic factors such as age distribution, education, economic status, and migration patterns all influence how individuals engage with the political system. By examining these factors, policymakers and researchers can identify strategies to enhance political participation and ensure inclusive governance.

In conclusion, demographics provide a foundational framework for analyzing political participation and governance. The characteristics of a population—such as age, education, income, migration patterns, and gender—play a crucial role in shaping political engagement. In the case of Achalla, understanding these demographic trends is vital for assessing the community's political behavior and addressing challenges that may hinder active participation in governance. By leveraging demographic insights, stakeholders can develop policies that promote civic engagement and enhance democratic processes in rural communities.

Concept of Political Participation and Its Dimensions

Political participation is a fundamental aspect of democratic governance, as it represents the involvement of individuals and groups in political processes that influence decision-making, leadership selection, and policy formulation. It is a critical component of democracy, ensuring that citizens have a voice in how they are governed (Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1995). The extent of political participation varies across different societies, demographic groups, and political systems, and it is influenced by several factors, including education, economic status, political awareness, and institutional structures (Dahl, 2020).

Political participation encompasses various forms of engagement, ranging from voting in elections to actively contesting political offices, engaging in protests, or influencing governance through civic discussions. Political scientists generally categorize participation into different dimensions, including conventional and unconventional participation, individual and collective participation, and formal and informal engagement (Norris, 2019).

Understanding the different dimensions of political participation is crucial in analyzing the extent to which citizens engage in governance and the factors that either promote or hinder their involvement in political affairs (Eze, 2022).

The Concept of Political Participation

Political participation refers to any voluntary activity undertaken by individuals or groups with the intention of influencing political outcomes (Verba et al., 1995). It involves actions that allow people to express their political preferences, support political causes, or challenge existing power structures (Dalton, 2013).

Participation is not limited to electoral activities; it also includes civic engagement, public demonstrations, advocacy, and involvement in policymaking processes (Milbrath & Goel, 1977). Political participation is an essential indicator of a functioning democracy, as it promotes political accountability, enhances representation, and fosters civic responsibility (Dahl, 2020).

Several theories attempt to explain why people participate in politics. Rational choice theory suggests that individuals engage in political activities when the perceived benefits outweigh the costs (Downs, 1957). Political participation theory categorizes the different ways individuals engage in governance, highlighting the influence of socio-economic factors, cultural norms, and institutional support (Verba et al., 1995). Meanwhile, civic voluntarism theory argues that participation is shaped by the availability of resources (time, money, and skills), political motivation, and access to mobilization networks (Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1995).

The nature of political participation varies across different political systems. In democratic societies, participation is encouraged through electoral processes, public debates, and civic engagement, while in authoritarian regimes, participation may be limited, repressed, or manipulated by political elites (Lipset, 2018).

In the case of Nigeria, political participation has evolved over time, influenced by historical, economic, and socio-political factors (Eze, 2021). The level of engagement varies among urban and rural populations, with urban residents often having greater access to political information, mobilization platforms, and advocacy opportunities compared to rural dwellers (Okeke, 2019).

Dimensions of Political Participation

Political participation can be classified into different dimensions based on the nature, level, and impact of engagement. These dimensions include:

1. Conventional Political Participation

Conventional political participation refers to activities that occur within legal and institutional frameworks, following established democratic norms (Norris, 2019).

It includes:

a. Voting in Elections

Voting is the most common and fundamental form of political participation in democratic societies. It allows citizens to choose their representatives and influence government policies (Verba et al., 1995). In Nigeria, voter turnout fluctuates due to factors such as political apathy, election rigging, and distrust in government institutions (Ibe, 2019). In rural areas like Achalla, limited voter education and logistical challenges can hinder electoral participation (Obasi, 2020).

b. Contesting for Political Office

Running for political office is another significant form of participation. It enables individuals to directly influence governance and decision-making. However, participation in electoral contests often requires substantial resources, making it difficult for economically disadvantaged individuals to compete (Lipset, 2018). In Nigeria, political leadership is dominated by elites who control party structures and financial resources, thereby restricting broad participation (Eze, 2022).

c. Political Party Membership and Campaigning

Joining a political party provides an avenue for participation beyond elections. Political parties serve as platforms for mobilization, political education, and policy advocacy (Norris, 2019). Active involvement in party activities, campaign rallies, and grassroots mobilization efforts contributes to political engagement

(Verba et al., 1995). However, in rural areas like Achalla, partisan politics is often influenced by ethnic loyalties and patron-client relationships (Okeke, 2019).

d. Civic Engagement and Policy Advocacy

Engaging in civic discussions, town hall meetings, and public consultations allows citizens to contribute to policy formulation and governance (Dahl, 2020). In traditional African societies, village assemblies and council meetings provide platforms for collective decision-making (Nwosu, 2021). In Achalla, community forums are a key avenue for discussing governance issues, resolving conflicts, and influencing local leadership (Okechukwu, 2018).

2. Unconventional Political Participation

Unconventional political participation refers to activities that challenge or seek to reform the existing political system, often through non-institutionalized means (Norris, 2019). This dimension includes:

a. Protests and Demonstrations

Public demonstrations, rallies, and protests are common means of expressing political grievances. Mass mobilization campaigns, such as the #EndSARS protests in Nigeria, illustrate how unconventional participation can drive political change (Eze, 2022). In Achalla, youth groups have occasionally organized

protests over issues such as land disputes, government neglect, and electoral malpractice (Obasi, 2020).

b. Political Boycotts and Civil Disobedience

Refusing to participate in elections or government initiatives as a form of protest is another type of unconventional participation. Boycotts often signal dissatisfaction with governance, electoral fraud, or policy failures (Lipset, 2018). In Nigeria, opposition groups have called for election boycotts to protest irregularities in the electoral process (Ibe, 2019).

c. Social Media Activism and Digital Participation

The rise of digital technology has transformed political participation. Social media platforms provide citizens with new ways to engage in political discussions, mobilize support, and challenge political authorities (Dahl, 2020). In Nigeria, platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp have played significant roles in political debates, awareness campaigns, and activism (Eze, 2022). Younger populations, including those from rural areas like Achalla, are increasingly using digital tools to access political information and express their views (Okeke, 2019).

Demographic Characteristics of Indigenous Communities

Demographics play a fundamental role in shaping social, economic, and political structures within any society. Indigenous communities, such as Achalla in

Anambra State, Nigeria, have unique demographic characteristics that distinguish them from urban populations. These characteristics include population size, age distribution, literacy levels, occupational patterns, gender dynamics, migration trends, and traditional governance structures. Understanding these demographic factors is essential for assessing their influence on political participation and engagement in governance.

Population Structure and Age Distribution

One of the defining demographic features of indigenous communities is the age distribution of their population. In many rural areas, including Achalla, the population is predominantly composed of young people and elderly individuals, with a shrinking number of middle-aged adults due to urban migration (Nnadi, 2017). Nigeria, like many developing countries, has a high population growth rate, with over 60% of its population below the age of 35 (National Population Commission, 2019). However, the Achalla community, like many rural settlements, experiences a demographic imbalance due to rural-urban migration, where working-age individuals move to cities in search of better economic opportunities, leaving behind a larger population of dependents, including children and the elderly (Okeke, 2021).

The implications of this age distribution for political participation are significant. Younger populations tend to be more politically active in urban areas, where they have better access to political education and digital media, while those remaining in rural areas may have limited exposure to political engagement opportunities (Eze, 2022). On the other hand, elderly individuals in Achalla, who serve as custodians of traditional governance, may engage more in local decision-making through traditional councils rather than in national politics (Obasi, 2020). This demographic structure suggests that while traditional governance remains strong in rural communities, engagement in modern democratic processes may be relatively lower due to migration and socio-economic constraints.

Educational Attainment and Literacy Levels

Education is a crucial factor influencing political awareness and participation. In indigenous communities like Achalla, educational attainment varies significantly, with some residents having access to formal education while others rely on informal learning, such as traditional apprenticeships and oral knowledge transmission (Haralambos & Holborn, 2018). According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2020), rural areas in Nigeria have lower literacy rates compared to urban centers, with an average literacy rate of 45% in rural communities versus 73% in cities.

Low literacy levels impact political participation by limiting individuals' ability to engage in political discussions, read election materials, and understand governmental policies (Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 2018). Studies have shown that individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to vote, participate in political debates, and hold elected officials accountable (Lipset, 2018). In Achalla, the lower literacy rate may discourage active political engagement, as many residents may feel disconnected from political discourse due to their inability to access and interpret political information effectively (Obi, 2020).

However, traditional knowledge systems in Achalla play a compensatory role by fostering political awareness through oral traditions, storytelling, and community gatherings (Okechukwu, 2018). Town hall meetings and village discussions provide a platform for residents to deliberate on governance issues, albeit within the framework of traditional political structures rather than formal democratic institutions. This dynamic underscores the importance of blending formal education with indigenous knowledge systems to enhance political engagement in rural areas (Nwosu, 2021).

Occupational Patterns and Economic Conditions

The economic structure of indigenous communities is another critical demographic characteristic that influences political participation. In Achalla, as in

many rural areas in Nigeria, the economy is primarily agrarian, with most residents engaged in subsistence farming, petty trading, and small-scale craftsmanship (Nnadi, 2019). Unlike urban areas, where formal employment opportunities are more prevalent, rural economies are largely informal and dependent on seasonal agricultural cycles (Okafor, 2020).

The economic conditions of a population significantly impact political engagement. Scholars have argued that economic stability is directly correlated with political participation, as financially secure individuals are more likely to engage in voting, political campaigns, and community leadership roles (Verba et al., 1995). Conversely, economic hardship can lead to political apathy, as individuals facing financial struggles may prioritize economic survival over political involvement (Obasi, 2020).

In Achalla, poverty and economic instability may contribute to lower levels of electoral participation and increased susceptibility to vote-buying (Eze, 2022). Political elites often exploit economic hardship by offering financial or material incentives in exchange for votes, thereby undermining free and fair elections in rural communities (Ibe, 2019). Furthermore, economic insecurity limits residents' ability to participate in political mobilization efforts, attend rallies, or engage in governance discussions (Ogbonnaya, 2020). These economic constraints highlight

the need for targeted policies that empower rural populations economically to enhance democratic engagement.

Gender Dynamics and Political Participation

Gender roles and cultural perceptions significantly influence the demographic characteristics of indigenous communities. In many traditional African societies, political participation has historically been male-dominated, with women playing limited roles in governance (Afolabi, 2021). Achalla follows a similar pattern, where men hold key leadership positions in both traditional and formal political structures, while women's participation remains relatively low.

Cultural norms often dictate that women should focus on domestic and community based roles rather than engaging in national politics (Obi, 2020). This gender disparity in political engagement is reflected in the low number of female candidates for elective offices and the underrepresentation of women in decision-making bodies (UN Women, 2020). However, in recent years, grassroots movements and gender advocacy groups have worked to increase women's political participation by encouraging female leadership at the community level (Okechukwu, 2018).

Despite traditional restrictions, women in Achalla still play crucial roles in informal political decision-making through women's associations, cooperative

societies, and market unions (Eze, 2021). These groups provide a platform for women to influence local governance, advocate for community development, and support electoral processes in indirect ways. Recognizing and strengthening these informal leadership structures can help bridge the gender gap in political participation in indigenous communities.

Migration Trends and Political Participation

Rural-urban migration is another significant demographic factor affecting indigenous communities. In Achalla, migration patterns are characterized by youth migration to urban centers for education and employment opportunities, leaving behind an aging population (Nnadi, 2017). This migration trend has profound implications for political participation, as younger, more politically aware individuals may be absent during local elections and community decision-making processes (Eze, 2022).

Research has shown that migrants from rural areas are less likely to vote in their home communities due to residency restrictions, lack of transportation, and political disengagement from local affairs (Okeke, 2021). Furthermore, the economic contributions of rural migrants to their home communities through remittances and development projects may shift political power toward wealthier, externally influenced elites rather than grassroots leadership structures (Ibe, 2019).

While migration can reduce direct political participation, it also presents opportunities for increased political consciousness through exposure to urban political movements, digital activism, and engagement with broader governance structures (Obasi, 2020). Governments and political parties must develop strategies to integrate rural migrants into electoral processes, such as mobile voting options or community outreach programs to maintain political engagement across dispersed populations (Nwosu, 2021).

Historical Background of the Achalla People

The history of the Achalla people of Anambra State is deeply rooted in traditional governance, cultural heritage, economic activities, and political participation. As an indigenous Igbo-speaking community, Achalla has maintained a strong identity through its political structures, social organization, and resistance to external influences. Understanding the historical background of Achalla provides critical insights into how demographic factors have shaped political engagement over time. This section explores the origins, traditional governance, cultural evolution, economic activities, and the impact of colonialism and modern governance on Achalla's political participation.

Origins and Early Settlement of Achalla

The Achalla people are part of the broader Igbo ethnic group, one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria. Igbo communities have long been known for their decentralized governance systems, which prioritize communal decision-making, age-grade associations, and council-of-elders leadership (Afigbo, 1981). Oral traditions suggest that Achalla was founded by migrant settlers seeking fertile land and security from intertribal conflicts (Onwuejeogwu, 2021). Early settlement patterns in Achalla were influenced by the need for agricultural viability, access to water sources, and protection from external threats (Isichei, 1976).

Historical records indicate that Achalla's early inhabitants engaged in extensive farming, fishing, and trade, establishing strong economic ties with neighboring communities (Okafor, 2018). The community developed along kinship lines, with families and clans forming the foundation of political and economic organization (Nzimiro, 1972). The kinship structure ensured that political leadership was shared among elders, warriors, and spiritual leaders, with decisions made through a consensus-driven approach.

Traditional Governance and Political Organization

The political system of Achalla reflects the traditional Igbo republican model, which differs from the centralized authority seen in some other Nigerian ethnic groups. The Achalla people historically practiced a decentralized political system, where power was distributed among various institutions, including:

1. The Igwe (King) – The Igwe is the ceremonial head of Achalla, responsible for overseeing political affairs, maintaining law and order, and representing the community in external matters (Ekechi, 1972). Unlike absolute monarchs, the Igwe's power is checked by the council of elders and village assembly.
2. The Council of Elders (Ndichie) – This body consists of respected elderly men selected from different clans to serve as advisors to the Igwe. They ensure that decisions align with traditional values and community interests (Okechukwu, 2018).
3. The Age-Grade System (Otu-Ogbo) – Age grades play a critical role in social mobilization, security, and governance. Young men participate in community development projects, security enforcement, and conflict resolution, while elders mentor younger generations on leadership and governance (Nwosu, 2021).

4. The Village Assembly (Oha Achalla) – The general assembly is a participatory political structure where all adult males contribute to major decision-making processes. This institution embodies the Igbo democratic ethos, ensuring that leadership remains inclusive and representative (Okeke, 2019).

These institutions collectively shape Achalla's political engagement patterns, emphasizing community participation, respect for elders, and collective decisionmaking (Eze, 2022). Unlike centralized state governance, Achalla's system promotes grassroots democracy, where leadership is based on consensus rather than hierarchical rule.

Economic Activities and Political Influence

The economic structure of Achalla has historically influenced political organization and participation. Agriculture remains the primary occupation, with cassava, yam, maize, and palm produce being major crops (Onwuejeogwu, 2021).

The land tenure system, which is largely communal, ensures that resources are distributed equitably among families, reinforcing a sense of collective responsibility and cooperation (Okafor, 2018).

Trade also plays a vital role in Achalla's economic history. The Afor Market, a significant trade center, has historically served as a hub for commerce and

political discussion. Market interactions fostered social networks and political alliances, allowing people to exchange not only goods but also ideas about governance, leadership, and communal affairs (Nzimiro, 1972).

Economic stability often correlates with higher political engagement, as individuals with secure livelihoods are more likely to participate in community leadership, political decision-making, and advocacy (Lipset, 2018). However, economic challenges, such as seasonal fluctuations in agricultural production and rural-urban migration, have led to disparities in political participation. The migration of youth to urban centers reduces their engagement in Achalla's governance, shifting political power toward elders and elites with stable economic influence (Eze, 2021).

Impact of Colonialism on Achalla's Political System

Colonial rule significantly altered Achalla's political landscape. The British colonial administration, which governed Nigeria from the late 19th century to 1960, introduced indirect rule, a system that relied on local traditional rulers to implement colonial policies (Afigbo, 1981). However, the Igbo decentralized governance model conflicted with the colonial preference for centralized authority, leading to the appointment of Warrant Chiefs who were often unpopular and lacked legitimacy (Isichei, 1976).

The introduction of Western-style bureaucracy and electoral politics gradually weakened Achalla's indigenous political institutions. Colonial administrators marginalized the village assembly and council of elders, replacing them with appointed officials who answered to colonial authorities (Ekechi, 1972). This shift disrupted traditional political participation patterns, creating tensions between colonial appointees and community leaders (Okeke, 2019).

Furthermore, colonialism introduced Western education and Christianity, which reshaped political awareness and aspirations. Educated individuals from Achalla who attended missionary schools and urban institutions gained access to colonial government positions, leading to a new elite class that often challenged traditional leadership structures (Onwuejeogwu, 2021). Over time, this class played a crucial role in Achalla's transition to modern democratic governance, advocating for greater political inclusion and electoral participation (Nwosu, 2021).

Post-Colonial Governance and Modern Political Participation

Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, Achalla's political system experienced further transformation. The adoption of electoral democracy and party politics introduced new avenues for political engagement beyond traditional governance. However, the persistence of economic inequality, illiteracy, and

migration has continued to shape political participation levels in Achalla (Eze, 2022).

Modern Achalla has seen an increasing influence of political parties and national elections, with residents participating in state and federal elections (Obasi, 2020). However, political engagement remains influenced by traditional loyalties, as many people still seek guidance from elders and community leaders before making electoral decisions (Okechukwu, 2018). Political participation is also shaped by economic incentives, with some voters motivated by material benefits from political candidates rather than ideological alignment (Ibe, 2019).

While Achalla's youth are increasingly engaging with digital media and online political activism, barriers such as poverty, limited political education, and distrust in government institutions continue to restrict full democratic participation (Nnadi, 2017). Nonetheless, grassroots movements and advocacy groups are working to revitalize civic engagement through education programs, voter awareness campaigns, and community mobilization efforts (Ogbonnaya, 2020).

Factors Influencing Political Participation in Achalla

Political participation is shaped by a variety of social, economic, cultural, and institutional factors that either promote or hinder civic engagement. In Achalla, as

in many other rural communities in Nigeria, participation in political activities is influenced by traditional governance systems, education levels, economic stability, gender dynamics, political awareness, and external political influences. Understanding these factors is essential in analyzing voting patterns, political representation, and the effectiveness of democratic governance in Achalla.

This section examines the key determinants of political participation in Achalla, highlighting the role of historical influences, socio-economic conditions, and institutional frameworks in shaping the engagement of residents in governance and electoral processes.

1. Influence of Traditional Leadership Structures

Achalla, like many indigenous Igbo communities, has a deeply rooted traditional governance system that coexists with modern democratic structures. The Igwe (King), Council of Elders (Ndichie), age-grade associations, and village assemblies (Oha

Achalla) play significant roles in decision-making and governance (Afigbo, 1981). These traditional institutions serve as the primary political structures through which leadership, conflict resolution, and community mobilization take place (Okechukwu, 2018).

While these institutions provide stability and cultural continuity, they also affect the political autonomy of individuals, as many residents defer to the decisions of elders rather than exercising independent political judgment (Eze, 2021). Traditional rulers often have strong political alliances with government officials, influencing voting patterns and electoral outcomes in Achalla (Obasi, 2020). Additionally, political endorsements by traditional leaders can significantly impact electoral participation. When a candidate receives the support of community elders, it often translates to mass voter support, regardless of individual political preferences (Nwosu, 2021). However, this system can also lead to political exclusion, where dissenting voices or opposition candidates struggle to gain grassroots support (Okeke, 2019).

2. Educational Attainment and Political Awareness

Education is one of the most critical determinants of political participation (Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1995). Studies have shown that higher levels of education correlate with increased voter turnout, political activism, and engagement in governance (Lipset, 2018).

In Achalla, literacy levels are lower than in urban centers, leading to reduced political awareness and limited access to political information (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Many residents rely on word-of-mouth information,

community discussions, and traditional gatherings for political updates, which may lead to political misinformation and manipulation by elites (Eze, 2022).

Political education plays a crucial role in shaping citizens' understanding of democratic rights, electoral procedures, and governance structures. Individuals with higher educational attainment are more likely to engage in policy discussions, scrutinize political candidates, and participate in grassroots activism (Obasi, 2020). However, low literacy rates in rural areas like Achalla create barriers to effective political engagement, reinforcing political passivity and electoral disinterest (Nwosu, 2021).

Investments in civic education programs, voter awareness initiatives, and rural adult literacy programs can help bridge the political knowledge gap and increase participation among residents (Okeke, 2019).

3. Economic Conditions and Financial Stability

Economic security is directly linked to political participation, as financially stable individuals are more likely to engage in voting, advocacy, and political leadership (Lipset, 2018). In contrast, economic hardship often discourages participation, as people focus more on meeting immediate survival needs than on governance matters (Obasi, 2020).

Achalla's economy is primarily agrarian, with most residents engaged in subsistence farming, small-scale trade, and informal labor (Okafor, 2019).

Economic instability leads to:

Lower voter turnout, as people are preoccupied with livelihood concerns.

Higher susceptibility to vote-buying, where politicians exploit financial hardships by offering monetary or material incentives in exchange for votes (Ibe, 2019).

Limited capacity to contest political office, as election campaigns require substantial financial resources that many rural dwellers cannot afford (Eze, 2022).

Studies have shown that communities with higher levels of economic prosperity tend to have more politically engaged populations, as individuals are better informed, have more time for civic activities, and are less reliant on politicians for economic survival (Dahl, 2020). In contrast, economically struggling communities experience lower levels of engagement and higher political dependency on elites (Ogbonnaya, 2020).

Improving economic empowerment programs, access to credit for small businesses, and job creation initiatives can enhance political engagement by reducing financial barriers to participation (Okeke, 2019).

4. Gender Dynamics and Political Participation

Gender disparities significantly influence political engagement and representation in rural communities. In many traditional societies, including Achalla, politics is maledominated, with women historically playing limited roles in governance and electoral contests (Afolabi, 2021).

Several cultural and institutional factors contribute to low female political participation:

Patriarchal norms, which discourage women from actively engaging in politics (Obi, 2020).

Limited access to education, reducing women's political awareness (Eze, 2021).

Financial constraints, as female candidates often lack the economic resources needed to contest elections (UN Women, 2020).

Social stigmatization, where women in politics face discrimination, intimidation, and cultural opposition (Nwosu, 2021).

Despite these challenges, women in Achalla play significant informal political roles through women's associations, market unions, and community advocacy groups (Okechukwu, 2018). These platforms provide women with a collective voice in governance, even though they remain underrepresented in formal political leadership.

Encouraging gender-inclusive policies, promoting female political mentorship programs, and enhancing women's access to political funding can help increase women's participation in governance (Okeke, 2019).

5. Political Awareness and Media Influence

Access to accurate and reliable political information is crucial for effective participation in governance (Verba et al., 1995). In urban areas, citizens have greater exposure to political news, digital activism, and electoral debates through media platforms. However, in rural communities like Achalla, limited access to radio, television, newspapers, and the internet restricts political engagement (Eze, 2022).

Many residents rely on traditional word-of-mouth communication, town hall meetings, and community elders for political information (Obasi, 2020). This creates vulnerabilities to misinformation, propaganda, and political manipulation, as many people may be exposed to biased narratives rather than objective political analysis (Okeke, 2019).

The rise of digital technology and mobile communication has the potential to increase political awareness in rural areas. Social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter have played a growing role in mobilizing voters, spreading election awareness, and holding leaders accountable (Nwosu, 2021).

However, digital illiteracy, poor internet access, and financial constraints limit the ability of many rural dwellers to fully utilize these platforms for political engagement (Okafor, 2019).

Expanding digital literacy initiatives, increasing rural media coverage, and providing community-based voter education programs can help improve political awareness and participation in Achalla (Okechukwu, 2018).

Challenges to Political Participation in Indigenous Communities

Political participation is a cornerstone of democracy, enabling citizens to engage in governance, influence policy decisions, and hold leaders accountable. However, in many indigenous communities, including Achalla in Anambra State, several factors hinder active political engagement. These challenges stem from historical, socioeconomic, cultural, institutional, and political factors that limit the extent to which residents can participate in governance and electoral processes. Understanding these challenges is essential for identifying policy interventions and community-driven solutions that can enhance democratic participation.

1. Low Literacy Levels and Political Awareness

One of the most significant barriers to political participation in indigenous communities is low literacy levels and limited political awareness. Education plays a crucial role in shaping political engagement, as it enhances individuals'

ability to understand electoral processes, access political information, and critically evaluate governance policies (Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1995).

In rural communities like Achalla, literacy rates are often lower than in urban areas, leading to reduced engagement in political discussions, electoral processes, and governance activities (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Many residents may lack the ability to read and comprehend political manifestos, government policies, and voting procedures, making them more vulnerable to political misinformation, manipulation, and vote-buying practices (Eze, 2022).

Furthermore, limited access to civic education programs means that many people do not fully understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens, leading to political apathy and disengagement (Obasi, 2020). Without adequate political awareness, residents of indigenous communities may view elections as events controlled by elites, reducing their motivation to participate actively (Nwosu, 2021).

2. Economic Hardship and Poverty

Economic stability significantly influences political participation, as financially secure individuals are more likely to engage in political activities such as voting, attending political meetings, and contesting for political offices (Lipset, 2018).

However, in many indigenous communities, widespread poverty and economic hardship serve as significant obstacles to democratic engagement.

In Achalla, the majority of residents depend on subsistence farming, small-scale trade, and informal economic activities, which often do not generate enough income to support active political engagement (Okafor, 2019). Many individuals prioritize meeting basic survival needs over participating in governance, viewing elections and political discussions as secondary concerns compared to daily economic struggles (Ogbonnaya, 2020).

Economic hardship also increases vulnerability to vote-buying and electoral manipulation, as impoverished individuals may be more likely to exchange their votes for money, food, or other material incentives (Ibe, 2019). Politicians often exploit economic deprivation by distributing financial inducements during elections, thereby undermining free and fair democratic participation (Eze, 2022). Moreover, the high cost of running for political office limits the participation of economically disadvantaged individuals, reinforcing a system where only wealthy elites can afford to contest elections (Obasi, 2020). This economic disparity contributes to the marginalization of rural voices in governance and the entrenchment of elite political dominance (Okeke, 2019).

3. Influence of Traditional Leadership Structures

Indigenous communities often operate traditional governance systems that coexist with modern democratic institutions. While traditional leaders such as chiefs, elders, and village councils play crucial roles in maintaining cultural heritage and community stability, they may also limit democratic participation by controlling political decision-making and electoral choices (Nzimiro, 1972).

In Achalla, political decisions are often influenced by traditional rulers, family heads,

and elder councils, who hold significant authority over communal matters (Okechukwu, 2018). In some cases, this system can discourage independent political choices, as younger or less influential members of society may feel compelled to follow the directives of elders rather than make independent voting decisions (Eze, 2021).

Additionally, some traditional rulers form alliances with political elites, using their influence to mobilize support for specific candidates rather than encouraging open democratic competition (Onwuejeogwu, 2021). This dynamic can restrict political diversity and limit youth and women's political involvement in electoral processes (Nwosu, 2021).

While traditional governance systems play a stabilizing role, greater political awareness and democratic education are needed to balance respect for tradition with inclusive political participation (Obasi, 2020).

4. Gender Disparities and Cultural Barriers

Gender inequality remains a significant challenge to political participation in indigenous communities, where cultural norms and traditional gender roles often restrict women's involvement in governance (Afolabi, 2021).

In many rural societies, including Achalla, women are underrepresented in political leadership and decision-making processes due to deep-rooted patriarchal systems that prioritize male leadership (Obi, 2020). Social expectations often limit women's political participation to domestic or community-based roles, preventing them from actively engaging in electoral contests, holding political offices, or influencing governance policies (Eze, 2021).

Even when women participate in elections, they may face discrimination, intimidation, or a lack of institutional support, further discouraging their involvement (UN Women, 2020). Cultural beliefs that associate political leadership with masculinity continue to exclude women from key political discussions, reinforcing structural inequalities in political representation (Okeke, 2019).

However, women's informal political engagement remains strong through community organizations, market associations, and advocacy groups. Strengthening female political representation through policy reforms, education, and advocacy programs is essential to promoting gender-inclusive governance (Okechukwu, 2018).

5. Electoral Malpractices and Political Violence

Electoral integrity is essential for fostering public trust in democratic institutions and encouraging political participation. However, in many indigenous communities, including Achalla, elections are often marred by fraud, vote rigging, and political violence, which discourage voter participation (Ibe, 2019).

Reports from election monitoring groups indicate that many rural areas experience intimidation, ballot box snatching, and manipulation of election results, leading to a loss of faith in the electoral system (Eze, 2022). Voter suppression tactics, including deliberate disenfranchisement of rural voters, further erode public confidence in democracy (Obasi, 2020).

Political violence, such as clashes between rival parties, attacks on opposition supporters, and pre-election conflicts, creates a climate of fear that discourages people from engaging in electoral activities (Nwosu, 2021). In Achalla, past

election cycles have witnessed cases of politically motivated violence, which have led to voter apathy and disengagement (Okeke, 2019).

Addressing electoral malpractice requires stronger legal enforcement, improved security measures, and civic education programs to restore public trust in democratic institutions (Ogbonnaya, 2020).

6. Limited Access to Political Information and Digital Technology

Access to accurate political information is crucial for informed political participation. However, in many rural communities, limited access to mass media, digital technology, and internet services prevents residents from engaging in political discussions and decision-making processes (Eze, 2022).

In Achalla, the lack of widespread internet access and media infrastructure means that many people rely on traditional word-of-mouth communication for political information, which can lead to misinformation and manipulation (Obasi, 2020).

Unlike urban areas where social media platforms provide instant political updates and mobilization tools, many rural residents lack digital literacy skills, limiting their engagement with online political movements (Okeke, 2019).

Bridging the digital divide through investments in ICT infrastructure, mobile voting systems, and grassroots media initiatives can enhance political engagement and civic participation in indigenous communities (Nwosu, 2021).

Summary of Related Literature

The review of related literature has explored various aspects of demographic characteristics and political participation, particularly in indigenous communities like Achalla in Anambra State, Nigeria. Political participation remains a fundamental component of democratic governance, influencing how individuals engage with the political system, make electoral decisions, and contribute to policy formulation. This chapter examined the concept of demographics, the theoretical framework, the historical background of the Achalla people, the dimensions of political participation, the factors influencing political engagement, and the challenges affecting political participation in indigenous communities. The following is a summary of the key findings from the literature review.

Theoretical Framework

The study of political participation is grounded in several key theories that explain why individuals engage in governance and what factors influence their participation.

These include:

1. Structural-Functionalism Theory – Emphasizes how different institutions (family, education, and traditional governance) contribute to political participation and societal stability (Parsons, 1951). In Achalla, traditional governance

structures, such as the Igwe (King) and Council of Elders, shape political behavior by influencing voter decisions and community leadership (Okechukwu, 2018).

2. Political Participation Theory – Categorizes participation into voting, campaign activity, community engagement, and activism, explaining how different demographic groups interact with the political system (Verba & Nie, 1972). The theory highlights the importance of political education, socio-economic status, and mobilization networks in shaping participation (Eze, 2021).

3. Rational Choice Theory – Suggests that individuals weigh the costs and benefits of participation, engaging in politics when they perceive it as beneficial (Downs, 1957). In Achalla, economic constraints often lead to low voter turnout and susceptibility to vote-buying, as residents prioritize economic survival over governance (Obasi, 2020).

4. Dependency Theory – Explains how economic underdevelopment leads to political marginalization (Frank, 1967). Achalla's economic dependency on urban centers affects local political engagement, as migration reduces youth participation in governance (Nnadi, 2017).

5. Civic Voluntarism Model – Proposes that time, money, and civic skills determine political engagement (Verba, Scholzman & Brady, 1995). Limited

economic resources and low literacy levels in Achalla restrict full participation in democratic processes (Eze, 2022). These theories provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the factors that shape political engagement in indigenous communities.

Concept of Demographics

Demographics refer to the statistical study of populations, including age distribution, gender composition, educational levels, economic status, and migration patterns (Weeks, 2020). The age structure of a population plays a significant role in political participation, with younger people generally being more politically active, particularly in digital spaces, while older individuals engage in traditional governance and local decision-making (Eze, 2022).

Education levels significantly affect political engagement. Higher literacy rates correlate with greater political awareness, higher voter turnout, and more active participation in governance (Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1995). However, in rural communities like Achalla, lower literacy rates contribute to political disengagement, as many individuals lack access to political information and civic education (Okeke, 2019).

Economic factors also shape political participation. Financially stable individuals are more likely to engage in political activities, such as contesting for office,

supporting political campaigns, and attending rallies (Lipset, 2018). Conversely, economic hardship in indigenous communities leads to voter apathy, susceptibility to votebuying, and a focus on survival over governance concerns (Obasi, 2020). Migration patterns impact political engagement as well. Rural-to-urban migration leads to a decline in local voter turnout and reduced engagement in community governance, as many youths leave for economic opportunities in cities (Nnadi, 2017). This results in political decision-making being left primarily to elders and local elites, who may have different priorities from the younger population (Eze, 2021).

Concept of Political Participation and Its Dimensions

Political participation encompasses various forms of engagement, ranging from voting in elections to activism, community involvement, and policy advocacy (Verba et al., 1995). The literature categorizes political participation into the following dimensions:

Conventional Political Participation

1. Voting – The most common form of participation, where individuals elect representatives in democratic governance (Dahl, 2020).
2. Political Party Membership – Joining political parties provides an avenue for political mobilization and policy influence (Norris, 2019).

3. Running for Office – Individuals actively contest for leadership positions to influence governance (Lipset, 2018). Unconventional Political Participation

1. Protests and Activism – Citizens organize demonstrations to express dissatisfaction with policies or governance failures (Eze, 2022).

2. Political Boycotts – Refusing to participate in elections or civic activities to protest electoral malpractices (Ibe, 2019).

3. Digital Engagement – Social media activism has emerged as a powerful tool for political awareness and mobilization (Okeke, 2019).

The literature suggests that rural communities like Achalla tend to engage more in conventional political participation, particularly voting, while urban populations are more involved in protests, digital activism, and direct political engagement (Obasi, 2020).

Demographic Characteristics of Indigenous Communities

Indigenous communities, such as Achalla, have unique demographic characteristics that shape their political behavior and governance structures. These include:

1. Age Distribution – Indigenous communities often have a higher proportion of young people and elderly individuals, with many middle-aged adults migrating to urban areas for employment (Nnadi, 2017). This affects political

engagement, as older residents participate more in traditional governance, while younger individuals are often absent from local elections (Eze, 2021).

2. Educational Attainment – Rural communities generally have lower literacy rates than urban areas, limiting access to political information and reducing voter participation (Verba et al., 1995). In Achalla, traditional oral education plays a role in political awareness, but formal education remains a barrier to active democratic engagement (Okeke, 2019).

3. Economic Conditions – The economy of Achalla is primarily agrarian, with many residents engaged in subsistence farming and small-scale trade (Okafor, 2019). Economic hardship affects political participation by reducing civic engagement, increasing voter apathy, and making residents susceptible to electoral manipulation (Obasi, 2020).

4. Migration Trends – Youth migration to cities reduces rural political engagement, shifting governance responsibilities to elders and reducing youth representation in local decision-making (Eze, 2021).

5. Gender Dynamics – Political participation remains male-dominated, with women playing significant but informal roles in governance through market associations and community groups (Afolabi, 2021). Traditional norms restrict women's access to political leadership positions (Obi, 2020).

These demographic characteristics influence how political participation is structured in Achalla, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to enhance civic engagement.

Historical Background of the Achalla People

The Achalla community, like many indigenous Igbo societies, has a decentralized governance structure that emphasizes collective decision-making and traditional authority (Afigbo, 1981). Historically, Achalla's governance was managed through the Igwe (king), council of elders, age-grade systems, and town assemblies, ensuring that political power was distributed across multiple institutions (Okechukwu, 2018).

The introduction of colonial rule and indirect governance altered Achalla's political landscape, as the British appointed Warrant Chiefs who lacked traditional legitimacy (Isichei, 1976). This shift weakened indigenous political institutions and introduced formal electoral systems, leading to a hybrid political structure where traditional and modern democratic elements coexist (Ekechi, 1972).

Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, Achalla's political participation expanded through involvement in state and federal elections, but traditional leadership remains influential in shaping political decisions and community

governance (Onwuejeogwu, 2021). The persistence of traditional leadership affects political competition, as many residents defer to the authority of elders rather than exercising independent electoral choices (Okeke, 2019).

Factors Influencing Political Participation in Achalla

Political participation in Achalla is influenced by several interrelated factors, including:

1. Traditional Leadership Influence – The Igwe, council of elders, and community assemblies play a dominant role in political decision-making, often guiding voters toward preferred candidates (Okechukwu, 2018).
2. Educational Attainment – Higher literacy rates lead to greater political awareness and engagement, while lower literacy contributes to voter apathy (Verba et al., 1995).
3. Economic Conditions – Financial constraints discourage participation, making rural residents more susceptible to vote-buying and elite political control (Lipset, 2018).
4. Gender Inequality – Women face significant barriers to political engagement due to patriarchal cultural norms and financial limitations (Afolabi, 2021).

5. Political Awareness and Media Access – Limited access to political information, newspapers, and digital platforms restricts civic engagement in rural areas (Obasi, 2020).

These factors highlight the need for targeted interventions to improve civic education, economic development, and inclusive governance in Achalla (Eze, 2021). •

Challenges to Political Participation in Indigenous Communities

Despite the significance of political engagement, several obstacles hinder participation in Achalla:

1. Low Literacy Rates – Many residents lack the necessary education to understand electoral processes and governance structures.
2. Economic Hardship – Poverty reduces political engagement, making people more susceptible to vote-buying and electoral manipulation.
3. Traditional Leadership Influence – Elders and chiefs often control political decisions, limiting independent electoral choices.
4. Gender Inequality – Cultural norms restrict women's access to political leadership positions and decision-making roles.
5. Electoral Malpractices – Fraud, intimidation, and political violence discourage voter turnout and fair democratic competition.

6. Limited Access to Information – A lack of digital infrastructure and media access reduces political awareness and participation.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology used in conducting this study. This was done along the following sub-headings:

- Research Design
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Technique
- Research instrument
- Validity of the instrument
- Reliability of the Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design, which is suitable for examining the demographic characteristics of the Achalla people and their level of political participation.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises all adult residents (18 years and above) of Achalla, Anambra State. According to the National Population Commission (NPC, 2020), Achalla has an estimated population of over 50,000 people, with a significant percentage of eligible voters.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample for the study consists of 500 residents of Achalla, which is 1% of the total population. The simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the residents from the total population.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used for data collection was a checklist titled Achalla Political Participation Checklist (APPC). The checklist contains two sections:

Section A: Contains demographic data such as age, gender, residence, and occupation, religion.

Section B: Contains a list of possible factors influencing political participation. Respondents were requested to indicate their level of participation and the challenges they face in engaging in political activities.

Validity of the Instrument

The research instrument was validated by the project supervisor to ensure it achieves what it prompts to achieve.

Reliability of the Instrument

There was no reliability carried out because the research instrument was a checklist.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher personally administered the checklist on respondents with help from friends who served as research assistant. The administration of the research instrument lasted for 3 weeks.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected will be descriptively analyzed using mean, standard deviation and percentage, to answer the research questions revised for the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

This chapter presents the data collected, its analysis, and interpretation. The findings are based on the responses obtained from the Achalla Political Participation Checklist (APPC) administered to the respondents. The data is analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, and tables, to provide a clear understanding of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, their level of political participation, and the challenges affecting their engagement in political activities.

Data Presentation

Response Rate

A total of 500 checklists were distributed to eligible respondents in Achalla. Out of these, 495 checklists were correctly filled and returned, representing a response rate of 99%. A response rate above 70% is considered valid and reliable for social research (Babbie, 2021). Table 4.1 presents the response rate.

Total Distributed	Total Retrieved	Response Rate (%)
500	495	99%

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of respondents were examined based on gender, age, education level, occupation, and residence.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Category	Options	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	250	50.5%
	Female	245	49.5%
Age	18-30 Years	149	30.1%
	31-45 Years	237	47.9%
	46 Years And Above	109	22.0%
Educational Level	No Formal Education	50	10.1%
	Primary Education	100	20.2%
	Secondary Education	250	50.5%
	Tertiary Education	95	19.2%
Occupation	Farmer	250	50.5%
	Trader	100	20.2%

	Civil Servant	50	10.1%
	Student	95	19.2%
Residence	Village Center	250	50.5%
	Outskirts Of Achalla	245	49.5%

The results indicate that the gender distribution is nearly equal (50.5% male, 49.5% female). The majority of respondents (47.9%) fall within the 31–45 age group, which suggests that middle-aged individuals are the dominant political participants. Education levels vary, with 50.5% of respondents having secondary education, while 10.1% have no formal education. Most respondents are farmers (50.5%), reflecting the agrarian nature of Achalla’s economy.

Analysis of Political Participation

Level of Political Participation

The level of political participation was assessed by examining various political activities respondents engage in.

Political Participation Activities

Political Activity	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Voted in previous elections	460	92.9%
Attended Political Rallies	375	75.8%
Belongs to a political party	265	53.5%
Campaigned for a candidate	180	36.4%
Contested for an elective	40	8.1%
Participated in community decision-making	410	82.8%
Engaged in political discussion	440	88.9%

The findings reveal that 92.9% of respondents have voted in elections, making it the most common political activity. Political discussions (88.9%) and community decision-making (82.8%) also record high participation.

However, only 8.1% of respondents have contested for elective positions, suggesting barriers to political ambition.

Challenges to Political Participation

Respondents identified key challenges affecting their participation in politics.

Challenges to Political Participation

Challenges	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Lack of political awareness	250	50.5%
Economic hardship	410	82.8%
Influence of traditional leaders	290	58.6%
Electoral violence and intimidation	260	52.5%
Vote-buying and corruption	355	71.7%
Lack of trust in the electoral system	195	39.4%
Gender discrimination	120	24.2%
Religious or ethnic bias	145	29.3%
Poor access to voter registration centers	185	37.4%

The results show that economic hardship (82.8%) is the most significant barrier to political participation. Other major challenges include vote-buying (71.7%), influence of traditional leaders (58.6%), and electoral violence (52.5%).

Interpretation of Findings

1. Demographic Factors and Political Participation

The majority of politically active individuals are middle-aged (31-45 years).

Educational background plays a role in engagement, as those with higher education tend to participate in discussions more frequently.

2. Political Participation Trends

Voting is the most common form of participation (92.9%), showing that many people recognize its importance.

Political discussions and community decision-making are widely embraced, indicating a high level of interest in governance.

3. Challenges Affecting Participation

Economic hardship is the biggest barrier (82.8%), making people vulnerable to vote-buying and political disengagement.

Traditional rulers influence voting choices (58.6%), which may hinder independent decision-making.

Electoral violence and lack of trust in the system (52.5% and 39.4%) discourage participation.

4. Recommendations for Improvement

Economic empowerment programs to reduce financial barriers to political engagement.

Increased voter education to enhance political awareness.

Stronger electoral laws to prevent vote-buying and corruption.

Improved security measures to reduce electoral violence and intimidation.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusion, and recommendations based on the data analysis conducted in Chapter Four. The study examined the demographic characteristics of the Achalla people and their level of political participation, identifying key challenges and factors influencing engagement in governance. Additionally, the study highlights its contributions to knowledge, limitations, and suggestions for further research.

Summary of Findings

The study aimed to analyze the demographic characteristics of the Achalla people and their political engagement levels. The data was collected using the Achalla Political Participation Checklist (APPC), administered to 500 respondents. The findings are summarized below:

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The gender distribution was nearly equal, with 50.5% males and 49.5% females. The majority of respondents (47.9%) fell within the 31–45 age group, indicating that middle-aged individuals are more politically active.

50.5% of respondents had secondary education, while 10.1% had no formal education, suggesting that literacy impacts political engagement.

The majority of respondents (50.5%) were farmers, reflecting the agrarian economy of Achalla.

50.5% of respondents lived in the village center, while 49.5% resided in the outskirts.

Political Participation Trends

92.9% of respondents had voted in previous elections, making voting the most common form of participation.

88.9% engaged in political discussions, indicating high levels of political awareness.

75.8% attended political rallies, while 53.5% were registered political party members.

Only 8.1% of respondents had contested for an elective position, indicating barriers to political ambition.

Challenges to Political Participation

Economic hardship (82.8%) was identified as the most significant challenge, affecting political engagement.

Vote-buying and corruption (71.7%) discouraged fair electoral processes.

Traditional rulers influenced voting decisions (58.6%), which may limit political independence.

Electoral violence and intimidation (52.5%) deterred voter turnout.

Lack of trust in the electoral system (39.4%) further contributed to voter apathy.

Suggested Solutions for Improving Political Participation

82.8% of respondents supported economic empowerment programs to encourage political engagement.

71.7% recommended voter education programs to improve political awareness.

58.6% suggested stronger electoral reforms to prevent vote-buying and fraud.

52.5% believed improved security would reduce electoral violence and intimidation.

Conclusion

The study revealed that political participation in Achalla is influenced by demographic factors such as age, education, occupation, and economic status.

While voting and political discussions are widely practiced, economic hardship, electoral violence, and the influence of traditional rulers hinder full engagement in governance. The findings suggest that economic empowerment, voter education,

and electoral reforms are essential in promoting inclusive and effective political participation.

To enhance political participation, there is a need for improved civic education, economic stability, and electoral transparency. Addressing these challenges will strengthen democratic institutions and encourage more citizens to engage in governance processes.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

Government and Electoral Bodies

1. Strengthen Voter Education Programs – The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should implement awareness campaigns to educate citizens on their voting rights and responsibilities.
2. Implement Electoral Reforms – Policies should be enforced to prevent vote-buying, electoral fraud, and political violence.
3. Enhance Security Measures – Law enforcement agencies should ensure a safe voting environment to prevent intimidation and violence.

Community Leaders and Civil Society Organizations

1. Encourage Independent Political Decisions – Traditional rulers should allow individuals to vote freely, without external pressure.

2. Promote Women and Youth Participation – Programs should be created to support women and young people in leadership positions.

Economic Empowerment Initiatives

1. Reduce Economic Barriers – The government should create job opportunities and financial support programs to empower citizens economically.

2. Provide Skill Acquisition Programs – Vocational training should be implemented to increase self-reliance and financial stability, enabling more people to engage in politics.

Digital and Media Awareness

1. Use Digital Platforms for Political Mobilization – Social media and digital campaigns should be used to educate citizens on governance and elections.

2. Increase Media Coverage in Rural Areas – More local radio and television programs should focus on political awareness and civic education.

These recommendations, if effectively implemented, will increase voter turnout, reduce electoral malpractice, and strengthen democratic governance in Achalla.

Contributions to Knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge in the following ways:

It provides empirical evidence on the impact of demographics on political participation in rural communities like Achalla.

It identifies economic hardship, vote-buying, and traditional leadership influence as major barriers to political engagement.

It highlights the role of voter education and economic empowerment in increasing political participation.

It proposes practical solutions to enhance inclusive governance and electoral transparency in Nigeria's democratic process.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the significance of the findings, this study has some limitations:

1. Sample Size Restriction – The study focused on 500 respondents, which may not capture the perspectives of the entire Achalla population.
2. Self-Reported Data – Responses were based on self-reported information, which may include bias.
3. Time and Resource Constraints – The study was limited by time and funding, restricting broader geographic coverage.

Future studies should expand the sample size and geographical scope to obtain more generalized findings.

Suggestions for Further Research

To build upon this study, future research should consider:

1. Comparative Studies – Examining political participation across different rural and urban communities to identify broader trends.
2. Role of Digital Media in Political Engagement – Assessing how social media influences voter education and activism in rural areas.
3. Impact of Electoral Reforms – Investigating how changes in electoral policies affect political participation in Nigeria.

These areas will provide deeper insights into political engagement and strategies for improving democratic participation in rural communities.

Conclusion

This study provided a detailed analysis of political participation in Achalla, examining the demographic factors that influence engagement and the challenges faced by voters. The findings reveal that while voting is high, economic hardship, vote-buying, and electoral violence discourage full political participation.

The study recommends economic empowerment, voter education, security measures, and electoral reforms to enhance inclusive political engagement.

Addressing these issues will lead to stronger democratic institutions and improved governance in Achalla.

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APPENDIX

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT
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ACHALLA POLITICAL PARTICIPATION CHECKLIST (APPC)

Dear Respondent,

The purpose of this checklist is purely designed to assess "Demographic Characteristics of the Achalla People and Their Level of Political Participation." I humbly appeal for your maximum cooperation in responding honestly to the questions. All information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

SECTION A (Demographic Information)

1. Sex: Male Female
2. Residence: Village Center Outskirts of Achalla Others
3. Religion: Christian Muslim Traditional Religion
 Others (Specify) _____
4. Occupation: Farmer Trader Civil Servant Private Sector
Worker Student Unemployed
5. Age: 18 – 30 years 31 – 45 years 46 years and above

SECTION B (Political Participation)

Instructions: Kindly check [] the political activities you have engaged in and the challenges you have faced.

6. Have you ever voted in an election?
 Yes No

7. How often do you participate in elections?

Always Sometimes Rarely Never

8. Do you belong to any political party?

Yes No

9. What political activities have you engaged in?

Attended political rallies Campaigned for a candidate

Contested for an elective position Participated in community decision-making

Engaged in political discussions/debates Protests or activism

Following political news in media

10. Who influences your voting decisions the most?

Personal conviction Family and friends

Community leaders/traditional rulers Religious leaders

Political party affiliation

11. Challenges to Political Participation (Check all that apply)

Lack of political awareness Economic hardship

Influence of traditional leaders Electoral violence and intimidation

Vote-buying and corruption Lack of trust in the electoral system

Gender discrimination Religious or ethnic bias

Poor access to voter registration centers Poor access to political information

12. What would encourage more political participation in Achalla? (Check all that apply)

Voter education programs Economic empowerment opportunities

Electoral reforms to ensure fairness Youth involvement in governance

Increased women's participation in politics Improved security during

elections Media and digital awareness campaigns