

CHALLENGES FACING WOMENS PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS IN BURSARI LOCAL GOVERNMENT YOBE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated the challenges facing women's participation in politics within Bursari Local Government, Yobe State. Despite increasing recognition of the importance of gender equality in political representation, women in this region face significant barriers to engagement. The paper employed a descriptive survey design, randomly selecting 200 respondents from three wards in Bursari, representing diverse occupations, educational backgrounds, political affiliations, ethnicities, and religions. Data were collected using the Social Acceptance of Women Political Participation Questionnaire (WPPQ), which demonstrated a reliability coefficient of $r = 0.74$. Analysis included descriptive frequency, mean, grand mean, and standard deviation calculations. Key challenges identified include cultural norms, limited access to resources, lack of political mentorship, and societal attitudes toward women in leadership. Findings indicate that these obstacles diminish women's political ambition and visibility in decision-making processes. The study recommends targeted interventions, such as awareness campaigns, mentorship programs, and supportive policies, to enhance women's political participation in Bursari, contributing to the broader discourse on gender equality and empowering women in governance.

Keywords: Women's participation, politics, Bursari Local Government, challenges, gender.

1.1 Background of the Study

Women's participation in politics is essential for achieving gender equality and ensuring that diverse perspectives are represented in decision-making processes. Despite progress in many regions, women continue to face significant challenges that hinder their full engagement in political life. One of the primary barriers is gender discrimination, which manifests in various forms, including biases within political parties and among voters. Research indicates that women candidates often encounter skepticism regarding their qualifications and leadership abilities compared to their male counterparts, leading to lower electoral success rates (Karam, 2022). Additionally, the lack of support from political parties significantly impacts women's political careers. Many political organizations are still dominated by male leadership, which often prioritizes male candidates over women, limiting opportunities for women to secure nominations and leadership roles (Smith & Paxton, 2021).

Another critical challenge is the balancing of family responsibilities with political ambitions. Women frequently bear the brunt of household duties and caregiving, which can restrict their availability for political engagement. This dual burden is particularly pronounced in cultures with traditional gender roles, where societal expectations dictate that women should prioritize family over career (Bauer & Britton, 2023).

Moreover, cultural norms and societal expectations continue to discourage women's political participation. In many societies, prevailing attitudes about gender roles can create a hostile environment for women seeking leadership positions. Negative stereotypes about women's capabilities in politics further exacerbate this issue (UN Women, 2023).

Safety and harassment also pose significant barriers to women's political participation. Women in politics often face threats of violence and harassment, both online and offline, which can deter them from running for office or engaging in public discourse. The rise of social media has intensified these challenges, with many women experiencing cyber bullying and online abuse (UN Women, 2023).

Furthermore, there is a notable lack of access to training and resources necessary for women to navigate the political landscape effectively. Many women lack the support systems that provide training, mentorship, and networking opportunities, which are crucial for building confidence and skills in political engagement (Bauer & Britton, 2023).

Understanding these challenges is vital for developing effective strategies to enhance women's political participation. By addressing the systemic barriers that hinder women's engagement in politics, stakeholders can work towards creating a more inclusive political environment that reflects the diverse voices and experiences of all citizens.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- i. To assess the level of perceived social acceptance of women's participation in the political process within the Bursari Local Government Area.
- ii. To evaluate perceptions of the historical status of women's participation in Bursari politics and how it has evolved over time.
- iii. To identify the primary challenges faced by women in participating in the political landscape of Bursari Local Government.
- iv. To propose strategies that could enhance women's participation in politics within Bursari, focusing on actionable measures for improvement.

2.1 Literature review/Theoretical Underpinning

Reviewing existing literature on women's political participation is crucial for several reasons. First, it provides a foundational understanding of the historical and contemporary challenges that women face in political arenas. By examining previous research, scholars can identify patterns of discrimination, barriers to entry, and the socio-cultural factors that influence women's engagement in politics (Karam, 2022). Second, a literature review helps to contextualize current findings within the broader discourse on gender equality and representation. It allows researchers to build upon existing knowledge, ensuring that new studies are informed by prior work and contribute to ongoing debates about women's roles in governance (Smith & Paxton, 2021). This is particularly important in a rapidly changing political landscape where women's rights and representation are increasingly recognized as vital to democratic processes.

Additionally, reviewing literature highlights gaps in current research, revealing areas that require further exploration. For instance, while much has been studied about gender discrimination and political participation, there may be less focus on the Intersectionality of race, class, and gender in different cultural contexts (Bauer & Britton, 2023). Identifying these gaps can guide future research efforts and inform policy recommendations aimed at enhancing women's political participation.

Finally, a comprehensive literature review serves as a critical tool for practitioners and policymakers. By synthesizing evidence from various studies, it can inform strategies and interventions designed to promote gender equality in political representation, ultimately contributing to more inclusive governance (UN Women, 2023).

2.2 Relevant Theories

Gender Theory

Gender theory examines the social constructs of gender and how these constructs influence individual behavior and societal norms. It posits that gender is not merely a biological characteristic but a complex interplay of social roles, expectations, and power dynamics. This theory is crucial for understanding how societal perceptions of gender can limit or enhance women's political participation.

Social Role Theory

Social role theory, developed by Eagly and others, suggests that gender stereotypes arise from the roles that men and women traditionally occupy in society. According to this theory, women are often associated with communal traits (e.g., nurturing, supportive), while men are linked to agentic traits (e.g., leadership, assertiveness). These stereotypes can create barriers for women seeking political roles, as they may be perceived as less suitable for leadership positions (Kunovich, Paxton, & Hughes, 2007).

2.2.1 Discussion of How These Theories Relate to Women's Political Participation

Impact of Gender Norms: Gender theory highlights how societal norms and expectations can discourage women from pursuing political careers. Women may internalize these norms, leading to lower self-efficacy and ambition in political contexts (Karam, 2022).

Role Congruity: Social role theory explains that women often face a "lack of fit" in political roles, as traditional gender roles do not align with the expectations of political leadership. This misalignment can result in biases against women candidates, affecting their chances of election and participation (Kunovich, Paxton, & Hughes, 2007).

Collective Action and Solidarity: Both theories emphasize the importance of social networks and collective action among women. Gender theory suggests that solidarity can empower women to challenge existing norms, while social role theory indicates that shared experiences can help women navigate the political landscape more effectively (Bauer & Britton, 2023).

Transformative Potential: Understanding these theories can inform strategies to enhance women's political participation. By addressing the stereotypes and societal

norms that limit women's roles, initiatives can be developed to promote gender equality in political representation (UN Women, 2023).

2.2 Historical Context of Women's Political Participation in Nigeria

Brief History of Women's Political Rights in Nigeria

The history of women's political rights in Nigeria is marked by significant activism and gradual progress. Women's political engagement began to take shape during the colonial era, with notable figures such as Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti leading movements against colonial policies. In the 1940s, she founded the Abeokuta Women's Union (AWU), which mobilized women to protest against unfair taxation and colonial rule, highlighting the early efforts of women to assert their political rights (Hamidu and Ali, 2018).

As Nigeria approached independence in the 1950s, women's organizations began to emerge, advocating for greater political representation. The Nigerian Women's Union and the Nigerian Women's Party were instrumental in pushing for women's rights during this period. However, despite these efforts, the immediate post-independence era saw limited representation for women in political offices. In 1960, when Nigeria gained independence, only a few women held political positions, underscoring the ongoing marginalization of women in the political landscape (Hamidu and Ali, 2018).

2.2.1 Key Milestones in Women's Political Participation

- 6.0 1940s: The formation of the Abeokuta Women's Union by Funmilayo Ransome - Kuti marked the beginning of organized women's political activism in Nigeria (Hamidu and Ali, 2018).
- 7.0 1954: Margaret Ekpo became the first female member of the Nigerian legislature, elected to the Eastern Regional House of Assembly, paving the way for future female politicians (Hamidu and Ali, 2018).
- 8.0 1960: Nigeria gained independence, but women's representation in political offices remained minimal, reflecting systemic barriers to female participation (Hamidu and Ali, 2018).
- 9.0 1982: The establishment of Women in Nigeria (WIN), an organization that advocated for women's rights and political participation during military rule (Hamidu and Ali, 2018).
- 10.0 1999: The return to civilian rule and the enactment of the Nigerian Constitution included provisions aimed at promoting gender equality in political representation (Hamidu and Ali, 2018).
- 11.0 2006: The adoption of the National Gender Policy aimed to ensure that women occupy at least 35% of decision-making positions in government (Hamidu and Ali, 2018).
- 12.0 2022: A landmark court ruling by the Federal High Court in Abuja affirmed women's rights to political participation, declaring the failure to implement the 35% affirmative action policy as unconstitutional (Hamidu and Ali, 2018).

These milestones illustrate the ongoing struggle and gradual progress of women in Nigeria's political landscape. Despite significant achievements, challenges remain, necessitating continued advocacy for women's rights and representation in politics.

2.2.2 Bursari Local Governments

Bursari Local Government, located in Yobe State, Nigeria, serves as a compelling case study for examining the ongoing efforts and challenges faced by women in politics at the local level. Women in Bursari have engaged in various political roles, from councilors to community leaders, advocating for issues that affect their communities.

Local Initiatives

Women's groups in Bursari have organized campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of female political participation. These initiatives focus on critical issues such as education, health, and economic empowerment. For instance, local organizations have conducted workshops aimed at educating women about their rights and the electoral process, encouraging them to run for office and participate in governance (Karam, 2022).

2.2.3 Barriers to Participation

Despite these efforts, cultural and societal barriers often hinder women's full participation in politics. Factors such as traditional gender roles, lack of access to resources, and political violence can limit their effectiveness and representation in local governance. In many cases, women face intimidation and harassment when they seek political office, which can discourage potential candidates from pursuing leadership roles (Karam, 2022).

Moreover, the intersection of gender with other social factors, such as ethnicity and socioeconomic status, further complicates women's political participation in Bursari. Women from marginalized communities often encounter additional obstacles, including limited access to education and economic opportunities, which can impede their ability to engage in political processes (Karam, 2022).

2.2.4 Impact of Women in Local Governance

The presence of women in local governance has been shown to positively impact community development and resource allocation. Research indicates that women leaders tend to prioritize issues such as health care, education, and social welfare, which are crucial for the well-being of their communities (Bauer and Britton, 2023). In Bursari, women in leadership positions have advocated for improved health services and educational opportunities, contributing to the overall development of the local area.

Furthermore, women's participation in politics can inspire future generations of female leaders. By occupying visible positions of power, women in Bursari serve as role models for young girls, demonstrating that leadership is attainable and encouraging them to aspire to similar roles in the future (Bauer and Britton, 2023).

The historical context of women's political rights and the case study of Bursari Local Government illustrate the complexities of women's participation in politics. While significant progress has been made in terms of legal rights and representation, challenges remain that must be addressed to ensure that women can fully engage in political processes. Continued advocacy, education, and support for women in politics

are essential for fostering gender equality and empowering women to take on leadership roles in their communities.

2.3 Socio-Cultural Barriers

Traditional Gender Roles and Societal Expectations

In many societies, including Nigeria, traditional gender roles significantly influence women's participation in politics. These roles often dictate that women should primarily focus on domestic responsibilities, such as child-rearing and household management, rather than engaging in public life or political activities. This societal expectation can discourage women from pursuing political ambitions, as they may face criticism or lack of support from their families and communities for stepping outside these traditional roles (Adeboye, 2005; Oyewole, 2017).

Moreover, the perception that leadership is a male domain reinforces the idea that women are less capable of holding political office. This belief is deeply ingrained in cultural narratives and practices, which often prioritize male authority and decision-making in both public and private spheres (Mwaura, 2013; Lang, 2020).

2.3.1 Cultural Attitudes towards Female Leadership

Cultural attitudes towards female leadership play a crucial role in shaping women's political participation. In many communities, there is a prevailing belief that women should not occupy leadership positions, as these roles are traditionally reserved for men. This cultural bias can manifest in various ways, including the lack of encouragement for women to seek leadership roles and the perpetuation of stereotypes that portray women as less competent leaders (Crumbley, 2003; Rubenstein, 2004).

Even in contexts where women do achieve leadership positions, they often face skepticism regarding their capabilities. This skepticism can lead to a lack of trust and support from male colleagues and constituents, further hindering their effectiveness and willingness to engage in politics (Soothill, 2007; Martin, 2003).

2.3.2 Impact of Religion on Women's Political Participation

Religion significantly influences women's political participation in Nigeria, where various religious beliefs and practices shape societal norms and expectations. In many religious contexts, traditional interpretations often reinforce gender inequalities, suggesting that women should be submissive and supportive rather than assertive leaders (Campbell and Bellar, 2022).

For instance, in some Christian denominations, while women may be allowed to participate in church activities, their roles are often limited to supportive functions rather than leadership positions. This dynamic can discourage women from seeking political roles, as they may internalize the belief that leadership is not appropriate for them (Adeboye, 2005; Oyewole, 2017).

Additionally, the intersection of religion and culture can create complex barriers for women. In some cases, religious leaders may actively oppose women's political participation, citing religious doctrines that emphasize male authority. This opposition

can further entrench societal norms that limit women's roles in public life (Mwaura, 2013; Lang, 2020).

2.4 Economic Barriers

Lack of Financial Resources for Campaigning

One of the most significant economic barriers to women's political participation in Nigeria is the lack of financial resources for campaigning. Running for political office often requires substantial financial investment, including costs for campaign materials, transportation, and outreach efforts. In Nigeria, the average cost of running for office can be prohibitively high, making it difficult for women, who may already face economic disadvantages, to compete effectively against male counterparts who often have more access to financial resources (Martin, 2023). This financial disparity can deter women from even considering a run for office, as the costs associated with campaigning can be overwhelming (Hamidu & Ali, 2018).

2.4.1 Economic Dependency and Its Effects on Political Ambition

Economic dependency significantly impacts women's political ambition. Many women in Nigeria are economically dependent on their families or spouses, which can limit their ability to pursue political careers. This dependency often results in a lack of autonomy and confidence, making it challenging for women to assert themselves in political contexts (Adeboye, 2005). Furthermore, the societal expectation that women should prioritize family responsibilities over personal ambitions can further suppress their political aspirations (Crumbley, 2003). As a result, many women may feel that they cannot afford to take the risks associated with running for office, leading to a cycle of underrepresentation in political spaces (Mwaura, 2013).

2.4.2 Access to Education and Professional Development Opportunities

Access to education and professional development opportunities is crucial for empowering women to participate in politics. However, many women in Nigeria face barriers to education, including cultural norms that prioritize male education and economic constraints that limit their ability to pursue higher education (Lang, 2020). Without adequate education and training, women may lack the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the political landscape effectively. Additionally, professional development opportunities, such as mentorship programs and networking events, are often less accessible to women, further hindering their political ambitions (Martin, 2023). This lack of access to education and professional growth can perpetuate gender disparities in political representation, as women may not feel adequately prepared to run for office or engage in political discourse (Adeboye, 2005).

2.5 Political Barriers

Gender Bias within Political Parties

Gender bias within political parties remains a significant barrier to women's political participation. Many political parties are dominated by male leadership, which often leads to the marginalization of women in decision-making processes. This bias can manifest in various ways, including the selection of candidates, where women may be overlooked for nominations in favor of male candidates, even when they are equally or more qualified (UN Women, 2024). Additionally, party platforms may not prioritize

issues that are important to women, further alienating potential female candidates and voters.

2.5.1 Lack of Support from Male Counterparts and Party Leadership

Women often face a lack of support from their male counterparts and party leadership, which can hinder their political ambitions. Male party leaders may be reluctant to endorse female candidates, fearing that they may not perform as well as their male counterparts in elections. This lack of endorsement can significantly impact women's chances of securing nominations and winning elections (Pew Research Center, 2023). Furthermore, women in politics frequently report feeling isolated and unsupported within their parties, which can discourage them from pursuing leadership roles (UN Women, 2024).

2.5.2 Political Violence and Intimidation Against Women

Political violence and intimidation are pervasive issues that disproportionately affect women in politics. Women candidates and officeholders often face threats of violence, harassment, and intimidation, which can deter them from participating in political processes. This violence can take many forms, including online harassment, physical threats, and even assaults, creating a hostile environment for women in politics (International IDEA, 2024). Such intimidation not only affects individual women but also serves to discourage other women from entering politics, perpetuating the cycle of underrepresentation (UN Women, 2024).

2.6 Legal and Institutional Challenges

Inadequate Implementation of Gender Equality Laws

The implementation of gender equality laws often faces significant challenges, leading to inadequate protection and support for women's rights. Many countries have established legal frameworks aimed at promoting gender equality; however, these laws frequently suffer from poor enforcement and lack of political commitment. For instance, while laws exist to address gender-based discrimination, they are not consistently applied, resulting in ongoing disparities in areas such as employment and political representation (Thomas, 2023). Additionally, insufficient training for law enforcement and judicial officials on gender issues can lead to inadequate responses to violations of these laws (Thomas, 2023).

2.6.1 Limited Representation in Decision-Making Bodies

Women continue to be underrepresented in decision-making bodies worldwide. In the United States, women held only 28% of congressional seats in 2023, despite comprising over half of the population (Ballard Brief, 2023). This underrepresentation is often exacerbated by systemic barriers, including gender bias in candidate selection processes and a lack of support from political parties (Ballard Brief, 2023). Projections suggest that at the current rate of progress, it will take approximately 95 years for the U.S. to achieve full gender parity in political representation (Ballard Brief, 2023).

2.6.2 Institutional Biases within Government Structures

Institutional biases within government structures further hinder efforts to achieve gender equality. Many political parties and governmental organizations are dominated by male leadership, which can marginalize women's voices and contributions

(Thomas, 2023). These biases often manifest in the prioritization of male-centric policies and the exclusion of women from key decision-making processes. Additionally, entrenched gender norms and stereotypes can influence the behavior of both male and female leaders, perpetuating a cycle of exclusion and discrimination against women in political and institutional contexts (Thomas, 2023).

2.6.3 Psychological Barriers

Psychological barriers can significantly impact individuals' personal and professional development. These barriers often stem from internalized beliefs, fear of failure, societal backlash, and the lack of mentorship and support networks.

2.6.4 Internalized Beliefs and Confidence Issues

Many individuals struggle with internalized beliefs that undermine their confidence. These beliefs can manifest as negative self-perceptions, leading to behaviors such as excessive people-pleasing, perfectionism, and negative self-talk. Such patterns can hinder effective communication and networking, ultimately affecting career progression and personal growth (Schunk, 2020). For instance, individuals may believe they are not capable of achieving their goals, which can lead to reduced ambition and stagnation in their careers (Schunk, 2020).

2.6.5 Fear of Failure and Societal Backlash

Fear of failure is a common psychological barrier that can prevent individuals from pursuing opportunities. This fear is often compounded by societal expectations and the potential for backlash when one does not meet these expectations. The pressure to succeed can lead to anxiety and avoidance behaviors, further limiting personal and professional growth (Dweck, 2017). Individuals may also internalize societal judgments, which can exacerbate feelings of inadequacy and discourage them from taking risks (Dweck, 2017).

2.6.7 The Role of Mentorship and Support Networks

Mentorship and support networks play a crucial role in overcoming psychological barriers. Effective mentorship can provide guidance, encouragement, and a sense of belonging, which are essential for building confidence and resilience. Support networks can help individuals navigate challenges and provide resources that facilitate personal and professional development (Kram, 1985). Research indicates that individuals with strong mentorship relationships are more likely to succeed in their careers and feel empowered to pursue their goals (Kram, 1985).

2.8 Case Studies and Personal Narratives

Testimonials from Women in Bursari Local Government

Women in Bursari Local Government have shared their experiences regarding the challenges they face in political participation. Many have highlighted issues such as gender bias, lack of access to resources, and societal expectations that limit their involvement in governance. Personal narratives reveal how these women navigate these barriers, often relying on community support and resilience to pursue their political ambitions. Their testimonials emphasize the importance of creating supportive environments that empower women to engage in local governance and leadership roles (Adebayo, 2022).

2.8.1 Examples of Successful Female Political Leaders and Their Challenges

Successful female political leaders serve as inspiring examples for aspiring women in politics. Leaders such as Kamala Harris, the Vice President of the United States, and Jacinda Ardern, the former Prime Minister of New Zealand, have faced significant challenges in their political careers, including gender discrimination and scrutiny over their leadership styles. Both leaders have spoken about the importance of perseverance and the need for systemic change to support women in leadership positions (Smith, 2021; Johnson, 2023). Their stories illustrate the ongoing struggles women face in politics and the impact of mentorship and support networks in overcoming these challenges.

2.9 Strategies for Overcoming Challenges

Community Engagement and Awareness Programs

Community engagement and awareness programs are essential strategies for overcoming the challenges faced by women in politics. These programs aim to educate the community about the importance of female representation in governance and to challenge existing gender biases. Initiatives such as workshops, seminars, and public forums can foster dialogue and encourage community members to support women's political participation. Recent studies have shown that such programs can significantly increase awareness and support for women candidates, leading to greater electoral success (Ogunyemi, 2022).

2.9.1 Empowerment Initiatives for Women

Empowerment initiatives specifically designed for women can also play a crucial role in overcoming barriers to political participation. These initiatives may include leadership training, mentorship programs, and access to resources that enhance women's skills and confidence in political settings. Programs that focus on building networks among women can provide essential support and encouragement, helping them navigate the political landscape more effectively. Research indicates that women who participate in empowerment initiatives are more likely to engage in political activities and pursue leadership roles (Adetunji, 2023).

2.9.2 Summary of Key Challenges Identified

Women in Bursari face several key challenges that hinder their political participation:

- 1. Cultural and Societal Norms:** Deeply entrenched gender stereotypes and cultural beliefs often portray women as less capable leaders, which discourages their involvement in politics. Many community members believe that men are better suited for leadership roles, creating a significant barrier for women seeking political office (Ogunyemi, 2022).
- 2. Limited Access to Resources:** Women often lack access to financial resources and political networks necessary for campaigning and securing nominations. This financial disadvantage can prevent them from effectively competing in elections (Adetunji, 2023).
- 3. Fear of Violence and Harassment:** The threat of gender-based violence, including harassment and intimidation, can deter women from participating in political activities. Many women report experiencing psychological and physical

violence, which undermines their confidence and willingness to engage in politics (Adetunji, 2023).

4. **Insufficient Support Systems:** There is a lack of mentorship and support networks for women in politics. Without guidance and encouragement from established leaders, aspiring female politicians may struggle to navigate the political landscape (Adebayo, 2022).
5. **Political Party Resistance:** Many political parties are reluctant to support female candidates, often prioritizing male candidates instead. This systemic bias within political structures further limits women's opportunities for leadership roles (Adetunji, 2023).

2.9.3 Importance of Addressing These Challenges

Addressing these challenges is crucial for enhancing women's political participation in Bursari for several reasons:

- ξ **Equitable Representation:** Ensuring that women have equal opportunities in political participation is essential for achieving fair representation in governance. Women make up half of the population and should have a voice in decision-making processes that affect their lives (Ogunyemi, 2022).
- ξ **Improved Governance:** Research indicates that higher levels of women's political participation lead to more responsive and transparent governance. Women often bring unique perspectives on issues such as health, education, and social welfare, which can lead to more comprehensive policy-making (Adebayo, 2022).
- ξ **Social Stability:** Increasing women's participation in politics is associated with lower risks of civil unrest and political violence. Societies that include women in decision-making processes tend to experience greater social cohesion and stability (Ogunyemi, 2022).
- ξ **Inspiration for Future Generations:** Successful female leaders can serve as role models for young girls, encouraging them to pursue education and careers in politics. This can create a positive cycle of increased female participation in future generations (Adebayo, 2022).

By addressing these challenges through targeted initiatives and community engagement, Bursari can foster an environment that supports and empowers women in politics, ultimately leading to a more inclusive and effective governance system.

2.10 Empirical review

On the study by Smith (2023) evaluates global advancements toward gender equality in political leadership roles while identifying persistent challenges. Utilizing both quantitative analysis of political representation data from over 100 countries and qualitative interviews with female leaders, the findings reveal that women still occupy only 25% of leadership positions worldwide. Key barriers, including patriarchal structures, a lack of mentorship, and discriminatory practices, continue to hinder women's advancement. The study recommends stronger international frameworks to support women's leadership, increased funding for political campaigns, and the establishment of mentorship programs linking young women with experienced

leaders. However, it notes a significant gap in longitudinal data on the effectiveness of these mentorship programs, suggesting the need for further research.

Another study by Lee (2022), investigates how educational programs and political training impact women's political participation. Employing a mixed-methods approach that includes surveys and case studies of successful female politicians, the study finds that participants in political training report increased confidence and ambition, leading to higher candidacy rates. It advocates for expanding access to educational initiatives, especially in rural areas, to better empower women. Nonetheless, a gap is identified regarding the lack of comprehensive evaluation metrics for assessing the long-term effects of these training programs on women's political careers, indicating a need for additional research.

Thompson's (2023), explores the effects of conflict and post-conflict environments on women's political participation. By analyzing case studies and electoral data from conflict-affected regions, the findings indicate that while women may gain political representation post-conflict—reaching up to 30% in some cases—this progress is often temporary as traditional political norms reassert themselves. The study calls for integrating gender considerations into peace building processes and ensuring women's voices are included in governance. However, it emphasizes the need for more in-depth analysis of the long-term effects of conflict on women's political engagement across diverse cultural contexts.

Martinez (2024) examines how digital platforms impact women's political participation. Utilizing a survey-based approach to gather data on women's use of digital tools for political engagement, the findings suggest that active users of social media report higher levels of political awareness and engagement. However, barriers such as digital illiteracy and limited access to technology disproportionately affect women, particularly in rural areas. The study recommends initiatives to enhance digital literacy and increase access to technology to boost women's political participation. It also highlights a gap in longitudinal studies assessing the long-term impact of digital engagement on women's political careers, underscoring the need for further investigation.

Nguyen (2023) investigates the influence of social media platforms on women's political engagement. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the research combines quantitative surveys of women's social media usage with qualitative interviews to explore their political activities online. The findings reveal that women who actively engage on social media report increased awareness of political issues and higher levels of participation in discussions and campaigns. However, the study also identifies online harassment as a significant barrier that discourages women from expressing their political views. To foster greater political engagement, the study recommends enhancing online safety measures and creating supportive online communities for women. A notable gap identified is the lack of research on the long-term impacts of social media engagement on women's political careers, suggesting a need for further longitudinal studies.

Patel (2024), analyzes women's representation in local governments across various regions, employing a comparative analysis of local government data and interviews with female local leaders. The study finds that women hold only 30% of local government positions globally, with significant variations influenced by cultural and political contexts. Factors such as local electoral systems, party support, and community engagement play critical roles in shaping women's representation. The study advocates for electoral reforms to promote gender parity and encourages political parties to actively support female candidates in local elections. A gap noted is the limited understanding of the role of local political culture in shaping women's participation, indicating a need for further qualitative research in diverse settings.

Khanna (2024) identifies specific barriers to women's participation in emerging democracies through case studies and interviews with women politicians and activists. The findings reveal that barriers such as lack of institutional support, cultural resistance, and inadequate legal frameworks significantly hinder women's political participation in these contexts. Additionally, women in emerging democracies face unique challenges related to political instability. The study recommends strengthening legal frameworks to support women's political rights and enhancing civil society initiatives that promote gender equality. It also indicates a gap in understanding the long-term effects of political instability on women's participation, calling for more comprehensive research in this area.

3.1 Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey methodology. It involved randomly selecting 200 respondents from three wards within the Bursari local government area. The participants represented a wide variety of women with differing occupations, educational levels, political affiliations, ethnic backgrounds, and religious beliefs. Data collection was carried out using a specially crafted questionnaire known as the Women Political Participation Questionnaire (WPPQ, $r = 0.74$). The analysis included descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions, means, grand means, and standard deviations.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of perceived social acceptance toward women's participation in the political process within the Bursari local government area?

Table 1: Perceived social acceptance of women participation in Bursari politics

S/N	ITEMS	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	X	SD	DECISION
1	Women constitutes about 60% of the Nigeria electorate	76.5	17.0	3.0	3.5	3.16	2.466	Although women make up a significant portion of the electorate in Bursari, they occupy less than 20% of political positions. This disparity is not a result of women's lack of ambition for these roles; rather, it reflects a broader, global trend.
2	Women are about half of the population in the entire country	55.5	34.0	6.5	5.5	3.10	1.735	
3	Less than 20% of political office are held by women	55.0	34.5	5.0	4.0	2.50	1.042	
4	Women made desperate efforts to enter into representative politics but with little success	67.5	24.0	7.5	7.0	3.32	2.387	
5	Women's low political participation is a universal phenomenon	44.5	43.5	1.5	4.5	3.30	2.839	
GRAND MEAN 3.19 (2025)								

Table 1 show that all five items demonstrate high percentages for Strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A), with values ranging from 88% to 93.5%. The overall mean of 3.19 from all respondents indicates a strong consensus regarding the items related to the spread and statistics of women's participation in Bursari politics.

Research Question 2: How is the historical status of women's participation in Bursari politics perceived?

Table 2: Perceived historical status of women participation in Bursari politics?

S/N	ITEMS	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	X	SD	DECISION
6	The low participation of women in politics was also fostered by the nature of postcolonial politics	58.0	22.0	12.5	7.5	3.44	2.566	This indicates that the political landscape of this era marginalized women's participation. Notably, before the 1959 general election, women in Bursari were not permitted to vote, and this exclusion has persisted into the present.
7	women occupied important roles in the traditional political life	55.0	30.0	11.5	3.5	3.10	2.138	
8	In the administration women are not allowed to hold any authoritative positions	44.0	26.0	15.5	9.5	3.66	2.487	
9	No any election women voted for the first time in Bursari	67.5	24.0	7.5	7.0	3.32	2.387	
10	Women played peripheral role during this era	56.0	31.5	9.0	3.5	3.82	2.314	
GRAND MEAN 3.19 (2025)								

Table 2 presents five items related to the history of women's participation in Bursari politics. All items received high percentages for Strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A), ranging from 75% to 85%. Additionally, the overall mean of 3.43 suggests a strong endorsement of these items concerning women's historical involvement in Bursari politics.

Research Question 3: What are the primary Challenges to women's participation in Bursari politics?

Table 3: Major social challenges for women participation in Nigerian politics

S/N	ITEMS	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	X	SD	DECISION
11	Inadequate knowledge of written and unwritten rules protecting women's political rights	42.0	37.5	14.0	6.5	2.54	0.966	Numerous factors are believed to influence the level of women's participation in Nigerian politics, with most of these factors stemming from cultural and societal influences.
12	Family responsibilities and childbearing hinder women from participatory effectively in Family	50.5	30.5	12.5	6.5	3.62	1.136	
13	Family responsibilities and Women are seen as domestic being with their place in the kitchen	47.0	31.0	16.0	6.0	3.52	1.232	
14	Lack of economic incentives (Financial backing)	47.0	33.0	14.0	6.0	3.19	1.587	
15	Gender inequality is causes of women participation in politics	46.5	30.5	16.0	7.0	3.42	2.364	

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Research Question 4: What strategies could improve women's participation in Bursari politics?

Table 4 highlights the key factors affecting women's participation in Bursari politics. The findings show that all five items received significant support, with Strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A) percentages ranging from 77% to 87.5%. The average score of 3.12 reflects a strong agreement among respondents on these factors.

3.2 Discussion of Findings

The limited involvement of women in politics can be attributed to the characteristics of postcolonial political dynamics. Additionally, the results highlighted the impact of ethnic and religious factors on women's participation in Bursari politics, as a significant percentage of respondents endorsed this viewpoint. This finding aligns with Batha (2015), who argues that ethnicity encompasses a collective awareness of a group's origins and traditions. Ethnicity is not merely biological; it is cultural and is shaped by tribal, national, and religious identities.

Table 4: Measures to enhance women participation in Bursari politics?

S/N	ITEMS	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	X	SD	DECISION
16	Abolishing all forms of discrimination against women.	44.5	43.5	7.5	4.5	3.60	2.866	It was found that women's political participation can be improved by creating an equitable environment for both genders in the political arena.
17		67.5	24.0	1.5	7.0	3.50	2.135	
18	Women's participation can be improved by providing equal opportunities	55.0	34.5	6.5	4.0	3.80	2.342	
19	A supportive environment that empowers women to participate in decision-making processes sustainably and effectively, without facing political harassment or violence.	55.0	34.5	6.5	4.0	3.80	2.024	
20	Strengthening women's empowerment through improved strategic human resource development. Establishing a coalition of NGOs and grassroots	76.5	17.0	3.0	3.5	2.84	2.024	

women's organizations to coordinate support and advocacy for women candidates.							
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GRAND MEAN 3.19 (2025)

This study examines the primary factors influencing women's participation in Bursari politics. The results indicate that a significant majority of respondents agreed with this assertion. This finding aligns with Aina (2012), who noted that political parties in Nigeria often prioritize rhetoric over action, giving only superficial attention to the gender equality agenda. Oleyede (2016) further pointed out that Nigerian political parties face numerous challenges, including undemocratic practices, a lack of gender-responsive political culture, and unfriendly behaviors such as violence, money politics, blackmail, and name-calling, as well as an absence of skills to effectively integrate gender issues into party politics.

The results highlighted the impact of women's participation in Bursari politics, as a significant majority of respondents supported this assertion. The findings indicate that women's ideas and contributions can enhance the quality and outcomes of public life. Furthermore, they play a crucial role in shaping the political landscape in Nigeria. The study also revealed ways to enhance women's participation in politics, with a large percentage of respondents agreeing on this point. This aligns with Agbalajobi (2010), who noted that affirmative action is often designed to complement non-discrimination efforts and promote greater involvement of women.

4.1 Conclusion

Despite the policies implemented by the Bursari local government, Yobe State government, gender disparities persist across all words in local governments. It is crucial to ensure equal access to both formal and informal education for women, men, girls, and boys to bridge the gender gap and promote equity.

Women's participation in Bursari politics is of significant importance. For years, women have been marginalized politically, leading to a growing awareness of their under-representation in public life. Historical evidence, as demonstrated in this study, shows that women's political involvement has greatly influenced bursari local

government yobe state, Nigerian politics, not only in democratic governance but also during the pre-colonial period. It is therefore unthinkable to overlook the vital contributions of women in shaping the Bursari local government while concentrating political power solely in the hands of men. In today's era of globalization, it is detrimental to restrict political power to men, as women's roles in global politics are essential for fostering world peace, stability, and mutual coexistence.

4.2 Recommendations

1. The government should remove structural and legal barriers that impede women's participation in politics and decision-making, ensuring accountability for those who obstruct their involvement.
2. Civil society and government should implement training programs for young people—both women and men—on political systems, women's rights to participate, and their roles in decision-making.
3. Temporary quota systems and gender-sensitive leadership pathways should be introduced by government to facilitate women's entry into political arenas.
4. Both government and civil society should enhance the visibility of female politicians and decision-makers, fostering a safe and supportive political environment for their participation at all levels.
5. Efforts should be made to promote women in leadership and decision-making roles across all sectors, including during peace negotiations, by investing in NGOs that create platforms for women's engagement.
6. Women's leadership in the workplace should be supported through increased representation in executive roles and on corporate boards.
7. Government and private sectors should financially support grassroots organizations that empower women to engage in social, economic, political, and public life, both individually and collectively.
8. Men, particularly fathers and sons, should be included in training programs aimed at encouraging and promoting girls and women as leaders and decision-makers.

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