IDENTITY POLITICS AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ADAMAWA STATE: A CASE STUDY OF ADAMAWA NORTHERN SENATORIAL DISTRICT IN ADAMAWA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the identity politics and the roles of women in the political development of Nigeria, focusing on the Adamawa Northern Senatorial District in Adamawa State, Low Women Political Participation and inadequate institutions to enhance and promote women involvement in politics in the area prompted this study. Data were collected using Questionnaires, structured interview, observation and Focus Group Discussion which were analysed using Statistical methods such as percentages and software such as SPSS and STATA. Different sampling methods such as Cluster, Purposive and simple Random sampling methods were employed for data collection in the area. The objective of the study was to identify the factors hindering Women from full participation in Politics in Adamawa State Northern Senatorial District. assess the Socio economic characteristics of Women in the study area and how it affects their Political Participation, determine the extent of Women political Participation and contributions to Political development in Adamawa State Northern Senatorial District, from 2015 to 2023, evaluate the effects of religion on women involvement and political participation / representation in Adamawa State Northern Senatorial District, examine the influence of culture on Women Political Performance in Adamawa State Northern Senatorial District Primary and secondary data sets were the source of information for the research. Four hundred sets of questionnaire was distributed and (397) returned by randomly chosen respondents and the result was summarized using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the research questions, while ANOVA and t-test were used to test hypotheses at .05 level significance. The result reveals significant socio-economic barriers and opportunities for women's political participation. It also shows that the education level, income level, access to healthcare, and access to basic services significantly affect women's political participation in the study area. Employment status, however, does not show a significant impact. These findings suggest that improving education, income, healthcare, and basic services can enhance women's involvement in political activities. This research work recommended that the implement comprehensive education initiatives aimed at increasing women's access to both formal and informal political education. Improve healthcare infrastructure and services, ensuring that women have adequate access to health facilities, which can indirectly enhance their political involvement.
Keywords: - Politics, Women, Political, Development

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INTRODUCTION

Globally, countries that are characterized by multi-ethnic, multicultural, multi-religious, and multilingual state, such as Nigeria, serious, and mostly undue, attention is paid to diversities such as where you hail from, what your beliefs are, what language you speak and more ridiculously your gender. These primordial affinities are often used as a basis for power acquisition, power consolidation, and, of course, power sharing. Beyond this, there are also attendant factors that determine one's access to resources, and, in extreme cases, societal influence. This is not to posit that plural identities is solely responsible for unhealthy power contestation and/or ethnic conflagration, neither does it berate the conscious efforts and progress made by states with multiple identities. For Jega (2020), identities are unifying factors in society and are instrumental in fostering dynamism in social action. They are used to direct political comportment and formulate political agendas as well as to influence political behaviour. Identities also serve as civil society tools used to check the intemperance of the state. By implication, identity politics has engendered a deep-seated structural inequality in the distribution of resources, employment, education, and the sharing of power, resulting in uneven development, resource and power imbalance, sheer distrust, and unhealthy competition for resources.

Women's participation in politics differs around the world, and today's discussion of development and governance are incomplete without mentioning how they participate in politics and the democratic process. In many parts of the world, women still linger on the periphery of politics, and their participation in governmental structures and the democratic process remains low (Oyekanmi & Orulebaja, 2014; Akeusola, Oyekanmi & Shittu, 2018). This is in spite of the clamour for women's political empowerment by international organizations.

Women constitute over half of the world's population and contribute in vital ways to societal development generally. In most societies, women assume some key roles, which are: mother, producer, home-manager, and community organizer, socio-cultural and political activists. Of these many roles mentioned, the last has been engendered by women movement. Nigerian women constitute nearly half of the population of the country. But despite the major roles they play with their population, women roles in the society are yet to be given recognition. This is due to some cultural stereotypes, abuse of religion, traditional practices and patriarchal societal structures. In Nigeria the awareness about the role of women in development of a nation came up in 1980s. The International Conference on women in Beijing in 1995 enhanced the effective participation of women in politics in Nigeria. About 51 percent of the Nigeria women involve in voting during elections. Despite these, women are still under represented in both elective and appointive positions. (Oluyemi 2020).

Statement of Problem

In Adamawa State, there is low women participation in either party election or elective positions at all levels, which is resulted from cultural and religious barriers, systematic discrimination by political process, lack of internal party democracy, God-fatherism, intimidation by men and lack of funds and low education. (EU and United State Development Agency 2023)

Cultural barriers to women's political participation in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District are deeply entrenched and multifaceted, stemming from a complex interplay of traditional gender roles, limited education and awareness, poverty, violence and intimidation, and restrictive religious beliefs. These barriers collectively hinder women's ability to engage meaningfully in the political process and have their voices heard.

In many cultures within Adamawa Northern Senatorial District, women are primarily relegated to domestic roles, expected to prioritize household responsibilities and childcare. This deeply ingrained societal norm positions men as the primary decision-makers and leaders, while women's roles are confined to the private sphere. This traditional gender divide poses a significant obstacle for women seeking to enter the political arena, as they often face resistance and disapproval from both men and women who adhere to these entrenched gender norms

Access to education remains a significant challenge for women in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District. Illiteracy rates among women are substantially higher than among men, limiting their understanding of the political process, their rights as citizens, and the mechanisms for political participation. This lack of education and awareness further marginalizes women in the political sphere, making it difficult for them to navigate the complexities of political campaigns, policy debates, and legislative processes

Aim of the Study

This research is aimed at examining the roles and challenges of women Political development of Adamawa Northern senatorial district of Adamawa state in order to recommend measures for better involvement and participation of women in Nigerian Politics. Other specific objectives are to:

1. identify the factors hindering Women from full participation in Politics in Adamawa State Northern Senatorial District
2. assess the Socio economic characteristics of Women in the study area and how it affects their Political Participation.
3. determine the extent of Women political Participation and contributions to Political development in Adamawa State Northern Senatorial District, from 2015 to 2023.
4. evaluate the effects of religion on women involvement and political participation/representation in Adamawa State Northern Senatorial District.
5. examine the influence of culture on Women Political Performance in Adamawa State Northern Senatorial District.

Research Hypothesis

Base on the objectives of the research the following hypothesis are derived to be tested.

H0:   The Socio economic characteristics of Women in the study area do not affect their Political Participation

H1:   The Socio economic characteristics of Women in the study area affect their Political Participation

H0:   There is no significant effect of religion on women involvement and political participation/representation in the study area

H1:   There is significant effect of religion on women involvement and political participation/representation in the study area?

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
Conceptual Clarification
Identity

Your identity is not just who you assume yourself to be or the ideals you nourish, it is who you are. Elebeke (2019) defines identity as a two edged process which lays at the core of an individual and is pivotal to their communal beliefs. Identity connotes the possession of distinctive identifying characteristics exclusive to an individual or a thing. In other words, it is a typical denominator by which a person or thing is perceived. According to Wonah (2017), identity surmises selfsameness and identicalness.

When expounded, this portends that an individual or an ethnic group may have defining features, qualities, cultural mannerisms, economic status, and realities, among other things, to which they are attached. These cursors tell a particular group apart from several other groups and, of course, becomes an underlying factor in the group's identity projection. Onyibor (2016) maintains that identity is a sense of individuality which becomes ingrained as a child distinguishes itself from its parents and family to assume a definite societal role. It refers to the consciousness of oneself and self-significance. Identity emanates from class, sexuality, ethnicity, and nationality, among other things. Identity could as well be individualised or affiliated to social groups with whom the individual identifies. Identity may be defined as a sense of belonging shared by a group of people having common history, beliefs, and values exhibited towards attaining a common goal. It is the notion of who we are, contrasted against who we are not. It is a sense of 'us', a sense of 'they', and a sense of 'self', often acquired at birth and exhibited throughout one's lifetime, and in the midst of several other identities.

Identity Politics

Given that identity attracts the struggle for relevance, competition thus becomes an integral part of the relationship between various groups in society, with each group keenly pursuing its interests. These interests, when not managed and coordinated, are capable of disrupting the political system and jeopardising the mutual existence of the varied interest groups. It is upon this premise that identity politics is engendered. Identity politics is the deliberate attempt by a group to assert its identity and protect its interests above other contending interests (Wonah, 2016). Alubo, (2006), avers that identity politics is used to signify the process in politics of grouping and classifying people into clusters given their shared and apparent parallels.

The point of vocalisation is that identity, apart from the collective trait, generally raises questions on the uniqueness of citizen-based communal values and dogmas because of its inclusive and exclusive nature. Although, it would be over simplistic to opine that in all cases, identity politics promotes selfish interest. If properly managed, identity politics can be a stabilising force in a plural society by creating much-needed

awareness and the objective conditions necessary for national integration (Oni 2008). Yet, it is obvious that identity politics is a peculiar feature of Nigerian politics. This is mainly the result of inequity in terms of power and resource distribution in post-colonial Nigeria. As put by Obi (2013), in Nigeria, the results of amalgamation have been precarious and exacerbated by socioeconomic crises, dictatorship, and inequality, which characterises the unequal distribution of power in an ethnically plural and oil-dependent state. These constraints have not only fuelled identity politics but have knitted it with violence and conflict.

National Integration

Osimen *et al*. (2018) define national integration as the bringing together of people of different racial or ethnic groups into unrestricted and equal association, as in society or an organisation. It is the process through which people living within the geographic boundaries of a country forget their difference of race, religion, and language and feel the spirit of unity and allegiance to their nation.

National integration reduces socio-cultural differences or inequalities and strengthens national unity and solidarity, which is not imposed by any authority.

People share ideas, values, and emotional bonds. It is the feeling of unity within diversity wherein a national identity is supreme. National integration in Nigeria is the bringing together of the different ethnic, racial, religious, economic, social, and political groups into unhindered, equal and balanced association on national issues.

According to Onyibor (2016), national integration refers to the growth of an incorporated and lucid national identity and awareness in a mixed society in which all citizens are given a fair chance to achieve their maximum potential. Members are given a sense of belonging, irrespective of where they come from. National integration enhances the chances of creating firmer loyalties that displace parochial loyalties to ethnic cleavages. National integration in a multi-ethnic society, theoretically, is a process of building a new society and social order based on justice and fair play to all its members, no matter their ethnic group, language, or religion. According to Ibodje and Dode (2007), integration connotes the pre-existence of heterogeneity, whether ethnic, political, economic, sociocultural, or lingual; the lack of which can impede the process of building a sense of national homogeneity. National integration describes a situation whereby the various ethnic groups understand the adequacies and otherwise of the groups and are willing to put up with each other in an ambience of compromise and reciprocity. Therefore, national integration is the ability of the groups in Nigeria to stay committed to the ideals of unity by guaranteeing equal opportunities and promoting the affirmation of the identities of the various groups and individuals.

Gender

The variety of traits used to define and distinguish between masculine and femininity is known as gender. These traits may include biological sex (i.e., the condition of being male, female, or an intersex variation), sex-based social structures (i.e., gender roles), or gender identity, depending on the viewpoint. In the current sense, the idea of gender is a relatively new development in human history. Gender was not understood in the ancient world in the same way that it is understood today in the

humanities and social sciences. For the majority of history, the word "gender" had been connected to grammar, and it wasn't until the 1950s and 1960s that it began to shift toward being a fluid cultural construct.

Gender refers to the social characteristics and possibilities associated relationships between girls and boys, women and men, and women and women. These characteristics, opportunities, and interactions are socially formed and acquired through socialization techniques. They are responsive to context, time, and flexibility. Gender dictates what behavior is acceptable, expected, and valued from a man or a woman in a certain setting. In the majority of communities, men and women have varying means over resources, varying opportunities to make decisions, and varying roles and responsibilities. Gender is a part of the larger socio-cultural milieu. Other important variables in socio-cultural analysis include age, ethnicity, socio-economic level, race, and class.

Over time, gender has depicted women as the weaker sex. According to the gender stereotype, women are primarily interested in fashion and beauty and have little patience for profound thought (Awajiusuk, 2016). According to this way of thought, female children are educated to see themselves as inferior, and when they become adults, their main responsibilities are caring for the family and having and raising children. In contrast, male children begin to receive leadership training at a young age (Awajiusuk, 2016). Women who participate in politics go against the gender norms that have been allocated to them culturally.

Women Participation

The major caretakers are women and at the center of the family, as well as the protectors of society's social, cultural, and basic values; therefore, full community development is impossible without their remarkable cooperation and effective participation (Omoruyi *et al.,* 2008). Despite the fact that women's participation and contributions to any democratic state's political and socio-economic prosperity are immeasurable; they are yet to attain equality in Nigeria's politics and national life.

Since women became aware of their rights, they have continued to compete with the men in all spheres of human endeavours (Fasugba, 2000). Many women currently participate in activities and vocations that were once regarded to be solely the provinces of men. Since the first republic, Nigerian women have faced many obstacles that have worked against them in the political sphere. However, the present democracy has been hailed as a new beginning for women's political participation because it has more women in elected and appointed positions of government than any other democracy in the political history of this country.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework that were adopted in this study include the System theory, Liberal Feminist Theory and Gender Mainstreaming Theory (GMT)

The Systems Theory

The systems theory is generally traced to the natural sciences, especially biology. The systems theory has been conceptualized differently by different scholars but generally it has to do with connected parts or things which are interdependent but functions as a whole. The general systems theory was propounded by Ludwig Von Bertallanty in 1920 but the theory was introduced in political science in the mid-sixties. While David Easton and Gabriel A. Almond applied this theory in the field of National politics, Mortan Kaplan applied it in the field of international politics (Agarwal, 2000). The central proposition of the systems approach is that all social phenomena, including the political process, are inter-related. Consequently, it is not possible to fully understand any part of society in isolation from the other parts of the same society, which affects its operation (Alapiki, 2004). As Alapiki has explicitly stated above. Women are a significant part of the political process and society, and for us to fully appreciate and tap from this great potential resource, Nigeria must invest on her women to ensure their greater participation in rural and national politics to aggregate national development.

Liberal Feminist Theory

Feminist theorization was started in the early late 18th century by Mary Wollstonecraft in her writing, 'A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: with Strictures of Political and Moral Subjects' (1792). Mary Wollstonecraft was not interested in equality of men and women per se but that the woman has a larger role in society than just keeping the home front. Consequently, several perspectives (Marxist feminism, socialist feminism, black feminism, critical feminism) of feminism have sprung up deriving inspiration from her work.

Gleason (2001) defined political participation as the involvement of citizens in public institutions through voting, campaigns, leadership and even lobby. Democratic constitutions have, since the 1960s, "enfranchised women" (Conway, 2001) to compete in elections. She further argues that in a "liberal culture" that values equality and freedom, women participation in electoral contests leading to positions of public decision making is common.

The feminist theory of women participation in electoral politics can be said to be a sociological theory derivative in that it expands from one aspect of it. One perspective of the feminist theory is the decolonial perspective. Developed by Nkenkana (2015), this theory seeks to explain domination of women by men in politics as a function of the "coloniality of gender" which packs the perennial marginalization of women in politics and society. Citing historical, cultural and contemporary situations, Nkenkana (2015) noted that until Africans divest themselves of these predetermined mindsets, the challenges of women participation in politics will remain.

Gender Mainstreaming Theory (GMT)

The concept of gender mainstreaming was first proposed at the 1985 Third World Conference on women held in Nairobi, and has since then been pushed in the United Nations development community. The theory is based on feminist political framework that takes into account gender

consciousness, gender awareness, and the purposeful integration of gender-sensitive practices into organizations and the society at large. It has evolved over time from a theory and notion to a tactic and/or signal for highlighting exclusionary tendencies and proposing and fostering inclusivity (Anderson, 2018).

Gender mainstreaming was developed as a strategy to address the issues facing women, such as the recognition of the disparities in household power where decisions are made, unpaid work, the feminization of poverty, differences in legal status and entitlements, discriminatory practices, gender-based violence, and ultimately differences in legal status and entitlements. In determining who should be consulted and how, on matters such as the formulation of the issue, the definition of information needs, and assessment of options (UN 2002) as well as how policy options would be formulated and presented to capture gender equality issues. Decentralizing to achieve equality, imagining an equitable future by utilizing gender impact assessment techniques, gender budgeting, and gender disaggregated statistics are all examples of gender mainstreaming. By integrating gender-sensitive behaviours and norms into the frameworks of public policy; gender mainstreaming illuminates a wide variety of actions that institutionalize equality. According to Daly (2005), gender mainstreaming should cover both the formulation of policies and theorizing political strategy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Research Design
The research adopted the use of survey design and structured interview in undertaking the study. The reason for making this choice is because the descriptive survey research design provides an effective way of collecting information from a large pool of data that are available in the area, while the interview was help in collection of qualitative data which cannot be covered using questionnaires. Again, for the fact that research in social sciences does not have single standard answer, the design is considered appropriate.

The Study Area

The Study Area lies between latitudes $9^030'$ N and $11^000'$ N and Longitudes $13^000'E$ and $13^045'E$. it is bounded in north by Borno state , in the west by Hong and Song Local Government Areas and in the east the region is bounded by the Republic of Cameroon. It occupies a land area of about 4728.77 km2 and has a population of 681,353 people in 2006 national Population census. The district was part of the Northern Cameroon under the German s until 1922 where the area was placed by the United nations under Britain as trusteeship Territory. The Region was then subjected to the administration of the Northern Nigeria and remained until 1961 when a plebiscite was conducted for the people to decide either to part of the Nigeria or join Cameroon republic. The people voted in favour of Nigeria, hence the Northern Cameroon was incorporated into the Federation of Nigeria on the 1st June 1961.

The erstwhile Trusteeship Province was named Sardauna in the honour of Bello. The region comprised of Madagali, Michika, Mubi North, Mubi South and Maiha local Government Areas.(Adebayo, 2004)

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised of 603,900 adult men and women from 18 year and above across the selected three local governments (Mubi North, Michika and Maiha) of Adamawa Northern Senatorial District of Adamawa State. Also, political Stakeholders and Women who have attained Political positions in the District were carefully selected for interview. In the same vein, women Political and pressure groups across the selected local government were used as focused group for the research.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample size for the study were drawn using Yamani (1967) formula for calculating sample size with large population, usually more than 500,000 population. The formula is stated as thus: $n = N/ (1+N(e)^2)$

n= sample size

N= Population

e= standard 0.05

The total population for the study stood at 603,900 people .The sample size for the study is therefore 400.

However, the Number of respondents from each selected local government area can be calculated as:

Mubi North :   233600 x400 / 603,900 = 155

Michika   200400 x 400 / 603,900 =132

Maiha :   169900 x 400 / 603,900   = 113

This gives a total number sample size of 400 respondents from the three (3) local government area for the study.

Sampling Techniques

A sample is a subset of the population the researcher wants to study (Mojekwe, 1997). The study adopted three sample techniques : cluster, simple random and Purposive sampling techniques. Cluster sampling is often adopted in circumstances which make it difficult or impossible to compile an exhaustive, a detailed, comprehensive and reliable list of the population of study and when the geographical area of study is too large to be conveniently managed by the researcher.

A cluster and purposive sampling techniques were used to select three local governments within the senatorial district, base on their proximity and easy accessibility. While the simple random sampling method were used for selection of adult Men and Women for the purpose of administration of questionnaire because of their knowledge about the Political Affairs of Adamawa State. They were selected to provide information about the Role and Challenges facing women participation in Politics.

Justifications for using these types of sampling is to reduce cost that might have been incurred in studying a sample that is scattered all over a nation. It also saves time and it's more convenient because it permits the study of subjects in naturally occurring groups or clusters

Method of Data Collection

In this research, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from two main sources: Primary and Secondary sources.

Methods of Data Analysis

The study will employ both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis. The quantitative data collected through the quantitative technique (administration of questionnaire) were analyzed using Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages and degrees. Also software such as STATA and SPSS were used for inferential analysis. Tables and charts were used to present the data in order to show the responses of the respondents' opinion. In the same vein, Regression Analysis were carried out to evaluate the statistical Significance of responses concerning the effects of socio economic and religion on women political participation in the study area.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Responses on factors Hindering Women's Full Participation in Politics.

S/N	Characteristics	($\bar{x}$)	SD	Decision
1	Societal attitudes towards women	2.72	1.147	Accepted
2	Financial constraints	3.52	1.098	Accepted
3	Lack of access to resources	2.48	1.111	Rejected
4	Gender stereotypes	2.35	1.092	Rejected
5	Political party structures	2.64	1.088	Accepted

Acceptance ($\bar{x}$ is 2.5 and above); Rejection ($\bar{x}$ is less than 2.5

The analysis in Table 1 sheds light on the factors hindering women's full participation in politics within the Northern Senatorial District of Adamawa State. The respondents' agreement with various statements reveals significant barriers. Societal attitudes towards women, with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 2.72, indicate that prevailing social perceptions moderately discourage women's political engagement. Financial constraints, the most pronounced factor with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 3.52), highlight the critical challenge posed by insufficient financial resources, which severely limits women's ability to campaign and sustain political activities. The lack of access to resources, with a mean of ($\bar{x}$ = 2.48), further underscores the economic barriers that hinder women from fully participating in the political arena. Gender stereotypes, scoring ($\bar{x}$ = 2.35), suggest that entrenched prejudices about women's roles and capabilities continue to act as a

deterrent to their political involvement. Additionally, political party structures, with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 2.64), indicate that the organizational frameworks and dynamics within political parties may not be conducive to female participation, possibly due to biases or lack of supportive policies. Taken together, these results imply that a multifaceted approach addressing financial, social, and structural barriers is essential to enhance women's political participation in the region.

Table 2: Assessment of Socioeconomic Characteristics and Their Impact

S/N	Item	($\bar{x}$)	SD	Decision
1	Education level	2.57	1.136	Accepted
2	Income level	2.67	1.093	Accepted
3	Employment status	1.52	1.129	Rejected
4	Access to healthcare	2.36	1.150	Rejected
5	Access to basic services	2.80	1.091	Accepted

Acceptance ($\bar{x}$ is 2.5 and above); Rejection ($\bar{x}$ is less than 2.5)

The analysis presented in Table 2 underscores the economic strength of women within the Northern Senatorial District of Adamawa State, highlighting several key areas. The respondents' agreement with various statements reveals insightful details about their socioeconomic conditions. The education level, with a mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 2.57), signifies moderate educational attainment among women, which is crucial for their economic empowerment and political participation. The income level, showing a mean of ($\bar{x}$ = 2.67), indicates that many women have a relatively stable income, albeit possibly not at an optimal level. Employment status, with a lower mean score of ($\bar{x}$ = 1.52), suggests that a significant portion of women may be unemployed or engaged in informal, less stable jobs. Access to healthcare, scored at ($\bar{x}$ = 2.36), reflects a moderate level of accessibility, which is essential for maintaining their overall well-being and productivity. Lastly, access to basic services, with the highest mean of ($\bar{x}$ = 2.80), points towards reasonably good availability of essential services, which supports their daily living and economic activities. Taken together, these results imply that while women in this region have certain strengths and access to resources, there are areas particularly employment and healthcare that require further attention to bolster their economic and political empowerment.

Table 3: Extent of Women's Political Participation and Contributions

S/N	Aspects	($\bar{x}$)	SD	Décision
1	Voter turnout	3.98	1.093	Accepted
2	Representation in government	2.50	1.123	Accepted
3	Leadership roles	2.83	1.072	Accepted
4	Community engagement	3.39	1.120	Accepted
5	Policy advocacy	2.27	1.090	Rejected

Acceptance ($\bar{x}$ is 2.5 and above); Rejection ($\bar{x}$ is less than 2.5)

The analysis in Table 3 highlights the extent of women's political participation and contributions to political development in Adamawa State Northern Senatorial District, revealing significant insights. The high mean score for "Voter turnout" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.98) indicates robust participation of women as voters, suggesting their active engagement in the electoral process. However, the lower mean scores for "Representation in government" ($\bar{x}$ = 2.50) and "Leadership roles" ($\bar{x}$ = 2.83) reflect a limited presence of women in political offices and leadership positions, pointing to challenges in achieving gender parity in governance. The relatively high score for "Community engagement" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.39) underscores women's active involvement at the grassroots level, contributing significantly to local political activities and civic responsibilities. Conversely, the low score for "Policy advocacy" ($\bar{x}$ = 2.27) suggests that women face difficulties in influencing policy decisions and advocating for legislative changes. Overall, these findings imply that while women in Adamawa State Northern Senatorial District are highly active as voters and in community engagements, they encounter substantial barriers to attaining higher political representation and leadership roles, thereby limiting their impact on broader policy advocacy and decision-making processes.

Table 4: Influence of Culture on Women's Political Performance

S/N	Influence	($\bar{x}$)	SD	Decision
1	Cultural norms affecting performance	2.17	1.107	Rejected
2	Cultural practices discouraging participation	2.45	1.122	Rejected
3	Cultural acceptance of women in leadership	2.09	1.122	Rejected
4	Tradition-based limitations on political involvement	2.53	1.113	Accepted

Acceptance ($\bar{x}$ is 2.5 and above); Rejection ($\bar{x}$ is less than 2.5)

The analysis depicted in Table highlights the significant influence of cultural factors on women's political performance in the Northern Senatorial District of Adamawa State. The respondents' agreement with various statements elucidates the complex interplay between culture and women's political engagement.

The mean score of ($\overline{x}$ =2.17) for cultural norms affecting performance suggests that prevailing cultural attitudes moderately hinder women's effectiveness in political roles. Cultural practices that discourage participation, with a mean score of ($\overline{x}$ = 2.45), indicate a notable barrier, implying that societal customs and traditions may actively dissuade women from engaging in politics. The low score of ($\overline{x}$ = 2.09) for cultural acceptance of women in leadership positions reflects a general reluctance to embrace female leaders, which can significantly impede their political advancement. Furthermore, tradition-based limitations on political involvement, with the highest mean of ($\overline{x}$ = 2.53), underscore the substantial restrictions imposed by longstanding traditions, which further curtail women's political activities. Collectively, these findings imply that while there is some degree of acceptance and participation, cultural factors still pose significant challenges to women's political performance in the region. Addressing these cultural barriers is essential for enhancing women's political empowerment and ensuring their effective participation in governance.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: (H0): "The socio-economic characteristics of women in the study area do not affect their political participation."

Table 6: t-test analysis on the statistically the socio-economic characteristics and their corresponding influence on political participation.

Socio-Economic Characteristics	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	t-Value	p-Value	Decision
Education Level	2.57	0.85	3.45	0.001	Reject H0
Income Level	2.67	0.90	2.78	0.007	Reject H0
Employment Status	1.52	0.75	1.02	0.312	Fail to Reject H0
Access to Healthcare	2.36	0.80	2.10	0.038	Reject H0
Access to Basic Services	2.80	0.95	2.95	0.005	Reject H0

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

Table 6 reveals that education level has a mean score of 2.57, indicating a moderate impact on women's political participation. The low p-value (0.001) leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis, suggesting that education significantly affects women's involvement in politics. With a mean score of 2.67, income level also appears to have a notable effect. The p-value of 0.007 indicates statistical significance, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests that higher income levels are associated with greater political participation among women. Employment status has a lower mean score of 1.52, and the high p-value (0.312) indicates no significant impact on women's political participation. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting that employment status does not significantly influence political involvement. Access to healthcare has a mean score of 2.36. The p-value of 0.038 indicates significance,

leading to the rejection of H0. This suggests that better access to healthcare positively influences women's political participation. The highest mean score (2.80) among the characteristics is for access to basic services. The p-value of 0.005 indicates a significant effect, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies that access to basic services greatly enhances women's political engagement. The data reveals that education level, income level, access to healthcare, and access to basic services significantly affect women's political participation in the study area. Employment status, however, does not show a significant impact. These findings suggest that improving education, income, healthcare, and basic services can enhance women's involvement in political activities. Policymakers should consider these socio-economic factors to promote greater political participation among women.

Hypothesis 2: (H$_2$) There is no significant effect of religion on women's involvement and political participation/representation in the study area.

Table 7: t-test analysis on the statistically significant effect of religion on women's involvement and political participation/representation in the study area

Religion	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	t-Value	p-Value	Decision
Christianity	2.45	0.85	1.56	0.125	Fail to Reject H0
Islam	2.30	0.90	1.20	0.232	Fail to Reject H0
Traditional	2.10	0.75	0.95	0.345	Fail to Reject H0
Other Religions	2.25	0.80	1.10	0.275	Fail to Reject H0

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

Table 7 reveals that mean score of 2.45 and a standard deviation of 0.85, the t-value is 1.56 and the p-value is 0.125. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that, statistically, Christianity does not have a significant effect on women's political involvement and representation. The mean score for Islam is 2.30 with a standard deviation of 0.90. The t-value is 1.20 and the p-value is 0.232. Again, the p-value exceeds 0.05, leading to a failure to reject the null hypothesis. This suggests that Islam does not significantly influence women's political participation in the study area. For traditional religious practices, the mean score is 2.10 and the standard deviation is 0.75. The t-value is 0.95 and the p-value is 0.345. The high p-value implies a failure to reject the null hypothesis, indicating that traditional religions do not significantly impact women's political participation. The mean score is 2.25 with a standard deviation of 0.80. The t-value is 1.10 and the p-value is 0.275. As with the other groups, the p-value is greater than 0.05, resulting in a failure to reject the null hypothesis. This suggests that other religions also do not significantly affect women's political involvement and representation. Therefore, results indicate that there is no statistically significant effect of religion on women's political participation and representation in the study area. The p-values for all religious groups are greater than 0.05, demonstrating that religion, whether Christianity, Islam, Traditional, or other religions, does not

significantly influence the political involvement of women. This implies that other factors beyond religion might be more critical in affecting women's political engagement in the region.

4.3   Findings

1.   The results from Data Analysis indicated that women turn out massively during voting. It revealed that 90% of the respondents strongly agreed that women turn out to vote during elections. Also about 82% of the respondents strongly agreed that women are involved in community development in different aspect of life. Few women that are given leader role do perform extremely well in their offices.

2.   Analysis of data also indicated that about 81% of the respondents strongly agreed that finance is a major challenge to their participation in politics as most women in the area engage in petty businesses and subsistence farming. This implies that, due to the high cost involve in electoral process in Nigeria, only few women can contest in an election particularly as some of them lack access to resources and credit facilities.

3.   The study also found that inadequate political party financing legislation, lack of fund raising skills and access to funds hinder women from effectively participating in politics. It was also found that the cost of organizing campaigns and mobilizing support to win elections is high and it is only men who have the kind of money that is required for this process.

4.   Results of the analysis also revealed that women lack adequate education/training to actively participate in politics. About 79% of women in the study area attended only primary and secondary schools which do not acquaint them with adequate knowledge and skills to contest for elections and campaign manifesto. This is another major challenge to women's political aspirations.

5.   The research also found out that there are religious practices and belief that hinder women participation in politics in the area. 42% and 25% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that religion has critically affected women political participation in the area.

6.   Also, about 67% of the respondents strongly agreed that cultural practices restricted women from public participation and leadership roles. This has placed women to reproductive and family care functions.

7.   It was revealed that women do not often occupy key political positions in the area as the men do. Even at the political party level

8.   Generally the study revealed that both internal and external barriers, such as patriarchy, societal and cultural stereotypes, the difficulty of balancing parental and professional obligations, and a lack of networking, have severely impeded women's effectiveness as leaders

5.2 Conclusion

Women have been making significant and remarkable economic and political contributions to the development of Adamawa northern senatorial District especially in the aspect of massive voters turn out and community engagement. The analysis of the forms and possible causes of the low level participation of women in politics I Adamawa Northern senatorial District indicates that there exist Economic, cultural, social, political and religious dimensions also including societal, prejudices, patriarchy. All these factors place restraints on the part of the women involving themselves deeply and meaningfully in politics. The

research underscores that enhancing women's political participation in Adamawa Northern Senatorial District requires addressing socio-economic disparities. Education and income levels, along with access to healthcare and basic services, are crucial determinants of women's political engagement.

5.3 Recommendations

i. Governments at all levels should embark on periodic enlightenment campaign on the need and benefits of greater women participation in politics

ii. Government should make education at the basic and secondary level free and compulsory for the girl child.

iii. Political parties can also encourage women participation by making party nomination forms free for women seeking elective positions.

iv. It is also recommended in this paper that, in order to tap from the women resource and ensure optimal women contribution to national development, the Nigerian state should improve on the 30% affirmative action, even though it is yet to adhere strictly to this benchmark.

It is also the responsibility of the Nigeria state to remove the religious, cultural, institutional and artificial barriers which have relegated and incapacitated the Nigerian women from active national life programmes such as women for change initiative programme, the women empowerment programme should be further enhanced to increase the level of women participation in politics. Finally, the Nigerian government should ensure that elections are being conducted well, and electoral malpractices, violence, thuggery, harassments, vote buying should be avoided during elections in order to ensure free and fair elections in the country

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