

PATRIARCHY, RELIGION AND WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between patriarchy and religion and how they impact on women's political participation in Kwara State. The Gender and Development (GAD) approach is employed to examine the impact of social construct on women's political participation. Primary and secondary data were utilized for the study. Primary data was collected through questionnaires distributed to respondents selected from four local governments that makes up Kwara Central Senatorial District. The simple random sampling technique was employed. The study utilized both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. The study finds that patriarchy permeates religion through the skewed interpretation of religious text (Quran and Hadith) in ways as to advance the entrenchment of male dominance in social life in the study area and by extension Kwara State. The study recommends enlightenment campaign to drive home the value of respect for the equality of women in social relations for inclusive development.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Religion, Gender, Political Participation, Kwara State, Nigeria

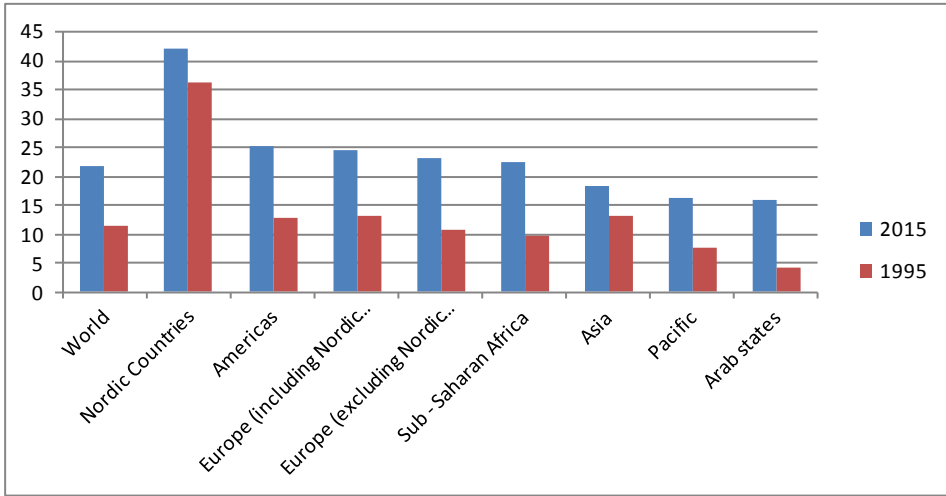
Introduction

Women in politics has become a thing of discussion in the turn of the 21st century, mostly after the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women CEDAW at the 1979 Beijing conference. The Convention was ratified by 189 states and comes into effect on 3 September 1981. It was concretised by the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security. This is situated aptly by the America's former Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright (2013), when she opines that:

Every country deserves to have the best possible leader and that means that women have to be given a chance to compete. If they are never allowed to compete in the electoral process then the countries are really robbing themselves of a great deal of talent (Angel, 2015).

The quotation above highlight the need to mainstream gender discourse in political participation. It is indicative of the challenges facing women as it relates to political participation. It also typifies efforts being made by individuals, women's advocacy groups, and international agencies to enhance women's participation in politics and governance. In countries across the world, inclusive of developed democracies, women's participation and representation in political positions seems to be minimal. This largely undermines women's ability to benefits from the profound transformation that human societies had witnessed in recent decades. Thus, women representation at all levels of decision making institutions and process in countries across the world remains a major obstacle to enhancing inclusive development has indicated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: World and regional averages of women in parliaments, 1995 and 2015



Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, IPU (2015).

As Lawal and Ojo (2008; 332) argued, the problem of women's low participation in politics and decision making positions is not particular to a region, clime or religious creed. Observations have revealed a low and disproportionate representation of women in governance at both the national and international levels. It was not until 2008 that the two leading political parties in the United States had women contenders at the highest level of politics with then Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY) contending the Democratic Party nomination for president, which she lost to Senator Barack Obama; and Sarah Palin, then Republican governor of Arkansas chosen as the Republican Party first ever presidential running mate at the same time (Sharrow, Strolovitch, Heaney, Masket and Miller, 2016: 394-395; Carroll and Dittmar, 2010).

While there seems to be no formal legal barriers to women's political participation in most countries of the world, as dictated by the UN Women's Bill of Right of 1985, however, in practice, there are often formidable obstacles to women's active participation in politics and governance. Although politics has traditionally been masculine in nature, however, women have found their attempts at breaking the barriers largely unwelcoming by society especially in the context of hostile religious and patriarchal values.

In Nigeria, as elsewhere, religion and patriarchal values seem to be instruments of women domination and exclusion from politics. In cohort with others, they constitute factors constraining women active participation in politics. As Aina (1998) notes, the Nigerian society has patriarchy as its major feature. With patriarchal values and the infusion of religion into politics, the Nigerian political setting displays an unabashed preference for men dominance in politics and political leadership and aid the suppression of women's political aspirations and ambitions. It is within this context that the issue of affirmative action, gender equality and women empowerment are elevated to position of importance in public discourse. However, promises of gender mainstreaming in Nigeria's politics to say the least, remains at the level of policy discourse.

With respect to Kwara State, North-Central Nigeria, women have not fared better as it relates to participation in politics at the highest level. While Kwara women often play multiple roles within the family, community and the society at large, but there still remains a lot of gender discrimination in the public sphere where women are marginalised in the political processes. Women in Kwara State are often subjected to disparaging comments and face public criticism while engaging in politics, especially while contesting for higher level political positions. This was the case in the 2011 governorship election wherein the candidacy of former Senator Gbemisola Rukayat Saraki became subject of public discourse conducted through the lenses of patriarchy and religion (Islam). It is against this background that this study examines the impacts of patriarchy and religion in relation to women's political participation in Kwara State politics. To this end, the central objective of this study is to examine how patriarchy and religious impacts women participation in politics (elective and appointive) in the State.

Conceptual clarification and literature review

The term "patriarchy" has been reformulated and deployed in a few decades to explain the genesis and condition of men's domination of women in societal life (Makama 2013: 117). Originally used to explain the power of the father as head of household, "patriarchy" was deployed within the post-1960s feminism discourse to analyse the systematic organisation of man superiority and women subordination

(Aina 1998). Patriarchy literally means “the rule of the father” (Ferguson, 1999: 1048; Green, 2010: 969) and it has its roots in the Greek word patriarch which means head of the tribe. Patriarchy owes its original prominence to “the testament” accounts of the Bible where the head of the twelve tribes of Israel were referred to as patriarchs (Aboribo and Oguoe, 2007: 33). In contemporary times, patriarchy is generally deployed to explain social system in which power is wielded by adult men (Meagher, 2011: 441, Giddens and Griffiths, 2006: 473, Boynton and Malin, 2005: 453).

Deriving from the above, Okpe (2005) avers that patriarchy is a pattern of hierarchical ordering that cut across political, economic, cultural, industrial and financial facets, under which the substantial number of higher positions in society are either occupied and controlled by men. Therefore, any system that gives effect to an order which accords men undue prominence over women is considered patriarchal. It is within this context, that this study conceives patriarchy as a system of societal sanctioned male authority, which enhances men dominance over women through the system of social, political, cultural and economic institutions.

Philosophers, theologians, sociologists and other scholars interested in an aspect of life have defined religion in ways that suit their purpose (Okorie, 2009: 63). McHenry (1992: 509) conceived of religion as a particular modality or set of systems in which doctrine, myths, rituals, sentiments and other similar elements are interconnected. Alanamu (2007: 43) suggests two ways through which religion can be understood. The first, relates to the material sense in which religions can be conceived as establishment (institutions and officials), social groups and movements whose primary interest are found in the context of religion. The second, relates to the spiritual sense, which manifests in our daily lives. From this precept, religion relates to the idea of transcendence, supernatural realities and the sacred as a system of language and practice that organises the world that has to do with what is deemed sacred and the ultimate conditions of existence (Alanamu 2007: 43; Egwu 2002: 19-20).

As it relates to partisan participation in politics, women seem to share common faith irrespective of political, economic and social development and advancement of countries. While appreciating improvement in representation that have been recorded in recent time, however, (Yang and Lee, 2016: 464) note that when compared with men, fewer women have competed for positions of national leadership. Women participation in politics and representation in political position continue to be minimal and the political space restricted. Women continue to be underrepresented in higher posts in all facets of social life. This occurs despite their proven abilities as leaders and agents of change, as well as their right to participate on equal terms in

democratic governance (Amusan, 2014). The position by Allen and Savigny (2016: 999-1000) that gender manifest in all organisations and is performed, negotiated, contested, constructed and reconstructed in a complex set of social interaction underlines the significance of gender role play and how it entrench discrimination against women in social life across societies (Amoateng, Heaton and Kalule-Sabiti, 2014).

Discourse about women representation and representativeness in electoral politics has gained ascendancy (Sharrow, Strolovitch, Heaney, Masket and Miller, 2016; Carroll and Dittmar, 2010; Chaney, 2012; Mackay, 2004; 2003; Mackay, Myers and Brown, 2003). However, much of the discourse had focused more on symbolic representation of women especially as it relates to numbers in parliaments against substantive representation within the public political sphere and how this impact the protection and advancement of women's rights and interest (Rumbul, 2016: 64). Underscoring this position using the much touted success story of Rwanda, Burnet (2011: 305) notes that the Rwandan case has revealed that rise in representation of women does not approximate enhance statutory protection of women's right nor enhance the democratic nature of the political terrain. The position should not be interpreted as undermining the advancement in representation that women has achieved in Rwanda and across countries and regions of the world. On the contrary it shows the pitfall of over vaporization of symbolic representation in electoral positions over substantive representation of women voices, interests and positions in social and political discourse as it relates to public policy, power structure and institutions.

With reference to the Nigerian context, Omotola (2007: 37) notes that the general agreement is that women have consistently been treated as the weaker sex, marginalized, and discriminated against in all facets of social life. The political marginalization of women in Nigeria has played out across the nation's history of democratic representation and participation. While several reasons has been adduced as informing political marginalization and suppression of women, few stands out. The notable are constitutional inadequacies, lack of political will to advance women interests, low level of education, economic empowerment, religion and of course tradition of patriarchy. Omotola (2007: 38) gives particular importance to the salience of traditional belief and value system and how religious belief, value and practice reinforce tradition to entrench male dominance in social life and by corollary political participation and representation.

The plight of Nigerian women as it relates to election into important position has been anything but cheerful. In the 2011 general elections only 8 women get elected into the Senate against 101 men. For the House of Representatives 19 women were

elected against 341 men. In the 2015 general elections 14 women were elected into the House of Representatives and 7 women into the Senate. Since the return into democratic rule in 1999, no women has been elected President/Vice-President of the Republic, no women get elected as State Governor. No women has emerged Speakers/Deputy Speakers House of Representatives and none has emerged President/Deputy President of the Senate. With this un-impressive statistics, it will not be out of place to conclude that the challenges that face women as it relates to politics and political participation in Nigeria are still very much with them (Olurode, 2013).

Theoretical position

This study is anchored on the Gender and Development (GAD) approach. The framework focuses on the socially constructed basis of differences between men and women and the need to challenge existing gendered roles and relations (Reeves and Baden, 2000: 32). The approach was influenced by writing of feminist scholars like Elson (1979) and Oakley (1972). These scholars emphasized the skewed social relationship between men and women and deployed it to explain the basis of gendered role play and subordination of women in society (Moser 1993). The GAD framework calls for a synergy of the issues of materialist political economy and the radical feminist concerns of patriarchy and ideology. Taking a cue from the radical feminist approach², the GAD framework posits that women's position in society is highly impacted by their material conditions of life and by their standing in national, regional and global economies. GAD also underscores the view that women are impacted by the form of patriarchal power is prevalent in their societies whether at the national, community and household levels. Given its foundation in radical political economies, the perspective posits that women's material conditions and patriarchal authority are both defined and maintained by socially accepted beliefs and values which codify women's and men's roles and duties in particular society.

GAD adopts a pincher approach to the analysis of issue as it relates to women and development. First it investigates women's economic conditions and class position, and secondly, the patriarchy structures that define and maintain women's domination. The focus is on relationship between women and men, as against sole focus on women. Gender relations are conceived as the main determinant of women's standing in society. Because it is socially informed modes of behaviour the

² *This approach, according to Simone de Beauvoir (1949), 'one is not born as a woman, but becomes so'. This connotes that woman's second class citizen in any society is socially constructed and natural fact. The theory therefore is of the opinion that women may free themselves from this social construct that reduced them to social and economic inferiority.*

social construction of gender can be modified if desired. The GAD framework dealt with the linkage between gender and class and the social construction of their defining features. It is on this ground that the GAD approach has been criticised for focusing more on the social differentiation between men and women while neglecting the bonds and roles between them. Notwithstanding the noted criticism, the gender and development framework is essential to this study as it understands the differential impacts of development policies and practices on women and men and takes women as agents, not just as recipients, of development.

Study Area and study population

The study area for this research is Kwara State, which was created on 27th May, 1967. Named the West Central State at its creation, the name was later changed to 'Kwara', a local name for the River Niger that runs through the northern edge of the state. With its capital at Ilorin, Kwara occupies 36,825 square kilometres. It is bordered in the north by Niger State; south by Oyo, Osun and Ekiti States, east by Kogi State and west it shared international boundary with Benin Republic. The population for this study comprises of all males and females above 18 years and who can participate in politics. Four local government areas namely: Ilorin West, Ilorin South, Ilorin East and Asa Local Governments were selected for this study. Although, there are sixteen local government areas all classified into 3 senatorial districts in Kwara state, however, the scope of study is limited to Kwara Central Senatorial District. The choice was informed by the fact that with Moro Local Government in Kwara North Senatorial District, these councils make up the Ilorin Emirate. Ilorin Emirate is the southern-most edge of Sokoto Caliphate that came about as a result of the 19th century Jihad of Uthmanu Dan Fodio. Given the centrality of religion (Islam) in the caliphate and its emirate system, Islam loom large in the communal and social of the people of Ilorin. Thus, Ilorin represents a good setting for assessing the impacts of religion and patriarchy on women's participation in politics in Nigeria.

Data collection and analysis

The study utilizes both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data was collected through the administration of questionnaire. Sample of 480 respondents was drawn from the study population. The simple random sampling technique was adopted. To this end, a sample of 120 respondents were drawn from each of the four local government areas that makes up Kwara Central Senatorial District. The questionnaire is structured into section A and B with close ended and open ended questions. Section A questions generates information on respondents' bio data while section B questions elicits information on respondents' perception on the impact of patriarchy and religion on women's political participation in Kwara politics. Secondary data was sourced from journal articles; books; chapter in books;

newspapers; and newsmagazines. The questionnaires data was analysed using both the descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The descriptive tool used are; frequency distribution table and histogram while the chi square was employed for testing the formulated hypotheses.

The chi-square (χ^2) formula is given as follows

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{f_o - f_e}{f_e}^2$$

Where f_o = is the Frequency Observed

f_e = Frequency Expected

The observed chi-square for each of the tabulated data are compared with the expected chi-square and the table value of the degree of freedom is determined by $(r-1) (c-1)$ alpha level (0.05). In the test of the hypotheses the following are used;

H_o = Null Hypothesis

H_1 = Alternative Hypothesis

Where H_o is hypothesis of a complete opposite of our basic assumption and H_1 is used to control and study all calculation that would be directed to H_o . The formula is;

$$\chi^2 > \chi^2_{0.05} = H_0 \text{ is rejected.}$$

Data presentation and analysis

Out of the 580 questionnaires distributed, 400 was selected for analysis as others were not appropriately filled or returned.

Table 1: Socio-Economic characteristics of respondents by sex

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Male	164	41%
Female	236	59%
Total	400	100%

Source: Researchers' survey, 2015

Table 1, above shows the distribution of the respondents by sex. As depicted 164 (41%) of the respondents are males, while 236 (59%) are females. The result shows that female respondents are more than male respondents.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by marital status

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	72	18%
Married	296	74%
Divorced	23	5.75%
Widowed	9	2.25%
Total	400	100%

Source: Researchers' survey, 2015

Table 2 gives the distribution of respondents by marital status. It shows that 296 (74%) of the respondents are married, 72 (18%) of the respondents are unmarried, 23 (5.75%) of the respondents are divorced and the remaining 9 (2.25%) are widowed.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by age

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Below 20	38	9.5%
21 – 30	141	35.25%
31 – 40	144	36%
41 and above	77	19.25%
Total	400	100%

Source: Researchers' survey, 2015

The table 3 shows the age distribution of respondents. Of the 400 respondents, 144 (36%) are in the age bracket of 31-40; 141 (35.25%) are in the age range of 21-30 years; 77 (19.25%) are 41 years and above while 38 (9.5%) are below 20 years old. The table indicates that those below 40 years constitute the bulk of respondents for the study.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by occupation

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Student	89	22.25%
Unemployed	56	14%
Self-employed	105	26.25%
Private firm employees	43	10.75%
Government employees	107	26.75%
Total	400	100%

Source: Researchers' survey, 2015

The table 4 shows the distribution of respondents by occupation. 107 (26.75%) of the respondents are government employees, followed by 105 (26.25%) who are self-employed, 89 (22.25%) of the respondents are students, 56 (14%) of the respondents are unemployed, while 43 (10.75%) of the respondents are working in private firms.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents by educational qualification

Status	Frequency	Percentage
PRE-SSCE	7	1.75%
SSCE/WAEC	73	18.25%
NCE/OND	215	53.75%
HND/BSc	84	21%
Others	21	5.25%
Total	400	100%

Source: Researcher's Survey, 2015

Table 5 indicates the educational status of the respondents. Of the respondents, 215 (53.75%) possessed NCE/OND certificate. 84 (21%) of the respondents have HND/BSC certificate, 73 (18. 25%) of the respondents have SSCE certificate and 21 (5.25%) of the respondents have other certificates.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents by religion

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Islam	291	72.75%
Christianity	109	27.25%
ATR	0	0%
Total	400	100%

Source: Researcher’s Survey, 2015

Table 6 shows that 291 (75.75%) of the respondents are Muslims and 109 (27.25%) of the respondents are Christians. None of the respondents is a traditionalist. From the table it can be deduced that respondents are adherents of Islam and Christianity. The larger percentage of the respondents are Muslims, this is not surprise giving that Ilorin is largely seen as bastion of Islam at the southern fringe of the Sokoto Caliphate.

Figure 2: Perception of respondents on how existing political structures in their community make them feel about the other gender

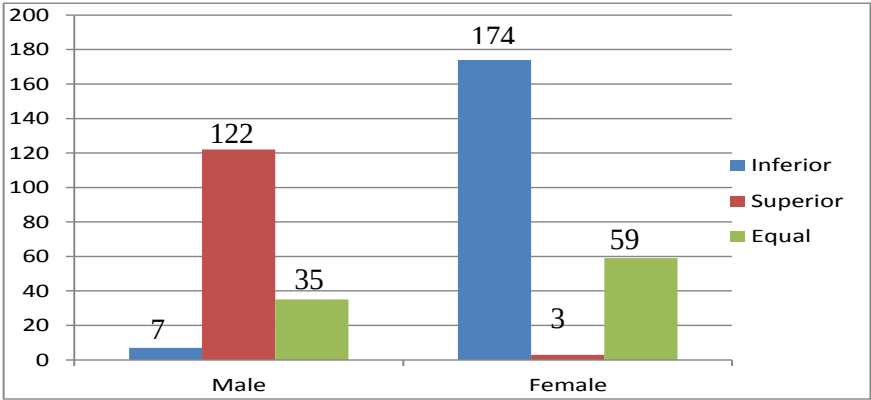


Figure 2 above depicts respondents’ view on how political structure(s) in their community make them feel about the opposite gender. As the diagram shows, 122 males representing (30.5%) all respondents expressed believe of superiority to the opposite sex. 3 females representing (0.75%) all respondents expressed feeling of superiority to the male sex. 7 males representing (1.75%) of all respondents believed

that they are inferior to female. However, 174 females representing (43.5%) of all respondents expressed the view that they are inferior to their male counterpart. 35 males representing (8.75%) of all respondents and 59 females representing (14.75%) of all respondents note that both sex are equal in status and standing in society. From the foregoing results, it can be deduced that more of female respondents feel inferior to the male gender, while more of male respondents expressed position that they are superior to female folks.

Figure 3: Respondents’ opinion on whether they can contest for any political office without criticism from the people on the basis of their gender.

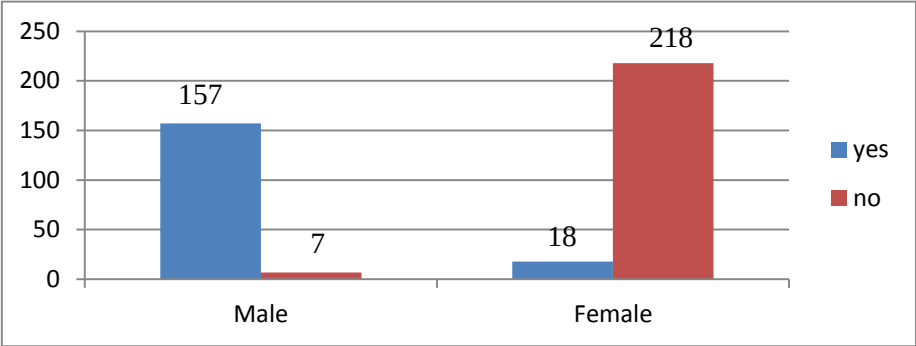


Figure 3, presents views expressed by respondents on whether their political aspiration will not attract criticism from the public based on their gender. As the figure indicates, 18 females representing (4.5%) of all respondents and 157 males representing (39.25%) of all respondents were of the opinion that they can contest for any political office in their community without facing public criticism that is informed by their gender. On the contrary, 218 females representing (54.5%) of all respondents and 7 males representing (1.75%) of all respondents expressed the position that their political aspiration (attempt at contesting political positions) will likely attract criticism on the basis of their gender. The result highlight that many females expressed the position that their attempt at contesting political position will attract public criticism that is informed gender consideration.

Figure 4: Do you think there is gender discrimination in your community?

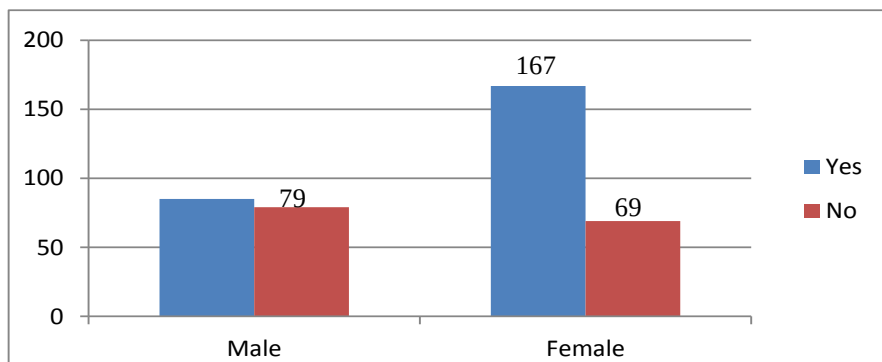
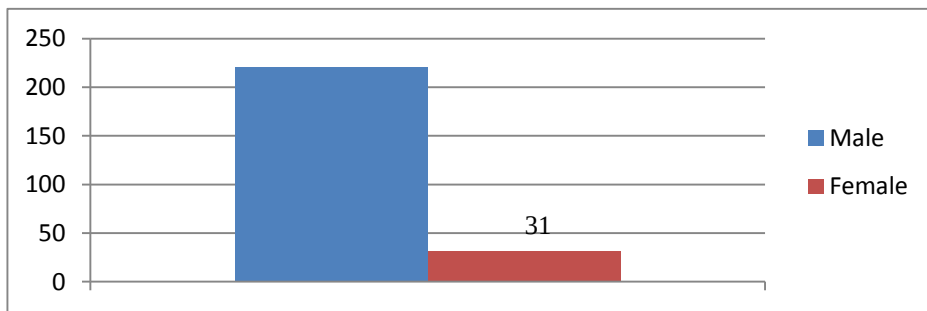


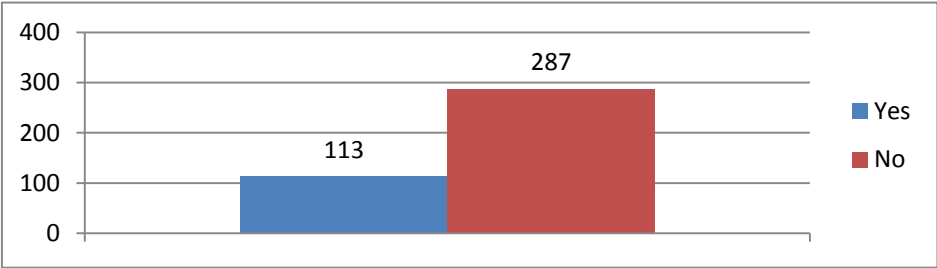
Figure 4, above shows respondents' view on whether their perceived gender discrimination in their community. As the diagram depicts, 85 males representing (21.25%) of all respondents' and 167 females representing (41.75%) of all respondents' expressed the view that there are elements/expression of gender discrimination in their community. 79 males representing (19.75%) of all respondents and 69 females representing (17.25%) of all respondents believed that there is no gender discrimination in their community.

Figure 5: Which gender is considered superior in your community?



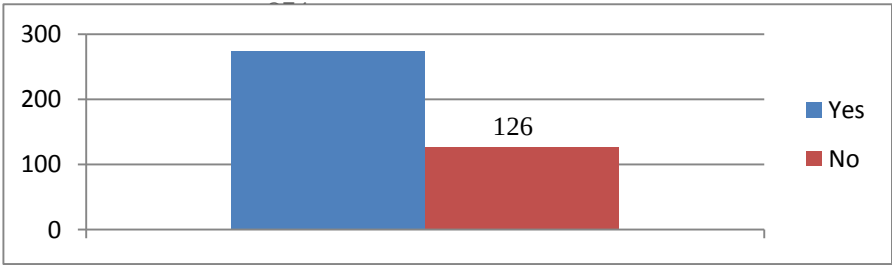
On the question of which gender is considered superior in the community, 252 respondents provided answer. Of these number, 221 respondents making up (87.7%) of all the respondents that answered the question believed that the male gender is considered superior in their community. On the other hand 31 respondents, representing (12.3%) of the respondents that answered the question believed that the female gender is considered superior. The result shows that a greater number of the respondents that answer the question held the position that male is considered superior in their community.

Figure 6: Perception of respondents on whether their religion allows for Women participation in politics



As depicted in figure 6 above, 113 respondents representing (28.3%) of all respondents believed that their religion and its principles do not expressly prohibit women from participating in politics. On the other hand, 287 respondents representing (71.7%) of all respondents expressed the view that their religion and its principles prohibit women's participation in partisan politics. Thus, the result highlights that a larger percentage of the respondents are of the opinion that religion teaching, principles and values restrict women's participation in politics.

Figure 7: Do you think women should be allowed to participate in politics?



When asked whether they think women should be given the chance to partake actively in politics, 274 respondents, representing (68.5%) of all respondents still affirmed their support for women's participation in politics, while 126 respondents representing (31.5%) of all respondents did not support women's political participation. This shows that while religion and cultural practice do have the potential to hinder women's chance to actively engage in partisan politics, a large number of respondents are favourably disposed to seeing women partake actively in the political process.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀: There is no significant relationship between patriarchy and women's political participation.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between patriarchy and women's political participation.

Table 7: Observed Frequency Table (FO)

VARIABLES	YES	NO	I DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
Male	88	29	47	164
Female	183	22	31	236
Total	271	51	78	400

Source: Researchers' survey, 2015

$$X^2 = \left\{ \frac{F_o - F_e}{F_e} \right\}^2$$

$$X^2 = 25.407$$

Degree of freedom = Df

$$df = (R-1) (C-1)$$

$$(2-1) (3-1)$$

$$1 \times 2 = 2$$

$$df = 2$$

$$\alpha = 0.05$$

$$X^2 = 25.407$$

$$\alpha = 5.991$$

Decision rule

At 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom df equal to 2, the chi-square calculated value of 25.407 is greater than the critical value 5.991. The value is significant and falls within the rejection area. We therefore reject H₀ and accept H₁. This means that there is a significant relationship between patriarchy and women's political participation.

Hypothesis Two

H₀: There is no significant relationship between religion and women's political participation.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between religion and women's political participation.

TABLE 8: Observed Frequency Table (FO)

VARIABLES	YES	NO	I DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
Male	121	21	22	164
Female	200	16	20	236
Total	321	37	42	400

Source: Researchers' Survey, 2015

$$X^2 = \frac{f_o - f_e}{f_e} \Bigg\}$$

$$X^2 = 7.49$$

Degree of freedom = df

$$df = (r-1) (c-1)$$

$$(2-1) (3-1)$$

$$1 \times 2 = 2$$

$$df = 2$$

$$\alpha = 0.05$$

$$X^2 = 7.49$$

$$\alpha = 5.991$$

Decision Rule

At 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom equal to 2, the chi-square calculated value of 7.4917 is greater than the critical value 5.991. The value difference is significant and falls within the rejection area. We therefore reject H0 and accept H1. Thus, there is a significant relationship between religion and women's political participation.

Hypothesis Three

H0: There is no significant linkage between patriarchy and religion as it relate to how they impact women's political participation.

H1: There is a significant linkage between patriarchy and religion as it relate to how they impact women's political participation.

Table 9: Observed Frequency Table (FO)

VARIABLES	YES	NO	I DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
Male	99	15	50	164
Female	187	19	30	236
Total	286	34	80	400

Source: Researchers' Survey, 2015

$$X^2 = \frac{f_o - f_e}{f_e} \Bigg\}$$

$$X^2 = 20.237$$

Degree of freedom = df

$$df = (r-1) (c-1)$$

$$(2-1) (3-1)$$

$$1 \times 2 = 2$$

$$df = 2$$

$$\alpha = 0.05$$

$$X^2 = 20.237$$

$$\alpha = 5.991$$

Decision Rule

At 0.05 level of significance and at degree of freedom of equal to 2, the chi-square calculated value of 20.237 is greater than the critical value 5.991. The value difference is significant and falls within the rejection area. We therefore reject H0 and accept H1. This means there is a significant linkage between patriarchy and religion in relation to how they impact on women's political participation in Kwara politics.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from this study reveals that women's active participation in politics especially as it relates to contest for elective position in Kwara Central Senatorial District and by extension the state in general is low. Women in the study area and by extension the State, still defers to their parents and spouse when making critical political decisions. This translate to a fact that patriarchal values still hold sway and impact on women decision in general and decision on political participation in particular. Patriarchy and religion are close bedfellows and both work in manner that they restrict women freedom, ability to make independent decisions especially those that involve choice on whether to partake actively in politics or not. The position by Hayes (2011: 134) that gender stereotypes can be potent factor that shape public perceptions especially as it relates to women candidacy in elective positions reinforce the view that patriarchal values influence public position on women participation in partisan politics. With particular reference to Nigeria, Lai Olurode (2013: 24) notes that patriarchy remains a potent force in our society and the core values that sustain patriarchy are rooted in culture and they do not change as rapid as one might have expected.

The negative publicity and poor reception of the candidacy of former Senator Gbemi Rukayat Saraki in the 2011 gubernatorial election in Kwara State and the frenzy with which Muslim clerics used their public preaching to campaign against her was a reflection of public attitude against women vying for elective posts in Kwara State. This is not minding the fact that she is the daughter of the Late Olusola Saraki, the

godfather of Kwara politics until his death. Anchoring their antagonism on a hadith in which it was reported that Prophet Muhammed notes that, 'A nation which entrust its affairs into the hands of a woman, such nation will not prosper' (Bukhari 9, 88: 219). While this study affirms that there is a significant relationship between religion and women's participation in politics, however, it is important to reiterate that religion texts (in particular the Quran) did not contain any categorical pronouncements barring women from political participation in particular and social life of their community in general.

Muslim respondents who believed that Islam is against women's political participation cited the two verses: 'Men are in charge of women, because Allah hath made the one of them to excel the other (Chapter 4 Verse 34) and 'And they (women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in kindness, and men are a decree above them (Chapter 2 Verse 228). From these two verses, one would realise that men (as husbands) are responsible for taking care of women (as wives) and not men (as leaders) taking care of women (as subjects). The Quran contains verses that may be interpreted to permit or encourage women's participation in politics, such as the story of the Queen of Sheba without ever undermining, the significance of her position and responsibility as a leader (Mernissi, 1993 trans by Lakeland). Furthermore, the Hadith contains many instances of women performing public leadership roles. Aisha Abu Baki, one of Prophet Muhammad's wives do accompanied the prophet to battles, and even led an army at the battle of the Camel. This finding is in line with the findings of Doumato and Posusney (2003); Kateeb (1999); Jarallah (1996); and Gazali (1990), who all argued that Islam views a women as playing an integral role in all aspects of society. Thus, the use of texts of the Quran or Hadith to support the position that Islam is against women's participation in politics represents a dis-ingenuous way of advancing patriarchal values and entrenching male dominant position in political and social life. This is particularly the case in Muslim dominated northern Nigeria, wherein politics is seen as men's exclusive preserves due to cultural factors that a dis-ingenuous interpretation of texts of the Quran and Hadiths were deployed to reinforce and gives legitimacy to by religious leaders (Ekundayo and Ama, 2014; Abidi, 2013; Oni, 2013).

Conclusion

This study examines the linkage between patriarchy and religion (Islam) and how both impact on women's participation in politics in Kwara State. The study finds that patriarchy permeates religion through the skewed interpretation of religious text (Quran and Hadith) in ways as to advance the entrenchment of male dominance in political and social life not just in the study area but across most of Northern Nigeria. However, it is important to notes that neither Islam nor Christianity disallows women's active participation in politics inclusive of contesting for important political

positions. Rather what has been the practice is the use of misinterpretation of religious text (Quran and Hadith) to reinforce patriarchal stereotypes that women are not suitable to occupy important leadership positions on the basis of gender categorization.

The study recommends vigorous enlightenment campaign by stakeholders to drive home the value of respect for the equality of women in social relations and highlights the benefits that society stands to gain if it support active participation of and encourage women to seek for elective political positions. It call for institution of affirmative policies that are specifically targeted at clearing the barriers that impede politically active women from the realisation of their political ambitions. It is also important that Muslim clerics through their sermon and preaching highlight Quranic positions that support women participation in political and social life in their community. More than these, it is important to note that the task of enhancing women social status and advancing their active participation in politics should not focus solely on numbers of women in elective and appointive positions, but should be about advancing women's substantive participation in political processes in their community for socio-economic development.

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