

**DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS: A STUDY
OF THE ATTITUDE AND PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN IN BENIN CITY, EDO STATE.**

BY

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,

BENIN CITY.

OCTOBER, 2025.

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
AND ANTHROPOLOGY, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF
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THE AWARD OF THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE (B.SC) IN SOCIOLOGY
AND ANTHROPOLOGY.**

OCTOBER, 2025.

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project work was carried out by **GRACE ODINAKACHI AUGUSTINE** with the matriculation number **SSC2105898** in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City under my supervision.

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DEDICATION

This project is wholeheartedly dedicated to God Almighty, whose boundless grace, mercy, and strength made the successful completion of this academic journey possible.

I also dedicate this work to myself for holding on and pushing through, even when the road was tough and the odds were stacked against me. The journey wasn't easy, but every step was worth it.

To my beloved parents, Mr. Matthew Ogbom and Mrs. Juliana Ogbom, your prayers, sacrifices, and unwavering support have been the backbone of my success. Thank you for your endless encouragement and love throughout this process.

To my amazing siblings, Blessing, Glory, Johnson, Joy, Ruth, Esther, Jude, and Ebuka, your love, inspiration, and constant support have been a source of strength and comfort. I cherish you all deeply. God bless you abundantly; I love you always.

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ABSTRACT

The participation of women in politics is a crucial aspect of democratic governance, as it not only enhances representation but also brings diverse perspectives to the policy making process. While many women actively engage in politics, others exhibit apathy. Studying women's participation in politics and its impact on democratic values can help assess the health of democracy by examining the representation and participation of women in decision-making process which is a key indicator to democracy. The study investigates the impacts of women's participation in politics on democratic values and examine the relationship between women's participation and representation in politics. The adopted research design for this study is the survey research design.

The study used a Close-ended questionnaire to collect data from female academic staffs across five Faculties serving as the research method. Conflict theory was used to backup this study. Data collection took place in the environs of the University of Benin, Edo State. Data was collected and analysed using frequency distribution tables representing its objectives. During the course of this study, the quantitative approach was used to get data information from 120 female academic staffs. The findings obtained from this study shows that majority of the female academic staffs agreed that women's participation in politics can lead to a more representative governance, strengthening democratic institutions.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The participation of women in politics is a crucial aspect of democratic governance, as it not only enhances representation but also brings diverse perspectives to the policymaking process. Women play a vital role in societal development globally, contributing to cultural and political progress. As activists, mothers, producers, and community leaders, women deserve equal rights and opportunities. According to Ajbaajobi (2009), women comprise over half of the world's population and actively engage in various levels of political and social movements, making significant contributions.

Research has shown that having more women in policy making leads to better legislation on critical issues like healthcare, education and infrastructure as well as efforts to end violence against women. Women's participation in politics is vital for a healthy democracy, as it ensures justice, effective governance and inspires future generations. The participation of women in politics has been a crucial aspect of democratic development worldwide. As half of the world's population, women's voices and perspectives are essential for ensuring that governance is representative, inclusive, and equitable. Over the years, women have made significant strides in politics, from local councils to national parliaments and even the highest levels of government. A society cannot achieve sustainable democracy without the equal involvement of women, who comprise a significant portion of the population, in politics (Anifowose, 2004). However, despite these gains, women remain underrepresented in politics globally.

It is worth noting that some countries have restrictions on women's participation in politics. In Saudi Arabia for instance, although women were granted the right to vote in 2015, their

participation in politics was still limited and they face significant barriers to running for offices. Historically, women did not have the opportunity to take part in politics or engage in business activities like buying and selling products, which limited their ability to contribute to and participate in their communities (Saber and Scroll, 2015). Democratic governance is founded on principles of freedom, justice, and fairness for all, regardless of gender, with development as its ultimate goal (Ogbonna, 2020). This foundation relies on equal opportunities for all actors to participate in decision-making processes, ensuring political self-preservation and inclusive governance (Sodaro, 2001:27).

The impact of women's participation in politics can be seen at various levels. Regionally, women's participation has led to the adoption of policies that address specific gender-related issues, such as reproductive rights and violence against women. At the federal level, women's presence in national parliaments has influenced the passage of legislation that promotes gender equality and challenges patriarchal norms. Globally, women's participation in international governance has shaped global agendas, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and ensured that women's rights are integrated into development policies.

The UN made a statement in 2024 as part of their report on women's representation in cabinet positions worldwide. According to the report, women hold only 23.3% of cabinet positions globally with 15 countries achieving gender parity in their cabinet minister positions and 7 countries have no women represented in the cabinet at all. Globally, women's representation in parliaments stands at 27%, while at the local level they make up 35.5% of elected member. At the current pace, achieving equal representation of women and men in cabinet positions globally is expected to take decades with projections indicating it will not happen before 2077. This slow progress is concerning, considering the importance of gender equality in leadership roles for

effective governance and democracy (UN Women, 2024). Women's participation in politics in Nigeria has a rich and complex history, starting from the early colonial era (1900 -1940s) when women began mobilizing against colonial policies and social changes. Notable figures like Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti led protest against unfair taxation and colonial rule. The Abeokuta women's Union, founded by Ransome-Kuti, played a significant role in advocating for women's rights. During the post-colonial period (1950s - 1960s), as Nigeria moved towards independence, women's organizations like the Nigerian women's Union and Nigerian women's party pushed for greater female participation in politics. Although progress was slow, women like Margaret Ekpo became pioneers in Nigerian politics, with Ekpo being one of the first women elected to the Eastern Regional House of Assembly.

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Nigeria's former Finance Minister, aptly captures the challenges women leaders face, stating, "There is no right way to be a woman leader." Okonjo-Iweala's quote emphasizes the need for a more inclusive and supportive environment, recognizing that women's leadership styles and strengths are valuable assets. "By acknowledging and addressing these challenges, we can work towards creating a more level playing field for women in leadership positions" (Gillard Okonjo-Iweala, 2020). Despite progress, women continue to encounter significant obstacles in participating in politics. Hence there is need to thoroughly examine how women's involvement in politics affects democratic values, exploring the challenges and benefits of their participation in University of Benin, Edo State.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

While many women actively engage in politics, others exhibit apathy. Historically, societal attitudes have hindered women's participation, with beliefs that women were intellectually inferior and incapable of learning, thus excluding them from education and political involvement

(Kay, 2012). Women's political participation is hindered by harmful societal norms and gender-based violence, while media stereotypes portray them as less capable leaders than men. This perpetuates underrepresentation in politics, despite their potential to bring diverse perspectives and skills to decision-making roles (UN Women Report, 2024).

"Women's representation in Nigeria's National Assembly is alarmingly low, with only 6% of seats held by women in the 9th Assembly. This starkly contrasts with global, regional, and sub-regional averages." The numbers are equally disappointing in ministerial appointments, with only 7 women appointed out of 36 positions (16.7%) in the Muhammadu Buhari-led administration. The underrepresentation of women in Nigerian politics is a longstanding issue, with awareness about the importance of women's roles in national development emerging in the 1980s. Despite efforts to promote women's participation, challenges persist. Societal and cultural norms limit women's opportunities and aspirations for leadership positions, while women in politics face online threats, physical violence, and psychological abuse. Limited access to resources, financial networks, and political connections also hinder successful campaigns (Eke, 2022).

Women's participation in politics is hindered by several significant challenges that prevent them from having an equal say in decision-making processes. Societal and cultural norms, including harmful stereotypes and biases, limit women's opportunities and aspirations for leadership positions. Additionally, women in politics often face violence and harassment, including online threats, physical violence, and psychological abuse, which can deter them from participating. Limited access to resources, such as financial networks and political connections, also hinders women's ability to run successful campaigns. Furthermore, resistance from political parties, including high fees for nomination forms and lack of support, can make it difficult for women to

participate in politics. These challenges hinder progress toward gender equality and underscore the need for greater support and empowerment of women in politics.

These barriers result in women holding limited seats in national parliaments and local governments worldwide. To achieve gender equality, it is crucial to address these challenges and promote women's participation in politics. Some potential solutions includes providing training and support for women candidates and promoting inclusive decisions making processes. (UN Women Report, 2024). This study seeks to analyze the relationship between women's political participation and democratic values, contributing to a deeper understanding of how women's empowerment strengthens democratic institutions.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study and provide answers to:

1. How does women's participation in politics affect democracy at different levels?
2. What helps or hinders women from participating effectively in politics?
3. How can women's involvement in politics be increased and sustained for better governance?
4. What strategies and initiatives can increase women's participation and influence in politics?
5. What is the relationship between women's participation and representation in politics?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Women's participation in politics is crucial for a well-functioning democracy, bringing diverse perspectives and experiences to decision making processes. These objectives aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of women's role in shaping democratic processes and promoting gender equality in politics. The research study aims to:

1. To investigate the impact of women's participation in politics on democratic values.
2. To examine the relationship between women's participation and representation in politics.

3. To identify the factors that facilitate or hinder women's participation in politics.
4. To explore the role of women in shaping public policy on key issues such as healthcare, education, and economic development.
5. To identify strategies for sustaining and institutionalizing women's participation in politics.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Studying women's participation in politics and its impact on democratic values is significant for several reasons. It helps assess the health of democracy by examining the representation and participation of women in decision-making processes, which is a key indicator of democracy. The study will reveal the obstacles women face in politics, such as gender stereotypes, limited access to resources, and societal biases, allowing for targeted interventions. By understanding the factors influencing women's political participation, policymakers can develop strategies to promote gender equality and enhance democratic governance. Women's participation brings diverse perspectives, leading to more representative and effective governance, which is essential for democratic values. In essence, studying women's participation in politics helps researchers gain a deeper understanding of how women participate in politics and its effects on democratic values by exploring these areas. This understanding can then inform policies and interventions that foster inclusive governance, ultimately contributing to a more equitable society where women have a greater voice in decision-making processes.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research focuses on investigating the involvement of women in politics and its effects on democratic values among women residing Benin City, Edo State. By narrowing its scope, the study aims to provide in-depth insights into the experiences and perspectives of women in this specific context.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION: Women's participation, as defined by UN Women's report, refers to women's equal involvement and leadership in political and public life, including decision-making processes. This concept encompasses various aspects, such as Women in Executive Government Positions, Women in National Parliaments, etc.

POLITICS: Politics is the art or science concerned with winning and holding control over a government. According to Harold Lasswell, politics is defined as: "Who gets what, when, and how." This definition, from his 1936 book "Politics: Who Gets What, When, and How," emphasizes that politics is about the distribution of power, resources, and benefits within a society.

DEMOCRATIC VALUES: Democratic values are the principles and ideals that underpin a democratic system of government, emphasizing the protection of individual rights, promotion of citizen participation, and accountability of government to the people. Some key democratic values include: equality, freedom, etc.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

Women's participation in politics refers to the involvement of women in various aspects of political life, including voting, running for office, holding public office, and influencing policy decisions. This concept is essential for achieving gender equality, promoting democratic values, and ensuring that women's perspectives and needs are represented in governance. In pre-colonial Nigeria, women held significant leadership roles, occupying positions of authority such as chieftaincy titles and priestesses, particularly in regions like the Niger Delta. They contributed to decision-making processes and had influence beyond domestic spheres, showcasing their importance in societal governance. Despite patriarchal constraints that often limited their official political engagement, women played vital roles in the economy through agriculture, trade, and handicrafts. They were instrumental in preserving and upholding cultural traditions, passing down knowledge and customs through generations. Their multifaceted contributions underscore the integral role women played in shaping pre-colonial Nigerian societies. (Oladipo, 2024).

Women's participation in politics in Nigeria has a rich and complex history, starting from the early colonial era (1900 -1940s) when women began mobilizing against colonial policies and social changes. Notable figures like Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti led protest against unfair taxation and colonial rule. The Abeokuta women's Union, founded by Ransome-Kuti, played a significant role in advocating for women's rights. During the post-colonial period (1950s - 1960s), as Nigeria moved towards independence, women's organizations like the Nigerian women's Union and Nigerian women's party pushed for greater female participation in politics. Although progress was slow, women like Margaret Ekpo became pioneers in Nigerian politics, with Ekpo

being one of the first women elected to the Eastern Regional House of Assembly. Women have not had much representation in Nigerian politics for a long time, there were few women in the 9th National Assembly and in President Buhari's cabinet. This underrepresentation has been an ongoing issue, highlighting the challenges women face in getting involved and holding significant positions in Nigerian politics (Salau, 2024).

During military rule (1966 -1999), women's participation in politics was severely restricted. Despite this, women's organizations continued to advocate for democracy and human rights. The women in Nigeria (WIN) organization, formed in 1982, was instrumental in promoting gender equality. The return to civilian rule (1999-till date) marked a new era for women's political participation. The National Gender policy adopted in 2006, aimed to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Notable figures like Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and Amina Mohammed have made contributions to Nigerian politics. A landmark court victory in 2022 ruled in favour of women's inclusion in political processes mandating the implementation of the 35% affirmative action policy. However, the government has yet to fully implement this policy, leaving women underrepresented in politics. Women in Nigeria do not participate much in politics, which affects their contribution to the country's development. They found that cultural practices, violence, and political party dynamics hinder women's involvement. The study also mentions women's domestic roles limit their political participation (Arolowo and Aluko, 2010).

Colonialism worsened the economic and political situation for Nigerian women, excluding them from politics and stripping them of their limited leadership roles through the indirect rule system (Okundaye,2017). Colonial authorities overlooked women's pre-colonial political involvement, instead engaged only with men in local governance. This oversight led to women's loss of ground in colonial legal systems. In pre-colonial Africa, women played significant roles in

politics, social, cultural and economic developments but their contributions were often disregarded or downplayed (Sheldon, 2017). Women's participation in politics is essential for achieving inclusive governance. While progress has been made, there is still much work to be done. By addressing the challenges and implementing recommendations, we can promote greater participation and representation of women in politics.

2.2 NIGERIAN WOMEN IN POLITICS

Nigerian women are increasingly making their mark in politics, shattering traditional barriers and claiming their space in leadership positions. Despite a history of underrepresentation, women are now more actively taking charge and pushing for equal representation in governance. Women have been key players in Nigeria's political landscape, contributing substantially from the colonial period till date. During Nigeria's colonial era, women's involvement in politics faced substantial obstacles and limited prospects, yet they demonstrated remarkable activism and resistance.

2.2.1 COLONIAL ERA (Pre -1960)

a. QUEEN AMINA OF ZARIA (1533-1610): Queen Amina was a legendary queen of the Hausa people in what is now Nigeria. She ruled Zaria, a city-state in the north, and expanded its territories through military conquests. Known for her bravery, strategic leadership, and diplomatic skills, Queen Amina is celebrated for her contributions to the region's history and culture.

b. FUNMILAYO RANSOME-KUTI (1900-1978): Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti was a pioneering Nigerian educator, politician, and women's rights activist. She was one of the first women to attend Abeokuta Grammar School and later became a teacher. Ransome-Kuti was a key figure in the Nigerian independence movement and fought for women's suffrage and rights.

She was also a vocal critic of colonialism and traditional practices that oppressed women. Both women left lasting legacies in Nigerian history, paving the way for future generations of women in politics and activism.

2.2.2 FIRST REPUBLIC (1960-1966)

MARGARET EKPO

Margaret Ekpo was a pioneering female politician in Nigeria's First Republic. Born on July 27, 1914, she was a women's rights activist and social mobilizer who played a significant role in the country's struggle for independence. Ekpo's activism began in 1945 when she joined the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC), a party led by Nnamdi Azikiwe, Nigeria's first president. Some of her notable achievements includes:

- a. **Breaking Gender Barriers:** In 1954, Ekpo was appointed a Chief with a seat in the Eastern House of Chiefs, a space previously dominated by men.
- b. **Advocating for Women's Rights:** She fought for women's inclusion in policies and programs, speaking out against women's exclusion in the Northern Region's political process.
- c. **Empowering Women:** Ekpo founded the Windsor Domestic Science Institute, training women in bookkeeping, dressmaking, and home economics.
- d. **Legislative Role:** In 1961, she won a seat in the Eastern Regional House of Assembly, advocating for women's progress in economic and political matters.

2.2.3 MILITARY RULE (1966-1999)

Some notable women who contributed to Nigerian politics and activism during this period include:

- a. **FUNMILAYO RANSOME-KUTI:** A pioneering women's rights activist who continued her activism during the military era. She supported her son, Fela Ransome-Kuti, in criticizing the

military government and was awarded the Member of Order of Niger (MON) and Lenin Peace Prize.

b. HAJIA GAMBO SAWABA: A northern Nigerian politician and activist who fought for women's inclusion in politics and social issues. Although she passed away in 2001, her legacy extends beyond the military era, inspiring future generations.

These women, though not exclusively active during the military era, paved the way for future generations of women in Nigerian politics.

2.2.4 FOURTH REPUBLIC (1999- Till date)

NGOZI OKONJO- IWEALA

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala is a renowned economist and politician who has made significant contributions to Nigerian politics and global economic governance. Born on June 13, 1954, in Ogwashi-Ukwu, Delta State, she served as Nigeria's Finance Minister twice, from 2003 to 2006 and 2011 to 2015. Some of her notable achievements includes:

a. DEBT CANCELLATION: Negotiated the cancellation of \$18 billion of Nigeria's debt by the Paris Club, freeing up funds for development projects.

b.ECONOMIC REFORMS: Implemented critical reforms to increase transparency, reduce corruption, and improve fiscal discipline.

c. GLOBAL LEADERSHIP: Became the first woman and African to be appointed Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2021.

2.3. GLOBAL STATISTICS OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS IN DIFFERENT LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

Women's participation in Nigerian politics has a rich history, albeit on a relatively small scale. According to Akande in 2006, African societies, including Nigeria, have a long history of

women's involvement in struggles for freedom, change, and democracy at various levels. Despite this, women's representation in Nigerian politics remains low, with women holding only: 4 seats out of 109 in the Senate (3.7% representation), 16 seats out of 360 in the House of Representatives (4.4% representation), 50 seats out of 993 in state Houses of Assembly (5% representation). Globally, women's participation in politics varies significantly across different levels of government.

2.3.1 WOMEN IN HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT POSITIONS

Only 18 countries have a woman Head of State, and 16 countries have a woman Head of Government as of January 2025. As of January 2023, 11.3% of countries had women Heads of State (17 out of 151 countries), and 9.8% had women Heads of Government (19 out of 193 countries).

2.3.2 WOMEN IN CABINET POSITIONS

Women represent 22.9% of Cabinet members heading Ministries or leading policy areas as of January 2025. Only nine countries have women holding 50% or more of Cabinet Minister positions leading policy areas.

2.3.3 WOMEN IN NATIONAL LEGISLATURES

Women hold 27% of legislative seats worldwide as of October 2024, up from 15.6% in 2004. Six countries have 50% or more women in parliament in single or lower houses: Rwanda: 64%, Cuba: 56%, Nicaragua: 55%, Andorra: 50%, Mexico: 50%, United Arab Emirates: 50%. A further 21 countries have reached or surpassed 40% women's representation in parliament, including: Nine countries in Europe, Six countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Five countries in Africa, and one country in Asia-Pacific.

2.3.4 Regionally, the Middle East/Northern Africa region has the lowest representation of women in legislative seats, with 16.8% as of 2024, although this is an increase from 6.9% in 2004. Europe has the highest number of countries led by women, with 16 countries as of January 2023.

2.4 BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

Women's participation in politics is crucial for inclusive and accountable governance. However, they face numerous barriers that hinder their ability to engage in political processes. These barriers can be broadly categorized into several areas:

2.4.1 SOCIO-CULTURAL BARRIERS

Socio-cultural factors play a significant role in hindering women's participation in politics. These factors are deeply ingrained in societal attitudes, norms, and expectations, and they can discourage women from pursuing political careers, limit their opportunities for advancement, and undermine their effectiveness in office. Therefore, socio-cultural barriers can be examined in 3 contexts. They are: Gender stereotypes and traditional roles and expectations.

2.4.1.1 GENDER STEREOTYPES

Gender stereotypes refer to preconceived notions or oversimplified generalizations about the characteristics, roles, and behaviors that are deemed appropriate for men and women. These stereotypes can limit women's opportunities for political engagement and leadership. Women are often perceived as nurturing, emotional, and caregiving, while men are seen as strong, rational, and decisive. These stereotypes can influence how women are perceived in politics and can limit their ability to be taken seriously as leaders. Gender stereotypes can discourage women from pursuing political careers, as they may feel that they do not fit the traditional mold of a politician. Additionally, women who do pursue political careers may face biases and stereotypes

that can undermine their credibility and effectiveness. For instance, women are often expected to prioritize family responsibilities over public life, and are seen as less capable of handling leadership positions or making tough decisions. According to Eagly and Karau's 2002 Role Congruity Theory which posits that gender stereotypes can impact how women lead, especially in politics. The theory explains that people might prejudice female leaders because they see a mismatch between traditional female roles and the demands of leadership positions.

2.4.1.2 TRADITIONAL ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS

Traditional roles and expectations refer to the societal norms and expectations that dictate what roles men and women should play in society. Traditional roles and expectations can limit women's opportunities for political engagement and leadership. Women are often expected to prioritize family responsibilities and caregiving roles, rather than pursuing careers in politics. These roles and expectations can discourage women from pursuing political careers, as they may feel that they are expected to prioritize family responsibilities over public life. Additionally, women who do pursue political careers may face challenges in balancing their family responsibilities with their political work. For instance, women are often expected to be primary caregivers for children and elderly family members, and are seen as responsible for managing household duties. These expectations can limit women's ability to participate in politics and can also undermine their credibility as leaders. Rachel George's research shows that traditional gender norms affect how women participate in politics. Her work with ALIGN (a platform focused on Advancing Learning and Innovation on Gender Norms) notes that gender norms shape women's involvement in politics, with traditional norms often expecting women to focus on being mothers and wives. This can make it harder for women to get involved in politics (ALIGN, 2019).

These socio-cultural factors can have a significant impact on women's participation in politics, and can limit their opportunities for leadership and decision-making. Addressing these factors requires a sustained effort to challenge and change societal attitudes, norms, and expectations.

2.4.2 ECONOMIC BARRIERS

Economic factors refer to the financial and material resources that can impact women's participation in politics. Economic factors play a significant role in shaping women's participation in politics. Three key factors that can impact women's participation are:

2.4.2.1 EDUCATION

Education is a critical factor in determining women's participation in politics. Women with higher levels of education are more likely to participate in politics and hold leadership positions. Limited access to education can hinder women's ability to participate in politics, as they may lack the necessary skills and knowledge to engage in political activities. Education plays a crucial role in empowering women to participate in politics. It can boost their confidence, increase their understanding of politics, equip them with essential skills, provide networking opportunities, and foster a sense of civic responsibility. By expanding access to education, we can increase women's representation in government, enhance political participation, and promote inclusive decision-making. Educated women are more likely to run for office, participate in voting, and bring diverse perspectives to the table (Kenworthy, Malami, 1999;240). Overall, education is a key factor in empowering women to participate in politics and can have a positive impact on their engagement and representation in the political process. Education can empower women to participate in politics by providing them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and confidence to engage in political activities.

2.4.2.2 LIMITED ACCESS TO RESOURCES

According to Attoe in 2012, in Nigeria, a significant number of women face financial constraints and have limited economic opportunities compared to their male counterparts. This disparity can affect their ability to participate in various spheres of life, including politics, education, and entrepreneurship. As a result, many Nigerian women struggle to achieve financial independence, making it challenging for them to pursue their goals and aspirations. In Nigerian politics, having sufficient economic resources can be a significant advantage. Those with substantial financial means often have more influence and a higher chance of winning political offices. This can create a power imbalance, where those with more resources have greater control and opportunities. Women may have limited access to networks and connections that can help them build support and momentum for their political activities. Also women may have limited access to information about politics, including information about political processes, procedures, and opportunities.

2.4.2.3. OCCUPATION

Traditional societal expectations often dictate that women's roles are limited to domestic duties, such as childcare, household management, and family care, rather than pursuing careers or leadership positions (Olaoluwa, 2017). Occupation can also impact women's participation in politics. Their occupational choices and experiences can influence their ability to participate in politics. Women in occupations with limited flexibility, such as shift work or long hours, may find it difficult to balance work and political responsibilities. These economic factors can have a significant impact on women's participation in politics, and can limit their opportunities for leadership and decision-making. Addressing these factors requires a sustained effort to promote education, provide access to resources, and support women's economic empowerment.

2.4.3 INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS

Institutional barriers refer to the systemic and structural obstacles that prevent women from fully participating in politics. These can include: Lack of representation in decision-making bodies and violence and harassment.

2.4.3.1 LACK OF REPRESENTATION

Lack of representation refers to the underrepresentation or absence of women in decision-making positions, such as: Political offices (parliament, congress, etc.), Leadership roles (ministers, governors, etc.), Party leadership, Committees and boards. When women are underrepresented in political offices and leadership positions, it can have a ripple effect. This scarcity of female role models and leaders can discourage women from pursuing political careers, as they may feel they don't belong or can't succeed. It can also limit the diversity of perspectives and ideas, leading to policies that might not address women's needs and concerns.

2.4.3.2 VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

Violence and harassment, whether physical, verbal, or psychological, can have a devastating impact on women's participation in politics. Women politicians or activists might receive threats, bullying, or coercion, making them feel unsafe or vulnerable. Social media can be a breeding ground for sexist, misogynistic, or abusive comments, further deterring women from participating. For instance, the Governorship election held in 2015 in Taraba State. Aisha Alhassan, a Nigerian lawyer and politician made history by becoming the first female gubernatorial candidate in Nigeria, earning her the nickname "Mama Taraba." Alhassan contested for governor in Taraba State under APC in 2015, initially losing to Darius Ishaku of the People's Democratic party (PDP). However, a tribunal later declared her the winner only to be reversed by the Appeal and Supreme Courts (Daily Trust, 2016). Another example is Funke Akindele, a

renowned Nigerian actress and filmmaker. She was strongly opposed after becoming the running mate of Olajide Adediran, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) gubernatorial candidate for Lagos State in 2023 (Erezi, 2022). Akindele faced intense scrutiny for her political ambitions, with critics focusing on her personal life, particularly her divorce rather than her qualifications (#PulseHot Takes,2022). Natasha Akpoti, a governorship candidate of Kogi State, witnessed her share of harassment for being a woman. She faced physical assault and attacks from opponents during her campaign (Oyewale, 2022).

2.5 IMPACTS OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS AND ITS DEMOCRATIC VALUES

Women's participation in policy-making can have significant impacts, including:

2.5.1. MORE INCLUSIVE POLICIES

Women's participation in policy-making leads to more inclusive policies that address the diverse needs of citizens. This includes addressing women's specific needs, considering diverse family structures, prioritizing social welfare, promoting economic empowerment, and representing marginalized groups. Inclusive policies can have a positive impact on health outcomes, economic opportunities, and social cohesion. They can also better serve citizens, foster equality and justice, and enhance democracy. Some key areas where inclusive policies can make a difference include; Reproductive health and maternal care, Education and skills training, Economic empowerment and financial inclusion, Social welfare and support services and Representation and advocacy for marginalized communities. By developing more inclusive policies, governments can promote equality, justice, and overall well-being for all citizens. Women's participation in politics leads to more inclusive decision-making, which can change people's perception of what a leader looks

like (UN Women, 2019). Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, emphasized that more women in politics results in more inclusive decisions.

2.5.2 INCREASED REPRESENTATION OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS

When women participate in politics and policy-making, they often bring attention to the needs and concerns of marginalized groups. Women from diverse backgrounds can advocate for policies that address the specific challenges they face. For instance, policies that promote equal pay, protect against discrimination, and ensure access to healthcare and education can greatly benefit marginalized communities. According to Dr. Naila Kabeer, women's participation in decision-making can lead to more inclusive policies that address the needs of diverse groups (Kabeer, 2015). Similarly, research by the World Bank has shown that women's participation in politics can lead to more equitable distribution of resources and opportunities (World Bank, 2012). Some key areas where policies can make a difference include: addressing systemic inequalities and biases, promoting diversity and inclusion etc. By representing marginalized groups, women in politics can help create a more just and equitable society. This can lead to improved outcomes in areas such as health, education, and economic opportunities.

2.5.3. ROLE MODELING AND EMPOWERMENT

When women hold leadership positions, they can inspire and empower other women to pursue careers in politics and leadership. This can lead to a ripple effect, where more women become involved in decision-making and shape policies that benefit their communities. Research has shown that women in leadership positions can serve as role models, challenging traditional gender stereotypes and demonstrating that women can be effective leaders (Eagly & Carli, 2007). This can help to build confidence and ambition among young women and girls, encouraging them to pursue their goals and aspirations. According to a report by the Inter-Parliamentary

Union (IPU), women parliamentarians can play a crucial role in promoting women's empowerment and gender equality (IPU, 2018). They can do this by:

- a. Advocating for policies that support women's rights and empowerment
- b. Providing mentorship and support to other women in politics
- c. Challenging discriminatory laws and practices
- d. Promoting women's participation in decision-making processes

By empowering other women and serving as role models, women in leadership positions can help to create a more inclusive and equitable society. This can lead to positive outcomes in areas such as education, health, and economic opportunities.

2.5.4. IMPROVED GOVERNANCE

Women's participation in politics and policy-making can lead to improved governance in several ways. Research suggests that women politicians tend to prioritize issues that benefit the broader community, such as healthcare, education, and social welfare (Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2004). This can result in more comprehensive and effective policies that address the needs of diverse populations. According to a study by the World Bank, women's participation in governance can lead to increased transparency and accountability (World Bank, 2012). Women politicians are often more likely to engage in collaborative leadership styles, which can foster a more inclusive and participatory approach to decision-making. Some key ways women's participation can improve governance include:

- a. Increased transparency and accountability.
- b. More inclusive and participatory decision-making processes.
- c. Prioritization of social welfare and community development.
- d. Reduced corruption and improved institutional trust.

By contributing to improved governance, women's participation in politics can lead to better outcomes for citizens and more effective use of resources. This can result in improved health, education, and economic opportunities for all members of society.

2.5.5. ENHANCED DEMOCRACY

When women participate in politics and policy-making, it can lead to a more robust and inclusive democracy. This is because women's involvement brings diverse perspectives and experiences to the decision-making process. Research has shown that women's participation in politics can lead to:

- a. Increased citizen engagement: Women's participation can increase citizen engagement and participation in the democratic process.
- b. More representative governance: Women often bring a more nuanced understanding of citizens' needs and priorities, leading to more representative governance.
- c. Greater accountability: Women's participation can lead to greater accountability and transparency in government decision-making.
- d. More inclusive decision-making: Women's involvement can ensure that policies are more inclusive and address the needs of diverse groups.

According to a report by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), women's participation in politics is essential for building a more inclusive and representative democracy (IDEA, 2019). By increasing women's participation in policy-making, we can create more inclusive, equitable, and effective policies that benefit society as a whole.

2.6 STRATEGICS FOR INCREASING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

Strategies are plans or approaches designed to achieve a specific goal or objective. They involve a set of actions, tactics, or steps taken to accomplish a desired outcome. Strategies can be applied

in various contexts, including business, politics, sports, or personal development. In the context of increasing women's participation in politics, strategies might include: identifying and recruiting potential women candidates, providing training and support for women in politics, building coalitions with women's organizations and advocating for policy changes to promote gender equality. By developing and implementing effective strategies, individuals and organizations can achieve their goals and make progress towards creating positive change. The strategies for increasing women's participation in politics are multifaceted and interconnected. They include:

2.6.1 Quotas and Affirmative Action

Implementing quotas or affirmative action policies can help increase the number of women in politics (Krook, 2010). According to Nigerian scholar, Dr. Bolanle Awe, "quotas can be an effective way to increase women's representation in politics, especially in contexts where women face significant barriers to participation" (Awe, 2013).

2.6.2 Training and Capacity Building

Providing training and capacity-building programs can help women develop the skills and confidence needed to participate in politics (Lovenduski, 2005). Nigerian author, Funmi Oluwole, notes that "training programs can help women build their capacity and become more effective politicians" (Oluwole, 2018).

2.6.3 Mentorship and Support

Establishing mentorship programs and support networks can help women navigate the political landscape and build relationships with other women in politics (Franceschet & Piscopo, 2008). According to Nigerian scholar, Dr. Rotimi Ajayi, "mentorship programs can provide valuable guidance and support for women in politics" (Ajayi, 2019).

2.6.4 Party Support

Political parties can play a crucial role in promoting women's participation by providing support, resources, and opportunities for women to get involved (IDEA, 2019). Nigerian author, Dr. Olufemi Vaughan, notes that "political parties can increase women's representation by implementing policies and programs that support women's participation" (Vaughan, 2017).

2.6.5 Public Awareness and Advocacy

Raising public awareness about the importance of women's participation in politics and advocating for policies that support women's empowerment can help create a more enabling environment (UN Women, 2019). According to Nigerian scholar, Dr. Amina Mama, "public awareness campaigns can help shift societal attitudes and promote gender equality" (Mama, 2018).

2.6.6 Addressing Structural Barriers

Addressing structural barriers such as childcare responsibilities, lack of funding, and societal expectations can help women participate more fully in politics (Kabeer, 2015). Nigerian author, Dr. Joy Ezeilo, notes that "addressing structural barriers can help women balance work and family responsibilities" (Ezeilo, 2017).

2.6.7 Encouraging Women's Leadership

Encouraging women to take on leadership roles and providing opportunities for them to develop their leadership skills can help increase their participation in politics (Schein, 2010). According to Nigerian scholar, Dr. Omolara Ogundipe, "leadership development programs can help women build confidence and become more effective leaders" (Ogundipe, 2015).

2.6.8 Creating a Supportive Environment

Creating a supportive environment that allows women to balance work and family responsibilities can help them participate more fully in politics (World Bank, 2012). Nigerian author, Dr. Pat Ukpabi, notes that "a supportive environment can help women navigate the challenges of politics" (Ukpabi, 2019).

2.6.9 Networking Opportunities

Providing networking opportunities can help women build relationships and connections with other women in politics (Iheduru, 2018). According to Nigerian scholar, Dr. Nwando Achebe, "networking can provide valuable opportunities for women to share experiences and build support networks" (Achebe, 2018).

2.6.10 Funding and Resource Support

Providing funding and resource support can help women candidates and politicians overcome financial barriers and compete more effectively in elections (Britton, 2005). Nigerian author, Dr. Ayo Olukotun, notes that "funding support can help level the playing field for women in politics" (Olukotun, 2017). By implementing these strategies, governments, political parties, and civil society organizations can help increase women's participation in politics and promote more inclusive and representative governance.

2.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theory is a well-substantiated principle that explains a particular aspect of the world, developed through repeated observations, testing, and the incorporation of facts, laws, and hypotheses that have been widely accepted. For broader understanding of the study, conflict theory was adopted.

2.7.1 CONFLICT THEORY

Conflict theory suggests that society is characterized by ongoing conflict and competition for resources, power, and status. This perspective argues that social relationships are shaped by inequality, exploitation, and competition, leading to tensions and conflicts between different groups. This perspective emphasizes the role of conflict in shaping social relationships and institutions. The relationship between women's participation in politics and democratic values can be understood through the lens of conflict theory. According to this perspective women's underrepresentation in politics reflects a power imbalance, where men have historically held more power and influence. Competition for resources can be seen as a challenge to the existing power structure, as they compete for resources, such as seats in parliament, leadership positions, and policy influence.

Friedrich Engels' perspective on conflict theory asserts that societal conflict arises from power imbalances between different social classes and groups. He argued that economic disparities between the bourgeoisie (those who own the means of production) and the proletariat (workers who sell their labor) lead to conflict. Engels also applied this concept to gender relations, suggesting that the power imbalance between men and women is parallel to the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and proletariat. Engels' perspective has influenced feminist theories, which address how institutional structures reinforce gender inequality and perpetuate male dominance. His work has laid the groundwork for understanding the intersection of economic and gender inequalities, and how these inequalities lead to conflicts that can drive social change.

From a Marxist perspective, conflict theory suggests that women's participation in politics is shaped by the capitalist-patriarchal system, which perpetuates inequality and exploitation. Women's participation in politics is influenced by their class position, with working-class women

facing greater barriers. Capitalist-patriarchal systems maintain women's subordination, limiting their access to power and resources, women labor, both in the home and in the workforce, is exploited, contributing to their marginalization. This perspective highlights the need for fundamental transformation of societal structures to achieve true equality and democracy.

According to Ajayi in 2019, mentorship programs can provide valuable guidance and support for women in politics. Mentorship can help women navigate the political landscape, build relationships, and develop leadership skills. Empowering women through mentorship and support can increase their participation and effectiveness in politics. Ajayi's opined that women's participation in politics requires dismantling systemic barriers and patriarchal norms that limit their involvement. Encouraging women to pursue education and financial independence can also help them become more effective leaders. Creating supportive environments where women can gain practical experience in leadership and politics can foster their growth and development.

However, conflict theory also suggests that there may be resistance to women's participation in politics from those who benefit from the existing power structure. Women's participation can challenge existing power dynamics, leading to conflict and tension. Overall, women's participation in politics can have a positive impact on democratic values, promoting representation, equality, legitimacy, and inclusive decision-making. However, it also requires addressing the underlying power dynamics and conflicts that can arise from challenging the existing power structure.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will outline the methodology for the study on women's participation in politics and its impact on democratic values. It details the research approach, design, and methods that will be used to collect and analyze data, aiming to provide insights into the role of women in politics and governance within this local context. This research methodology is divided into several key components, including: research design, the area of study, population study, sample size, sampling techniques, research instruments and data collection and analysis.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a framework that outlines the plan for collecting and analyzing data to answer research questions, ensuring the data is relevant and necessary for the study population. It is the deliberate and scientific plan that shows the method to be adopted in the research process. The survey research design is suitable for this study because it enables the researcher gather insights into people's opinion, behavior and experiences, offering a deeper understanding of the targeted population. Secondly, surveys allow researchers to collect data from a large number of participants, providing a representative sample of the population.

3.3 AREA OF STUDY

The study took place at the University of Benin, a Federal government-owned institution in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. The University, which had been upgraded to a full University by the National University Commission (NUC) on July 1, 1971, has two campuses, Ugbowo and Ekeuhwan. The University operates a faculty system with 15 faculties, mostly located at the Ugbowo Campus, which also house the Central Administration Unit and the Vice Chancellor's

office. The student body comprise approximately 77,000 students. This study concentrated on the Ugbowo Campus of the university.

3.4 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The target population for this study specifically comprised the female academic staff members of the University of Benin, who were distributed across all 15 faculties of the institution. According to the latest statistics provided by the University of Benin Academic Planning Department, which were current as of 2024, the total number of female academic staff members in the University was approximately 595, with this figure exclusively representing the female demographic and not including the male.

3.5 SAMPLE SIZE

Based on our study population, it is not feasible to engage all members due to the constraints of the study, hence the need to select a suitable sample size that accurately represents the population. The sample size refers to a subset of individuals selected from the target population who participated in the research and provided data. A sample of 120 respondents (female academic staffs) were drawn from across five faculties: Basic Medical Sciences, Life Sciences, Management Sciences, Social Sciences and Law was selected from the targeted population, and questionnaires were administered to them. The results obtained from this sample were then generalized to represent the larger population.

3.6 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Sampling techniques refer to the methods used to select a subset of individuals or cases from a larger population for the purpose of a study or research. For this study, probability sampling techniques was adopted giving every respondents (female academic staffs) of the population an equal chance of being selected, ensuring a representative sample of the whole population.

3.7 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

This study used a close-ended questionnaire to collect data from female academic staff across five faculties: Basic Medical Sciences, Life Sciences, Management Sciences, Social Sciences, and Law, to gather information. The close-ended questions helped the researcher obtain precise quantifiable data and reduce respondent bias. Close-ended questions also enabled the researcher to standardize responses, making it simpler to compare and contrast data across different groups. The questionnaire was divided into six sections: Section A was on the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, while Section B was on women's participation in politics. Section C was on factors affecting women's participation in politics, while Section D was on enhancing women's involvement in politics. Section E was on strategies for promoting women's political engagement, and lastly, Section F was on the link between women's participation and representation in politics. Each section contained 4 questions, and the total number of questions was twenty.

3.8 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Questionnaires were used to collect data due to the large population size and limitations of time and funds. This method allowed for efficient collection of demographic data and measurement of respondents' behaviors through self-reported responses, without requiring direct observation. The data collected from the study was analyzed using simple percentages and frequency distribution tables.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings of the study, focusing on the analysis of data collected through questionnaires administered in the previous chapter. A total of 120 questionnaires was distributed to gather insights and perspectives relevant to the study.

4.1 DATA PRESENTATION

This section analyzes the socio-demographic profiles of study participants, specifically focusing on women's participation in politics and democratic values at the University of Benin, Edo State. The characteristics, such as age, education level, and other relevant factors, are presented in tables with frequencies and percentages, followed by detailed analysis and interpretation.

4.1.2 SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC OF RESPONDENTS

Table 4.1.1: Analysis of Age Distribution of the Respondents

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
25 -34	27	22.5%
35 -44	61	50.8%
45 -54	21	17.5%
55 and above	11	9.2%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 4.1.1 above shows that 22.5% represented respondents within the age of (25 -34), 50.8% represented respondents within the age of (35 -44), 17.5% represented respondents within the age of (45 -54), and 9.2% represented respondents within the age of (55 and above).

Table 4.1.2: Analysis of Respondents by Sex

SEX OF RESPONDENTS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Male	0	0
Female	120	100%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 4.1.2, indicates that 0% represented respondents are Male, while 100% represented respondents are Female.

Table 4.1.3: Analysis of Respondents by Academic Position

ACADEMIC POSITION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Professor	18	15%
Associate Professor	11	9.2%
Senior Lecturer	17	14.2%
Lecturer 1	27	22.5%
Lecturer 2	22	18.3%
Assistant Lecturer	22	18.3%
Graduate Assistant	3	2.5%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

The Table 4.1.3 above indicates that 15% represented the respondents that are Professors, 9.2% represented respondents that are Associate Professors, 14.2% represented respondents that are Senior Lecturers, 22.5% represented respondents that are Lecturer 1, 18.3% represented

respondents that are Lecturer 2, 18.3% represented respondents that are Assistant Graduates and 2.5% represented respondents that are Graduate Assistant.

Table 4.1.4: Analysis of Respondents by Faculty

FACULTY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Basic Medical Sciences	24	20%
Law	24	20%
Life Sciences	24	20%
Management Sciences	24	20%
Social Sciences	24	20%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

From table 4.1.4 above, it shows that 20% represented respondents are from Basic Medical Sciences, 20% represented respondents are from Law, 20% represented respondents are from Life Sciences, 20% represented respondents are from Management Sciences and 20% represented respondents are from Social Sciences.

Table 4.1.5: Analysis of Respondents by Departments

DEPARTMENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Medical Biochemistry	6	5%
Medical Lab Science	6	5%
Nursing	6	5%
Physiology	6	5%
Business Law	6	5%

JurisprudenceLaw	6	5%
Private and Property Law	6	5%
Public Law	6	5%
Biochemistry	6	5%
PlantBiology	6	5%
Optometry	6	5%
Microbiology	6	5%
Accounting	6	5%
Business Administration	6	5%
Banking and Finance	6	5%
Entrepreneurship	6	5%
Economic and Statistics	6	5%
Geography	6	5%
Public Administration	6	5%
Sociology	6	5%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

The table 4.1.5 presented above reveals that the percentage distribution of department of respondents. 5% of represented respondents are from the department of Medical Biochemistry, 5% of represented respondents are from the department of Medical Laboratory Sciences, 5% of represented respondents are from the department of Nursing, 5% of represented respondents are from the department of Physiology, 5% of represented respondents are from the department of Business Law, 5% of represented respondents are from the department of Jurisprudence Law,

5% of represented respondents are from the department of Private and Property Law, 5% of represented respondents are from the department of Public Law, 5% of represented respondents are from the department of Biochemistry, 5% of represented respondents are from the department of Plant Biology, 5% of represented respondents are from the department of Optometry, 5% of represented respondents are from the department of Microbiology, 5% of represented respondents are from the department of Accounting, 5% of represented respondents are from the department of Business Administration, 5% of represented respondents are from the department of Banking and Finance, 5% of represented respondents are from the department of Entrepreneurship, 5% of represented respondents are from the department of Economic and Statistics, 5% of represented respondents are from the department of Geography, 5% of represented respondents are from the department of Public Administration and 5% of represented respondents are from the department of Sociology and Anthropology.

4.2 SECTION B: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

Table 4.2.1: Will women's participation in politics lead to more representative governance?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	40	33.3%
Disagree	16	13.3%
Strongly Agree	47	39.2%
Strongly Disagree	17	14.2%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 4.2.1 indicates the response collected from the study area on the question: Will women's participation in politics lead to more representative governance? From the table, 33.3%

represented respondents indicated (Agree),13.3% represented respondents indicated (Disagree),39.2% represented respondents indicated (Strongly Agree), while ,14.2% represented respondents indicated (Strongly Disagree). This suggests that women's participation in politics will lead to a more representative governance.

Table 4.2.2: Can women's participation in politics affect policy making at the local level?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	48	40%
Disagree	23	19.2%
Strongly Agree	40	33.3%
Strongly Disagree	9	7.5%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 4.2.2 indicates the response collected from the study area on the question: Can women's participation in politics affect policy making at the local level? From the table, 40% represented respondents indicated (Agree), 19.2% represented respondents indicated (Disagree), 33.3% represented respondents indicated (Strongly Agree), while 7.5% represented respondents indicated (Strongly Disagree). Thus, it can be inferred that women's participation in politics can affect policy making at the local level.

Table 4.2.3: Does women's participation in politics increase accountability in governance?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	46	38%
Disagree	13	11%

Strongly Agree	42	35%
Strongly Disagree	19	16%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 4.2.3 indicates the response collected from the study area on the question: Does women's participation in politics increase accountability in governance? From table 4.2.3, 38% represented respondents indicated (Agree), 11% represented respondents indicated (Disagree), 35% represented respondents indicated (Strongly Agree), while 16% represented respondents indicated (Strongly Disagree). From the result on the table, it can be concluded that women's participation in politics increase accountability in governance.

Table 4.2.4: Women's participation in politics strengthens democratic institutions

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	53	44.2%
Disagree	9	7.5%
Strongly Agree	46	38.3%
Strongly Disagree	12	10%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

According to Table 4.2.4, respondents in the study area indicates that one impact of women's participation in politics is the strengthening of democratic institutions. From table 4.2.4, 44.2% represented respondents indicated (Agree), 7.5% represented respondents indicated (Disagree), 38.3% represented respondents indicated (Strongly Agree), while 10% represented respondents

indicated (Strongly Disagree). Thus, it can be concluded that the strengthening of Democratic institutions is one of the impact of women's participation in politics.

4.3 SECTION C: FACTORS AFFECTING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

Table 4.3.1: Does societal stereotypes and biases hinder women's ability to participate effectively in politics?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	46	38.3%
Disagree	14	11.7%
Strongly Agree	47	39.2%
Strongly Disagree	13	10.8%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 4.3.1 shows the response collected from the study area on the question: Does societal stereotypes and biases hinder women's ability to participate effectively in politics? From the table, 38.3% represented respondents indicated (Agree), 11.7% indicated (Disagree), 39.2% represented respondents indicated (Strongly Agree), while 10.8% represented respondents indicated (Strongly Disagree). From the results on the table, it can be concluded that societal stereotypes and biases hinders women's ability to participate effectively in politics.

Table 4.3.2: Will access to education and training opportunities enable women to participate effectively in politics?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	59	49.2%
Disagree	14	11.7%

Strongly Agree	34	28.3%
Strongly Disagree	13	10.8%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 4.3.2 indicates that 49.2% of the represented respondents indicated (Agree), 11.7% of the represented respondents indicated (Disagree), 28.3% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Agree), while 10.8% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Disagree). From the results of table 4.3.2, it can be concluded that access to education and training opportunities will enable women participate effectively in politics.

Table 4.3.3: Are family and childcare responsibilities a significant barrier to women's participation in politics?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	43	35.8%
Disagree	14	11.7%
Strongly Agree	52	43.3%
Strongly Disagree	11	9.2%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 4.3.4 shows that 35.8% of the represented respondents indicated (Agree), 11.7% of the represented respondents indicated (Disagree), 43.3% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Agree), while 9.2% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Disagree). From the table above it can be inferred that 43.3% of the represented respondents strongly agree

that family and childcare responsibilities are barriers that can hinder women's participation in politics.

Table 4.3.4: Can government policy and laws play a crucial role in promoting women's participation in politics?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	56	46.7%
Disagree	13	10.8%
Strongly Agree	41	34.2%
Strongly Disagree	10	8.3%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 4.3.4 above shows that 46.7% of the represented respondents indicated (Agree), 10.8% of the represented respondents indicated (Disagree), 34.2% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Agree), while 8.3% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Disagree). From the data above, it can be noted that government policy and laws play a crucial role in promoting women's participation in politics.

4.4 SECTION D: FACTORS THAT ENHANCE WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS

Table 4.4.1: Can implementing quotas or affirmative action policies increase women's representation in politics?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	56	46.7%
Disagree	13	10.8%

Strongly Agree	44	36.7%
Strongly Disagree	7	5.8%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 4.4.1 reveals the response collected from the study area on the question: Can implementing quotas or affirmative action policies increase women's representation in politics? From the table, 46.7% of the represented respondents indicated (Agree), 10.8% of the represented respondents indicated (Disagree), 36.7% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Agree), while 5.8% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Disagree). From the result on the table therefore, it can be concluded that implementing quotas or affirmative action policies can increase women's representation in politics.

Table 4.4.2: Can training and mentorship programs for women help sustain their involvement in politics?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	48	40%
Disagree	22	18.3%
Strongly Agree	38	31.7%
Strongly Disagree	12	10%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 4.4.2 indicates the response collected from the study area on the question: Can training and mentorship programs for women help sustain their involvement in politics? From the table, 40% of the represented respondents indicated (Agree), 18.3% of the represented respondents indicated

(Disagree), 31.7% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Agree), while 10% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Disagree). From the result therefore, it can be inferred that training and mentorship programs for women can help sustain their involvement in politics.

Table 4.4.3: Can creating a supportive network of women in politics help increase their participation and retention?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Gree	50	41.7%
Disagree	9	7.5%
Strongly Agree	51	42.5%
Strongly Disagree	10	8.3%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 4.4.3 shows the response collected from the study area on the question: Can creating a supportive network of women in politics help increase their participation and retention? From the table, 41.7% of the represented respondents indicated (Agree), 7.5% of the represented respondents indicated (Disagree), 42.5% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Agree), while 8.3% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Disagree). From the result, it can be concluded that creating a supportive network of women in politics helps increase their participation and retention.

Table 4.4.4: Can addressing societal attitudes and biases through awareness campaigns encourage more women to participate in politics?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	70	58.3%
Disagree	14	11.7%
Strongly Agree	31	25.8%
Strongly Disagree	5	4.2%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 4.4.4 reveals the response collected from the study area on the question: Can addressing societal attitudes and biases through awareness campaigns encourage more women to participate in politics? From the table, 58.3% of the represented respondents indicated (Agree), 11.7% of the represented respondents indicated (Disagree), 25.8% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Agree), while 4.2% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Disagree). From the result therefore, it can be concluded that addressing societal attitudes and biases through awareness campaigns can encourage more women to participate in politics.

4.5 SECTION E: STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING WOMEN'S POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Table 4.5.1: Can providing financial support to women candidates increase their chances of winning elections?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	37	30.8%
Disagree	23	19.2%

Strongly Agree	48	40%
Strongly Disagree	12	10%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 4.5.1 above presents the response collected from the study area on the question: Can providing financial support to women candidates increase their chances of winning elections? From the table, 30.8% of the represented respondents indicated (Agree), 19.2% of the represented respondents indicated (Disagree), 40% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Agree), while 10% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Disagree). From the result above, it can be inferred that providing financial support to women candidates can increase their chances of winning elections.

Table 4.5.2: Can civil society groups help promote women's political participation?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	72	60%
Disagree	9	7.5%
Strongly Agree	31	25.8%
Strongly Disagree	8	6.7%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 4.5.2 above reveals the response collected from the study area on the question: Can civil society groups help promote women's political participation? From the table, 60% of the represented respondents indicated (Agree), 7.5% of the represented respondents indicated (Disagree), 25.8% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Agree), while 6.7% of the

represented respondents indicated (Strongly Disagree). From the result on the table, it can be concluded that building coalitions with women's organization and civil society groups can help promote women's political participation.

Table 4.5.3: Does incorporating gender-sensitive language and perspectives in political party manifestos attract more women voters?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	45	38%
Disagree	5	4%
Strongly Agree	53	44%
Strongly Disagree	17	14%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 4.5.3 above indicates the response collected from the study area on the question: Does incorporating gender-sensitive language and perspectives in political party manifestos attract more women voters? From the table, 38% of the represented respondents indicated (Agree), 4% of the represented respondents indicated (Disagree), 44% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Agree), while 14% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Disagree). From the result on the table therefore, it can be inferred that incorporating gender-sensitive language and perspectives in political party manifestos can attract more women voters.

Table 4.5.4: Can mentorship programs for women increase their participation and influence in politics?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	53	44%
Disagree	14	12%
Strongly Agree	35	29%
Strongly Disagree	18	15%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 4.5.4 above shows the response collected from the study area on the question: Can mentorship programs for women increase their participation and influence in politics? From the table, 44% of the represented respondents indicated (Agree), 12% of the represented respondents indicated (Disagree), 29% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Agree), while 15% of the represented respondents indicated (15%). From the result on the table, it can concluded that mentorship programs and targeted training for women can increase their participation and influence in politics.

4.6 SECTION F: THE LINK BETWEEN WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION IN POLITICS

Table 4.6.1: Does increased participation of women in politics lead to greater representation of women in government?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	39	32%
Disagree	22	18%

Strongly Agree	38	32%
Strongly Disagree	21	18%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 4.6.1 above reveals the response collected from the study area on the question: Does increased participation of women in politics lead to greater representation of women in government? From the table, 32% of the represented respondents indicated (Agree), 18% of the represented respondents indicated (Disagree), 32% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Agree), while 18% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Disagree). From the result on the table, it can be inferred that increased participation of women in politics can lead to a greater representation of women in government.

Table 4.6.2: Is there a positive correlation between women's participation in politics and the number of women elected to public office?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	50	41%
Disagree	24	20%
Strongly Agree	20	17%
Strongly Disagree	26	22%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 4.6.2 above indicates the response collected from the study area on the question: Is there a positive correlation between women's participation in politics and the number of women elected to public office? From the table, 41% of the represented respondents indicated (Agree), 20% of

the represented respondents indicated (Disagree), 17% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Agree), while 22% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Disagree). From the result on the table therefore, it can be concluded that there is a positive correlation between women's participation in politics and the number of women elected to public office.

Table 4.6.3: Can women's participation in politics influence the types of issues that are represented in policy agendas?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	33	27.5%
Disagree	17	14.2%
Strongly Agree	46	38.3%
Strongly Disagree	24	20%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 4.6.3 shows the response collected from the study area on the question: Can women's participation in politics influence the types of issues that are represented in policy agendas? From the table, 27.5% of the represented respondents indicated (Agree), 14.2% of the represented respondents indicated (Disagree), 38.3% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Agree), while 20% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Disagree). From the result on the table therefore, it can be inferred that women's participation in politics can influence the types of issues that are represented in policy agendas.

Table 4.6.4: Can increased representation of women in government be attributed to increased participation of women in the electoral process?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Agree	62	52%
Disagree	18	15%
Strongly Agree	25	21%
Strongly Disagree	15	12%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field Work, 2025.

Table 4.6.4 shows the response collected from the study area on the question: Can increased representation of women in government be attributed to increased participation of women in the electoral process? From the table, 52% of the represented respondents indicated (Agree), 15% of the represented respondents indicated (Disagree), 21% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Agree), while 12% of the represented respondents indicated (Strongly Disagree). From the result on the table therefore, it can be inferred that increased representation of women in government can be attributed to increased participation of women in the electoral process.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter investigates the impact of women's participation in politics on democratic values, highlighting the key findings, drawing meaningful conclusions, and offering practical recommendations based on the data collected.

5.1 SUMMARY

Women face a lot of challenges in politics, like societal norms that put them down, gender-based violence that tries to silence them, and stereotypes that say they are not good leaders. These norms can be really damaging, making it hard for women to be taken seriously and to build the confidence they need to succeed. They also do not get the same access to resources like funding, networking opportunities, and mentorship, which makes it hard for them to succeed. Without these resources, women often struggle to build the support networks and gain the experience they need to run effective campaigns and hold office.

All this leads to women being underrepresented in politics, which is bad for democracy and means policies might not address women's needs. When women are not involved in decision-making, their perspectives and experiences are often overlooked, resulting in policies that do not benefit them. This can perpetuate inequality and limit opportunities for women and girls. We need more women in politics to make governance better and more inclusive, ensuring that everyone's voices are heard and valued. This way, we can build a more equitable society where women and men have equal opportunities to participate and lead. By promoting women's participation in politics, we can create a more just and representative government that truly serves the needs of all citizens. This is not just about fairness; it is also about making use of the

unique perspectives and talents that women bring to the table to create better policies and outcomes for everyone. The study aimed at answering questions such as:

1. How does women's participation in politics affect democracy at different levels?
2. What helps or hinders women from participating effectively in politics?
3. How can women's involvement in politics be increased and sustained for better governance?
4. What strategies and initiatives can increase women's participation and influence in politics?
5. What is the relationship between women's participation and representation in politics?

To gather data, questionnaires were distributed among female academic staff at the University of Benin, Edo State, to address the study's objectives and questions. The analysis results showed several important findings. The findings included among others that:

1. Women's participation in politics will lead to a more representative governance.
2. Women's participation in politics can affect policy making at the local level and increase accountability in governance.
3. Strengthening democratic institutions is one of the impact of women's participation in politics
4. Societal stereotypes and biases hinder women's ability to participate effectively in politics.
5. Access to education and training opportunities enables women to participate more effectively in politics.
6. Government policies and laws play a crucial role in promoting women's participation in politics.
7. Implementing quotas or affirmative action policies can increase women's representation in politics.

8. Providing training and mentorship programs for women can help sustain their involvement in politics.
9. Creating a supportive network of women in politics can help increase their participation and retention.
10. Addressing societal attitudes and biases through awareness campaigns can encourage more women to participate in politics.

5.2 CONCLUSION

Although Nigerian women face various challenges that hinder their involvement in politics, they have significantly contributed to the nation's economic and political development. Politics remains a key platform through which women can engage meaningfully in national growth. Nigerian women have demonstrated competence and readiness to hold political positions. Therefore, it is crucial for the government and relevant institutions to implement gender equality policies that address discrimination and promote women's increased participation in politics for national advancement (Ojeifo & Ikomi, 2020).

Increasing women's participation in politics is crucial for creating a more inclusive, equitable, and just society. By addressing the challenges women face and promoting their involvement in decision-making, we can build a government that truly represents and serves the needs of all citizens, leading to better policies and outcomes for everyone.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study's finding led to the following recommendations:

1. Political parties should create more inclusive structures and deliberately support female candidates, ensuring that women are not just members but active participants in leadership and decision-making roles (Aweni, 2006). This includes reducing internal party barriers,

providing financial and moral support, and ensuring fair representation during candidate selection.

2. Community development initiatives should actively involve women in leadership and decision-making roles, as their participation strengthens democratic values by promoting inclusivity, accountability, and responsiveness at the grassroots level (Omoruyi, 2008). This involvement helps to empower women politically and enhances the overall democratic process. Notable figures such as Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala made remarkable impacts on Nigerian politics and international economic leadership. Their contributions created enduring legacies in the nation's history, opening doors for future generations of women in political leadership and activism.
3. The notion that women are incapable of performing in political roles needs to be changed (Taiye, 2017).
4. Building coalitions with women's organizations and civil society groups.
5. Incorporating gender-sensitive language and perspectives in political party manifestos.
6. Addressing societal attitudes and biases through awareness campaigns.
7. Increase the representation of women in government.
8. Nigerian women need to overcome feelings of inferiority and begin to view themselves as equal to men. They should also move away from political apathy by actively engaging in the political process and showing support for other women contesting for positions in the National Assembly and other political offices at all levels—national, state, and local (Ekeuhwan, 2022).
9. Provide training and mentorship programs for women that can help sustain their involvement in politics.

10. Create a supportive network of women in politics that can help increase their participation.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, EDO STATE

Dear respondents,

I am a 400 level student from the department of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences conducting a research on women's participation in politics and its impact on democratic values in University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated and I want to assure you that all information provided will remain strictly confidential.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Warm regards.

SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHICS CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Age group: 25-34 (), 35-44 (), 45-54 (), 55 and above ()

Gender: Male (), Female ()

Academic Position: Professor (), Associate Professor (), Senior Lecturer (), Lecturer 1 (), Lecturer 2 (), Assistant Lecturer (), Graduate Assistant ().

Faculty: Basic Medical Sciences (), Law (), Social Sciences (), Life Sciences (), Management Sciences ().

Department: _____

SECTION B:

ITEM	Women's Participation in Politics	OPTION			
S/N	QUESTIONS	SA	A	SD	D
1.	Women's participation in politics leads to more representative governance.				
2.	Women's participation in politics affect policy-making at the local level.				
3.	Does women's participation in politics increase accountability in governance.				
4.	One of the impacts on women's participation in politics is that it strengthens democratic institutions.				

SECTION C:

ITEM	Factors Affecting Women's Participation in Politics	OPTION			
S/N	QUESTIONS	SA	A	SD	D
1.	Societal stereotypes and biases hinder women's ability to participate effectively in politics.				
2.	Access to education and training opportunities enables women to participate more effectively in politics.				
3.	Family and childcare responsibilities are significant barriers to women's participation in politics.				
4.	Government policies and laws play a crucial role in promoting women's participation in politics.				

SECTION D:

ITEM	Enhancing Women's Involvement in Politics	OPTION			
S/N	QUESTIONS	SA	A	SD	D
1.	Implementing quotas or affirmative action policies can increase women's representation in politics.				
2.	Providing training and mentorship programs for women can help sustain their involvement in politics.				
3.	Creating a supportive network of women in politics can help increase their participation and retention.				
4.	Addressing societal attitudes and biases through awareness campaigns can encourage more women to participate in politics.				

SECTION E:

ITEM	Strategies for Promoting Women's Political Engagement	OPTION			
S/N	QUESTIONS	SA	A	SD	D
1.	Providing financial support to women candidates increase their chances of winning elections.				
2.	Building coalitions with women's organizations and civil society groups help promote women's political participation.				
3.	Incorporating gender-sensitive language and perspectives in political party manifestos attract more women voters.				
4.	Targeted training and mentorship programs for women				

	increase their participation and influence in politics.				
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SECTION F:

ITEM	The Link Between Women's Participation and Representation in Politics	OPTION			
S/N	QUESTIONS	SA	A	SD	D
1.	Increased participation of women in politics lead to greater representation of women in government.				
2.	There is a positive correlation between women's participation in politics and the number of women elected to public office.				
3.	Women's participation in politics influence the types of issues that are represented in policy agendas.				
4.	Increased representation of women in government can be attributed to increased participation of women in the electoral process.				