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Indigenous Communication: Socio-Economic Characteristics Influencing Contemporary Female Political Participation

By Kehinde Oyesomi[1], Abiodun Salawu[2], Bankole Olorunyomi[3]

Abstract

This paper takes into account the exceptionality of the socio-economic characteristics (age, income, education, marital status, occupation) of female participation in politics through the use of indigenous communication. The theory was laid on democratic-participant theory. Four communities were selected in Lagos and Ogun states. Survey design, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and in-depth interviews (IDI) were adopted to generate both quantitative and qualitative data for the study. Structured and semi structured copies of the questionnaire were administered on 800 purposively selected respondents but only 775 copies of the questionnaire were used for analysis. Four (4) focus group discussions, made up of 8 purposively selected discussants each took place in four communities. Four purposively selected participants took part in the in-depth interviews. The quantitative data were presented in tables and analysed, using percentage counts, and cross tabulation. Mean and standard deviation were used for ranking of the perception of women on the role of indigenous communication in politics. The qualitative data, on the other hand, were transcribed and analysed, adopting the constant comparative technique and thematic approach. From the findings, young women participate more in politics. On age distribution, respondents were analysed and the result reveals that 40%, were between 26-35 years, only 8.2%, were over 55 years. The age distribution reveals that over 70% of the respondents were young women. Most of the respondents in this research were between 18 and 35. Recommendation were made among others that since young female participate more in politics, leaders in the community should devise more activities to promote the participation of young women and involve them in the preparation, organisation and evaluation of such activities.

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Introduction

According to Oyesomi, Okorie, Ahmadu &Itsekor (2014), indigenous communication systems are essential elements of the socio-cultural tradition of Africans. These systems have been used to promote co-operation, mobilization and participation among African people. Indigenous communication enjoys high credibility status because it is familiar and controlled locally. Local audiences are often sceptical of externally-controlled mass media, viewing them merely as government propaganda. Indigenous communication has a much wider audience, as it can reach those who do not read or write. It is therefore, crucial for exchange of information with those (people) who are out of the reach of external channels (Agunga, 1997).

Oyesomi, Oyero, Omole & Kayode-Adedeji (2016) are of the view that the relevance of women in the society and in politics cannot be undermined .It is therefore important to study female empowerment from the perspective of women's socioeconomic characteristics, as women are divided by heterogeneous categories based on class, life cycle, or ethnicity. Scholars also point out the need to consider the intersectional ties of women's empowerment—that is, how social, economic, cultural, and other categories related to gender relations interact with each other in such a way that they create inequalities among women (Calvès 2009; Charmes and Wieringa 2003). This is an important issue to tackle if the policies that promote gender equity are not to benefit only privileged groups of women, while leaving disadvantaged groups voiceless (Calvès 2009).

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are to:
1. determine the extent to which young and old women participate in politics at the local level;
2. assess what demographic characteristics influence women's participation in politics;
3. find out women's perception on the role of indigenous communication in politics.

Research Questions
1. To what extent do young and old women participate in politics at the local level?
2. What demographic characteristics influence women's participation in politics?
3. How do women perceive the role of indigenous communication in politics?

Literature Review

Effectiveness of Indigenous Communication in Politics

According to Oyesomi and Okorie (2013), effective communication which operates in a society through the mass media cannot operate in isolation; it has to operate with the society so as to reflect the needs of the people. Indigenous communication forms such as festivals, traditional institutions, folklore, drama, music, songs, dance, drums, and poetry amongst others are dominant sources of entertainment, and they inform and reform social, moral and human values of their societies. They also help in curbing inter-tribal wars and conflicts among communities thereby

promoting peace, understanding, team-spirit and brotherhood among mankind. To the rural people, the use of traditional communication to immensely popularize certain government policies whether economic, ideological, cultural or educational is in tandem with their ways of life. This is done particularly through dramatic performances (Oyesomi, 2013).

In fact, the effectiveness of traditional media can be traced to the colonial era, when the colonialists first came to Nigeria. During the colonial period, the colonial masters resorted to the use of indigenous media materials such as drums, gongs and many other traditional methods of communication. Traditional rulers were adequately involved to carry out assignments as well, since there were no mass media materials (the kind they were used to), absence of good roads, social and economic infrastructure (Balogun, 1985).

It is important to note that the traditional media system is people-oriented. The failure of modern media experts to grasp this fact accounts for the seeming failure of modern communication practices as used especially for development in Africa, when a majority of the people are considered (Balogun, 1985). Indigenous communication is therefore effective for political activities because it facilitates feedback and it makes people to communicate with each other using channels they are familiar with and have access to.

The overview of political participation

Political participation is an essential component of ensuring the stability and legitimacy of every political system (Oyesomi, 2011). Arowolo &Aluko (2010) identified three levels of political participation as: the spectator level, the transitional level, and the gladiatorial level. At spectator level of participation, the following activities are performed: voting, initiating public discussions, attempting to influence another into voting in a certain way, wearing a party badge or displaying a party sticker. The activities identified above entail relatively little costs in time, energy and resources. Consequently, many women are able to participate at this level of politics.

At the transitional level of participation, the following activities are performed: attending political meetings or rallies, making some monetary contribution to campaigns, contracting a public official or political leader. Activities at this level require more costs in time and resources than those at the spectator level. Activities at this level are referred to as transitional because of the general tendency for participants at this level either to descend to spectator activities or to ascend to gladiatorial activities.

At the Gladiatorial level of participation, political participation may include: holding a public or party office, being a candidate for office, soliciting or appealing for party funds, attending a caucus or strategy meeting and contributing time or other resources in a campaign.

Adedeji (2009) defines participation in politics as taking part in one or two of the following**:**

1. joining a political party;
2. contributing funds to a political party organization or candidate or attending political fund-raising functions;
3. attending political party events, e.g., meetings, conventions, rallies, fund-raising functions, or other political gatherings;
4. carrying out administrative activities for a political party or candidate, such as stuffing envelopes, answering or placing telephone calls, addressing correspondence on behalf of a political candidate or party;

5. supporting a political party or candidate, e.g.,
   o displaying political material, e.g., picture, sticker, badge or button, place a sign on lawn; accompanying a candidate during a press conference;
   o organizing political events;
   o expressing personal views or opinions on public issues, thereby directing attention to themselves, or their position;
   o developing promotional material for a political party or candidate, e.g. writing campaign speeches, slogans, pamphlets for candidates in partisan elections;
   o signing nomination petitions and/or the official nomination paper of a candidate;
   o distributing campaign literature in political elections;
   o seeking the public's views on specific issues on behalf of a political party or candidate;
   o recruiting volunteers for a political party or candidate;
   o soliciting funds for a political party or candidate;
   o attending, as a delegate, a political leadership convention;
   o seeking to be elected as a delegate to a political leadership convention; Being a member of an official group promoting a candidate or political party (e.g., president of a riding, president of the youth association, etc.);
   o seeking nomination in a federal, provincial, territorial or municipal election;
   o Being a candidate in a federal, provincial, territorial or municipal election.

Method

Survey, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and in-depth interviews (IDI) were adopted to generate both quantitative and qualitative data for the study. Structured and semi structured copies of the questionnaire were administered on 800 purposively selected respondents but only 775 copies were used for analysis. Four (4) focus group discussions, made up of 8 purposively selected discussants each took place in four communities. 4 purposively selected participants took part in the in-depth interviews. Four communities were selected in Lagos and Ogun states. The communities selected are: Ilogbo, Ayobo, Odeda and Aradagun.

Table 1: Age Distribution According to Communities

AGE	ILOGBO	AYOBO	ODEDA	ARADAGUN
18-25	46.5%	47.8%	45.9%	39.2%
26-35	30.2%	36.6%	28.8%	29.4%
36-45	11.6%	9.3%	12.4%	16.7%
46-55	5.8%	3.6%	5.8%	9.8%
Over 55	5.8%	2.7%	7.1%	4.9 %
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	172	331	170	102

Four communities were sampled- Ilogbo, Ayobo, Odeda and Aradagun. The findings in table 1 reveal that Ayobo community has the highest number of respondents; the reason being that

proportionate sampling was used to select the respondents. The age group 18-25 has the highest number of respondents in all the communities sampled.

Table 2: Age of women by participation in politics

	Participating	Not Participating
Age	%	%
18-25years	15.5 %	9.0%
26-35years	48.1%	18.8%
36-45years	19.2%	5.5%
46-55years	12.0%	54.9%
Over 55years	5.2%	11.8%
Total	100%	100%
N	620	155

Table 3: Young and old women's level of participation in politics

	Participation in Politics			
	High	Average	Low	No
18- 45years	79.9%	68.6%	16.7%	22.6%
46 years and above	20.1%	31.4%	83.3 %	77.4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	133	457	30	155

The participation of women in politics were divided into three categories: registration as a member of a political party, registration as a voter, and contesting for a political post was regarded as high participation, registration as a member of a political party and registration as a voter only was regarded as average participation and registration as a voter only was regarded as low participation. The last category was non registration as a member of a political party and non-registration as a voter was regarded as no participation.

The result in table 3 shows that younger women participate more in politics than the older women. As numbers of women in politics around the world increase, young women may become more inspired to participate in politics.

In an interview, the woman leader of Ilogbo community, had this to say on the level of women's participation in politics:

> Women do participate in politics in the community. Young women are more
> vibrant and active. Their level of participation is high. They attend meetings, they

are members of political parties and many of them vote during elections. Many of them also belong to one female association or the other. The truth is that only very few of them are aspirants. Though they participate actively, they hardly contest for elections.

Here are the general views of discussants on the level of women's participation in the elections in a focus group sessions:

Discussants in Ayobo: As high as 75% women in this community participate well in politics. Our leaders, women leaders, opinion leaders encourage us to participate. This comes through different ways. They organise programmes especially training programmes on different skills to encourage women to be self-employed. During these programmes, women are encouraged to participate in politics. Participation rate is high, especially among the middle-aged women.

Discussants in Ilogbo: Women participate in politics, especially during election time. Though only very few of them are contestants, they tend to give support to the aspirants by supporting and campaigning for them.

Discussants in Aradagun: Our women participate in politics, both the young and old ones but the young ones are more vibrant. "Some of our wives, for example, participate in politics; I even encourage my wife to do so because she is a good decision maker in the house". The truth is that many of them are not aspirants and this is because they have responsibilities, especially to take care of the home. Marriage and home keeping is a hindrance.

Discussant D in Egba-Odeda: We do participate in politics and even love to be aspirants but the funding needed is not there most times. Women here are great politicians.

Interviewees (ID1) agreed that women are participating in politics but more needs to be done as, for example, the Onilogbo of Ilogbo land explained, to support elected women and improve their ability to influence policies: *"Generally, I would say efforts are being made to increase women's participation in leadership …but a lot remains to be done in building the elected women's capacity and increasing the quality of their participation and voice to influence policies and actions in favor of women."* Another participant reasoned that the participation of women in leadership at the local level is not enough; women at all levels must be empowered especially the young ones. Local level participation *"must be accompanied by a comprehensive consciousness-raising campaign, and civil and political education that would allow women to know their rights."* Both of these strategies –training elected women at the local level and conducting civil and political education at the grassroots level– will be important complementary efforts to increase the number of women aspirants.

Table 4: Cross-tabulation of educational status and membership of a political party

EDUCATIONAL STATUS					
Political party	No formal education	Primary school	J.S.S	S.S.S	Tertiary
ACN	65.5%	57.7%	54.5%	70.9%	36.4%
PDP	26.7%	38%	33.6%	20.8%	36.4%
DPA	4%.	3.3%	1.9%	4.9%	-
OTHERS (ANPP)	3.4%	1.0%	7 %	-	-
NONE	1.4%	-	3.0%	3.4%	27.2%
TOTAL N	100% 93	100% 94	100% 124	100% 453	100% 11

In table 4, Educational qualification was one of the socio-economic characteristics considered. Educational qualification was cross-tabulated with membership of political party. The highest group with political membership of Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) party are respondents with senior secondary school certificate. It is note worthy of that out of 11 of the respondents with tertiary institution certificate, only 8 of them belong to a political party, ACN and PDP. This implies that women with high education from the communites sampled have little or no time for politics.

Table 5: Cross-tabulation of occupational status and membership of a political party

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS					
Political party	Unemployed	Trading/business	Housewife	Civil servant	Teaching
CAN	40.3%	70.1%	64.9%	61.6%	6.5%
PDP	38.0%	22.9%	26.4%	26%	45%
DPA	9.4%	3.8%	3.2%	-	-
OTHERS (ANPP)	10.5%	1.6 %	2.5%	2.1%	3.5%
NONE	1.8%	1.6%	3.0%	10.3%	45%
TOTAL N	100% 27	100% 590	100% 61	100% 26	100% 79

In table 5, occupational status was cross-tabulated with membership of political party. The highest group that belong to a political party are traders/business women. 70.1 % respondents are ACN members.While 26 respondents female civil servants belong to one political party or the other.

Table 6: Cross-tabulation of marital status and membership of a political party

MARITAL STATUS					
Political party	Single	Married	Widowed	Separated	Divorced
CAN	60.8%	77.3%	61.3%	63.5	60.4%
PDP	23.2%	15.1%	20.6%	20.5%	16.3%
DPA	10.3%	2.2%	5.5%	8.3%	-
OTHERS (ANPP)	2.9%	1.6%	10.8%	-	13%
NONE	2.8%	3.8%	1.8%	7.7%	10.3%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	78	640	32	17	8

Marital status was one of the socio-economic characteristics considered. Marital status was crosstabulated with membership of political party in table 6. The highest group that belonged to a political party are married women, where (494) 77.3% women, said they are members of ACN. However, 8 (1%) respondents that were divorced were members of some political party. This is surprising because they are no longer under the influence of a man and are expected to participate more in politics. Marital status influences women involvement in political activities at the local level. Although, the number of unmarried women who were involved in politics were fewer than that of married women.In all, very few married women are candidates for elections . This implies that being under an authority of a man could also be a factor that may hinder active participation in elections.

Table 7: Cross-tabulation of age and membership of a political party

AGE STATUS					
Political party	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	55 and above
CAN	56.3%	70.5%	63.7%	68.6%	63.8%
PDP	10.4%	14.6%	20.8%	23.9%	22.7
DPA	8.3%	6.4%	6.5%	2.8%	5.1
(ANPP)	15%	7.9%	5.6%	2.5%	6.3%
NONE	10%	0.6%	3.4%	2.2%	2.1%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	116	310	123	162	64

Age was one of the socio-ecoonomic characteristics considered. Age was crosstabulated with membership of political party in table 7. The highest age group of respondents that belong to a political party is age 26-35years, 70.5% of them belong to ACN party. Only (64)3.1% of the

respondents who are aged 55 and above are members of political parties. This implies that the older the women, the lesser they are involved in political activities at the local level.

The finding in table 2 reveals that the majority of women participate in politics at the local level, out of which 82.8 %, were between 18-45years of age. Those over 46 years who participate in politics were just 17.2%. This implies that young women participate more in politics than older women.

Table 7: Cross-tabulation of income and membership of a political party

INCOME STATUS					
Political party	N20000 and below	20000-50000	51000-80000	81000-100000	101000 and above
CAN	57.3%	68.5%	60.6%	61.4%	60.7%
PDP	12.5%	16.4%	23.9%	24%	25.8
DPA	7.4%	6.6%	5.5%	2.9%	5.2
(ANPP)	17%	7.9%	6.6%	9.5%	5.3%
NONE	8%	0.6%	3.4%	2.2%	3.%
TOTAL N	100% 192	100% 378	100% 106	100% 57	100% 42

The table above shows that as high as 378 (48%) respondents income status is between N20,000-N50,000 and 42 (5%) respondents income status is N101000 and above. This suggests that many of the respondents are average income earners.

Table 8: Forms of indigenous communication that influence women to participate in politics

Forms of indigenous communication	Percent
Political groups	16.6%
Family network	1.3%
Political symbols	8.5%
Language	3.6%
Neighbourhood Networks	1.7%
All	68.3%
Total	100%
N	775

The results in table 8 show that 68.3% of the respondents indicated that all indigenous communication forms influence them to participate in politics. This implies that isolating one form of indigenous communication as being responsible for promotion of politics among women may be difficult and misleading.

Table 9: **Respondents perception on the role of Indigenous communication in politics by ranking**

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking
A woman has cultural rights to participate in politics in my community	3.1703	.38966	12th
On the basis of political competence, my community rates men over women	3.3148	.46475	10th
Political parties in my community are dominated by men and this encourages women to participate in politics	3.5742	.49478	5th
The religious heritage in my community encourages women to participate in politics	3.5806	.49377	4th
In my community, the place of a woman is not at home,; she is permitted to participate in politics	3.0968	.49021	13th
In my community, a woman who contests for political position is seen as someone who is either independent or not submissive	2.7910	.44043	14th
Political symbols made me to know about the importance of participation in politics	3.6000	.48190	3rd
My attendance of political meetings influenced my participation in politics	3.7084	.51629	1st
I got convinced to participate in politics through the drama/play I watched	3.2374	.45480	11th
The dance/festival in my community encouraged me to participate in politics	3.4348	.50381	8th
The friendship network in my community influenced my participation in politics	3.3226	.49200	9th
The different forms of indigenous communication made me to voluntarily join a `political party	3.5084	.51552	6th
The different forms of indigenous communication made me to encourage other people to join a political party	3.4955	.50030	7th
I have so much information on political activities through indigenous communication	3.6077	.48857	2nd

By ranking, in table 9, the results show that women are convinced to participate in politics mainly because of their attendance at political meetings. This shows that attendance at political meetings goes a long way to influence women to participate in politics. The next by rank also shows that women tend to have so much information on political activities through indigenous communication. This implies that indigenous communication is a good platform for political activities, especially for women. Opinion leaders are significant here. They serve to convince women on the importance of participating in politics. Opinion leaders are generally seen as

advisers, translators, interpreters and mediators in any community. The religious beliefs of all the communities visited confirmed that religious practices do not in any way stand as a hindrance to women's participation in politics.

The result is at variance with the views of Millet and Gerald (2007) that religious doctrines militate against the active participation of women in politics. However, it should be noted that in some parts of the country, religious heritage can militate against the participation of women in politics. Millet and Gerald (2007) have reasoned that "patriarchy has God on its side" that is, Christianity portrays Eve as an after-thought produced from Adam's spare rib. Furthermore, it is held that the origin of gender discrimination began with sins. Islamic doctrines strictly bar women from some political activities – public speaking etc. – that can facilitate their political ambitions. Through series of enlightenment, emancipation and consciousness raising of groups on women movement, women's subordination in politics has been reduced to an extent. Women, through several of these platforms, have played influential roles and this has further spurred more women to go into politics.

Table 10: Ways indigenous communication influence women's participation in politics

Variations	Percent
Identification of political parties	36%
Fostering registration as voters	55%
Fostering registration as a party member	3%
Identification of political symbols	6%
Total	100
N	775

Table 8 reveals the different forms of indigenous communication adopted in the communities sampled. Many of the women are members of political parties. Indigenous communication, especially political groups influence them to participate in politics. Indigenous communication influences women's participation in politics in so many ways, these include identification of political parties, encouraging women to register as voters, to register as party members and as voters. Indigenous communication influences women's participation in politics, especially to register as voters and to know political parties available in the country.

A participant during the in-depth interview at Egba-Odeda community remarked that:

Indigenous communication contributes effectively in influencing women to participate in politics. Women attend political party events, e.g., meetings, conventions, rallies,   fund-raising functions, or other political gatherings. Women do register during electoral process. They also support the political party they belong to and support candidates for election by displaying political materials, e.g., picture, sticker, badge or button, place a sign on lawn; accompanying a candidate during a press conference; organizing political events, etc. They support women aspirants too for any political post.

The general view of participants in the focus group discussion shows that women make use of indigenous communication to ensure their own as well as their families' survival and, as a result,

have developed a rich communication environment. They have lived creative lives, transmitting culture, knowledge, customs and history through traditional forms of communication such as political groups, language, family network, etc. within their communities; women are active participants in social communication networks, especially in politics. The use of indigenous communication therefore, influences women to participate in politics.

According to Onabajo (2001), grassroots campaigns rely significantly on local leadership to fire the enthusiasm of the people. Local leaders are the real agents in their communities and other change agents must recognize the pattern and structure of leadership in any community they find themselves. Women are found as leaders of market associations and other skilled labour groups and they constitute powerful influences in the mass mobilisation of women groups. From the result, women are encouraged to participate in politics through different forms of indigenous communication

Opinion leaders, especially local leaders, also have a great influence on women. They are the vehicles through which these messages are disseminated. According to Wright (2006), local leaders refer to individuals, who through day to day personal contacts, influence others in matters of decision and opinion formation and this is distinct from formal leadership brought about through position of authority. To Wright, the local leaders are more active participants in the communication system, most especially the mass media. In this regard, they tower above members of their communities in access to development information and they become vital agents of social change and community development.

Leadership in a community depends on the co-operative personal attitudes of individuals within the community and the system of communication in use in a given community. The community is the environment in which a local leader establishes contact with culture, consolidates her relationships with other people, senses the efforts of others to educate her for leadership and by her own personal efforts improve her leadership ability, through access to the electronic media and other communication channels. Leadership gives common meaning to the common purposes of a local community. It infuses consistency into the subjective aspects of countless decisions in a changing environment and inspires the personal conviction that produces vital cohesiveness, without which understanding and co-operation are impossible.

Local leadership fosters participation in the decisions that affect the lives and welfare of people in the rural communities and creates faith in a number of activities that may lead to rural development. The relationships among rural people are personal and in most cases, face to face. With close personal relationships, the woman community leader, according to Wright (2006), is more involved in the day to day activities of her community and does recognize areas of conflicts better than does her urban counterpart.

The local leader must continually be aware that rural development is not an end in itself, but a means to national development. She must be guided by the understanding that the principal purpose for rural development is to bring about desirable changes for better living, among the people of her community. She should help the people to identify the problems militating against their progress, and lead them to a desired action, to solve these problems. The local leader should ensure that the rural population is involved in the planning, execution, utilization and assessment of any project designed to improve their welfare. In all the communities sampled, there are women leaders who serve as agents of change to other women.

An important finding from both the focus group discussion and interview session reveal that women are motivated to participate and contest for political offices through indigenous communication, yet many of them run away from contesting as candidates for elections. There are

many factors that could be responsible for this. Among this are lack of adequate finance and *godfatherism* are crucial hindrances to effective female participation in politics in Nigeria. Adedeji (2009) is of the view that a large portion of the Nigerian female population is not as financially strong as their male counterparts. Family responsibilities and childbearing also hinder women from participating effectively in partisan political activities. During a sizeable part of their adult lives, most women are involved not only in child bearing, but also in child rearing. Thus, much of the time they may have wished to devote to politics is taken up by their maternal challenges and obligations.

Discussion of findings

1. The extent to which young and old women participate in politics at local level.

From the findings, young women participate more in politics. On age distribution, respondents were analysed and the result reveals that 40%, were between 26-35 years, only 8.2%, were over 55years.The age distribution reveal that over 70% of the respondents were young women. Romao (2003) noted that for many young women, the local level is where they can find the means and opportunities for participating, influencing the decision-making process and acquiring competences transposable to the formal political sphere.

Age is an important factor in the study of indigenous communication and women's participation in politics because it reflects the physical strength and psychological disposition of women for imbibing behavioural change and influencing the decision making progress. Most of the respondents in this research were between 18 and 45. Respondents participate actively in politics. Out of this, 549 were between 18 and 45. This shows that women participate in politics in their active age. The result is in line with the findings of Falolo (2005) and Ajayi (2007) who observed that most of the women in decision making who participate in the electoral process are below 50 years of age. In addition, Lewu (2005) and Ayobami (2006) equally found that most of women who participate actively in politics are between 20 and 45 and that only very few are older than 50 years of age.

Indeed, Ajayi (2007) corroborated this point when he opined that women are active in politics between 18 and 45. Anifowose (2004) asserts that young and active women can positively influence decision making in the electoral process. This therefore, shows that younger women participate in political activities more than older women. Hence, more attention should be focused on this category of women.

The distribution of respondents by marital status reveals that 82.6% were married. Women participate in election through voting, campaigning and supporting the candidates. However, married women find it hard to run for elective positions due to limited time available to them because of their dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres. With their primary roles as mothers and wives and competing domestic responsibilities and care work, they are left with little time to participate in politics. This supports Osundiyi's (2010) study on women and political development. He found out that the majority of women who participate in politics are married women but very many of them have home responsibilities that limit their time to participate actively in politics, especially in contesting for political offices. Arowolo and Aluko (2010), in a study on women and political participation, discovered that a lot of female respondents believed that politics would prevent them from taking absolute care of their families. Fear of broken homes, breeding irresponsible children and the need to perform their domestic chores were identified as major reasons preventing them from going into politics. Family responsibilities and cultural

values, traditions and practices of confining women to household activities have excluded them from actively participating and fulfilling their role as elected representatives. The burden of multiple roles on women restricts the exercise and enjoyment of their right in various political processes. The demands of the job and family in the absence of support mechanisms impede their effective discharge of responsibilities as elected representatives.

Men need to be oriented on the need to allow their wives not only to participate in politics but also to run for elective office. Married women are found to constitute a special interest group which is not favourably inclined towards the political participation of women possibly because, as suggested in the previous section, such candidacy pose a threat to the stability and the tradition of the institution of marriage.

The literacy status distribution of the respondents was analysed and the result reveals that 88% respondents, were literate, while 12%, were illiterate. The literacy status distribution revealed that most participants were literate. It is interesting to know that many of the respondents are educated. Literacy can be seen as integrating all aspects of adult life which brings about total change in the community.

As Okpoko (2005) observes, mass literacy is very important because a literate society is a liberated society. He pointed out that literacy will enable the women get involved and participate fully in political processes – elections, voting and understanding manifestos of political parties, in order to decide for themselves which of the manifestoes are relevant to solve their problems and increase their standard of living in various spheres of life.

The educational qualification of the respondents was analysed and the result reveals 58.5%, were senior secondary school certificate holders, while 12%, had no formal education. The distribution of respondents by educational qualification reveals that above 88% of the participants were educated but only 1.4 % women have higher education. Several scholars, Gana (2003), Falola (2005) found separately that the majority of the women in politics have formal education. The scholars found that many of the women have either primary school certificate or secondary school certificate education. This is in line with the finding of this work that shows that as high as 453 respondents have secondary school certificate However, Anuma, (1996) noted that education is the most effective way to enhance Nigerian women political awareness and effective participation.

The data on the job status distribution of the respondents reveal that 76.1%, were traders or self-employed. The job status distribution reveals that most participants were self-employed. Women are involved in several activities. As high as 76.1% respondents are involved in business and trading. Aiyede (2006) notes that trading generally helps women to earn income and other benefits. This will also go along way for them to assist and support their husbands in feeding the family and better their well-being and thus could find time to participate in political activities.

The data on the tenancy distribution of the respondents was analysed and in table 4.24, the result reveals that 74.5%, had spent between 3 and 10years in the community sampled, 3.6% of the respondents, had spent 19 years and above in the community sampled. Many of the respondents have lived in the communities for about 3-10years.

2. *The role of social cultural factors on women's participation in politics*

During the focus group discussion, the discussants indicated, overwhelmingly, that patriarchy is pervasive and dominates all aspects of society. Oluwatofunmi Lawal, a political activist, said most succinctly what most participants, across the community, expressed: "women are considered subordinate to men and second class members/citizens both in the family and in the society." There was a robust discussion about the barriers to women's entry into politics; illiteracy

and economic dependency were the most commonly cited challenges. Closely related to those two issues are the responsibility that women have for their households and the cultural expectations that inhibit their experience outside the private sphere. They lack the time to participate in politics.

The woman leader of Ayobo community during an interview explained how some attitudes hold women back: "women are still facing a lot of challenges related to social and cultural pressures. The perceived traditional roles of men and women have not changed in relation to daily practice. The working environment for women is still unfriendly at both working and societal levels due to gender stereotypes and patriarchal structures. Women leaders and professionals are still faced with traditional roles and also have to meet work/professional expectations. Neither their husbands nor their male relatives have succumbed to the changes ushered in by the era of gender equality. For women to be able to perform on an equal footing with men, they have to walk extra miles."

Participants were careful to point out traditional practices and attitudes that are more common in rural and isolated areas. Urban, educated women are however not immune to these pressures. The Onilogbo of Ilogbo-Asowo, Oba (Barrister) Samuel Olufemi Ojugbele, explains that even elite women face these challenges. "The weight of the tradition, the culture, and the religion are cultural barriers ... certain husbands refuse to eat meals other than the ones prepared by their wives. Even certain women [government] ministers and directors submit to this dictate of culture and society. Tradition has for a long time hindered the participation of the women ... even to register the children for school; the priority was first given to the boy because the destiny of the girl was sealed. The traditional social barriers are the most tenacious ones and require more work and behavior change is difficult and slow to come."

The woman leader of Aradagun community said: When you have so little energy left as a result of the long years of struggle, when your domestic situation changes over time, and in my case, I have children to take care of, when you need to begin to worry about your financial needs, and then have to continue your activism, being in social movements that keep fighting with each other was simply a bit too much, in light of many things that needed my attention as a woman, mother, wife, organizer, activist, etc. Cultural barriers are among the most difficult to remove, as they are often subtly enforced by both men and women. They are seen as immutable. Despite these challenges, participants recalled that culture changed over time and that the oppression of women was not a permanent condition. As the woman leader of Egba-Odeda summarized, "unless people start to realize that culture is dynamic, women will always be the voters not the [elected candidates]."

A few specific strategies aimed at changing the culture were suggested. The most common suggestion was training programmes aimed at changing attitudes and creating an "enabling environment" for women's empowerment. For example, Olalade Eniayemo from Aradagun suggested working with schools and youths: "train cadres of women/girls starting from high schools to advocate for popular participation of women in politics and influence the school.

An Ayobo community participant said: Women are still at a stage where they are still struggling to be heard. There are indigenous communities that are very patriarchal; there are also some that are egalitarian in some ways. Women need to be given respect; they should also be allowed to acquire leadership positions, to have a say over what's happening in their communities. Sometimes, because women in the non-indigenous areas are often more visible than their indigenous sisters, there is a tendency to view women's participation in politics and governance as merely a function of organizing and education. Class and ethnicity are important factors that should be considered.

Culture varies widely with respect to the roles they assigned to different sexes. While one job may be regarded as a man's job in one society, it may be regarded as women's job in another. This can be related to politics. Men are generally seen as politicians. This division is with the exception of child bearing. Child bearing is one constant factor that determines the division of labour in pre-industrial societies. Because of child-bearing, women are less mobile and therefore send to fill roles which they can perform closer to their houses such as house-keeping, weaving, midwifery and processing of food. Politics, for example, is time consuming and women are involved in some other domestic responsibilities. Apart from the physical attractions, women are indispensable at home not only in the domestic work they do, but also in the taking care of the children. According to Oyesakin (1982), women perform certain functions that make for development. They bear and take care of the children, they take care of the home and economically they are helping hands to men.

The data reveal the following:

- Indigenous communication influences women to participate in politics.
- Most of the respondents are between 18 and 35 years old. This shows that most of the respondents are young women. As Romao (2003) noted that for many young women, the local level is where they can find the means and opportunities for participating, influencing the decision-making process and acquiring competences transposable to the formal political sphere. Young women should also be encouraged to contest for political positions.
- Most of the respondents are married women and they participate in politics. However, very few of them contest for elective positions. Married women also find it hard to run for elective positions due to limited time available because of their dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres. With their primary roles as mothers and wives and competing domestic responsibilities and care work, they are left with little time to participate in politics.

Recommendations
- Considering the fact that young women participate more in politics, leaders in the community should devise more activities to promote the participation of young women and involve them in the preparation, organisation and evaluation of such activities;
- Concerted efforts have to be made by women themselves to be seen and heard in all ventures, especially political efforts. It can be said that the best advocates for equality are all people who believe that the disparity in power between female and male populations has been morally unjust through the lens of distributive justice.
- In order to ensure active participation of women in politics, civil society organisations, governments as well as political parties should increase the level of awareness of women by organizing seminars/workshops not only in the cities but also in the villages. Participation in such seminars/workshops should be open to both women and men.

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