

**POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND GENDER EQUALITY IN GOVERNANCE:
EDO STATE IN FOCUS (2020-2024)**

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BY

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF B.SC IN
POLITICAL SCIENCE, IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE,
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JUNE, 2026

DECLARATION

I, OMOZOKPIA JENNIFER EHINOME hereby declare that the project work titled, Political Participation and Gender Equality in Governance: Edo State in Focus (2020-2024) is an original work done by me as a result of my research effort carried out in the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin under the supervision of Mr. R.I. Omoregie.

STUDENT SIGNATURE AND DATE

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this study was carried out by OMOZOKPIA JENNIFER EHINOME SSC2208611 in the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin under my supervision.

MR R.I. OMOREGIE
(Project Supervisor)

Date: _____

DR. G.O. IGIEBOR
(Ag Head of Department)

Date: _____

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God Almighty for HIS exceeding and Immense provisions, protection and preservation all through my years of study in the University of Benin.

To HIM be all Glory forever more.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge the support of those whom God used to bless me throughout this journey. To my relatives who showed up for me in difficult times, God bless you.

To my parents, I am thankful for your love and guidance. May the Lord God Almighty continue to keep and watch over you for me. My sweet and beloved Mother, i am really grateful for your sincere and heartfelt prayers, the constant checkups, sacrifices and advices. Your love kept me going and knowing that you are rooting for me daily made it easier. I love you Ma and may the Good Lord continue to uplift you, do you good and cause you to smile always.

I extend my appreciation to my Project Supervisor, Mr R.I. Omoregie for your utmost patience and Guidance throughout the course of this project work. Thank you Sir for making it easy, your support made a significant difference.

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ABSTRACT

This project was carried out to examine the Area of Political Participation and Gender Equality in Governance. Its significance captures the theoretical analysis in understanding the nitty - gritty of the variables (Political Participation and Gender Equality) and how it applies to Edo State basically in Ovia North East Local Government Area.

The use of the Simple Percentage method was introduced as this study discovered internal issues and causative factors that play around Political Participation and Gender Equality in Governance. Apart from the well known patriarchal system, the study proved the rise of contemporary issues and trends that plague Gender Equality in Governance and the intriguing effect it has on Political Participation.

The Study has also made provisions and offered recommendations to enhance effective Political Participation and address the issues and concerns of Gender Equality in Governance.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Politics is an important facet of the human life and ubiquitous to the society. It is as old as Man and has been in place prior to time. Dating back to the Traditional life or Age down to this contemporary or Modern Age and times, Politics has been present but only that there's has been evolvement in the structures and systems.

The Philosophers of old or the Ancient Philosophers as Plato and Aristotle gave hints of what Politics is and how it correlates with the state. According to Plato (428 – 347BC), Politics is the art of cultivating virtue and pursuing justice for the collective good of the soul of the citizens. Here, Plato describes the goal of politics as the common good emphasizing that the choices of the Philosophers – Kings have the capacity to influence the Polis (State) either good or bad. The more reason why It is the art of cultivating virtue, virtue that reflects and propagates the interest of the Public.

Unfortunately, the term, Politics has been narrowed down to the governing structure of the state, defining it to be associated with a selected few, failing to realize that it is present in every sector and aspect of the state in which in a way or the other everyone is involved in it. The presence of Humans in the society births Politics. Hence the need for

leadership even before the formalization of structures and Political systems. As stated above in the Traditional age and life, where man was just a hunter, Politics plays out.

Scholars have given numerous definitions to the concept of Politics and what it entails. For Easton (1965), Politics is the Authoritative Allocation of Value. Otoghile (1994) tells us that Politics is the Authoritative Management of power and resources to serve the public interest. In all and from the scholarly definitions above, it can be said that Politics is the process that entails the management of power with the use of Available Resources in a defined territory or Sovereign State. It is the act of Administration over a people or defined territory in alignment with laid down rules and written codes of conduct with the sole aim of achieving order and development in the interest of all.

And because Politics is the process by which decisions are made and the larger population represented in Governance, it has been narrowed down into the hands of selected few, failing to see the need and responsibility of the population in it, will bring about what is termed 'POLITICAL PARTICIPATION'. Well the guiding principles or order of a state or Democratic System which is applied to all and sundry commonly known as Constitution, states expressly that anyone is allowed and permitted to run or engage in politics regardless of Gender, meaning there should be a balance in the Gender Representation in Politics. This has coined out 'GENDER EQUALITY IN GOVERNANCE '. Put together 'POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND GENDER

EQUALITY IN GOVERNANCE : EDO STATE IN FOCUS (2020-2024) ‘, we have the topic for this study and research work.

This Study provides the express details and explanation of Political Participation and Gender Equality in Governance using Edo State as a reference point and focus of study. Edo State being one of the Politically active State in Nigeria, the trail and dynamics of political Participation is worth of study with Gender Equality in Governance as the bone of contention

Political Participation is simply the interest of the citizens or an individual in political activities and matters. It defines the engagement in contemporary political discussions, Arising political issues, ideas and affairs. Political Participation has gone beyond voting, it has passed the scene of selected few. The World turning into a global village, needs the hands of everyone to be on deck politically thereby involving even the common man.

Gender Equality is a fragile yet crucial concept that requires delicate attention. Overtime, there has been serious discussions about Gender Equality in Governance. Scholars Wanting to strike the balance of Gender Equality and Representation in Political Scene and affairs. The United Nations (UN)(2015) advocated for the equal participation of Women and Men in Governance a Fundamental Human Right which is necessary for Democracy, Accountability and Sustainable Development.

The United Nations takes a stand on the issue of Gender Equality in Governance. Stating the importance of the full representation of both Genders in power. As a Fundamental

Human Right, UN acknowledge that it is mandated for any citizen of a sovereign state of both Gender, being of Age and having met the requirements to run for elections and go for political positions. As this will bring about the true Democracy that is propounded and Equal Political Systems. As at 2025, The UN records that only 22.9% of Women holding cabinet positions worldwide. Predicting the progress to be slow and it could take 130 years to reach full gender equality in the highest positions at the current pace.

Political Participation and Gender Equality in Governance: Edo State in Focus (2020-2024) is interestingly the purpose of this study. It tends to explore how the Political Structure of Edo State has been affected by Political Participation of its indigenes which will also birth the principle of Gender Equality and Representation in the Governance of Edo State.. views and schools of thought will be taken into consideration. We can't talk about the Political Scene of Edo State without referring to the Political Space of (2020-2024) period and the examination of votes and Political Participation in the Gubernatorial Election of Godwin Obaseki and the most recent elected Governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo.

Hence, this study is sure to determine the number of seats won and occupied by the Female Gender in the Political House of Edo State in the period of the past immediate Governor and most recent in Edo State now. Diving into the myriad of Edo State Politics, this study outline theories guiding the play of Politics in Edo State and the Weight of Gender Equality in Edo State Governance.

This Research work promises a comprehensive study and exploration of Edo State and its Political Affairs.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Political Participation and Gender Equality or representation in Governance is an over flogged concept but in this study it will be narrowed down to Edo State. A politically active state which has been appearing in the political scene of Nigeria and Affairs of the world view.

Recognizing the great works of past literatures but there are still gaps that that needs to be covered and the reason for this study.

There are problems associated with the Political Participation of Edo State Government and the representation of Gender in the Edo State Government. Discovering that there are influences responsible for the low turnout of participation politically in Edo State or where is the truth that there is equal representation of both Gender in Governance and seats of Edo State Political House. Having to study the elections and Political Affairs in the periods of (2020-2024), the dynamics and turnout of the whole election points out that there ought to be a standing or lingering problem that continually affects the whole political structure of Edo State and it's Government. As these Problems include: Why is there a low turnout of Political Participation?, what can be influencing the low turnout of participation in political affairs in Edo State?, can it be said that there's Gender Equality

in the representation of Governance in Edo State?, Is the Patriarchal System and culture present in Edo State Politics and many others.

So far, the issues have been identified and problems stated on what this study tends to research into and possibly bring about solutions.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Political Participation and Gender Equality in Governance: Edo State in focus (2020-2024)

The Purpose of this study is to examine the Political Participation in Edo State and Dissect Gender Equality in Governance (2020-2024).

With the specific objectives as follows :

- 1) Examining the rate of Political Participation in Edo State especially in the years (2020-2024).
- 2) To strike a balance between Gender Equality in Governance.
- 3) To determine if the presence and participation of Youths involvement in Edo State Politics holds any impact.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

This study is sure to answer the questions listed below

1. To what extent will the influence of the representation of the Women in Governance Edo State make a difference

2. What will be the margin of the rate of Political Participation in Edo State
3. What thin line is there between Gender Equality in Governance and Patriarchal System
4. How many LGA's in Edo State was cleared and won by the Immediate past Governor and incumbent Governor.

1.5 SIG

The Significance and Usefulness of this study will help not only the Academia's but also the common man so he/she can know their place in the Political Scene and the effects their participation has in political affairs and structures. This study is sure to give a better orientation about Women and Female Gender participation and Representation in Governance and redefining the misconceptions about Gender Equality in Nigeria and Edo State to be precise.

In as much as it is open to the society at large, it is also essential and pointed out to those welding powers of the State and Governance.

1.6 SCOPE OF STUDY

The study is geographically based and develop it's findings in Edo State. It takes the Timeline and Period of Edo State Political Scene from 2020-2024.

1.7 TERMS USED IN THE COURSE OF STUDY

GENDER: A term used to define the sex of an individual either Male or Female. It is collectively used for identity.

EQUALITY: This emphasizing on Fairness and the principle of treating all the same regardless of skin color, Age and Gender. It can also be referred to as doing the right thing and not be impartial.

PATRIARCHAL: A term often associated with the Male dominated system or space. It signifies an unequal structure where Men hold primary powers and authority in the spheres of the society and Women have less power and importance.

GLOBAL VILLAGE: it is a term used to describe the interconnectedness of the whole world into a single entity linked through Telecommunications, Business and media technologies.

POLITICS: is the management or Administration of Allocated Authority to push an agenda or propagate development.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK.

2.1 This Chapter contains detailed informs about Political Participation and Gender Equality in Governance. Perusing past literatures, it gathers relevant facts about Edo State Politics from journals, Reports, Newspaper, Articles and Reviews. It also provides Theoritical Frameworks that aligns with this study and the purpose for it thereof. It tends to build context and also propagate solutions to existing or discovered issues.

2.2 POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Politics or Political as well known is the act of administering authoritative power over a defined body of persons. While Participation explains the act of getting involved. It is the step one takes in performing an action, act or activity collectively or individually.

Political Participation is an essential concept in the world of Governance. As simple as it may seem or sounds, it holds such amount of weight.

Political Participation can be said to be the involvement in Political matters, Affairs and Activities. It defines the roles played by individuals or the citizens at large in Government or Politics. A Fundamental Component of Democracy, it influences the structure, policies or leadership of Government. (Weiner 1971) describes Political Participation as voluntary participation of selecting rulers and forming public policy. While some Scholars see Political Participation as a civic action carried out voluntary,

others perceive it as Political Behavior. (Anifowose 1999) tells that Political Participation is an aspect of Political Behavior that focuses on the methods by which individuals and groups take part in politics including actions of Government, Political Parties and Interest Groups.

Understanding the efficacy of Political Participation in the world of Democracy is very important as the actions and inactions is capable of influencing Governance negatively or positively and also shape public policies. As (Awofeso and Odeyemi 2014) describes it as the voluntary activity which is shared by the members of a society in selecting their rulers and directly or indirectly involving themselves in the formation of public policies.

It is worthy to note that Political Participation takes two (2) forms. This Includes:

A. The Conventional Participation/Forms

B. The Unconventional Participation/Form.

A. CONVENTIONAL FORM : The Conventional Form of Participation which is also known as the Direct method or actions. It is the deliberate efforts made by the citizens or group of body to express their opinions and influence political systems.

And this conventional form includes voting, Running for office or contesting in an election, campaign and, lobbying, engaging in Political Discussions, Being a member of a political party. This form of participation is institutionalized and it is expected of every citizen to take

part in it. It is a reality that a citizen is expected to take part of either by voting, contesting for offices, Lobbying, membership of a Political Party, Engaging in Insightful political discussions and affairs, keeping abreast of political news and contemporary political ideology and happenings.

B. UNCONVENTIONAL FORM : The Unconventional Form which is also referred to as the indirect form of Political Participation and it involves the activities of boycotting, protest (most times violent), civil disobedience.

This form of Political Participation is often controversial in nature and is considered inappropriate as persons typically take part in it to express their displeasure and grievance about political issues and trendy issues made by the Government. The process the unconventional Political Participation causes mayhem and the outcomes not always good or pleasant.

In all we can see that either directly or indirectly in which Political Participation is played out, the bottom line is that it influences Governance and the strings of Government positively or negatively. The results or should I say outcomes holds significant weight in political systems and in shaping policies which affects the public. The reason why Political Participation is regarded as a Fundamental Component in Democracy.

2.2.1 YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN EDO STATE

You've heard it said that 'Youths are the Leaders of Tomorrow'. But don't you think that the tomorrow is today?. Common phrase though it is, Leaders don't just appear once

but are been built through small involvements and engagements in inspiring and transformative events and positions. The youths needs to understand that appearing in big political scenes and affairs must first start from the grassroot which is engaging and getting involved in political Activities and participating in local political leadership.

Edo State, A recent vibrant Political State in Nigeria records 81.89% of new voters in the age bracket 18 – 35 in its electoral data. This information depicts a positive move of Youths Political Participation in Edo State.

Across the 18 Local Government Areas (LGA)'s of Edo State, We see youths occupying political positions and handling relative issues of politics, Governance, Advocacy of Youths Leadership, Development amidst many others. There's also the Youths representing in the constituencies of the (3) three Senatorial Districts of Edo, Namely:

Edo South (7)

Edo North (6)

Edo Central (5)

It is commendable of the Youths of Edo State actively participating in politics and contesting for senatorial seats across the three (3) districts and advocating for Youth Governance and Political Change. What is even more commendable is that the present Deputy Governor of Edo State Rt Hon Dennis Idahosa is regarded as one of the youngest

politicians to assume office as Deputy Governor in Nigeria after Omobayo Godwin who also served in that capacity in Edo State.

2.2.2 TENETS OF YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

1. INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE: There should be deliberate efforts made to Include Youths in Governance. The Governments of the State should ensure young people in power and create allocative seats whether in the Senatorial Arm or Local Government.

In Edo State, it has come to notice of Student leaders taking up positions in tertiary institutions, The SUG (Student Union Government) is a platform for young and aspiring youths who desire relevance in the political world. Even in the Faculty down to the departmental level, students are seen clamoring to hold public offices. Well this is good as it trains their hands for the wider world of Governance and prepare their hearts for effective handling of task and increasingly participation in political affairs and systems. After all, most of our world leaders started in school and started early.

Well, as pointed out earlier on Leaders do not just appear overnight, they are made overtime. So it is important to that this youths are involved in the primary level and relatively school politics so that they can be qualified to serve in the tomorrows Governance and be grounded well enough to handle the issues and challenges that comes with Politics.

2. ACTIVE ADVOCACY AND EXPRESSION: The Youths have taken it upon themselves to advocate and create awareness on pressing issues affecting and plaguing their communities. Take for instance, in the Local Government Area of Esan North East. There is also the leverage of social media and digital platforms for expression of indirect discussions of political matters and pointing out issues of public policies.

If you notice the trend, there is a positive trend of Active Advocacy and Political Mobilization of the Youths advocating for inclusiveness and relative issues in the political sphere. As a result of this, there has been a positive shift towards youth driven leadership.

Programs such as the EDO STATE YOUTH INVESTMENT (EYIF) and many others serves as a platform and avenue for deliberating political matters and propagating youthful leadership in Governance.

3. GRASSROOT DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT: We often find youths in the various Local Government Areas of Edo State actively involving in the political process and Governance at the Grassroot Level. Research has shown that the seat of the Local Government Chairman in one of the LGA's in Edo State is currently occupied by a Youth per say. And as result of this, there is an iota of development as the Grassroot needs Fresh Blood not the Millennials. It is either they are contesting for election and position or helping out with the electoral process by serving as INEC and electoral officials. Study has it that most times, the youths are the ones behind the Ballot boxes

either counting votes or coordinating the vote casting exercise and at times NYSC members are recruited to participate in this exercise.

It is a good thing if the Youths engage actively and Participate in Politics conventionally without involving in erroneous activities or disturbing Governance.

In as much as the Youths are eager to make a change and influence the Government positively, it is also worthy to note that their unconventional Participation in Politics could cause disruption and bring about chaos in the society, so they must be careful in not letting any powerful politicians or leader use them for any unconventional political activities that profits nothing but causes mayhem.

This is how core the Youths are to the sovereign state and the much influence they hold.

2.2.3 CHALLENGES OF YOUTH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN EDO STATE

As much as there is high level degree of Political Participation by the Youths in Edo State, it is not without challenges or barriers. These factors create a barricade to Youth Political Participation and Representation in the Edo State House.

According to the studies by (Chukwuemeka and Aghara 2010), it propounds that due to marginalization, a reoccurring culture of violence e.t.c. Edo State experiences hindrances to its Youth Political Participation in Politics.

The segment of this study has been compounded into (4) four factors.

1. ECONOMIC FACTORS: This is always identified with lack of Finance or Non access to funds. It is always said that to run politics is money. Financial constraint or Economic Factor can be a challenge to youths political participation and this has also caused a number of issues in Nigeria Governance. The high cost of party or nomination forms, funding political campaigns, all or this can cause a strain to a young aspiring youth or political candidate.

- POVERTY : when there's a high rate of poverty in the society and the youths are not able to keep up with their basic amenities of life talk more of participating actively in politics.
- UNEMPLOYMENT : This can also be a challenge to the youths participating in politics or political activities.

Unemployment is one of the deadly plague ravaging the youths faster. When a young adult has no job doing or handy skills to keep up with life or be engaged, Actively participating in in political activities will not be the best decision for the person.

Little wonder we see them lurking around engaging in all manner of evil things.

2. POLITICAL FACTORS: This factor is a lingering challenge in the world of politics as it shuns the participation of youths in politics thereby closing the door to youthful Governance and the 'Not too young to Rule' policy.

This is identified by manipulation by political elites especially those in the ruling class who are greedy for gain. This gullible humans would rather cause a brainwash than encourage the young ones to run for Governance. This are ones propagating perpetual dominance of power and Governments as seen in most African countries.

- VIOLENCE AND THUGGERY: Rather than engaging actively, positively and conventionally in political activities, we find the youths disrupting electoral process, causing chaos in political programs or campaigns and boycotting peaceful demonstrations.

This sort of challenge has been the standard and a reoccurring challenge for the Edo State Government and Nigeria as a whole. We have seen this play out numerous times whereby our youths are used as thugs and bad agents to perpetuate evil and violence in political activities causing confusion and division.

- GODFATHERISM : This is the most common in political parties. As a result of this, there is a blockage of access to political networks or connections for the youths to engage in politics. There's also widespread fear of the domineering godfather head, it has been seen played out when the candidate or son to say can not meet up with the demands of the godfather.

3. CULTURAL FACTORS: Similarly linked to the patriarchal system and Gender inequality culture, silent yet loud effects on the participation of youths in political activities. It is a challenge that requires efficient and effective tackling at the root. The backdated and traditional norms that prioritize the authority and rule of the aged and elderly ones. The school of thought that goes with the notion that the aged are knowledgeable having more experience in governing regarding the youths as immature and full of youthful exuberance. So it is a cultural factor and patriarchal system that has been in existence.

Young women and females also face hurdles and social stereotypes including safety concerns in a male dominated and violent political landscape. The Women are always relegated to the back and confined to secretarial duties and other minor jobs and not at the forefront of Governance as they are seen as unfit and deemed feeble for Governance and to handle Political Activities

Since the history of Nigeria's Past Government and Presidents, there has never been a Woman elected or who served as a President neither as there been a Woman as Governor in Edo State. So until there is reforms in some of the cultural stagnated factors and cultural systems, there will be less or no political Participation of the Youths.

4. SOCIAL FACTORS: The social Factors consists of quite a number of issues that creates a challenge in the youth political participation Some of which are the

everyday issues of life but somehow has the path to influence the political participation of the youths positively or negatively.

- **APATHY:** This is very common even in all the age bracket and gaps. it is simply the lack of confidence in the government and any activities concerning politics. In Nigeria it has come to points whereby our present day youths shows outright apathy to the government in power, political activities, politics and the belief that Nigeria could and will be better again or the political system will become right and balance once more. They all regard this renewed hope or make Nigeria better again a disillusionment. As a result the youths choose not to participate or engage actively in political activities having the feeling that their votes do not count and their participation amounts to nothing and does not translate to anything meaningful, visible and audacious change.
- **CORRUPTION :** Nigeria as a whole is so deep in corruption not to talk of Edo State. In fact it has now become a national identity globally as it is known to have a corrupt entrenched political system which has affected the social status of the country. Research has also shown the youths who are supposed to be advising against corruption involved in it therefore creating an imbalance.

- LACK FORMAL MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS: Programs and empowerment initiatives ought to be organized for the youths so as to create a platform and entry into leadership roles.

2.3 GENDER EQUALITY IN GOVERNANCE

Gender is a term often used to mark identities. Being a former terminology opined in relations to humans and their identities they bear.

At other times, it is made mention in place of 'SEX' or synonymous to it. As recorded and captured in the holy book of the Bible in Genesis 1:27(In His image God created them. Male and Female created He them). So theoretically and correctly, the concept and entity of Gender can be drawn and analyzed from the recorded accounts of creation in the Bible where we see that there has been always been a distinction in human beings and the form of identification. Drawing conclusions from this we should be able to point out and identify a MALE OR FEMALE when we see one regardless of the identity crisis and gender wars that is being seen in this present day and modern times, from the beginning it wasn't so, it has always been the male and female which is man and woman.

Scholarly Gender is defined as a socially constructed roles, the behaviors, expressions and identities and of girls, boys, women and men. Quite distinct from biological sex, it depicts social norm, expectation and attitudes which varies across borders and cultures that changes over time. As a result of this Gender is seen to be relational, hierarchical and

often producing inequality. there have been arguments stating that Gender is a determination of social, cultural and psychological factors.

Beauvoir(1949) defined Gender as the implication of a social construct rather than a biological imperative which explains the notion that one is not born but rather becomes (a Man or Woman) thereby setting the foundational distinction between sex and Gender. West and Zimmerman (1987) is of the same opinion with that of Beauvoir that conceptualizing Gender as an emergence feature of social situations rather than a fixed trait.

Across Board, We can tell that the concept and meaning of Gender varies but one reoccurring factor so far in all of the definitions above is that Gender is seen as a product of the society or a cause of the social model which according to (Oakley 1972) in her Book 'Sex, Gender and Society' mentioned that Gender refers to the social classification of Men and Women into the Masculine and Feminine pointing out that it is a matter of culture.

While other theorists sees Gender as roles attributed to being a Man or Woman, others may define it as the relations between men and women perceptually and materially which is not determined biologically.

Nevertheless, All roads leads to the fact that Gender is a compulsory Determinant of the social, economic, political and cultural Development in a sovereign state that desires

advancement in all of its spheres of Administration and Administrative Body for the well-being of all.

2.3.1 GENDER EQUALITY

In the previous parts of this study, We expressly discussed about Gender and all it entails but it is good to know that it doesn't end there. Because the hope of development in countries depends on how Gender is been managed and treated.

Globally, There has been talks and trends of Gender, Gender Roles and Gender Equality. Gender Equality serves as an umbrella bearing all of these sub concepts.

Gender Equality is a situation in which access to rights and opportunities is not determined by Gender. It simply defines that the state in which all individuals regardless of Gender enjoys and are privileged equal rights, opportunities, responsibilities and protections in all spheres and aspects of life.

It is the inalienable rights and privileges accorded to one regardless of the Gender. Being a Fundamental Human Right, it is of paramount importance in achieving peaceful societies with full human potential and Sustainable Development. Gender Equality doesn't necessary mean making Men and Women the same but ensuring that their rights and opportunities accorded to them doesn't depend on their being male or female. There's need to make awareness that Gender Equality is a Fundamental Human Right,

rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)(1948) and also recognized as a Sustainable Development Goal 5(SDG 5) by the United Nations (UN).

In as much there is an ongoing trend about Gender Equality and equal representation, there's a long way to go in achieving full equality of rights and opportunities between men and women. It is of paramount importance to ending the various forms of Gender violence and social inequalities and as this will aid to curb the rising ills of the patriarchal system and culture even in the political space.

Enough of the under representation or no representation at all of the women in all spheres of the country and globally. Denying women equal rights, we fail to realize that we deny ourselves and half of the population the chance to living life to the fullest. Gender equality as it is, is not just a human rights issues but if tremendous waste of the world's human potential and the benefits it has for the world's citizens. But the good news is that together in harmony and one spirit we can work towards eradicating prejudice and ensuring equal rights and respect for all, Access of opportunities and values for both sexes and many more

The vitality of Gender Equality is very imperative to all spheres of the society. The role it plays cannot be overemphasized. Gender Equality is crucial for sustainable development, poverty reduction, good healthcare services and outcomes, political stability and governance, economic growth, promoting social justice and respect for fundamental human rights, equal representation in leadership, empowerment of women

and the girl child, Ensuring peaceful and healthy societies, Good and High Standard of living.

2.3.2 EDO STATE GENDER EQUALITY IN GOVERNANCE

Edo State should be lauded in its progressive actions of ensuring equal representation and inclusive governance of the women.

Record has it that as at November 2025, Edo State has had 35% of female representation some of which are Commissioners, Head of services and others Secretary to the State Government which makes it one the better performing states in the area of Gender Equality and appointment of offices. The Edo State stands out as a leading state of equal representation in its cabinet with a good number of women occupying top positions basing its focus on areas as Women's Empowerment and reduction of Gender based violence (GBV), it has achieved this through the initiation of inspiring programs and policies such as the National Gender Policy (2023) that contains a gender transformative approach in monitoring, implementing and evaluating to ensure sustainable development. The matter of Gender Equality in Edo State has also taken a new path as the Heart Beat of the Nation state works hand in hand with dedicated ministries as (Ministry of Social Development and Gender issues) and partnering with the likes of FIDA and IOM.

Even the present Government and incumbent Governor has not failed to portray solidarity in Gender Equality the (Shine Agenda) has continued in the good work of promoting women's inclusion in decision making in order to stand up against the under representation of women in governance and political space thereby aiming for full and greater equality.

Statistical Record Data has shown that data of women in governance in Edo State between the years 2020 – 2024. Though it is at the local government level and some at the state alongside the Governor, it shows a flicker of hope of Gender Equality in governance. These women served as executive chair persons and played supervisory roles

It could be better as there hasn't been a female governor in the political history of Edo State neither a speaker so there is still room for improvement and more.

2.3.3 CHALLENGES OF GENDER EQUALITY IN EDO STATE GOVERNANCE

For as much as the Edo State is making progressive moves concerning the representation of women in governance and gender equality it is not without challenges.

These challenges have been identified to be barriers that includes deeply rooted patriarchal norms that relegates women to insubordinate roles and limit their political participation

Inspite of the (2023) policies like the Gender Policy, Obstacles to Full Women Representation and Gender Equality still lingers.

The Barriers are discussed below.

1. POLITICAL APATHY – Let's bring the discussion home, most Women shy away from political activities. it's time to erase the mindset that specific roles or activities are meant for the men alone. With the rapid globalization the world is undergoing now, the women need to be included in decision making and the political space. Research as it that this effect of political apathy is caused by factors like intimidation, bad governance, lack of social amenities, violence in the political space, Electoral Malpractices etc. all these listed above could sow seeds of discouragement and nonchalant in the hearts of women towards political activities, politics and government

And we keep hearing sayings as even though I go there what difference will it make?, what they want to do, they do. So political apathy is first primarily a challenge plaguing Edo State governance as a matter of concern of gender equality

It is also worthy to know that political Apathy is also displayed by the male but it is commonly found in the women because of the structure of the political space in Nigeria and the way the system has been built .

If the woman doesn't believe in herself to make a difference and cause a change nobody can do that for her. it is a heart thing. so political apathy mindset should first be dealt with in the hearts of many and make them see the need to arise and come into power.

2. PATRIARCHAL SYSTEM AND CULTURAL NORMS.

This is a deep rooted stereotype that has dominance in the heart of many. It all started with the attributing of roles meant for the male and that meant for the female and as a result of this everyone sees governance and governments as primarily and particularly a man's duty and sphere but sustainable developments are full representation demands both gender to be involved in the decision making process and important facet of politics

While culture defines the roles of that of the women as being domestic thereby relegating them to the back and this has hindered their influence in the state level decision making and even in the community. women are primarily and initially seen as homemakers but they could be useful in government and politics when given the chance after all it is a fundamental human right to participate in political activities/affairs and governments. The voices of women should be heard not only in the home but in the wider world.

The deep rooted the patriarchal system has in much prevented a full participation and representation of the women in governance as the political arena is largely dominated by the male gender.

3. ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS – This is another challenge that stands against equality of gender representation in governance

Records as it that only few women are financially buoyant to engage in political activities by buying forms, running campaigns, lobbying and mobilization of resources. And even the present state of the economy of Nigeria is not helping as it is every man to himself. 40% of the women in Nigeria desire not the political positions and aspirations but to be able to fend for their families, loved ones and be comfortable. so economic constraint is a great obstacle and lack of funds and resources to execute their political aspirations and governance dreams to be able to put that which they have in mind into reality.

In Nigeria today one must be well to do and have access to useful networks and personalities in order to participate in politics and its activities.

4. INADEQUATE ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT.

Most women need pushing and encouragement to come out of their shell. There's lots of virtue and rare qualities locked up in the vessels of the female gender but when this is not discovered and there is no empowerment programs to ignite and ginger this up, it might never be out and showcased.

Inadequate access to empowering programs and trainings on the issue of government can cause a limit to their participation in political activities. The Esteem of the women needs to be boosted to make them see the value they bring and the colour they add to the world.

Unequal access to education can also be a challenge to the representation of women in Edo State governance. In this day we find prostitution (hook up), human trafficking, child abuse and early marriage on high rise. Where a country lacks inadequate educational structure and standard educational system, social vices and abuse of the female gender is sure to happen.

So it should be very crucial to the Edo State Government to ensure the presence of access to education and empowerment programs.

5. **LOW POLITICAL REPRESENTATION** – in the history of the Edo State government, there has never been a female Governor or Speaker. there's also the representation of women at 30% way below and far from the 50% target. Besides the women in Edo State are not represented in major political positions or top governance but are given advisory roles and secretarial jobs which gives a limit to full representation of women in governance or no participation at all.

2.3.4 THEORIES OF GENDER EQUALITY IN GOVERNANCE.

There are theoretical frameworks guiding the analysis of Gender Equality in Governance and seeks to give explanations to the concept.

These theories varies in its analysis but the end point of each is that there should be full representation of women in governance.

This theories suggests economic growth, structural changes and informed institutional reforms and policies.

1. **FEMINIST THEORY:** The Feminist Theory is such that seeks and aims to understand the nature of Gender inequality by examining and analysing social, cultural and political structures. Originating as a feminist movement to challenge the patriarchal, male dominated perspective that historically have rendered the experiences of women invisible.

Referencing a Nigerian Popular Author and Activist, (Adichie 2013) as she constantly clamours for feminism with her TED talk and Essay ‘We should all be Feminist’. She advocates for a Globalized Feminism especially in Africa.

(Hudson – Weens 1993) also gave her cent to the issue of feminism. Differentiating Western Feminism to that of the Black highlighting the experiences of the Black Women which is distinct and Family centered.

Under the Feminist Theory, are sub aspects of it.

A. **THE LIBERAL FEMINISM:** This particular type of feminist theory advocates for equal access to rights, resources and political positions through legal and policy reforms. This theory is saying that there should be free access of all for opportunities and values. The Political System especially should be liberal in nature which can encourage and accommodate all to participate effectively in political activities.

B. **MARXIST FEMINISM:** Also known as the Socialist Feminism theory propagates that women’s subordination in Governance is as a result of

existing capitalist systems and the ownership of private properties which runs into unpaid reproductive labor and thereby excludes them from power. This theory advocates that true Gender Equality springs from the restructuring of the capitalist economy and system.

(Engels 1884) in his work ‘ The Origin of the Family, Private Property and and the State’ traced the subordination and relegation of women to the rise of private property and the nuclear family.

C. RADICAL FEMINISM: As the name portrays focuses on Dethroning deep seated existing patriarchal structure, systems and cultures.

It also aims to dismantle the barbaric traditional Gender roles.

2. CLASSICAL MODERNIZATION THEORY

This theory explains that the presence of Economic Development is an advantage for fostering Gender -Egalitarian attitudes, educational/occupational opportunities for women which enables them participate in Governance. It points Economic Development and Growth, industrialization as a necessary and positive tool for bridging the gap of Gender inequality that has hinder women from getting position of power.

This theory of Gender Equality in Governance is just trying to explain that if there is modernization, every thing else will fall in place.

3. EMANCIPATIVE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT THEORY

This view emphasizes on changing cultural norms and values or shifting it towards Gender Equality creates an opportunity for Women full representation and participation.

It also hammers on self prioritization, self love, expression and egalitarian attitudes that demands and supports women leadership in Governance. Linked to the works of (Welzel and Inglehart), this theory posits for Human Development emphasizing that there should be a rise of knowledge based values and Economic Development and the eradication of subjective beliefs and the introduction of objective improvements which will genuinely empower people to change and shift their subjective beliefs and consciousness so as to support emancipative goals.

This theory also preaches equity and freedom of expression.

4. INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION THEORY

This theory simply focuses on electoral and political reforms, thereby introducing policies like the Quota system to correct historical injustices and increase Women's representation in Political Leadership and Governance. This view vehemently argues that because discrimination institutionalized , remedies must also be institutionalized with the use of tools like Quota system, Reserved Seats and Target Driven Policies in

ensuring full representation of Women in Political, Economic and Social Sector of the State and Society.

5. **HISTORICAL AND INTERSECTIONAL THEORY**

This theory identifies how overlapping social models (race class, gender, ethnicity and religion) influences and creates unique barriers for different group of women.

(Crenshaw 1989) explains that existing social inequalities can be a compounded experience of oppression and privilege. He continues that for inequality to be addressed and remedied, all aspects of identity must be considered and respected rather than treating them in isolation.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study tends to apply the survey research design method. As this design research fits as the right technique to be used regarding the nature of the research.

Survey Method as described by (Check and Schutt 2012 p. 160) as the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions.

A Survey will be carried out across Edo State from it's indigenes seeking opinions and perspectives on the subject matter in which the findings of the research will then be compared with the hypothesis formulated and conclusion drawn.

3.2 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The Population of this study is been limited to Edo State, Nigeria with particular reference to Ovia North East Local Government Area. As at the time of formulating this study and carrying out the research, the population of Ovia North East Local Government ranks about 250,000 to 270,000 as at (2026) according to the National Population Commission (NPC).

However, a subset will be drawn out of the entire population.

3.3 SAMPLING SIZE AND TECHNIQUE

For the purpose of this study, A sample size of (100) respondents will make up the population to be used. And this will cover all persons especially the Women and Youths.

And the sampling technique to be used in achieving this is the Stratified Sampling as it constitutes a random selection of participants based on shared characteristics ad Age and Gender.

3.4 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

This study will employ the use of Primary and Secondary Data.

The Primary sources which include the use of questionnaire, interview and the survey method. While the Secondary sources of Data collection involve the application of Newspaper, Articles, Reviewed Journals and Books.

Howbeit, the both sources of Data Collection make up the avenue in which the data and information is been sourced and collated from.

3.5 INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION

The instruments for the collection of data to be used in this research is the Administration of Questionnaire.

The Questionnaire is basically structured questions arranged to obtain information and discern opinions from respondents in which the respondents are required to answer the outlined questions with sincerity of heart and clarity so as not to undermine the validity and Authenticity of the research and study.

3.6 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The Method of Data Analysis to be used in analysing and calculating the responses and opinions of the respondents of the questionnaire is the Simple Percentage.

As this will aid the researcher analyze the responses of the respondents expressed in the questionnaire thereby transforming raw data into credible and authentic insights which is needed for informed decision making and hypothesis validation.

The formula for calculating the Simple Percentage states thus:

$$\% = f/n \times 100$$

Where f is Frequency

And n the Population.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter vitally captures the presentation and interpretation of data and information gathered through structured questionnaires.

The questionnaires were administered through (2) means: the physical/manual respondents and online respondents via Google form. A total of 100 questionnaire was administered in which 90 was successfully gathered, this consisting of 50 physical /manual respondents and 40 online respondents all from Ovia North East Local Government Area, Benin City in Edo State.

4.2 DATA AND RESULTS PRESENTATION

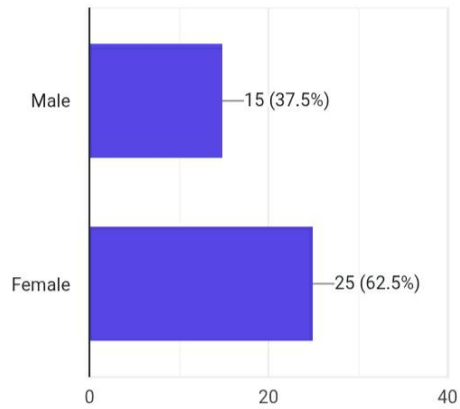
This section presents the analysis of data and interpretations. In which the results are been presented in tabular form and graphical terms too. As this encapsulates the overall sections of the questionnaire passed across which includes the information of respondents, Assessing political participation and Gender Equality in Governance.

4.2.1 SECTION A: INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

VARIABLE	STATUS	FREQUENCY (No)	PERCENTAGE (%)
GENDER	Male	17	34
	Female	33	66
		50	100
AGE	18 – 27	46	92
	28 – 37	4	8
	38 – 47	-	
	48 - 57	-	
	58 - 67	-	
	67 and Above	-	
		50	100
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS	No Formal Education	-	-
	Primary	-	-
	Secondary	12	24
	OND/HND/NCE	1	2
	Bachelor's Degree	36	72
	Masters and Above	-	-
		49	98
OCCUPATION	Student	49	98
	Civil Servant	-	-
	Trader/Business	-	-
	Artisan	-	-
	Professional	-	-
	Unemployed	1	2
	Others	-	-
		50	100
DO YOU HAVE THE PERMANENT VOTERS CARD (PVC)	Yes	13	26
	No	36	72
		49	98
HAVE YOU EVER VOTED OR PARTICIPATED IN AN ELECTION	Yes, I Have	9	18
	No, I Haven't	40	80
		49	98
DO YOU BELONG TO ANY POLITICAL PARTY	Yes	6	12
	No	43	86
		49	98

GENDER

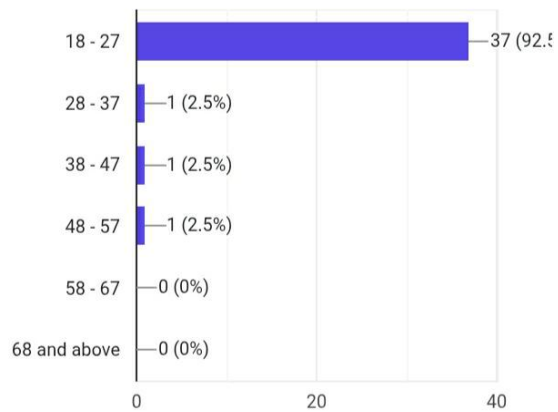
40 responses



AGE

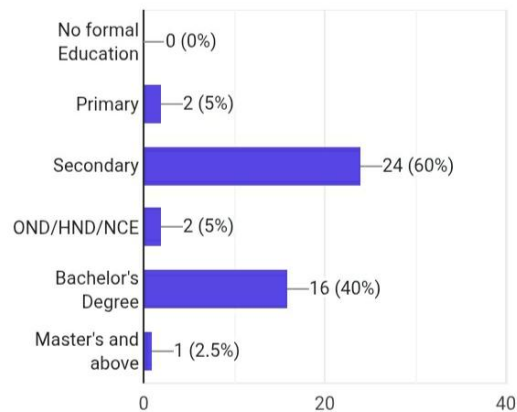
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40 responses



EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

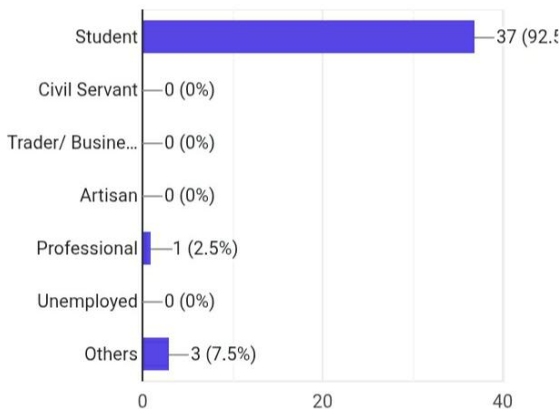
40 responses



OCCUPATION

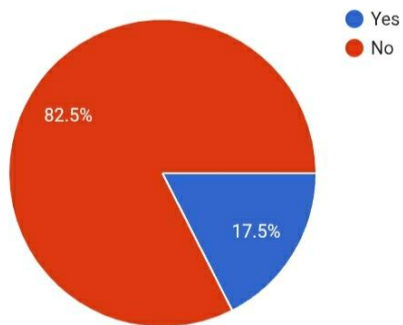
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40 responses



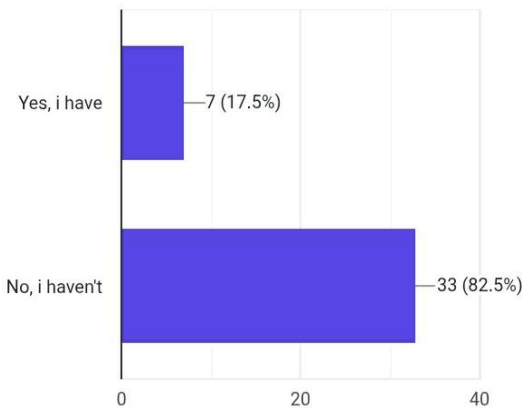
Do you have the permanent voters card (PVC)?

40 responses



Have you ever voted or participated in any election?

40 responses



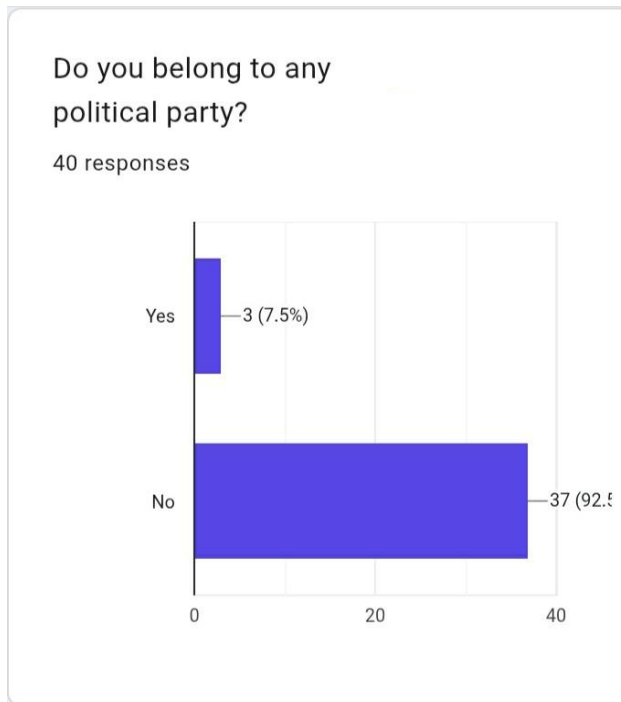


Table 4.2.1 presents the information of respondents. This is used in order to get specific demographic data of the respondents as this will help in analyzing.

From the table and graphic representation, we can draw that the female gender has the highest response leading with 66% and 62.5%

It also tells the rate at which the female's are more interested in politics and Governance basically but in action is it so?. Then there is the age representation spanning from the youthful age bracket with 92% and other age brackets minimal with 8% and 2.5%. The Educational Qualifications also shows that 72% which is the highest is from BSc holders with the minimal participation in the others ranging from 24%2% and Master's to above

being the lowest with 2.5%. Another striking point in the educational qualifications is the rising interest of secondary school students or school leavers at 24%.

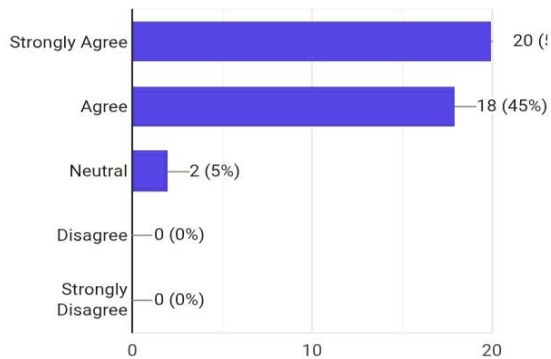
In occupation, students were mostly the participants, although there were low participation from the unemployed at 2% and professional at 2.5%. There is a negative turnout in Permanent Voters Card (PVC) at 72% and 82.5%. many participants do not have the permanent voters card which strikes a cord and the danger and effect it has on Political Participation and Gender Equality in Governance. As this is the basic form of participation in politics and the core principles of Democratic Governance. While there's still hope at 26% for the participants that have the PVC, it can be better. 80% have never voted in an election and only 12% belongs to a political party. The response gotten from the respondents on PVC, voting in an election and belonging to a political party gives a negative vibe citing it as a fundamental issue that needs to be addressed. If the foundation be faulty, the building can not stand.

4.2.2. SECTION B – ASSESSING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

No	Questions		FREQUENCY (N)	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	How Interested are you in Political Activities and Affairs	Interested	13	26
		V. Interested	10	20
		Neutral	16	32
		N. Interested	10	20
			49	98
2	Do you agree on youth engagement and Participation in Politics	S. Agree	25	50
		Agree	20	40
		Neutral	5	10
		Disagree	-	-
		S. Disagree	-	-
			50	100
3	Do you think the Constitution and political parties give room for youth activism and participation in politics	Yes, I do	21	42
		No, I don't	23	46
		I don't know	6	12
			50	100
4	Do you think there are factors that triggers and encourages the interest of all and sundry in politics and its activities and affairs	Yes, I do	35	70
		No, I don't	9	18
		I don't know	6	12
			50	100
5	Do you think there are also factors that undermines the interest and participation of all and sundry in political activities and affairs	Yes, I do	36	72
		No, I don't	9	18
		I don't Know	4	8
			49	98
6	Do you agree that youths are actively engaging and participating in politics as it should be	S. Agree	4	8
		Agree	13	36
		Neutral	14	28
		Disagree	5	10
		S. Disagree	13	26
			49	98

Do you agree on
Youths Engagement
and Participation in
political activities and
affairs?

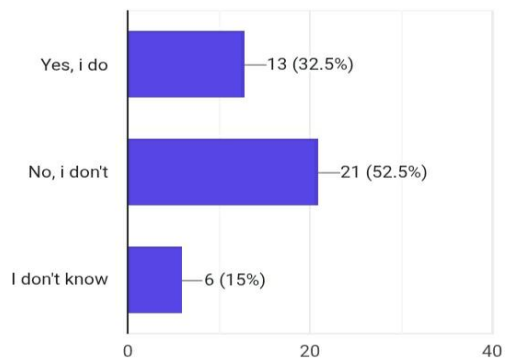
40 responses



Do you think the
Constitution and
Political Parties gives
room for Youth
Activism and
Participation Politics?

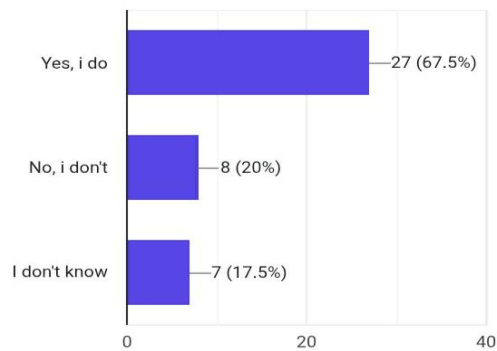
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40 responses



Do you think there are factors that triggers and encourages the interest of all and sundry in politics and it's political activities/affairs?

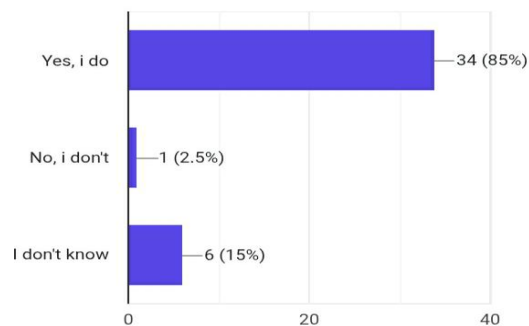
40 responses



Do you think there are also factors that undermines the interest and participation of all and sundry in political activities and affairs?

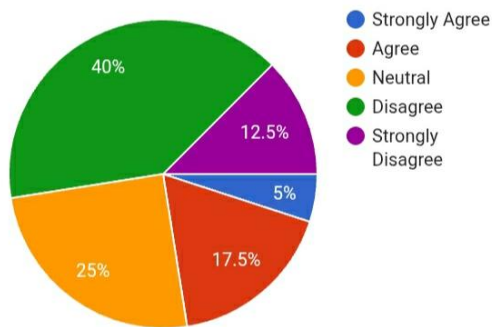
Consistent

40 responses



Do you agree that youths are actively engaging and participating in political activities and affairs as it should be?

40 responses



Above are the data gathered and analyzed in assessing political participation. The table and graphical representation shows the opinions and preference of participants in political activities and affairs. Dicey, though it is, it shows the ground in which political participation can be weighed.

Question 1 shows the interest of participants in political activities and affairs with 32% pointing out what looks like political apathy. While 32% are neutral about political activities and its affairs, there seems to be some level of encouragement with 26%

interested, 20% very interested and 20% not interested. Although this is not a pass mark for political participation which simply tells that there's work to be done and political apathy is silently looming seeing that it has the highest percentage (32% and 20%).

Well, Question 2 shows the clamoring for youths in Governance and engagement in politics with strongly agree leading at 50% and 51.45% thus sends a strong message on youths participation and more youthful personalities in governance against the aged/senior citizen existing rule system. Well question 3 shows that many have issues with the Constitution as 46% and 54% express their grievance on the constitutional value citing that it doesn't give room for Youth's Activism and participation in politics which normally should be a basis and legality entrenched in the Constitution. While these set of respondents disagree, others at 42% and 31.4% nod their heads in agreement claiming that there is such in the Constitution. This is to say there's a push for the review and amendment of the Constitution on Youth's Activism and Participation in Politics.

Participants strongly believes that there should be incentives and factors that encourages participation in politics and likewise the also hinders and undermines participation in politics. At 70% and 65.7, these participants strongly agree that there are factors that encourages Political Participation. 12% are unsure and 18% kicks against it. Likewise, 72% puts out that there are factors that could also hinder the interest of all and sundry in politics. While 18% seems to kick against it also, 8% are not sure.

The last question for this section shows there is a strong Disagreement on youths actively engaging and participating in political activities and affairs as it should be. As represented in the graphics, there is a dissatisfaction at 40% on the level of youth engagement and participation in governance and politics as it should be with minimal and low responses following at 11.4%, 5.7%, 20%, 22.9% in the other categories.

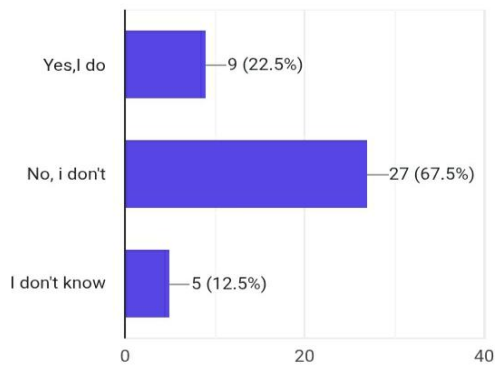
4.2.3. SECTION C – GENDER EQUALITY IN GOVERNANCE

No	Questions		FREQUENCY (N)	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	Do you think gender equality is present and dominant in governance	Yes, I do	14	28
		No, I don't	34	68
		I don't know	2	4
			50	100
2	Do you agree that the constitution captures an equal representation or strikes a balance on gender equality in governance	S. Agree	3	6
		Agree	24	48
		Neutral	11	22
		Disagree	12	24
		S. Disagree	-	-
			50	100
3	Do you think there should be equal representation or equality in politics between both gender	Yes, I do	39	78
		No, I don't	9	18
		I don't know	2	4
			50	100
4	Do you agree on women representing and participating in politics	S. Agree	32	64
		Agree	12	24
		Neutral	5	10
		Disagree	-	-
		S. Disagree	1	2
			50	100
5	Are you of the belief system that Women are not supposed to lead, Govern or preside	Yes, I am	5	10
		No, I am not	41	82
		Maybe	4	8
		I don't know	-	-
			50	100
6	Do you agree that men do better or perform well in politics then women	S. Agree	4	8
		Agree	8	16
		Neutral	17	34
		Disagree	4	8
		S. Disagree	16	32
			49	98
7	On a scale of 1 – 5, what do you	5	8	16

	think is the chance of a woman contesting and winning elections	4	2	4
		3	11	22
		2	17	34
		1	12	24
			50	100
8	Do you agree that there is an under-representation or no representation of women at all across the LGA's in Edo state	S. Agree	16	32
		Agree	13	26
		Neutral	16	32
		Disagree	4	8
		S. Disagree	1	2
			50	100
9	Do you think the Edo state political House captures and makes room for women's engagement and participation in political activities and affairs	Yes, I do	15	30
		No, I don't	23	46
		I don't know	12	24
			50	100
10	Do you agree that there could be factors responsible for women's marginalization or inequality in governance	S. Agree	12	24
		Agree	21	42
		Neutral	12	24
		Disagree	3	6
		S. Disagree	2	4
			50	100

Do you think Gender Equality in dominant and present in Governance?

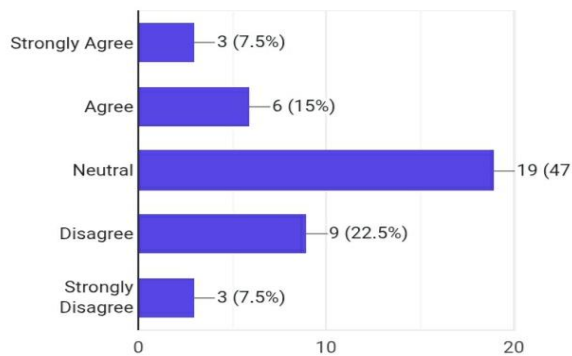
40 responses



Do you agree that the Constitution captures an equal representation or strikes a balance on Gender Equality in Governance?

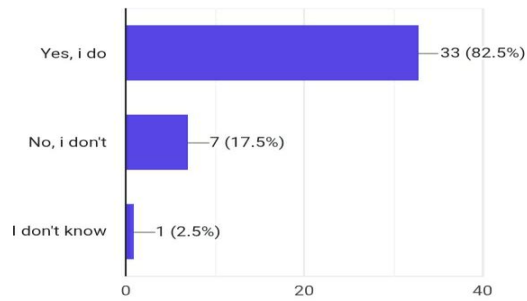
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40 responses



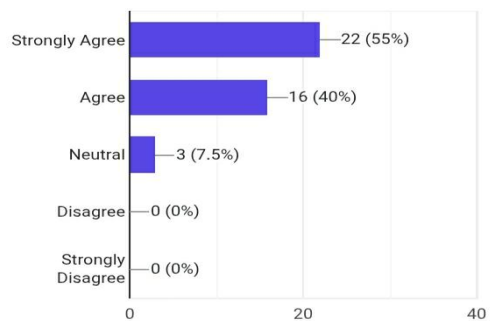
Do you think there should be equal representation or equality in politics between both gender?

40 responses



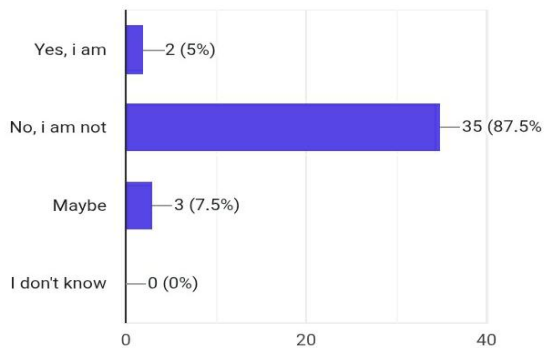
Do you agree on Women representing and participating in politics?

40 responses



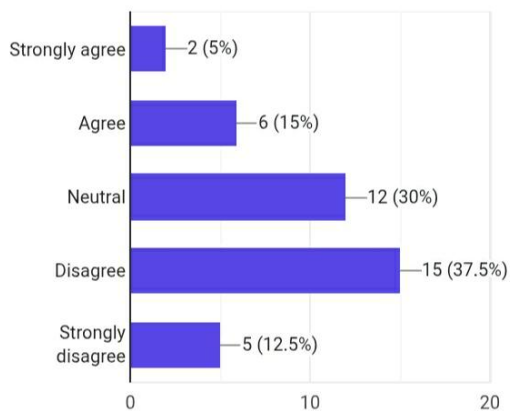
Are you of the belief
system that Women
are not meant and
supposed to Lead,
Govern or Preside?

40 responses



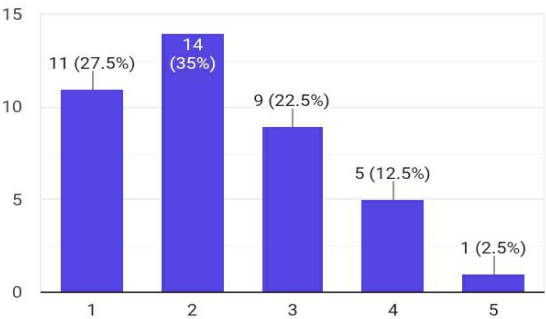
Do you agree that
Men do better or
perform well in
politics than Women?

40 responses



On a scale of 1-5,
what do you think the
chance of a Woman
contesting and
winning elections?

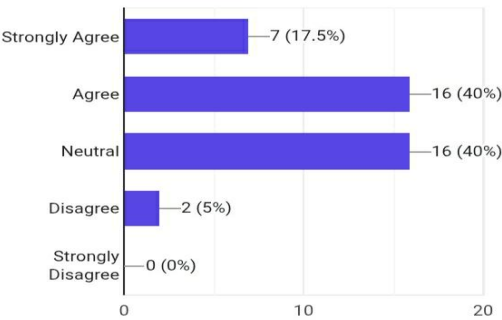
40 responses



Do you agree that
there is an
underrepresentation
or no representation
of Women at all
across the LGA's in
Edo State?

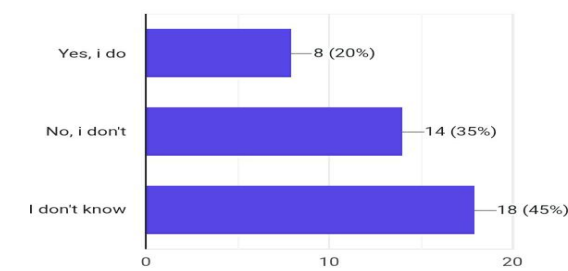
 Copy chart

40 responses



Do you think the Edo State Political House captures and makes room for Women's Engagement and Participation in Political Activities and Affairs?

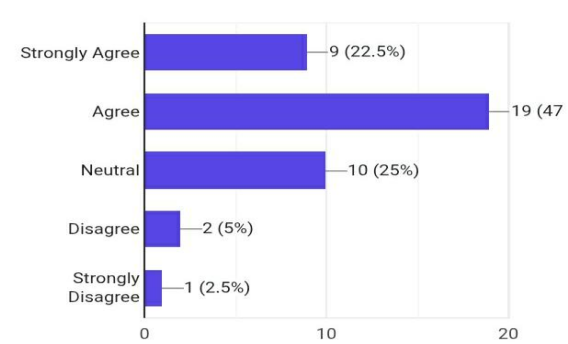
40 responses



Do you agree that there could be factors responsible for Women's marginalization or inequality in Governance?

Convo chart

40 responses



In this section of the structured questionnaire, it provides detailed questions used in checking Gender Equality in Governance, a very vital concept which has been a bone of contention over time. The statements or questions seeked the perceptions of people and indigenes of Edo State about Gender Equality in Governance and how it appears in Edo State and it's political house.

Question 1 asks participants about the presence of Gender Equality in Governance, well the response from the participants appears negative as many disagrees on gender equality being present in governance. This is ably represented at 68% and 65.8%, while 28% thinks yeah, there's some level of gender equality in governance. 4% are unaware of such.

Also in this section, the validity and relevance of the Constitution is been questioned, a larger percentage do not agree to the Constitution capturing a representation or striking a balance between gender neither do they disagree and as such places them in between (neutral) at 7.5%. Only 6% of the participants seems to agree to the Constitution capturing a representation and striking a balance on Gender Equality in Governance. This gives a feeling of oh, the Constitution doesn't really give a legal ground for equal representation of Gender and as such the reason for the patriarchal system and marginalization of women. Question 3 highlights the clamor for exclusive equal representation of Gender or Equality in Governance. 78% of the respondents speaks out boldly that no gender is more special. Well, 18.4% don't share same thought saying that there can't be Gender Equality in Governance and Politics. 41% are unsure. Question 4

and 5 focuses on the perception of are Women supposed, meant to be in governance and politics? and is it necessary that they participate and represent in politics.

To this, 64% of the participants strongly agrees that yes, it is necessary for Women to represent and participate in politics. It is the right of every individual to be involved in the decision making process and their political system. While 82% do not belong to the school of thought and are not of the belief system that Women are not meant or supposed to lead, govern, and preside. While 10% affirms to this, 8% stands in between.

Now here's the question of the viability of the Men doing better than the Women in politics. 37.5% kicks against it and 30% are neutral about this. And this neutrality points out that there's has not been any visible achievements and performance to be able to weigh if Men actually do well and perform better than Women in office and as such this particular respondents are just there. 15% agrees to this.

Now Question 7 dwells in the chance and viability of a Woman contesting and winning election. This particular question was actually inputed to gather perceptions about a woman running for an office or position and weighing the chances of her winning and coming out victorious. From the data collected from the respondents 36.8% which is on the scale of 2, and at 5, it is 2.5%, this is so poor as it shows the weakness and low possibility of a Woman actually winning elections and emerging as the Governor or President. And this is a fundamental issue that needs to be tackled. It is clearly seen that

many don't see the need for a Woman to be in office and position, instead it has been sidelined to the Man.

Question 8 and 9 portrays the political house of Edo State and analysing of it gives room for Women's participation and also has representation of Women at least across the LGA's which is the least form of government in the political system. 46% says no, the Edo State political house and its government is not doing enough in making room for Women's participation and engaging them in politics. There is a marginal expression of those that don't know it all at 30% 24%. 5.3% disagrees that there's an underrepresentation or no representation of Women at all across the LGA's in Edo State, while 39.5% agrees to such, 42.1 remains neutral on this issue.

Well, it is right to say that there could be causative factors responsible for Women's marginalization and inequality in Governance. 42% agrees to this, 24% stands neutral while there is marginal expression between Disagree and Strongly Disagree at 6% and 4%. And 24% Strongly Agrees to this.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.1 SUMMARY

A comprehensive Research was carried out in the geographic location of Ovia North East LGA in Edo State. With the aid of administered questionnaire, The study examined the perceptions and opinions of the selected population of 100 respondents in which 50 physical /manual questionnaire was used and 40 online respondents via Google forms, making a total of 90 responses that was successfully gathered based on the issue and topic of the project: Political Participation and Gender Equality in Governance: Edo State in Focus (2020-2024).

The responses gathered, analyzed and collated into data proved a point in the vitality and validity of the study thereby sparking reactions on intricate issue of Political Participation and Gender Equality in Governance. it also gave a new order and schools of thoughts that seeks to address the concept of political participation and gender equality in governance apart from the existing order and system that is well known, there were new findings that appears different and questions the framework of political participation and gender equality in governance thereby providing a new total approach for the study of political participation and gender equality.

As stated earlier some of the findings necessarily agree to existing data's and findings, While some are in alliance with certain belief systems and theories. Nevertheless, the cause of this research has sprang new order and findings putting into considerations the complexity and evolving of our political system and world. so therefore this study begs to say based on the findings that whatever existing order or findings that was relevant back then might not be relevant now or is out of context and as such can't be used to address present issues.

Edo State was the focus and used as case study precisely Ovia North East the research showed that although engagement or participation in politics, it is in the background and not in the forefront. More or less saying the crumbs and leftovers and there's lots of foundational problems that has caused this which needs to be addressed.

The findings are discussed as follows:

1. Based on the successfully conducted research for this study, the data shows level of responsiveness or interest to political activities and affairs, governance in both genders. The study proved that the female gender has the higher ground in showing interest and responsiveness to politics and governance. Well, can this be said to be just in the hear and in abstract form because in reality there is no visible proof or attribute for the display of this interest. while the males expressed less interest but in reality and action, reverse is the case because they are always seen in every nook and cranny in the political world and system.

Education also plays a vital role as it creates awareness and enlightens on what should be done and what has to be done. This finding also shows a negative turn out of having the permanent voters card (PVC), belonging to a political party and participating in electoral contests and political affairs. This outrightly gives a red flag as it is the basic and foundational elements for democracy and the topic that is being researched and discussed on.

2. Based On this study the findings has also pointed out that the place of the constitution has been overlooked and as such many are not aware of the provisions of the constitution on political participation and gender equality in governance and do not take into cognizance the stance of the constitution in matters as this.

It also appears that according to the findings, some things have to give way for certain things to happen. this clearly speaks of Youths Engagement in politics and presence in governance not just at the rear but in forefront and important position. there is a deep clamor and fight for youthful leadership and presence in governance. Based on this study also the findings have discovered there are certain factors that could spur up the interest of people or undermine an hinder it.

3. Existing literature and previous research has said that that Women marginalization and inequality in governance and and politics happens because the female allowed it. But standing on the findings of the research, this study begs to say that the order has passed. This study finds out that not necessarily are the women not involved or do not show

interest but there's an existing system in place that has crippled their efforts and make it fruitless. The patriarchal order system has to be redefined and the thinking capacity of the female gender towards political participation and gender equality in governance has to shift. The findings points out there's a place for one's awareness and interest making them to see its their right and as such they should treat it as one.

5.2 CONCLUSION

Having carried out a successful research and thorough exposition on this topic, this study has come to the conclusion that Political Participation has foundational issues which has to be tackled from within. If the least of political participation cannot be followed, , then the big stage of political participation can not be achieved. This in which the study has discussed that youths wants to hold and weild powers exacting dominance in political system but fails to understand that political participation firsts start at the ground level by getting the PVC, joining a political party and should be a regular sincere voter. Of course, all this was lacking as reveled by the research carried out. Now, the question is how can one contest for an election if not first belonging to a political party.

So the green light is that the Youths must first do the right thing by performing and participating at the basic and ground level before desiring, attaining the bigger scope of politics. They are to ensure that they observe the core democratic principles which is the basis for any political system in the world.

The Edo State takes no cognizance of the representation of Women across the LGA's, As the research results and data has proved, there is low and negative representation of the women across the LGA's. The margin is very thin and as such has caused an inequality in governance in Edo State. A causative factor of this is the unawareness of the women of their role and place in the Edo State political house. Unequal political structure, modalities that have been put in place which affects the female gender from expressing their interests into actions.

The Edo State politics has to be redefined and the Constitution, expressly explained and upheld if truly the Constitution makes provision for Gender Equality in Governance.

This study validates that truly there could be factors that influence political participation either positively or negatively. As earlier outlined in chapter 2, these factors are inherent and have been propagated by ungroomed political actors and has continually punctured Gender Equality in Governance.

All research objectives have been duly established by this study. Even the research questions have been investigated, analyzed and defined therefore giving a theoretical framework for the study and filling gaps in the topic and concept of the study.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are been made and proposed for enhancing Political Participation and achieving total Gender Equality in Governance.

The recommendations are also used for further studies and build on knowledge.

1. CREATING PUBLIC AWARENESS ON CORE TENETS OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE: The citizens should be made to understand that Political Participation is not magic. If the foundation be faulty, the building cannot stand. An election cannot take place if the citizens have no PVC, a candidate cannot contest or run for an office or position, if he/she irrespective of gender doesn't belong to an accredited and registered political party.

These core principles and tenets of democracy must and should be upheld. Political Participation starts in it's littlest form before attaining a much higher height and status in Governance. Public awareness should be made not to disregard our basic and fundamentals of political participation and core's of democracy and even realize gender equality in governance.

2. CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK, REVIEW AND REFORM: Based on the findings of this study, the constitutional values and background were questioned. And as

part of the recommendations, this study is implying a defined expression of the provisions of the Constitution. It should be adequately taught and imbibed in the system.

As well known, the Constitution serves as the legal framework and enacted codes of conduct for a body, persons and systems. It is very essential in the business of political participation and gender equality. Most individuals are not aware of the Constitution's stance on matters as this, hence there is nonchalantness towards politics and governance. In other instance, the values of the Constitution should be upheld in dealing with Political Participation and Gender Equality in Governance. Public awareness has to be made about the Constitution and its frameworks so that citizens can take proper advantage of it. It is also important to note that the Constitution should be reviewed and reformed if need be and arises as the political system evolves and Globalization press on.

3. SUBSTANTIAL EXPRESSION OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND IT'S IDEOLOGIES: Now, the disturbing question in the minds of many Nigerian citizens and Edo State indigene is that, what exactly does political parties on this side of the world stands for?.

So the findings of this study reads that the response to belonging to a political party is negative and very disturbing. Belonging to a political party is the fundamental benchmark to any political activities and participation, it cannot be overlooked.

But the present realities in Edo State even in Nigeria at large has made political parties be a joke, and so the reoccurring question: what exactly does Political Parties in Nigeria stands for?.

There should be clear and express definition of political parties and their ideologies. Political Parties should be able to live out their ideologies even in their present realities. It should be clear on what each political party stands for and represents not just the viability of winning electoral contest. This will encourage citizens and intending members so they can participate effectively in politics even in their local area and grassroot. Avenue's and mechanisms should be made in which citizens are encouraged to belong to a political party.

The monopoly of Political Parties should be tamed so that there will not be a situation of a one party or two party system instead multi parties system. This is to allow and give room for other political parties to express their interest and ideology and also participate in politics.

4. CAPACITY BUILDING FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND GOVERNANCE: Empowerment is very important in accessing Governance and effectively participate in politics. While many youths clamor for positions and offices, they fail to understand it takes capacity and knowledge to achieve change and propagate development through governance. So therefore this is a charge to every youth out there and even the female gender. Get yourself empowered, build capacity and acquire

knowledge so when you finally attain greatness in governance, you don't fumble. Capacity building also provides insight in participating effectively in politics and how to navigate the four walls of the political world and governance.

The Political system and Governance is a structure that requires adequate capacity and full knowledge to manage. It is the duty of everyone in the society to get empowered, mentored and build capacity to enact change and greatly participate in politics.

5. EDUCATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT ON GENDER EQUALITY: According to the findings of this study, while patriarchal system might not be a causative factor for Women's marginalization, but awareness has to be made. The results proved that most females have not come into that consciousness of their importance in the political realm. They need to be enlightened and educated on the need for them to be in Governance. It is important they understand the provisions of the Constitution in regards to their Gender rights and equality even on issues of Political Participation and Governance.

The World is Globalized now, we have more educated women and females over the place even in career but more intentional steps have to be taken.

The Males are not left behind, they should be kept abreast of the happenings and the notion of Gender Equality in Governance even encouraging the Women to take up positions and spaces in Governance.

This Study asserts that if each gender understands their roles and place in Governance, there will be no room for gender wars and conflicts. As the Participation in Politics requires both Genders, it is not a man thing or syndrome. Every one is needed in Governance, No Gender is less or inferior to the other. Gender Equality should be upheld and practiced.

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APPENDIX

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY

Questionnaire on Political Participation and Gender Equality in Governance: Edo State in Focus (2020-2024).

Dear Respondent,

I am a final year undergraduate student of Political Science conducting a research study on Political Participation and Gender Equality in Governance: Edo State in Focus (2020-2024). This questionnaire is interested in gathering your sincere opinions and perceptions on the Political Participation performance in Edo State and the area of Gender Equality in Governance.

This is strictly for academic purpose and not intended to harm or cause chaos and as such participation is voluntary, anonymous and confidential.

INSTRUCTIONS

Please tick (✓) the appropriate boxes.

SECTION A: INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

GENDER: Male ☐ Female ☐

AGE: 18-27 ☐ 28-37 ☐ 38-47 ☐ 48-57 ☐ 58-67 ☐ 68 and above ☐

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS: No formal Education ☐ Primary ☐

Secondary ☐ Ond/ Hnd/ Nce ☐ Bachelor's ☐ Master's and above ☐

OCCUPATION: Student ☐ Civil Servant ☐ Trader/Business ☐ Artisan ☐

Professional ☐ Unemployed ☐ Others ☐

Do you have the permanent voters card (PVC)? Yes ☐ No ☐

Have you ever voted or participated in any election? Yes, I have ☐ No, I haven't ☐

Do you belong to any political party? Yes ☐ No ☐

SECTION B

Indicate the level in which you agree or disagree by ticking (✓) the box.

ASSESSING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION.

1. How interested are you in political activities and affairs?

Interested ☐ Very interested ☐ Neutral ☐ Not Interested ☐

2. Do you agree on youths engagement and participation on political activities and affairs?

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

3. Do you think the Constitution and political parties gives room for youth activism and participation in politics?

Yes, I do [] No, I don't [] I don't know []

4. Do you think there are factors that triggers and encourages the interest of all and sundry in politics and it's activities/affairs?

Yes, I do [] No, I don't [] I don't know []

5. Do you think there are also factors that undermines the interest and participation of all and sundry in political activities and affairs?

Yes, I do [] No I don't [] I don't know []

6. Do you agree that youths are actively engaging and participating in political activities and affairs as it should be?

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Neutral [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

SECTION C

GENDER EQUALITY IN GOVERNANCE.

1. Do you think Gender Equality is dominant and present in Governance?

Yes, I do [] No, I don't [] I don't know []

2. Do you agree that the Constitution captures an equal representation or strikes a balance on Gender Equality in Governance?

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Neutral [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

3. Do you think there should be equal representation or equality in politics between both gender?

Yes, I do [] No, I don't [] I don't know []

4. Do you agree on Women representing and participating in politics?

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Neutral [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

5. Are you of the belief system that Women are not meant and supposed to Lead, Govern or Preside?

Yes, I am [] No, I am not [] Maybe [] I don't know []

6. Do you agree that Men do better or perform well in politics than Women?

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Neutral [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

7. On a scale of 1-5, what do you think is the chance of a Woman contesting and winning elections?

5 [] 4 [] 3 [] 2 [] 1 []

8. Do you agree that there is an underrepresentation or no representation of Women at all across the LGA's in Edo State?

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Neutral [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree []

9. Do you think the Edo State political house captures and makes room for Women's engagement and participation in political activities and affairs?

Yes, I do [] No, I don't [] I don't know []

10. Do you agree that there could be factors responsible for Women's marginalization or inequality in Governance?

Strongly Agree [] Agree [] Neutral [] Disagree [] Strongly Disagree [].