
Factors affecting Women's Political Participation in Lusaka: A Case Study of Kabwata and Munali Constituencies

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Abstract - Gender equality in politics is said to be major aspect of modern democratic governance such that poor or no participation of women in politics is a major concern worldwide. The passage of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and other international clarion have laid the foundation for the emergence of women's participation in politics. In Zambia, women's political participation is not proportional to the 50% of the country's population which women represent thereby not translating into equal representation in political leadership positions. This study examined the factors that affect women's political participation in Lusaka. Women have not fully participated in politics because they are marginalised and discriminated against by political parties, there is generally a wrong perception of women in politics and there is indigenization of women political aspirants. The central objective of the study was to investigate the factors that affect women's political participation in Lusaka. The research design used was a descriptive survey method and the study used both primary and secondary data sources. The study employed a semi-structured questionnaire to collect data. The findings demonstrate that there exists a significant gender gap in the political participation of women in Lusaka and that factors affecting their effective participation were socio-economic, political and cultural. The study therefore, recommended the economic empowerment of women, change of perception of people, equal representation in governance, support from everyone and also stopping of discriminatory practices to ensure the equal and full participation of women.

Keywords: Politics, Participation, Women, Lusaka

I. INTRODUCTION

Political participation and the poor participation of women in politics has been a major concern worldwide. For many years now, various specialized agencies such as the United Nations (UN) have recognized that there is need for women to have equal rights with men in politics. Women are a major force behind people's participation in society today, as they play a critical role in posterity. Their participation is recognized as both a right and a requirement for effective development, and it is generally agreed that a critical mass of women in politics are needed in order to have policy impact (usually estimated at 30% of the parliamentarians being women) [1].

An array of international agreements and conventions have been meaningful in encouraging women to take up political offices and influence policy making in different African countries. Conventions such as Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Beijing Declaration of 1995, Southern African Development Community declaration on Gender and Development (1997) with its addendum on Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women and Children (1998) and The Millennium Declaration of 2000 have been ratified by many states. These

conventions have brought to the forefront the matter of gender equality and rights with political participation included [2].

A. Political Participation in perspective

Women's political participation is not just about occupying positions of leadership, but that meaningful political participation requires a broader definition of politics, which extends beyond the institutional boundaries of the party-state to other domains of social and economic life. As stated by the United Nations Development Programme, political participation ranges from the home, through the locality, to the national level. Women need to participate at the micro level of the home, the meso level of community organizations and local government, and at the macro level of national party, parliamentary and governmental politics [3]. Thus, women's exclusion from decision making positions results in state institutions and policies that do not address gender inequalities and are accountable or responsive to women citizens thereby perpetuating women's political, social and economic marginalization.

B. Background

Women around the world represent more than 50% of the total population. Globally women's political participation lags behind that of men; the world average for women in all national parliaments being 21.8%, a figure which is not near the 'critical majority' of 30% of women parliamentarians. Even though the right to vote and stand for elections begun as of the nineteenth century, the political participation of women throughout the world still lag behind as compared to that of their male counterparts [4]. Thus, women at every political level find themselves underrepresented and far removed from decision-making levels.

In Zambia, women's political participation is not proportionate to the 50% of the nation's population which they represent and this has not been able to translate into the equal representation in various political positions. The Millennium Development Goals emphasizes that women's equal participation with men in power and decision making is part of their fundamental right to participate in political life and at the core of gender equality and women's empowerment. However, the Zambian Government, like many countries, has ratified a number of international instruments to promote women in politics, but none have been domesticated [5].

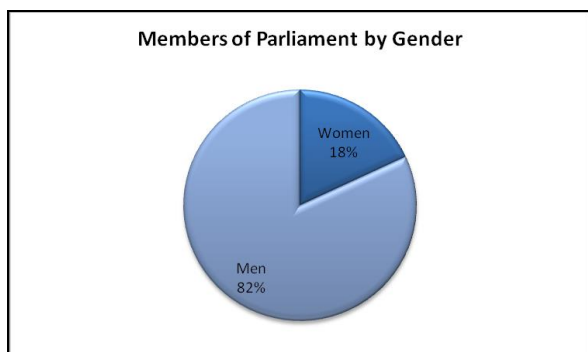
Statistics on women's political participation in Zambia are very worrying because of the magnitude of the imbalance of women in the Zambia Parliament as compared to men. Prior to Zambia's independence in 1964, women fought colonialism alongside men but sadly for them, inequality and oppression emerged after. Women have continued to lag behind due to inherited colonial and cultural practices which exclude them from leadership roles [6]. Thus, looking at the representation of women in parliament in Zambia since independence, table 1 gives us an overview of the statistics to date [7].

Table I.

Years	Number of Women MPS	(%)	Number of Men MPs	(%)	Total Elective Seats
1964-1968	5	6.67	70	93.3	75
1968-1972	2	1.9	103	98.1	105
1973-1978	7	5.6	118	94.4	125
1978-1983	6	4.8	119	95.2	125
1983-1988	4	3.2	120	96.8	125
1988-1991	6	4.8	119	95.2	125
1991-1996	6	4.8	119	95.2	125
1996-2001	16	10.6	134	89.4	150
2001-2006	19	12.6	131	88.34	150
2006-2008	22	14.6	128	85.3	150
2008-2011	17	11	133	89	150
2011-2015	26	17	130	83	156

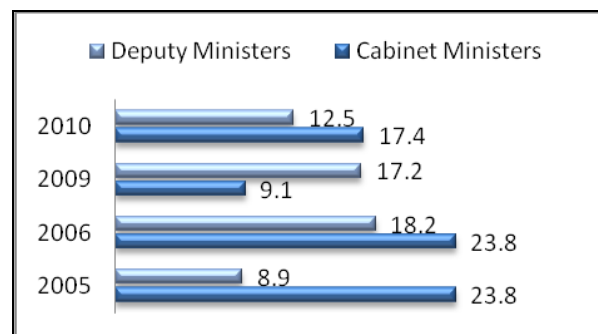
Women representation in the Zambian Parliament following general elections in September 2011 fell short of the regional targets. Very few women are able to get into elected offices due to resources constraints and general belief that women cannot become leaders. In the 2016 tripartite elections, there was ample opportunity for women to increase their representation but there was minimal increase of only 6% [7]. Statistics on current members of parliament as obtained from the Parliament currently show that the representation of men and women in the Zambia parliament stands at 136 (81.9%) men and 30 (18.1%) women [8]. This is shown in figure 1 below.

Fig. 1



Whereas, for cabinet and deputy ministers, women are still underrepresented and this sadly takes us backwards as it is not near the critical mass of the needed percentage of women in parliament as evidenced in figure 2 below [9].

Fig. 2



Women’s political participation is significantly diminishing especially in higher-level local government positions and in the key roles where policies are adopted and implemented. In Kabwata and Munali constituencies, there has been low representation of women at parliamentary level. From the table it is evidenced that there has only been men occupying the positions of Member of Parliament in Kabwata since 1991 and no woman has been Member of Parliament for Kabwata since that time. For Munali Constituency, only in 2001, 2011 and 2016 have we had a woman winning as Member of Parliament. This is evidenced in table 2 below [10].

Table II.

Years	Gender	Kabwata	Munali
1991	Male	1	1
	Female	0	0
1996	Male	1	1
	Female	0	0
2001	Male	1	0
	Female	0	1
2006	Male	1	1
	Female	0	0
2011	Male	1	0
	Female	0	1
2016	Male	1	0
	Female	0	1

They are lowly represented in most decision-making positions, for example the proper

perception often suggests that a woman's proper place is still in the home rather than in politics. Tradition instructs women to follow men in public and not to lead. Thus, any woman who tries to enter into politics faces all forms of discrimination [11]. This has caused the country to have minimal changes in the representation of women in Cabinet, Parliament and Local Government.

C. Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by two theories; patriarchy theory and structural functionalist theory. These theories relate to the Zambian situation and recognize the pervasive influence of gender divisions on social life and understood women's oppression and the structures in society that promote this oppression and subordination.

Patriarchy theory: The theories of patriarchy laid emphasis on male dominance of the female folks. Males are seen as controlling access to institutional power and it is argued that they mould ideology, philosophy, art and religion to suit their needs. In the study of Millet in her book sexual politics, she wrote: our society, like all other historical civilization is a patriarchy. The fact is evident that the military, technology, universities, science, political office and finance-in short, every avenue of power including the coercive force of the police, is entirely in male hands. What lingers of supernatural authority, the deity, his ministry, together with the ethics and values, the philosophy and art of our culture is of male manufacture [12]. The above shows that the power of the male permeates everything. Women are thought of as a sub-group in a man's world. Similarly, in Zambia, patriarchy affects women's political participation and

men dominate everything, including the political arena. Women are marginalized in national and local politics and more generally in the public and private life of our nation. Traditional values speak more when it comes to women's participation in politics and everyone sees politics as man's game.

Structural Functionalist theory: Structural Functionalism explains why society functions the way it does by focusing on the relationships between the various social institutions that makes up society such as government, law, education, religion. Talcott Parsons posited that different and complementary gender roles are beneficial for the society. The roles assigned to the woman are linked to the home - she is to take the responsibility of managing the household and bearing and raising the children. He argued that men and women are socialized in different ways in order to prepare them to assume their gender roles as adults where a clear division of roles between men (undertaking instrumental roles) and women (undertaking expressive, nurturing roles) led to stable families and to positive socialization of children. The man is to work outside the home and act as a link between the family unit and the larger world (the public sphere) [13].

Gender is an important part of personal identity and family life, and it is deeply woven into the moral fabric of the society. From these theories, in the Zambian setting, men and women are socialized differently and this has had an impact on the participation of women in politics. Women are considered to be subjective to men and they cannot rule over men because of the pervasive influence of gender divisions on social life.

Against this backdrop, the point this paper seeks to emphasize is that women should be given a chance to actively participate in the politics of the nation. Low participation of women in politics in Lusaka made us carry out this study because the numbers of women in politics is worrying. There is the need for a greater level of participation of women in politics all over the country and Lusaka especially because any democratization process will be incomplete without the active involvement and participation of the two sexes. The research was timely since political participation and representation of women in Lusaka and Zambia at large is yet to reach the minimum constitutional requirement and the 30% target set by the Beijing conference.

II. MATERIALS & METHODS

This study used both qualitative and quantitative methodology through primary and secondary data collection. The research design used was a descriptive survey method aimed at establishing factors affecting women's political participation because the method allows for prudent comparison of the research findings. The target population for this study included residents of Kabwata and Munali constituencies as well as political party members.

A. Sample

A total of 100 people (electorates from both Kabwata and Munali Constituencies) were selected for the sample, while 5 comprised members of political parties. The sample was calculated by applying Daniel [13] formula as follows:

$$n = \frac{Z^2(p)(1-p)}{d^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size; Z = Confidence level; p = Percentage choice (Proportion); and d = Precision (Confidence interval)

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 (.5)(1-.5)}{0.09800^2}$$

$$n = \frac{3.8416 \times 0.25}{0.009604}$$

$$n = \frac{0.9604}{0.009604}$$

$$n = 100$$

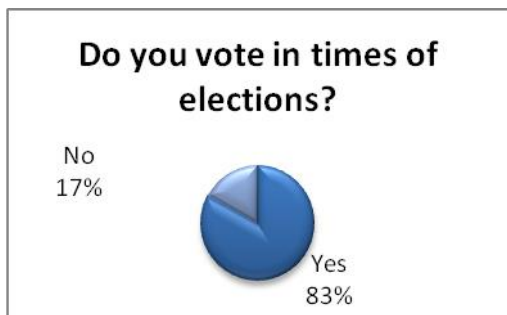
B. Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used in this study was the probability sampling and purposive methods. All wards in the two constituencies were listed and had probability of being included in the sample and households were sampled randomly and selected at ward level. The other technique (purposive sampling technique), was used for selecting members of political parties because they were the best source of rich and valuable information regarding their experiences in politics. Instruments for data collection included semi structured questionnaires used for both categories of respondents and these questionnaires incorporated both close and open-ended questions. Quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 20) and qualitative data on the other hand was analyzed using content analysis were responses were grouped in similar thematic areas for easy aggregation and understanding of the trend of the data.

III. RESULTS

The study was held in Kabwata and Munali constituencies in Lusaka District. Kabwata represented 51% of respondents and Munali

had 49%. From these, 62% were males and 38% females. Since participation starts with voting and goes all the way to being elected, when asked if they participate in voting in times of elections, respondents representing 83% said they do vote while 17% said they do not vote as shown below.



Respondents were also asked if at all they were interested in any politics and from the results, 60% said they were interested, 16% were very interested, 22% were not interested while 2% were not sure as illustrated below.

	Frequency	Percentage
Interested	60	60
Very Interested	16	16
Not Interested	22	22
Not Sure	2	2
Total	100	100

Respondents were asked if at all they have ever attended any political meetings and more than half of the respondents representing 57% said they have attended a political meeting in one way or another while 43% said no.

Attendance of political meetings



On membership to a political party, respondents were asked if at all they belong to any political party in Lusaka because political parties are avenues where people can participate in politics. Respondents representing 44% said they were members while 56% said they were not members of any political party and this is shown below.

Membership to a political party



When asked what they thought about women participating in politics, respondents had varied responses. 8% could not comment while 9% said that women should not participate because politics breaks marriages, there was too much violence in politics, it's a dirty game and also that there is generally a lack of interest to join politics on the part of women. Those that agreed to the idea of women participation in politics said that it is good for women to participate in politics because it is their human right, they are equal partners as men in development, they are less prone to corruption, so as to ensure gender equality, so as to create a level playing field, it

is an important tool that emphasizes the development discourse. Respondents were also asked if at all there were any factors that affect women's political participation and 91% said yes there were factors while only 9% said there were none. Most of the factors were found to be socio-economic, political and also cultural.

IV. DISCUSSION

Women's meaningful participation in politics affects both the range of policy issues that are considered and the types of solutions that are proposed. Findings of the study show that socio-economic, cultural and political factors affect women's political participation especially in the two constituencies under study.

A. Socio-economic factors

Socio-economic conditions play a significant role in the participation of women in politics because the social and economic status of women in society has a direct influence on their participation in political institutions and elected bodies.

Lack of resources

The ability of women to attain financial autonomy or access to economic resources is necessary for their greater participation in political life. Ballington reveals that worldwide, women's lower economic status, relative poverty, limited business networks and discriminatory legal frameworks are substantial hurdles to be overcome. When women do have access to discretionary funds, they are more likely to spend it on household needs or donate it to charity instead of politics [15].

In the study, lack of resources was considered a huge challenge for women to take an active part in politics such as running for election campaigns, achieving progress within the political parties as well as contributing to political parties. Currently, it is almost impossible for women to contest any election without adequate material resources. Politics in Zambia is an expensive venture and requires huge financial involvement and backing. In Lusaka, women's lack of resources restricts them from securing the necessary funding for campaigns. In many large urban centres such as Kabwata and Munali, a councillor race can cost the same as a national assembly post. From the results therefore, women's lack of control over resources was considered a big factor that affects their political participation. Because women are less welcomed to existing major political and economic networks, it is even more challenging for them to be involved in significant numbers or to have an opportunity for a meaningful participation in politics. Therefore, financial costs act as a block on many women who have little money and few alternatives to financial resources as they are less likely to be elected or appointed in political positions making them less interested to participate.

Education

Education is the backbone of thriving nations across the globe and in nowhere in the world is the leaders of a nation with no single form of education. As stated by Waylen literacy levels in developing countries are low and a correlation can be seen between literacy levels and women's political participation in that political candidacy nomination procedures require a minimum level of literacy and this prevents women from registering as

candidates most times [16]. To succeed as political candidates, women must be able to demonstrate that they are qualified to serve in elected office. Social conditions and factors relating to education, skills and competence are important factors that could help aspirants seeking to be elected or appointed into local assemblies.

Our results therefore, found that education is key to women's political participation and in fact, some political party leaders argued that there is a shortage of willing and trained women candidates with the requisite confidence and experience to stand for election. Women lack the political training required to participate effectively in the political arena. In this vein, it is important to promote within the educational system women's political participation because most schools in Lusaka do not include anything about women's rights and the need for active female participation in all spheres of public life. What is promoted is basic religious and home management education which undermines the very secular idea of gender equality. From the findings, the respondents strongly agreed that lack of access to well-developed education and training systems for women's political leadership in general, and for orienting young women towards political life is a cause for their lack of participation.

B. Cultural Factors

Most of the cultural factors from the study results centered so much on patriarchy. Dominant societal and cultural norms guide the behavior of groups, and in some cultures, traditions deny women the same access to public office as men and the 'proper' behavior of women does not include political activism. Women's roles are often held in the 'private

sphere,' which discourages them from entering the 'public' political environment. Women find it hard to participate in politics 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 [17]. Thus, gender role ideology does not only create duality of femininity and masculinity, it also places them in hierarchal fashion in which female sex is generally valued less than male sex because of their socially ascribed roles in reproductive sphere.

The situation of women's under-representation in political participation and leadership roles is not much different in Lusaka, because of the patriarchal nature of the Zambian society, where women's decision-making is lowered to the societal levels of the family. Politics is seen as masculine. Those women who tried to enter into politics were prevented by their husbands and use divorce as an intimidation to prevent their entry into politics. From the study results, women's representation and participation in mainstream politics has significant repercussions for wider sphere of governance in that because of the old patriarchal nature of our society which tends to tag politics as a 'dirty game' and that women are not tough customers when it comes to doing politics, impinges on women's aspiration of becoming a political leader, thus masculinity has taken over. The view that a woman's place is at home and political career and life is reserved only for men is still held by many Zambians. It was found that men are very skeptical on whether a woman may run for office or a woman's ability to effectively make decisions

and govern predominantly males. Infact, masculine cultures and orientations usually tend to influence the election of more males into government positions than women.

C. Political Factors

Politics were established well before women had rights to hold office, and since that time, has made no accommodations for the gender roles that women bring to the table. The values and standards of political life are traditionally male and the current political culture, one that is adversarial and not consensus building discourages many women from pursuing political careers. That, along with the fact that the rules of the political game have not changed, disadvantages women as potential candidates.

Political Violence

Unhealthy political environment was cited as the major factor that affects women's political participation. Before and after elections, thugs are used to disrupt elections and most of the affected are women. Violence against women in politics poses a serious challenge to democracy, human rights, and gender equality. Women are directly subjected to political violence when they engage in civic discourse, support or join a political party, or vote as a public citizen. As voters, women may face various forms of marginalization, ranging from physical violence to bar them from voting to more subtle efforts to coerce their votes. After being nominated as candidates, women are confronted with negative reactions from their families and spouses, including the threat of ostracism or divorce, in an effort to curb their political ambition – problems not generally experienced by their male counterparts. Once elected, women encounter a host of subtle and not-so-subtle tactics to

marginalize them and render them less effective, including pressures to conform to masculine norms of behaviour. Despite the greater presence of women in elected positions, female party members may find spaces largely hidden from public view – like internal party decision-making bodies – remain solidly male-dominated.

Our results showed that women often face violence and interference against their political voice starting in the home, where they may be intimidated, harassed or even abused by their husbands in order to keep them from voting or to force them to vote for a specific candidate. The incremental trend of incidences of violence correlates well with the resulting low levels of participation. Many people shun political gatherings for fear of being caught up in skirmishes between and among parties. Thus, changes in women's participation are perhaps most visible in the electoral arena, and especially national parliamentary and local governmental seats where most candidates are men as evidenced from the findings in the study.

Inequality in the political arena

Gender representation in political leadership especially within political parties' structures has been an imbalance. Politics in general and political parties' internal structures in specific have been dominated by men at the expense of women. Thus, political parties are among the most important institutions that inhibit activities affecting women's political participation. As observed by the UNPF, in most countries, parties determine which candidates are nominated and elected and which issues achieve national prominence. The role of women in political parties is therefore a key determinant of their prospects

for political empowerment, particularly at the national level [18]. Evidence suggests that women's participation within the parties appears to be mostly through the women's wing, which is a relatively powerless branch of the party whose role is to mobilize women for meetings and elections.

In Lusaka, findings showed that men largely dominate the political arena; largely formulate the rules of the political game; and often define the standards for evaluation. Political life is organized according to male norms and values, and in some cases even male lifestyles, for instance, politics is often based on the idea of winners and losers, competition and confrontation, rather than on systematic collaboration and consensus, especially across party lines. This has resulted in women either rejecting politics altogether or rejecting male-style politics. In contrast, highly centralized parties that are tightly controlled by a few leaders or organized around well-known personalities usually men have been less receptive to selecting substantial numbers of women as candidates as is the case in both Kabwata and Munali constituencies. Thus, our findings showed that gendered political institutions continue to make it difficult for women to vote, run for office, and exercise influence in legislatures and political parties.

V. CONCLUSION

Within politics women can play a variety of roles: as voters, political party members, candidates and office holders, and members of civil society. Through the conferences, declarations and action plans, a consensus has emerged that 1) women should be able to play an equal role in politics; 2) temporary special measures, such as quotas, are an effective

means to increasing women's political roles; and 3) quota legislation is insufficient on its own to achieve the full and equal participation of women in politics. While there has been incremental progress in the gains of women's political participation globally, the numbers of women participating in politics in Lusaka has remained relatively low. Various factors have been cited or causing this lack of participation and these are socio-economic, cultural and political.

As evidenced from the findings, women in Lusaka face many social or cultural constraints to political empowerment and many are discouraged from engaging in public decision-making processes altogether. Patriarchal structures continue to exclude them from aspects of political life and women often encounter prejudice based on assumptions that women lack masculine traits, such as leadership and level headedness, necessary to succeed in politics. Women's lower economic status, relative poverty, limited business networks and discriminatory legal frameworks are substantial hurdles to be overcome because when women do have access to discretionary funds, they are more likely to spend it on household needs or donate it to charity instead of politics. Thus, from the results also, the numbers of women occupying political positions in Lusaka are worrying.

A lot needs to be done for Zambia to meet the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, which calls for State parties to ensure 50% of women and men in all decision-making positions. There is a need for a broad policy shift that would help Zambia dismantle the cultural prejudices that disadvantage women in the process of selection of candidates at presidential, parliamentary and local

government levels. Therefore, this study suggests and recommends that to increase the numbers of women in politics, there is need to guarantee women's active participation in politics by empowering them economically, supporting them, having equal representation in governance, help change the perception of people over women in politics as well as stop discriminatory practices done to women by society. When this is addressed, women will not only be encouraged to participate in politics but democracy will be achieved in an equal manner. Additionally, the active participation of women, on equal basis with men, at all levels of decision making is essential to the achievement of equality, sustainable development, peace and democracy and the inclusion of their perspectives and experiences into the decision-making processes.

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