GENDER AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE SOUTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON (1990-2009)

BY

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AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

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AUGUST, 2015

DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis entitled " Gender and political participation in the south west region of Cameroon, 1990-2009" has been carried out by me in the department of Political science and International Studies. The information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this thesis was previously presented for another degree at this or any other institution.

_____ _____ _____

Name of Student Signature Date

CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled 'Gender and Political Participation in the South West Region of Cameroon, 1990-2009' by Ruth Fanny KINGE meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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Dean Postgraduate School — Date……..……...

DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to my late Mum, Mrs Emmah Lymunga Ndumbe (RIP), and

To my children, Krys Ian and Kayla Lymunga Mbafor

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My profound gratitude goes to God Almighty who made the completion of this research work possible. My heartfelt gratitude goes to my Supervisors, Professor Ejembi A. Unobe (Chairman supervisory committee), Professor Ayo Dunmoye and Professor Kayode Omojuwa. They provided me with the much needed intellectual guide required for such an endeavor.

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ABSTRACT

Despite the role women play in the well-being of a country, women in the South West Region of Cameroon are seen to be marginalized and largely excluded from the political processes including decision making processes in the region. The women of the South West region of Cameroon are seen to command limited economic resources and see their place in the home. This study examines the impact of socio-economic status as defined by income and educational levels on women's political participation in the South West region of Cameroon. It argues that although there are constitutional provisions and public policies which guarantee women's rights in the country, socio-economic factors constitute barriers to women's participation in politics in the south west region of Cameroon. The study is anchored on the premise of liberal feminism as the theory. The theory posits that all people are created equal and that culture and the attitude of individuals are responsible for promoting gender conflict. Its relevance to the study is reflected in its relative importance accorded to work and education as prerequisites for sustainable development. Data were derived from both secondary and primary sources which included existing documents on the subject matter, text books, journal publications and questionnaires respectively. In terms of analysis, qualitative data were analyzed descriptively while simple statistical tools were adopted in analyzing quantitative data (questionnaires). The study found out that there exists a gender gap in political participation in the region. It also found out that political participation is determined to a large extent by socioeconomic status in the south west region of Cameroon. The study emphasizes that the onus of redefining public and private spaces to ensure gender balance cannot be on women alone. It suggests collective efforts from all in the society in order to facilitate effective participation of women in politics. It further suggests that the need for the facilitation of the active engagement of the female population in economic activities in various fields of endeavor is imperative. This can be done by ensuring access to business capital, extension and other business and development services for female entrepreneurs by deliberate government policy and programs. This will boost women's socio-economic empowerment.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BPFA : Beijing Platform of Action

CBSPS : Central Bureau of Statistics and Population Studies

CEDAW : UN Convention on the elimination of All forms of discrimination Against women

CENRWOR: Center for women's research

CFA : Central African Franc (frs)

CIDA : Canadian International Development Agency

CPDM : Cameroon People's Democratic Movement

CNU : Cameroon National Union

CWA : Catholic women's association

ESCC : Economic, social and cultural commission.

FSCL : First School Leaving Certificate

GDP : Gross domestic product

GCE : General Certificate of education

IWRAW : International women's rights action watch

SDF : Social Democratic Front

SES : Socio economic status

SPSS : Statistical package for social sciences

MINEPAT : Ministry of Economic planning and territorial Administration

UNHRC : United Nations Human Rights Commission

FIDA : International Federation of Women Lawyers

UDC : Cameroonian Democratic Union

UNDP : National Union for Democracy and Progress

UNDP : United Nations Development Program

USAID : United Nations Agency for International Development

UNESCO : United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0: Introduction

In recent times, nations of the world have witnessed increased discussions and heated debates on gender issues with emphasis on women liberation, emancipation empowerment, protection of the rights of women, the rights of lesbians, rights of gay, bisexual and transgender issues. These gender discussions and debates have been devoted to gender identity and gender representation.These gender discussions and debates have been devoted to gender identity and gender representation(gender identity refers to the simple ability to label oneself man or woman. While gender representation relates to one's ability to control or influence decision making in terms of resource and political control). In general, men and women differ in their activities regarding access and control over resources, participating in decision processes and in addition are involved in social and political activism.

It is widely accepted, that the ability of a nation to establish a just, equitable, balanced, viable, healthy and prosperous society depends largely on an all-inclusive political process and economic activities of the nation. In the wake of democratic governance, gender discrimination remains a major issue in political processes and socio-economic development in most societies in the globe. Nevertheless, few women participate in political activities or hold

relevant decision-making positions. This brings into question, the representative nature of existing political structures.In view of the various forms of discrimination inherent in gender studies, this study looks at women and political participation. Available data on women participation in politics and positions of power, decision making in the public and private spheres and civil societies demonstrate that despite efforts, initiatives and operational strategies put in place, resistance to the advancement of women in positions and professions and fields traditionally dominated by men still persist.

At global level, the gender gap in parliamentary seats revealed that women constitute 19.2% in the House of Representatives, and 17.8% in the senate. (Inter-parliamentary Union, 2009). This severe gap along gender lines in socio-economic and political processes has gave rise to many movements, theories, declarations from state governments and institutions which are geared towards minimizing the gap. Among these declarations are the 1979 UN Convention on the elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which addressed issues pertaining to the rights of women to education, inheritance, credit and opportunities on equal bases with men. It also reaffirmed the equality of human rights for women and men in societies and in the family.In the same vein, it obliged States to take actions against the social causes of women's inequality; called for the elimination of laws, stereotype practices and prejudices that impair the wellbeing of women (UNDP, 2005). The World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 at Vienna affirmed that "women's rights are human rights" (Delahanty, 2005:5-10). The Beijing

platform of Action in 1999 re-emphasized the protection of women from domestic violence and sexual harassments.Inglehart and Norris (2003)maintained that gender gap in important areas of human capabilities has impacted negatively on the lives of women and girls. It has engendered severe gap in political participation with more men significantly involved in a number of outlets than women such as strikes, campaigns, demonstrations, contacting political officials and party memberships.

In Africa, this gap in political participation along gender line works against women, marginalizes them in both socioeconomic and political spheres. It has left women economically weak, politically disadvantaged, and largely excluded from the structures of political power in their societies. Howard(2006:114), argued that African women are the invisible farmers of African agriculture because of their extraordinary labor contributions to farming noting that rural women work 2-6hrs longer than rural men daily.He contends that development planners fail to recognize the important role of women in the development process. This situation no doubt undermines the socio-economic and political development of African women.

In Cameroon, gender disparity and the marginalization of women still persist despite the significant successes associated with women's participation in the socioeconomic and political process of the nations of the world. In a patriarchal society like Cameroon, women are still seen to be at the margin of the society and are considered as child producers and family caregivers in

order to perpetuate their husbands' family line. On the socioeconomic status of women in Cameroon (all ten regions inclusive), the government of Cameroon, contended inparagraph 13 of its report,to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 2008 that women workers in Cameroon suffer from various forms of discrimination. It noted that 31% of the female population is economically active but that "the overwhelming majority of women are to varying degrees financially dependent on men", acknowledging that women are poorly represented among employees of businesses. The Government attributed this under representation to limited access to training, the reluctance to hire women, and "the confining of women to certain administrative roles and other sociological and family-related considerations" (ESCC, 2008).According to IWRAW (2001:1), illiteracy for women under 25 years is 29% against 15% for men. Women constitute more than 20% of workers in Cameroon, but only 5.2% are found in skilled jobs.

In the wake of these developments, women in the south west region of Cameroon are still restricted in almost all important areas of human capabilities. Here, the status of a woman is still a reflection of the stereotype of cultural views of the woman's role in the society being that of child-raising and home-making. She is afforded limited opportunities to explore wider aspirations and attain her maximum potentials (especially in the socioeconomic and political spheres) outside these cultural stereotypical boundaries. This invariably has resulted in the girl-child being given little or no opportunities for further education. Abua & Fonchong, 2004 maintained that women tend to

have limited access to formal education because early marriages are often imposed on young girls. This structure is exacerbated by high level of women's inaccessibility to quality education. It is worthy of note that Cameroonian women acquired the rights to vote and be voted for in 1946, and this took effect with the realization of women only being able to vote men into office. Until the 1980s, the percentage of women in the National Assembly remained below 5%. In 1997, the percentage of women in political leadership in Cameroon, stood at 5% ;from2002-2005 it stood at 10%,and 2008-2010 it stood at 13% . Specifically in 2008 only 10 of the 180 members of the National Assembly were women (IPU,2009, Atanga, 2009:9, Abia and Fonchingong 2004:7). There are only 6 female mayors of the 30 mayors in the South West region of Cameroon. There has never been a woman Governor for any region neither has there been any woman Attorney General. For the particular case of the south west region, apart from the fact that there has never been a female governor, the number of female councilors stood at 154 out of 877 from 2003-2007. This low representation of women at various branches of government is at variance with the expectations of Article 25 and 26 of the covenant of the United Nations Human Rights Commission. (FIDA, 2008:2). It is also at variance with the BPFA target of 30% women representation in political institutions in world societies. The south west region of Cameroon has never had a female governor. Even where women occupy political post it is often located at the lower ebb of power. The women of the south west region work as much as the men but majority of their works goes unaccounted for as they

are poorly represented in the area of decision making. Gender disparity is reflected in every aspect of life in the region as this incapacitates women making it impossible for them to contribute meaningfully to the political system that determines their existence. These expectations of international frameworks which aimed at minimizing or eradicating gender inequality were predicated on the hope that state parties would address the socio- economic problems of women's low participation in politics. It is against this background that this work sets out to examine the influence of socioeconomic status on women's political participation in the South west region of Cameroon.

1.1: Statement of the problem

Contemporarily, there have been global effortsmadeto address gender inequality in political participation with specific reference to women'ssocioeconomic and political empowerment. These efforts have basically been targeted at ending discrimination against women to ensure that women are empowered to compete favorably in all facets of nation building. These concerns led to the convocation of a conference on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in 1979 (CEDAW) and the Affirmative Action Initiative of the UN which came into limelight after the UN World Women Conference in Beijing in 1995. It is posited that the absence of women in political debates and decision-making processes distorts the appreciation of women's interests. Women's interests are not well defined because male representatives and women concerns and associations do not possess adequate

and appropriate knowledge (CENRWOR, 1994). Burns maintains that statistical evidences show that women's political participation is lower than that of men globally. Marshal (2002) posited that women's area of participation is dominant in their stereotyped roles example women are always placed in the lower ranks of political structures where their impact on issues that affect their well-being is insignificant. Despite the efforts aimed at minimizing inequality in political participation, the participation of women in political and decision making processes is still low worldwide. In Cameroon, women still face severe discrimination and exclusion from the country's political process amidst the clamors for gender equity in political participation. The gap in political participation along gender lines in Cameroon is eminent and has been persistent.The country still maintains a 13% female political representation. In the case of the south west region, looking at administration and politics, this region has never had a female governor, and has only had154 out of 877 councilors (Mudec group 2013) An investigation into the reasons for disproportion in political processes and structures in the south west region along gender lines cannot be overemphasized. This calls for the examination of the existing political structures, and socio-economic environment etc. Therefore, this study is an examination of the impact of socio-economic status (as defined by income and education) on women's political participation in the South west region of Cameroon. Narrowing the problem down therefore, the following research questions were addressed by the study

1.2: Research questions

i- What are the major factors that determine political participation in the South West region of Cameroon?

ii To what extent does socioeconomic status(income and educational levels) account for gender differentials in political participation in the region ?

iii To what extent do the differentials in socioeconomic status (income and educational levels)along gender lines affect women's political participation in the south west region of Cameroon?

iv- How can the effect of the differentials in socioeconomic status(income and educational levels) along gender lines on women political participation be addressed?

1.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are to

i-Identify the major factors that determine political participation in the South West Region of Cameroon.

ii- Examine the extent to which socioeconomic status (income and educational levels) account for gender differentials in political participation in the region

iii Examine the extent to which differences in socioeconomic status(income and educational levels) impact on women's political participation in the South West region.

iv- Present ways in which the effect of differences in socioeconomic status on women's political participation in the South West region can be addressed.

1.4 PROPOSITIONS

The study explored the following propositions:

i - Socio-economic status is a major determinant of political participation. Therefore, any gender that is discriminated against in terms of resource distribution will be at the lower level of political participation.

ii- Women political participation is determined by levels of income and education. The higher their levels of income and education, the higher their participation in politics and vice versa.

1.5: Rationale for the study

The status of women during pre-colonial times in Cameroon supported the notion of domesticity and narrowed the space available for women to participate in public life. Beginning from the colonial days and recently in the 19^{th} and 20^{th} century, this notion has changed with the proliferation of movements, theories, declarations and conventions that are geared towards addressing gender inequality in socio-economic and political spheres for developmental purposes in societies of the world. Some of the activities include the feminist activities in the UK and US which focus on the promotion of equal contract and property rights for women and opposed ownership of married women and their children by their husbands (Freedman and Estelle, 2003:10), in 1979 the UN convention on the elimination of all forms of

discrimination against women (CEDAW). Amidst these movements and conventions, nations of the world in acknowledgement have become signatories to conventions and made laws that promote gender equality in socio-economic and political spheres.In the specific case of Cameroon, the South West region served as the first point of call to the colonial imperialists given itsstrategic geographic location;it boarders the gulf of guinea on the west (part of Atlantic ocean) constituting the coastal plains of Cameroon and hosted the first and many missionaries who came into the country through the coastal waters. In that capacity it served as the first settlement for the missionaries and later became the headquarters of Southern Cameroon (British Cameroon). According to Adams (2006) colonial encounters in the south West region of Cameroon affected women in complex and contradictory ways, noting that many colonial policies spread western notion of domesticity, constricting the space available for women to participate in public life;while other policies opened new opportunities to women for education, salaried employment, travel abroad, activism in local and international organizations. Considering the fact that women in the South West region were first exposed to such opportunities, it is expected that their socio-economic status would be higher as well as their participation in public life.

More so, Adams (2006) noted that education for girls and women was greatly encouraged and this was orchestrated by the growth of the number of female colonial officers in the administration in the region. Furthermore, the increase in education for girls and women was not accidental but a conscious effort to

increase women's access to education. Therefore, an increase in women's access to education, salaried jobs would ensure women's capacity to contribute to socio-economic and political processes in their societies and should only have gotten better as time changes. Thus the issues of gender relations with regards to articulating relevant ideas and understanding of the dynamics of gender inequality, formulation and evaluation of policies that affect it should be better with time in the South West region especially for women and for women in other regions in Cameroon;meaning that women in the South West region should have a higher level of participation in public life than other women in Cameroon. The reality on ground has been the reverse with fewer women participating in public life in the south west region.

This study argues that it is not just enough to adopt recommendations from conventions and international agreement but to fully understand, accept and implement them.

Therefore, gender inequality in political participation should be given utmostpriority as it constitutes severe constraints to the development of a society. Thus the justification for this studyis that it contributes to the vast and ever growing literature on gender studies, which view gender inequality in political participation as a formidable barrier to eliminating discrimination against women in socio-economic and political processes in their various societies.

This study provides an empirical study on the impact of socio-economic status on women political participation on south west region of Cameroon. This comes at a time when there is dire need for all groups in the country to make meaningful contributions to the socio-economic and political development. Furthermore, the high level of gender inequality in political participation in the South West region has consistently informed the formulation and execution of policies, programs and projects which exclude a reasonable portion of the population (women).

The study will help in educating and promoting an acceptable course (membership in political party, voting in elections etc) for political participation in theSouth West region by investigating and providing information on the factors that impact on women's political participation, and /or ensures gender equality in political participation in the South West region. The study has made available a comprehensive material on gender and political participation in the South West Region of Cameroon, with particular reference to the impact of socio-economic status on women's political participation in the region. Paying attention to minute details, it is evident that this study would arm students on gender studies, as well as policy makers who would need to design and formulate policies to promote effective gender strategies in political participation.

Some works in the area which include, Mungwa (2001) "Mastering political forces and structures for empowerment: challenges for women in post-independent Cameroon" examined the need for rooted commitment to the

political advancement of women in Cameroon within key political institutions. It concluded that there is the absence of meaningful commitment by political leaders within political structures and the low trends in women political participations. The present study examined factors influencing the political participation of women in South West region of Cameroon to facilitate the understanding of low trends in women's political participation. The present study further examined the impact of formal education on women's political participation with specific reference to women in the South West region. This is because formal education ensures political conscientization and inform the formulation of strategies which will promote greater women's participation in politics as presented in the various ratified human rights instruments since early 1990s.

Besides, it is the intension of this study that an analysis of this nature would highlight factors impacting on women's participation in politics and therefore establish the relationship between socio-economic factors and political participation of women in the South West region. The study is also informed by the zeal to contribute to researches on gender and political participation in Cameroon. It is therefore hoped that, by highlighting the factors which impact on women's political participation, and the impact of socio-economic factors on women's political participation in the South West region of Cameroon, the study provides a panacea for minimizing the severe gender gap in political participation in the South West Region and Cameroon at large.

1.6: Scope and location of the study area

The study specifically covers the South Western Region of Cameroon with a landmass of 245,571km2 and estimated population of 1,316,079 (2009 est) from 1990-2009.(CBSP, 2010) The period under study (1990-2009) marked the era of multiparty political landscape in Cameroon. This brought about political liberation and was greetedby the clamour for gender balance in the country's politics and decision making process. The emergence of the "New Deal" administration in Cameroon in 1982 significantly marked a period of political reawakening in gender issues in the 1980s and 1990s as the number of women voted into parliament increased, following the formation of several political parties and several general elections which came up during that period, the percentage of women voted into parliament constituted 13% in 2007. Between 1990-2009, the country held several elections including presidential and legislative and municipal elections in 1992, 97, 2002,2004 and 2007. This period is long enough to assess the level of gender equality in the region's political process. The study specifically covers three election periods since it cannot cover all of the elections namely 1992, 1997 and 2004. While factors that determine political participation in the South West region areexamined, the main focus of the study is the impact of socio-economic status as defined by income and educational levels on women's political participation in the South West region.

The study covered selected council areas in the South West region and a total of 1500 respondents were selected. The choice is informed by the high level of

gender inequality in the political process of the South West region and is exacerbated, by a high level of illiteracy and social injustice.

1.7: Limitation of the study

From the large variety of the sources of data for the study, it is worthy of note that problems were encountered in the course of data collection.These problems included; the reliability of official documents and data, since some of the statistical data varied in most government texts in most cases intended to suit official interest. More so, the area under study is multiethnic and multi linguistic in nature. Furthermore, some respondents felt they needed to be given remunerations for filling out questionnaires. They said it is waste of time as the government never takes them into consideration. In addition, many respondents failed to keep to appointments; as such the researcher spent more time and incurred extra financial cost going back and forth to retrieve questionnaires. Some female respondents had to seek permission from their spouses to fill out the questionnaires which in most cases influenced their responses to questions pertaining to finances, employment and marital status.

Using the descriptive statistical analysis, attempts were made to reduce the impact of these weaknesses on the analysis. However, data for this study are from a survey, hence, the quality of data and the results depended largely on the willingness of the respondents to answer truthfully the questions presented to them

1.8: Conceptual Clarification

Gender:

Gender issues in every discourse are often controversial because of their sensitive nature. This can be seen in the definition of the term ‘gender’ itself. Often people use the terms ‘sex’ and ‘gender interchangeably, but scholars have since established the clear dichotomy between both terms. While sex is the biological characteristics that define humans as male or female, gender is the economic, political and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being ‘male’ or ‘female’ (USAID, 2007) Though the concept of “gender” has been given different interpretations over time giving the diverse views of scholars in the field,feminist theories and political imperatives are centered upon the idea of significance of gender as a social force, in shaping all areas of life (socio-economic, political, cultural etc).

Furthermore, sex refers to the anatomical difference between man and woman. By contrast, the term gender is used to denote the social expectations of behavior, competency and status assigned according to biological sex and distinguished as “masculine” and “feminine” (Nicholson 1998, Pilcher and Whelehan 2004)Thus gender is a key social variable within which humans think about and organize their social activity. (Mannathoko,1992:71-91). Gender is evident through the social world shaping of how people think about themselves, guide their interactions with others and influence their work and family life; while “sex may be male or female, gender refers to the social naming of masculinity and feminism” Macionis and Plummer (2005:309). The

behavior, competence and status previously regarded as "natural" consequences of biological sex have thus been distinguished as discreet social characteristics. Nicholson, (1998:707-731) captured the essence of this distinction as she concludes that "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman" and sees gender as socially constructed roles of men and women in public and private life and as the economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female: the family, workplace and in public sphere.

Gender, is the socio-cultural category that refers to the expectations, attitudes and ideas that attach them to "male" and "female" used to distinguish the cultural and social characteristics of being a man and a woman. Some critics oppose this traditional view by questioning the conventional assumption that gender differences (and subordination) between men and women are rooted in their biological differences. Rather, they claimed that all the characteristics acquainted with masculinity such as rationality, aggression, domination and public life, are a result of social construction as well as the characteristics associated with femininity such as weakness, vulnerability, submission and privacy.

In other terms, masculinity and femininity become 'configurations' of gender practice since the social construction of gender is associated with characteristics of masculinity and femininity in an exclusive way from each other, the characteristics associated with masculinity are also attributed a meaning which is desirable. In contrast, femininity is associated with weakness

and submission becomes a value which is undesirable. Therefore, feminization of someone or something is defined as the subordination of that person, political entity, or idea, because values perceived as feminine are lower on the social strata than values perceived as natural or masculine. In that context, gender is seen as a reflection of cultural and biological differences, and the interpretation of sex differences is linked with social construction of meanings attributed among people.

Gender difference is seen as a manifestation of sexism, as a patriarchal creation used to rationalize the inequality between the sexes. Patriarchy is a social system based on male domination over women. It is a culture that promotes phallocentric ideology, which designates women as inferior beings and men as superior beings. Patriarchy is also seen as another term for male domination, which is established in religious, economic and biological concepts for the sole purpose of demonstrating male superiority and the deemed female inferiority.

In this vein, Fraser (1995:100), asserted that one of the most fundamental aspects of culture is the importance attached to men,noting societies of the world have always been a man-centered in nature. Further, the widespread presumption that women are not fully rational has been repeatedly used as a justification for their continued exclusion from public life. However, the relationship between the two concepts (sender and sex) has been perceived differently and the location of women's oppression in the exploitation of their biological sex, particularly their reproductive abilities. (Corrie,1999:246)Butler 1990, Pilcher and Whelehan 2004,) have all argued that what is identified as

biological sex is so imbued with and produced out of social meaning; that the social and biological can never be fully separated. That the vectors through which biology is investigated and described are infused with gendered social expectations. Despite the prolific argument with these complexities and the significant advancement of the distinction between sex and gender, the term gender is still often used to describe or denote implicitly innate value free and material categories. (Pilcher and Whelenhan ,2004). Thus, this study adopts the above definitions and descriptions of the term gender which include a whole sets of ideas, competence and behaviors of a particular sex e.g 'female' and qualities that are associated with men and women which are more socially and culturally, than biologically determined. It is within these descriptions that the study agreed that details on gender relations tend to include a strong element of inequality between men and women and this varies from society to society.

Political participation

Political participation has several definitions. But all these definitions have common characteristics situated within the limitations of activities that are geared towards influencing the "state" The political authority that exercises monopoly control over the means of coercion, whether in a democratic or non-democratic way. (Uhlaner, 2001) describes it thus " political participation is referred to activity by private citizens designed to influence government decision-making."Verba et al. (1995: 38) state that "by *political* participation we refer simply to activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action – either directly by affecting the making or implementation

of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies."

Political participation takes several forms amongst which include voting in national and local elections, working in campaigns, contacting public officials, attending political meetings, membership in political parties or clubs, engaging in illegal or legal protestsof which all are geared towards influencing government policies and actions. Pateman (1990)opined that political participation has effect on policy choices and outcomes and it ensures superior social outcomes because of participation's role in aggregating information and preferences. This study locates political participation within the realm of any activity which aims at influencing the structure of a government, the appointment of leaders, and the policies they execute. This process includes active and passive actions, collective or individual actions, legal or illegal, support or pressure groups actions, by which one or several persons try to influence the type of government that may lead a society, or specific government decisions that affect a community or their members. Political participation here entails various variables of participation which include membership of political parties, voting in elections, and participation in political campaigns/rallies. This is basically different from representation. For instance, the percentage of votes cast by women in an election increased from 40% to 60% of total votes cast in 8 years, indicating an increase in participation. The reverse is true for low political participation. But when the number of women holding political/public offices compared to men drops or is

relatively low, then there is low participation of women in politics. Participation in politics has three aspects to it. These may be regarded as ways of exercising one's civic rights. First is voting at elections, and the second aspect is being actively involved in party affairs i.e. membership, position holding and standing for elections. For the most part one would need to be a party member before standing for elections.

The third aspect is taking interest and acting in the public interest without being partisan, i.e. attending political rallies, debating or writing opinions on public issues. One does not need to be a party member to undertake these. For our purpose here, the study is interested in the second and third aspects of participation which includes party membership, holding party positions, standing for elections and voting and attending campaign/rallies.

Socio-economic status

Socio-economic status is an economic and sociological combination of a person's work and experience and of an individual's family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education and occupation and wealth.

Income here refers to wages, salaries, profits, rents and any flow of earnings received. Income can also come in form of unemployment of workers compensation, social security, pensions, interest, dividends, royalties, alimony or other government, public or family assistance. According to Keynes (cited in Boushey et al 2005:27-40) , income can be classified into two namely

relative and absolute income. Absolute income refers to the relationship between an increase in that results in an increase in consumption,but not at the same rate. Relative income dictates a person's savings and consumption. (Boushey, Heather and Weller, 2005:27-40)

Education plays a role in income. Here education is seen as a parameter for skill acquisition, which enables one to be able to acquire a job, as well as specific qualities that satisfy people with their socio-economic status (SES). According to Lareau (2003:6), higher educational levels ensure higher earnings as such associated with better economic and psychological outcomes, (i.e more income, more control and greater social support and networking.

Employment status

Employment here refers to both income and educational attainment. Employment status reflects the educational attainment required to obtain the job and income levels that vary with different jobs and within different ranks of occupations. Additionally, it shows achievement in skills required for the job. According to Scott and Leonhardt (2005), employment status measures social position by describing job characteristics, decision-making ability and control and psychological demands on the job.

However, this study locates socio-economic status within the above variables. For example if there is an increase in the number of women who are educated in the region say from 50% to 70% in 5 years, employment of women also increases say from 30% to 40% in same 5years, there also is an increase in

women's income say from 20%-40%, then there has been an increase on the socio-economic status of women. Also in the same 5 years, women's votes cast in national and local elections increases from 50% - 60% , or women's membership in political parties, increases from 30% - 45% , or women's attendance in political meetings increase from 20%-30%, then there is an increase in political participation. And the reverse is true with low socio-economic status. Available literature indicates that the latter is common.

1.9: Chapter outline

The study is divided into five chapters as follows:

Chapter one covers the general background to the study, statement of the problem, propositions, objective of the study, rationale of the study, scope and location of the study, limitation of the study and chapter outline.

In chapter two,the literature review, and theoretical framework are provided Chapter three presents the methodology of the study

Chapter four covers data presentation and analysis: the impact of socio-economic status as defined by income and educational levels on women's political participation in the South West Region of Cameroon.

Chapter Five handles the discussion of theresearch findings

Chapter six covers the summary, conclusion, and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0: Introduction

Political participation is good for democracy, but all democracies are plagued by systematic inequalities in participation. (Lijphart,1997; Galston, 2001). One of the most persistent forms of inequality in political participation according to gender has been such that women are found to participate less than men; suggesting that half the population's interests are less well represented (Scholzman et al 1994). Yet explanations to gender differences in political participation in certain developing societies are far from addressed. Though much has been written on gender and political participation, a lot has been written discretely in form of articles, views/opinions, in dailies, weeklies and journals on Cameroon's South West region.

Thus, the approach adopted for this review of related literature is as follows: clarification of concepts, gender and political participation- general view, Women and political participation: factors which may affect women's political participation, African women and Political participation, dwelling specifically on Cameroonian women and political participation with specific reference to women in the south west region. The second section of this chapter covers the theoretical framework.

2.1: Gender and political participation

The recognition of gender equality in politics as an important global issue dates back to women movements in 1970s (Bratton 2002:115-147; Bratton and Haynie 1999 :658-679; Dotson and Carroll, 1999; Swers 2000; Thomas 1994). Amidst world declarations and conventions, political participation in Sub-Saharan Africa still reveals a gender gap with evidences reflecting, that women tend to vote and participate politically in between elections to a lesser extent than men. (Bratton, 1999, Bratton and lambright, 2006) .

So far Sub-Saharan African countries that have reached the BPFA target of 30% for women representation in parliament include , South Afrcia, Liberia, Mozambique 38%, Rwanda and Uganda. Stretching this further,(AWAD, 2009:1) stated thus "Rwanda has made ever more significant moves with a record level of 48.8% in the lower house and surpassing the Scandinavian average of 40% " Today Rwanda's new constitution reserves 24 out of 80 seats for women in the lower house and 6 out of 20 in the upper houses of parliament respectively.Since 1970s many international, regional and national efforts have been generated to address gender inequality by placing women in the positions of influence because of the assumption that women in power would be more likely than men to represent women's interests. Coffle and Bolzendahl (2009: 245-264) in their study ' Gender gap in political participation across Sub-Saharan African nations, took a look at less institutionalized types of political participation, with small or no gap in registration to vote.

Attempting to differentiate between thepatterns of gender gap in Industrialized and Sub-Saharan African nations in political participation, the study indicated that gender differentials in one of the most important form of political participation –voting is shrinking to the point of significance in industrialized nations, as well as even reversing;while gender gaps persist in most other types of political participation and men are significantly involved than women in a number of outlets such as strikes, demonstrations, contacting political officials and political party membership in sub- Saharan African nations.

In order to determine how large the gender gap is and where it occurs, Coffe and Bolzendahl agreed that gender remains a meaningful source of inequality in political participation. The section of their contribution which has direct bearing on the study is their findings which suggested that modernization has a role in shaping equal outcomes across sub-Saharan African nations. The length of time a nation has permitted women to vote and the presence of women in ministerial or political positions, and other development indicators such as GDP per capita are positively linked to gender equality in participation.

This is also reflected in their regression results which showed that two of Africa's wealthiest nations, like Botswana and Namibia, often have the smallest gender gaps. Corroborating this position, Reynolds (1999) concurred however, that the number of competitive multiparty elections since 1945 and the number of years since women were allowed to stand for election were significantly related to the percentage of women in parliaments and cabinets, thus providing evidence for the importance of long-term democracy and

women's participation in nations of the world. Kenworthy and Malami also found out that the year women gained suffrage is significant. Paxton (1997:442-468) hypothesizes that democracies will have more women in the parliament because democracies reduce artificial and arbitrary barriers to power and are therefore more likely to promote the interests of those not in power.

It is worthy of note herein that gender gap in political participation varies according to how participation is measured. To this effect, Paxton et al (2007) differentiates between more 'institutional' and 'less institutional' forms of participation. They argued that among the institutional forms of participation, while voting gaps appear to be shrinking, participation in political parties and running for political offices remain dominated by men.

Furthermore, among the less institutional forms of participation, gender difference patterns vary even further (Coffe and Bolzendal (2009).They among other scholars argued that women tend to be as likely or more so as men to engage in individualistic forms of participation such as signing a petition, political communication or donating money. Men are more likely than women to participate in collective forms of participation e.g demonstrations, or directly contacting a politician (Burns, 2007; Coffe and Bolzendal,2009; Marien et al,2009; Parry et al 1992)

In an attempt to provide explanations to questions on gender inequality in political participation, Schloman et al (1994) posited two sets of explanations stating thus:

Firstly, the gender gap in political participation is due to systematic and individual differences between men and women in terms of socio-economic resources. In view of this conclusion, their research argue that women are more or less not likely to engage in politics because of their lower access to such resources. For example, men are more likely to be employed full-time than women, and employment is positively related to political participation, information and efficacy. Furthermore, women employed or not are more likely to be burdened with house and care work, placing further demands on their time and resources, leaving them less available for political participation. Thus, controlling for socio-economic status such as employment, marital status and parental status are found to mediate a substantial portion of gender gap in political participation.(Burns, 2007; Harrisson and Munn,2007)

Secondly, influence of attitude on participation. Inglehart and Norris (2003) maintained that regardless of socio-economic status, political participation or engagement requires motivation and interest; as such, they conclude that women's lower level of political information, interest and efficacy are important explanation for a gender gap independent of other characteristics.

In the same vein, Fox and Lawless, 2004: Atkeson and Rapoport 2003) posited that women are socialized towards a gender role that is more passive, private, rule-abiding and compassionate while men are oriented towards leadership, public roles,autonomy and self-reliance. This level of socialization, these scholars argued, contributes to women's low political engagement, with differences in political attitudes, and participation beginning from early life

and continuing over the course of life. Verba et al (1997) stated that political attitudes has also been found to substantially mediate gender differences in political participation and this attitudes are perpetuated by gender relations.

2.2: Women and political participation

The political participation of women has consistently been at the centre of global agenda since the adoption of the Nairobi forward-looking strategies for the advancement of women in 1985. Thus, female participation in politics has continued to attract the attention of many scholars as they try to pinpoint factors that influence women's participation in politics, while the most common relationship studied is the effect of socio-economic status on female participation. (Inglehart and Norris,2002;Norris and Welzel,2002; kenworhty and Malami, 1999) Other researches have focused on the importance of cultural,political and contextual factors that affect the degree of gender inequality in political participation.

According to Afolabi & Arogundade (2003:75), women constitute over half of the population of the world and contribute in vital ways to societal development generally. In view of this, he argued thus " in most societies women assume five key roles: mother, producers, home-manager, community organizer and socio-cultural and political activists. These roles he maintained can be broadly classified into productive and reproductive gender roles. Whereas the productive gender roles were associated with the male sex, reproductive gender roles were exclusive to their female counterparts. These societal realities were deeply rooted in the cultural beliefs and values of most

societies in the world. Consequently women have long suffered various forms of gender discrimination in the political systems of the nations of the world. Corroborating this position, Chapman posited that, the male dominate the political environment, and have pre-conditioned the environment that their female counterparts compete with them unfavorably. He directly touched on the research problem when he pointed out that:-

> "Men are the major determinants of political actions and inactions generally concerned with the perpetuation of power of the state. When women compete with men for access to political power, they do so on the terms already established by men for competition among themselves. The success of women in politics like any other group cannot be achieved within a system without displacing or replacing the existing elite. Any change in values which cannot occur independently in the socio-economic as well as political relations, without clear involvement of various offices(positions) and make known their own ambition through consciousness and effective involvement in the political scene, a condition which is absent , allows or facilitates domination by the political elites and governed, and women remain the same.*"*
> (Chapman 1993:11cited in Agbalajobi D.T,1996)

In a similar manner, Agbalajobi (2008:77) concurred that women have been subjected to domination by men as recorded by history. He noted that this form of discrimination is a global phenomenon; arguing that discrimination against women in the political spheres in nations of the world results from persisting traditional practices, patriarchal societal structures in which economic, political and social powers are dominated by men, and the role of women have historically played as followers of male political leadership.

Furthermore, Anifowose& Arogundade (2003) in explaining the status of women in different democracies argued that some established democracies like

Britain and USA, democratic oligarchies were in fact male oligarchies. Even the famous advocates of democratic and republican governments rejected claims that women should be full citizens. For the most part, they adopted prevailing views that the proper roles of women were marriage, procreation and family not politics. This he demonstrated when he quoted John locke as maintaining that "all men are by nature more equal" He failed to recommend women be allowed to vote; and considered it more or less self-evident that in family matters, the husbands have the final say.

Tracing the historical origin of male domination, Anifowose (2004) opined that a plausible explanation for male domination is physical difference. Men he argued are generally heavier, taller and even physically stronger than women, and therefore more capable than women to enforce their will through physical violence and threat of violence. Women on the other hand are vulnerable because of their role of childbearing and nourishing. More so, Hobbes made a similar observation by pointing out that nature rendered man apt to invade and destroy. He emphasized this when he pointed out that

"men live without a common power to keep them all in awe,
they are in that condition that is called warre"

This study agree with the above conclusion that men have always dominated the conceptual schemes and formation of laws in societies in the world and this has left little or no room for the question of how gender relations affected state issues, until recently. This has prompted the investigation of the factors that influence societal justice and equal political participation by the study.

Looking at women's position within male dominated societies in the world, Millett examined the relationship between male and female and concluded that gender relations has gone largely unexamined and unacknowledged. The section of her thesis that has direct bearing on the study is where she pointed out that"even though sexual domination is perhaps the most pervasive ideology of our culture and provides its fundamental concept of power, it is one which tends to be sturdier than any form of segregation, and more rigorous than class stratification, more uniform, certainly more enduring. Our society, like all other historical civilizations, is a patriarchy. The fact is evident at once if one recalls 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 Diety, " H i s " ministry, together with the ethics and values, the philosophy and art of our culture—its very civilization— as T S. Eliot once observed, is of male manufacture. (Millet,1969: 25 cited in Agbalajobi,D.T.2009)

On the same note, Phillip (1998) noted that another issue in women's political participation relates to the nature of politics in general and liberal democracy in particular. Stretching this further he situated democracy within history and pointed out that:-

Democracy has historically served men better than women. As a political system from the ancient Greece to the modern times of the 21st century, it has built on the public-private dichotomy and excluded women from citizenship.

Women have been kept outside the public domain of politics as most of the political thinkers and philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle,

Rousseau, John Lock, Thomas Hobbes and Hegel considered women fit only for domestic roles in the private sphere and maintained that there was no place for women in politics because of their suitability in caring roles as mothers and wives. The public/private divide remains as the foundation of the various forms of world democracies (Phillips, 1998, Rai, 2000). Thus the ancient and modern democracies failed to recognize women as citizens. Therefore, they sidelined them and their concerns in its theory and practice (Bathla, 1998:39). It was only the liberal political philosophy of the 19th century that promoted the idea of 'free and rational' individual which was used by suffragists to demand women's right to vote.

However, gender still remains a major source of inequality in political participation and to this effect scholars have advanced different factors that may affect gender relations and actions in political participation. This study looks at some of these factors as they relate to women's participation in politics in world societies.

2.3: Factors affecting women's political participation

The political participation of women has continually been at the center of global issues with the aim to pinpoint factors affecting women's participation in formal politics. While the most common relationship studied is the effect of socio-economic factors on female representation (Inglehart & Norris, 2003:;

Inglehart, Norris, & Welzel, 2002:321-345; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Paxton, 1997(442-464; Welzel, 2003:269-298), other researchers have focused on the importance of cultural, political and contextual factors that affect the degree of gender inequality in political participation. Some of the factors will be mentioned below

2.3.1: Political factors and institutional design

Institutional designs and political constraints are major barriers for women. Political variables such as electoral laws and quota implementation (Paxton) have been identified as more significant in wealthy rich countries (Rule, 1994). Electoral laws and voting systems also affect women's participation in developed nations (Rule, 1994; Matland, 1998). Examples include unfair party nomination processes occurring when a nomination is conducted through a 'closed' political opportunity structure or methods that unevenly discriminate against female candidates.

There is consent in previous literature that women tend to achieve higher levels of representation in a representative political system, for example, through a party list of multiple candidates and districts (Matland & Tayler, 1997; Paxton, 1997:442-464). This relates to the common idea that democracy positively affects women's political participation. Inglehart et al., (2002:11) show that "democratic institutions, by themselves, do not guarantee gender equality". Paxton (1997:442-464:) also studied how the level of political democracy influences women's political gains and found a negative correlation. She discovered that a country with a "Marxist-Leninist"

orientation or one-party government tends to have higher rate of women presence, since the dominant party tends to control and steer election results, often increasing their numerical representation (Paxton, 1997:442-464), such is the case in one- party system like Cuba .Such an analysis is a step towards the research on other forms of political culture and its impact on women's political representation since what matters is leaders in power and not democracy per se. Cameroon's politics is still male dominated. Males do not encourage women to advance beyond a certain level. There is also a lack of networks and public organizations, NGOs or alternative political parties to work towards increasing women participation in politics.

Reformed electoral systems are more favorable to women while quotas serve to ensure women's political representation. Quotas play a major role in the higher percentage of women legislators (Rathod, 2007:7). For instance, Sweden, Norway and Germany and Rwanda and Namibia requires quota or percentage of seats for women in national legislature as against one party countries like Cuba.

Studies by Moore and Shackman (1996), Oakes and Almquist (1993:71-81) and Matland (1998) assert that institutions have little effect. Cameroon has had increases in elected female candidates, at lower levels of political seats (deputy members of parliament) though not reaching the 30% benchmark it increased from 9% in 2000 to 13.8% in2009.The author found extensive informal quotas, or formal legal reforms to aid women's presence in the political arena.

2.3.2: Socio-economic factors: education and training, employment

Women's levels of education, earnings and employment status are strongly correlated with reference to the number of women in politics (Matland 1998:108-125; Moore & Shackman, 1996:273-288; Oakes & Almquist, 1993:71-81). Education serves as a tool to enter professional and political life allowing women to engage in political processes at all levels: voting, running for office, and becoming leaders.

Illiteracy, poor professional training, and low levels of female education are factors which influence women's participation in politics and uneven access to full participation in politics (Rathod, 2007). Low levels of education results in lower skilled jobs, which are more detrimental to women, given that traditionally they already have fewer opportunities in the labour market. Women are often pushed into 'feminine' professions, as it is difficult for them to get involved in politics without the appropriate experience or suitable background in a profession from which politicians are typically drawn. Lacking in education and professional training are disadvantages, especially for women living in rural areas.

Illiteracy levels are highest amongst the women because social attitudes towards them mean that they are often less likely to be given the opportunity to attain education and participate in politics. Education is the key to breaking such social barriers, to competing equally with men in political campaigns and finally, to winning elections. Yet, even when a woman succeeds in obtaining the necessary education, she has to participate in the type of field from which

political officials are generally drawn such as law, education or business (Norris 1996a).

Women's ability to take up highly valued professions also affects their political success, especially the profession of law plays an important role for women who wish to enter into the political sphere, and thus, giving them the opportunity to be agents of social and economic change. This highlights the importance of education; occupational participation and relevant professions and preparedness for political role which are all strongly related to political candidacy. Female political leaders also face economic obstacles during election campaigns because compared to their male counterparts, women lack funding, connections, and support in general.

Furthermore, their financial standing being less secure than men makes them less confident in their ability to financially stand for election (Filadelfiova, Butorova & Gyarfasova, 2002). Thus, a woman's political opportunities depend on her career to provide the confidence, networks and funding necessary to run for office. The logic is that the greater the female participation in the workforce, the larger the number of highly qualified female candidates willing to vote and stand for election (Norris, 1987). This eventually results in an increase in female participation in politics.

2.3.3: Cultural factors

Political culture combined with traditional cultural attitudes regarding women has long been documented as a great barrier to women's representation, participation in politics, and access to power (Rathod, 2007). Measuring

attitudes towards women in politics, Norris (1996:90-101; 1987:) used an index called "political egalitarianism" to study countries in Europe. She concluded that countries scoring high egalitarian rates are more likely to have a high proportion of women in legislative politics.Such is the case in Scandinavian countries (Bystydzienski, 1995; Norris,1993:309-330) where an egalitarian culture and liberal attitude towards women in politics provide a favorable environment for women's political participation.

Religion is another central factor that affects levels of female representation (Rule,1994; Reynolds, 1999), especially when it influences and shapes attitudes towards women's capabilities for political roles. An interesting comparative study conducted in 180 nations by Reynolds (1999) revealed that Christianity, whether Protestant or Catholic, was linked to higher percentages of women in public office than other religions such as Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Confucianism and Hinduism. According to the authors, Catholicism is more likely to link women to traditional roles, so in turn reducing their chances of getting elected (Norris, 1997; Paxton, 1997:442-464).

Similarly, Confucian thought, which emphasizes hierarchy in society, is an example of patriarchal culture preventing women from holding high social, economic and political positions. Traditional Confucian thought continues to influence attitude towards women in East and South East Asian countries and has been a force in effectively domesticating gender divisions. Haque (2003) broadly points to the patriarchal ideological factor in Asia. In fact, Cameroon

still abides by patriarchal values. (Konde 1999), making women secondary to men.

According to Nguyen (1997), a male preference has been "shaped and reinforced over so many generations that is deeply rooted in people's mind and exists as a social stronghold resistant to opposition". It holds that "woman is inferior to man and generally incompetent in roles outside the home". It is expected that a woman stays at home to care for her family and respect her motherhood responsibilities (De Dios Ruiz, Labani & Zabaleta, 2009; Werner, 2008). This role must also take precedence over employment and public activities (Werner, 2008).

In thinking so, women are excluded from public activities as a consequence of a patriarchal view of gender roles, insisting that women stay at home to care for children and family. These notions suggest that women are both unfit for and uninterested in politics (Toth, 1994; Kiss, 1999).

These public perceptions are then deeply ingrained into society such that women find it difficult to gain familial and public support to expand their participation. Negative public perceptions perpetuate the domestic role of women and in turn, limit commitment to gender equality policies. Thus, in traditional and patriarchal societies, even though some women might desire to participate in politics, women are confronted with long-entrenched gender stereotypes, which are supported by societal perceptions that the public arena is considered to be men's realm.

Moreover, prevailing norms of femininity expect women to do a host of unpaid duties even while maintaining full-time employment. Women are confronted with difficult decisions as they struggle to find balance between the multiple roles in society that are associated with norms of femininity. For example, balancing the roles of a mother and of an employee in addition to other familial duties can undermine women's opportunities to take on leadership roles. Truong (2008:19) explained that choosing to adhere to "social norms may cause women to miss out on opportunities for their own involvement in politics and society and influence the scope of opportunities they allow their daughters.

Respect for these norms may also explain why many women do not support the political ambitions among other females". Even if a woman chooses to participate in politics, she may find it difficult to balance the time and effort required both for family duties and political participation. As such, a double burden of family responsibility has rendered Cameroonian women automatically ineligible for public decision-making positions. Therefore, social norms, religion and culture are also important factors for women's eligibility, election and candidacy ability to vote or contact politicians.

2.3.4: Contextual factors: wars and internal conflicts

Post-conflict theorists interestingly theorize that contextual factors such as wars and internal conflict may positively affect women's political presence (Hughes, 2004:2) as they allow for transformation of gender norms (Goetz, 1995; Pankhurst, 2002; Tripp, 1994) or as Sambanis portrays: "by altering

society, changing the ideas, beliefs, and social position of its members" (as cited in Hughes, 2004:2).

Rwanda, for example, is a developing country that has achieved high political representation of women apparently because of the powerful presence of women in armed conflict (Hughes, 2004:2). Although women there have historically been excluded from the peacemaking process, legislative politics and government (Geisler, 1995;Waylen, 1994), Rwanda has been praised for having involved women in the peacemaking process, reconstruction efforts and the creation of new governments (Hughes, 2004:3). Similarly, in post-conflict Kosovo, women were heavily involved in the police force, mine dismantling projects, and running farms and businesses (Corrin, 2002). One reason for these changes in societal structure is that more men die in combat (Kampwirth, 2002). As a further example, Liberia's transition to democracy after the civil war culminated in an election that brought the first woman to Liberia's presidency in 2006. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf had supporters campaign with the slogan: "All the men have failed Liberia, let's try a woman this time" which was noted as a "remarkable breakthrough for women's movement" (Massaquoi, 2007:29-30). Thus, the conclusion is that, war can change gender norms and perceptions of women, and when given opportunities women do choose to take up political role and be active in politics and so enter the traditionally excluded professions. This indicates the significance of conflict as a variable for the gain in political participation for women.

Therefore, much of previous works have emphasized socio-economic, political, culture, institutional features, and the effects of conflict (since it is a broader term than war) as variables affecting women's political representation and participation. Though the results of the studies on wars are not applicable to Cameroon, they however explained the effect of these on gender norms and relations in favour of women. It is expected that women's increased educational and employment opportunities will increase democratic and political participation and that such relationship will be strengthened by Cameroon's desire towards strengthening democratic institutions and gender equality.

2.4: African women and political participation

The unequal status of women and men in all spheres of life in Africa dates back to centuries. In pre-colonial Africa, women occupied a position that was complementary rather than being subordinate to men. This complimentarily did not mean equality but meant that the female gender had equally important roles to play and indeed played them successfully.

With examples, Howard noted that in West African cultures, women sometimes serve as chiefs or hold other important political positions (Howard, 2006:) Stretching this further, he pointed out that In Nigerian Ibo societies, women exercised political power prior to British conquest and that the imposition of colonial rule, placed serious restrictions on women's views and roles. His thesis has a bearing on the present study in his conclusion that colonial encounter affected African women in complex and contradictory ways and treated women less equitable than traditional institutions had done.

This situation left African women economically weak (limited access to education, low employment status inadequate healthcare services amongst others), limited their chances for political empowerment,(participation and representation), making them unable to compete favorably with their male counterparts decision making processes in various societies in the continent.

In view of the economic structure between men and women in Africa, Fonjong (2005:) noted thatagriculture which has always been the backbone of most African States leaves African women with little or nothing to empower themselves. Women are involved in arduous task using low levels of technology which ensure low yields and reduced productivity. They lack titled land and have very low access to improved seedlings and agricultural extension services; cannot obtain credit facilities in order to engage in production and marketing of lucrative cash crops like cocoa, and coffee. He emphasized that whether urban or rural women, African women experience the same sort of changes many of which are detrimental to their well-being.

With regards to women's occupation, in sub Saharan Africa no matter their origin, the occupation women pursue tend to fall into certain categories because of women's differential access to education and the constraints imposed by sexual division of labor both in colonial and indigenous societies. It is worthy of note that only few women have been able to overcome the socio-economic constraints which keep women illiterate, poorly paid or marginally self-employed. Adams (2006:1) made a similar observation by pointing out that colonial policies towards women spread western notion of

domesticity and narrowed the space available for women to participate in public life and colonial administrators viewed politics as “man’s concern” and consequently downgraded female political influence.

Duke (2010:8) commenting on the status of women in African politics, posited that in spite of the critical role that women play in sustaining the family, and the contributions they make to economic and other development of African societies, they have largely been excluded from participation in the decision-making processes and mainstream activities of most facets of life, including politics.

In an attempt to explain the gender gap in political participation in Africa, Duke examined the factors that hinder women’s participation in democratic politics and traces them mainly to the existing institutionalized structures, beliefs, and value systems. He further argued that although there are liberal constitutional provisions and public policies which espouse and advertise the full guarantee of women’s rights in a number of African countries, the reality on-the-ground shows that deep traditional and cultural barriers which constrain women continue to exist.

Much as he dissected the various factors which could lead to gender gap in political participation in Africa, with reference to the women, he failed to facilitate the understanding of the gendered nature of social and institutional relations which determine who does what, for whom, when and how, as well as that gender relations are related to other inequalities and contradictions of social life like family, education, and politics.

A leaf however, can be borrowed from his thesis in the provision of an eloquent testimony to the achievements and potentials of women in democracy and governance, though he concluded that the ratio to men is still alarming.

2.5: Factors affecting women political participation in Africa

2.5.1: Gender roles – Patriarchy

Patriarchy which means "the rule of the father"; is broadly, referred to as a society ruled and dominated by men over women. This is inherent in most African families. Giving men a higher social status over females has crept into public life, which reflects in state activities. The family plays an important role in maintaining this patriarchal order across generations. The socialization of children to expect and accept different roles in life has created a social mechanism for the development of values that engender the several forms of discrimination against the female sex. The greatest psychological weapon available to man is the length of time they have enjoyed dominance over women, who have taken it for granted especially in the area of politics that often continue to stereotype women and justify their subordination.

Though we record some exceptions like Ghana where both patrilineal and matrilineal traditional societies exist. Among matrilineal groups, such as the Akan, married women continue to reside at their maternal homes and would not inherit any of his property, other than that granted to her by her husband as gifts in token appreciation of years of devotion. The children from this matrilineal marriage would be expected to inherit from their mother's family. The patrilineal societies like Dagomba on the other hand, inherit from fathers. (David, 1994)This traditional societal arrangement has left women

withmultiple roles: wives, mothers, farmers, traders, office workers etc which has gone a long away to limit their socio-economic and political empowerment.

2.5.2: Women's conception of politics

Some consensus has been of the belief that African politics is based on high political virility – those who have all it takes to compete in the turbulent environment; those who possess the wherewithal to take it by force when force is required; those that can march violence with violence. This consensus belief maintainsthat men possess the superior strength, competitiveness, are self-reliant and are prepared to tussle in political endeavor, whereas women are considered too passive to engage in politics and governance. This consensus belief is also constructed by societal norms and values, which through socialization has defined different gender roles according to biological differences. Women's perception of politics as a dirty game and continued fright at the thought of violence has further alienated them from mainstream politics. In Nigeria there seems to be no critical understanding of the difference between "a visible agenda for women and an impacting agenda for women." (Nkoyo, 2002:29). Though, emphasis is laid on women's numerical strength, translating such into the attainment of power has been difficult as women are perceived as "supporters club, team of cheerers and clappers" in contrast to their male counterparts. Women politicians seek offices on the premise of being different; most believe they must do what men are doing to succeed,but the meekness of women is not to their advantage in political tussle.

2.5.3:Lack of economic incentives (Financial backing)

Women's historical experience of discrimination puts them at a disadvantaged position economically. Political campaigns are expensive and require solid financial backing for success. Over the years, sexual division of labour and job opportunities offered on sex basis has given men productive gender roles, enabling them to possess more purchasing power over their female counterparts.This situation is exacerbated by the type of education offered to women and sex stereotyping of women into clerical and secretarial roles.Negash observed that two-thirds of the approximately 880 million illiterate adults in the world are women; 60 percent of the 135 million children in the world between ages seven and eighteen who are not receiving education are girls; and, only one out of every four girls who begin primary school remains in school four years after (Negash, 2006). Available literaturehas repeatedly shown that even in countries where women are active professionally their level of responsibilities as policy makers and planners are low. Revealing that the relatively small number of women who have reached high leadership positions reveals that they hold posts popularly associated with female qualities. Furthermore, in Africa, most women in Cabinets, head Ministries of Education, Women's Affairs Health and Social Welfare or generally areas traditionally viewed as compatible with women's "nurturing roles.However, societal values assume that political activities are masculine and this makes it worse as financiers and sponsors of politicians prefer male candidates over female ones, since they believe they stand a better chance. Most success

achieved by women in politics has been through women's movements that sponsor women's political aspirants financially and otherwise. Women's dependence on men financially may manifest through wife's dependence on their husbands in families and this seriously incapacitates women who venture into politics. As a result, women political aspirations are grossly hampered by lack of financial bedrock to subsist their endeavour.

2.5.4: Discriminatory customs and laws

The customary practices of many contemporary societies are biased by subjugating women to men and undermining their self-esteem. The overall impact of gender bias, cultural norms and practices has entrenched a feeling of inferiority in African women and place them at a disadvantage vis-à-vis their male counterpart in the socio-political scene even in urban centers. These socially constructed norms and stereotype roles make women overplay their 'feminity' by accepting that they are 'weaker sexes', overemphasizing the dainty nature of their sex and regarding exceptional achievement as masculine. For example, most customs often prefer sending the male child to school over the female, who is expected to nurture siblings and to be married off. This marginally increases the number of illiterate women and stiffens their competition with their male counterparts in politics.

2.5.5:Lack of affirmative action quota

Affirmative Action is usually a measure intended to supplement non-discrimination; it is a broad term that encompasses a host of policies that seek to support weak groups in society. They include policies where deliberate

action is used to stop discrimination. A policy process of this kind allows for rules that have the objective of enhancing equal opportunity for individuals and the improvement, in the situation of marginalized groups. In 1979, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This convention has variously been described as the "Bible of women empowerment" and "Women's International Bill of Rights." Since its adoption it has become a reference point for women's movements in the demand for gender equality. The Convention "rejects the depth of exclusion and restriction practiced against women solely on the basis of their sex by calling for equal rights for women, regardless of their marital status in all fields – political, economic, social, cultural and civil; hence the calls for national legislations to ban discriminations, recommend temporary special measures to speed equality between men and women" (UNESCO, 1999:6). - Article IV, CEDAW. However, some African countries have stepped up to the quota system like Rwanda, Namibia and South Africa which have recorded significant increase in women's participation and representation in politics.

2.5.6: Other factors

i. Inadequate knowledge of written and unwritten rules protecting women's political rights.

ii. **Religious doctrine:** Religion is one of the instruments used in keeping women in perpetual servitude, domination, and slavery. The beliefs and values of most religions are sexist and patriarchal in structure and character, as they

perpetually seek to subjugate women. Religious traditions shape attitude both at the individual and societal levels (Norris and Inglehart, 2004; Norris, 2009:553-560). Norris (2009:553-560) specifically proposes that both the individual Muslim identity and living in an Islamic society – even as, say, a Christian or a non-believer – strengthen traditional gender norms. According to this line of reasoning, not only individual religious affiliation but also the level of religiosity in society could potentially affect political participation. Some religious doctrines militate against the active participation of women in politics and position of authority. As Millet puts it: "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 from their sins. Islamic doctrines strictly bar women from some political endeavor – public speaking etc. – that can facilitate their political ambitions. In recent times, however, there have been a number of movements to the commitment, both to the personal and social change of women in their status in public life. Through series of women enlightenment, emancipation and conscious rising of groups on women movement, women 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 in to politics.

2.6: Cameroonian women and political participation

In spite of the significant gains associated with women's participation in the socio-economic and political processes of nations of the world gender disparity

and the marginalization of women still persist in Cameroon. The country's political landscape has been significantly marred by widely reported malpractices perpetrated by both formal and less overt informal political structures and institutions that have negatively affected women. This gender disparity persists in areas such as education, health, employment and ensures severe discrimination at the public and private sphere, reinforced by a male-dominated and patriarchal society. This situation is known to be totally disruptive and extensively undermines the normal functioning and predictability of formal political processes. Men have manipulated and exploited various constituents including women, to accede to, and stay in power. As a result, women face exclusion, subjugation and systemic discrimination within state institutions, especially at leadership and decision-making levels. Writing on the gender equality laws in Cameroon, Nkolo (1997:13) posited that although egalitarian principles are enshrined in the Cameroonian constitution, their reflection in various legal instruments turn to marginalize women in such areas as family life (A), and economic and public life (B). stretching this further Nkolo argued that

"the egalitarian principles conflict with other principles
as it upholds that the husband is the head of the family
andfamily estate.(Section 213 of the civil Code) Section
1421 of the civil code further stipulates that 'the husband
alone shall administer the joint estate. He may sell,
alienate and mortgage it without the consent of his wife.
This leaves the women with little or no decision in

the execution of family estate and in the discharge of her matrimonial duties. Further, this places any action by the women at the ‘generosity’ of the man.

Thus laws of the land severely perpetuate gender inequality In private and public spheres”.

The section of her work which has direct bearing on the study is the description of the laws as it affects women in terms of their ability to improve their socio-economic status and further compete favorably in the political process of the nation. To this she noted

> " the principle of the freedom of trade and industry
> officialzed bylaw no 90/31 of 10 August 1990
> governing commercial activities in Cameroon,
> marginalizes women in the economic and
> public sector, especially married women who
> have to obtain permission from their husbands
> to engage freely in trade due to marriage regulations"
> (Section 74(2) of Ordinance 81-02 0f June 1984).
> (Nkolo, 1997:21)

As a result, this places any action by the women at the 'generosity' of the man pointing out that the laws of the land severely perpetuate gender inequality in private and public spheres, thus adversely affecting the political participation of women. In the same vein, Mungwa (1999:12) in analyzing the formal human rights framework in Cameroon, maintained gender inequality exists in Cameroon, and is exacerbated by bad governance, mismanagement, corruption and in virtually all sectors of public life. Stretching this further, he pointed out that gender inequality is glaring in the political arena as this can easily be measured by the number of women in public offices. He illustrated this for instance by citing, 10 women as members of parliament in a house of parliament meant for 180 people's representatives.

On the other hand, Konde (2005) in his book *Africa women and Politics: knowledge, Gender and Power in male dominated Cameroon* , argued that men still dominate politics and public administration in Cameroon while women , though more invisible in the public sphere than men in the past, continue to be responsible for domestic and child care tasks. Directly impacting on this study is kondo's conclusion that Cameroonian women's public appearances consist of cheering the men; and women are constructed as voters but not to be voted for. Explaining further, he argued that the rise of women in Cameroonian politics during the colonial and post-colonial periods had to contend with patriarchal structures that sought to relegate them to the realm of economic production and reproduction. He identified western education as a necessary factor for female political participation. His contention is that this would serve as a means to win an appointment into the lucrative structures of the post-colonial state because in order to be incorporated into politics women were expected to be active members of modern women's organizations. Konde contends that most successful women politicians were co-opted from these organizations. Much as konde identified education as a necessary factor for political participation, and also noted it is not sufficientto win an appointment into lucrative political structures of the post-colonial state, he failed to advance other factors that may influence women's political participation. However, his thesis provides tangible arguments to the history of women's political participation. On this premise, this study identified other factors that may

influence women's political participation, like employment, income, marital status among others.

Corroborating the above position, (Fonjong 2005:161) maintained that women are discriminated against with regards to ownership of property and access to factors of production especially land and capital. This situation he explains impedes their access to new opportunities consequently limiting their level of productivity. He further noted that the exclusion of women from land ownership; of which they are at the forefront of food production in the Cameroon economy is quite unfair to them. More so, traditional, customary and even legal practices exclude women in favor of men in the ownership of other forms of property in cases of succession, divorce, inheritance and widowhood (Fonjong, 2005: 162). To this effect, rural women in Cameroon are forced to cultivate on marginal lands and pay high rents to have users' rights to land. Meanwhile, in the urban areas women are forced into the informal sector as small business entrepreneurs, while their male counterparts operate as landlords and big entrepreneurs. This structure is exacerbated by high level of women's inaccessibility to quality education. This situation leaves women economically weak and politically less active.

On political participation of women in Cameroon, Mungwa (1991:12) opined that gender inequality exists and is exacerbated by bad governance, mismanagement and corruption in virtually all sectors of public life.

In the particular case of women in the South West region of Cameroon a wide variety of factors may be responsible for their current level of participation in

democratic politics. The problems that challenge women the most in Cameroon including the South West region may include the following:

The local traditional/cultural beliefs and values: This factor forms one of the most important impediments to the participation of women in most facets of public life. African traditions have mainly defined and ascribed separate roles to males and females. While the male roles are more empowering, the female roles are disempowering. These gender roles and societal expectations hinder the participation of women in politics. Non-conformists are made to suffer the negative effects of "group-think". Women are regarded as the weaker sex; they are not supposed to own properties; only get to speak when spoken to by men; and, remain relevant essentially in the kitchen and bedroom. Further compounding this circumstance is the demand on the women as wives, mothers, and home keepers, leaving them with little time and energy to partake in political meetings and campaigns, which unfortunately take place at very odd hours and with no strict compliance to time. This unfriendly time schedule excludes women who often have other domestic issues to cope with.

The Patriarchal system: Most of our communities are patriarchal in nature. Men remain at the helm of affairs and make decisions virtually exclusively, even when the issues border on women. The few women who venture into 'the man's world' feel inhibited to speak, especially when they are in large, male-dominated assemblies. Those who muster up enough courage and strength to speak receive less attention and respect.

The economic dependence of women: More than men, women suffer an acute lack of access to capital for business and other purposes. With limited access to land or total denial of land-ownership rights, it remains a daunting task for most women to engage in sustainable economic activities of any commercial significance. Their dependence on family networks for financial support further drives down the instrument of subjugation among them. Women's unequal access to, and control of, resources is therefore an important problem and is at the heart of the causes of their low level of their political participation.

Relative illiteracy and low educational levels of women: Two-thirds of the approximately 880 million illiterate adults in the world are women; 60 percent of the 135 million children in the world between ages seven and eighteen who are not receiving education are girls; and, only one out of every four girls who begin primary school remains in school four years after (Negash, 2006). These statistics paint a dismal picture about the state of women/girl-child education across the globe. Most cultures promote the belief that the girl-child does not require formal education (which is the most potent tool for human empowerment), simply because she will be married off and become a housewife anyway. This increasingly unsustainable belief unfortunately still finds resonance in certain cultures in south west region of Cameroon. It presents a most disempowering factor for women's development, as it serves to limit the educational attainment of females, especially in the rural and traditional societies.

From the foregoing discussion therefore, much of previous works have emphasized socio-economic, political, cultural,institutional features, and the effects of conflict (since it is a broader term than war) as variables that determine women's political representation and participation. The results of these studies can be applicable to Africa and Cameroon as well as the case study, the south West Region. It is expected that women's increased educational and employmentopportunities will increase their democratic and political participation and that such relationship willbe strengthened by Cameroon's desire to continually maintain democratic institutions and gender equality. Simultaneously, this argument tends to be constrained by certain factors that may curtail majority of the South West region's population from participating. This thesis however, examines the extent to which such probabilities are manifested in reality, with focus on factors that are likely to affect women political participation in the South West region of Cameroon. Of all factors discussed above, thisstudy argued that the socio-economic status of women in the south west region is the most strongly correlated factor with female participation in politics in the region, while attitude of government elite, economic reforms and patriarchal structure of state institutions, customs and traditions, none of which should be disregarded as factors that can trigger a variation in political participation of the under-represented group, such as women. The study provides a statistical examination of the influence of socio-economic factors on women's political participation in the south West region of Cameroon

2.7: Theoretical framework

Theintegration of women into public and private life is a pre requisite for their emancipation and consequent participation in democratic processes. Lots of researches on gender focus on low levels of women participation in political processes and representation in political institutions , with patriarchy, customs and traditions, poverty, inadequate health care facilities as factors militating against their integration.

The bulk of these researches have established the nature of gender relations that shape the circumstances surrounding women's participation in both private and public life within the context of their societies (customs, religion and traditions).Many scholars have made significant contributions to gender studies specifically seeking to provide explanations for the differences between men and women as well as the subordinate position of women.This has led to the development of theories and movements of gender inequality. Many writers have also concluded that there is little agreement about the causes of gender inequality, or about what actions to be taken to reduce or end it. This study used the liberal feminist theory as its theoretical base.

Liberal feminism

The liberal feminist theory posits that all people are created equal and that culture and attitude of individuals are responsible for promoting gender conflict and that nobody benefits from making one gender subordinate to the other. The theory emphasizes that the potentials of both men and women alike

are suppressed. The creation of equal opportunities particularly in education and work is at the heart of the liberal feminist theory. Liberal feminists argue that society holds the false belief that women are, by nature, less intellectually and physically capable than men; thus, it tends to discriminate against women in the academy, the forum, and the marketplace. Liberal feminists believe that "female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that block women's entrance to and success in the so-called public world", and they work hard to emphasize the equality of men and women through political and legal reform.

Proponents of this theory include Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), John Stuart Mill (1806-1873, 1989);Elizabeth Cady Stanton(1815 – 1902). The theory posits that men and women are similar to one another because of their shared humanity, as such; the theory emphasizes human progress through rational thought. Looking further into the ideas of gender inequality under a liberal feminist perspective, the division of labor is a predominant issue.

Liberal feminists point out that homecare and childcare are a woman's primary responsibility, in some instances, even above her own well-being. "The mindscapes that legitimate women's segregation are the cognitive translations of ideologies that range the spectrum from radical fundamentalism to difference in feminism; all are grounded in cultural-religious or pseudoscientific views that women have different emotions, brains, aptitudes, ways of thinking, conversing, and imagining. Such mindsets are legitimated every day in conventional understandings expressed from the media, pulpits,

boardrooms, and in departments of universities. Psychologists call them schemas andculturally set definitions that people internalize. Gender operates as a cultural 'superschema' (Roos and Gatta 2006) that shapes interaction and cues stereotypes (Ridgeway 1997). Liberal feminism denounces the idea that men and women are physically, emotionally, and intellectually polar opposites. This also builds up the liberal ideal that men and women should share household duties and childcare. They support the idea that being good at cleaning kitchens or nurturing a child is something learned, not a biological instinct. Further, liberal feminism conceives of freedom as personal autonomy living a life of one's own choosing and political autonomy being co-author of the conditions under which one lives.

To this effect, the theory holds that women should be allowed to live lives chosen by them (MacKenzie and Stoljar 1999: 13–19)More so liberal feminists hold that the exercise of personal autonomy depends on certain enabling conditions that are insufficiently present in women's lives, or that social arrangements often fail to respect women's personal autonomy and other elements of women's flourishing. They hold also that women's needs and interests are insufficiently reflected in the basic conditions under which they live, and that those conditions lack legitimacy because women are inadequately represented in the processes of democratic self-determination.

Liberal feminists hold that autonomy deficits like these are due to the "gender system" (Okin,1989: 89), or the patriarchal nature of inherited traditions and institutions, and that the women's movement should work to identify and

remedy them. As the protection and promotion of citizens' autonomy is the appropriate role of the state on the liberal view, liberal feminists hold that the state can and should be the women's movement's ally in promoting women's autonomy. However it is relevant in this study as it emphasizes human progress through rational thought and believes that a just society can be planned; stresses the rights of individuals and most especially its believe that education and work constitute major determinants of change in society.

Relevance of the theory to the study

The liberal feminist theory serves as a tool of analysis for this study as it projects the different levels of the nature and dynamics of women's subordination in male dominated world societies. The theoryprovides explanations of the nature of the state and the position of women in it.The liberal feminist theory, explains clear linkages between socio-economic status(education and income) and gender equality in political participation. In making socioeconomic development an integral part for understanding women's political participation, liberal feminism theorists have raised therelative importance ofeducation and work as perquisites for sustainable development of a country. For instance, they arguedthat a high proportion of women in legislative parliament can be seen in countries with highlevels of income and this cuts across level of education, healthcare services among others.

According to Matland, (1998:109-125)socioeconomic development can bring about unforeseen cultural, traditional, and perception shifts regarding women and transforming gender roles which may lead to political balance and

genderequality This is supported by Viterna, Fallon, & Beckfield, (2008);Matland, (1998:109-125) who confirmed that womenoccupy an important number of seats in parliament in highly developed countries where their socioeconomic status are higher. However, in a worldwide analysis, Moore and Shackman (1996:273-288), Oakes andAlmquist (1993:71-81), and Paxton (1997:442-464) all cited wealth as a factor that influencesparticipation of women in national politics. From the foregoing discussion, liberal feminism serves as the best tool for analysis for women's political participation in South West region of Cameroon.The theory projects the strategies of women's employment and gender mainstreaming as means of handling women's immediate needs and practical concerns, more fundamentally issues of gender power relations and the interactions between political, economic and social spheres.

The demand for equality lawfully (as stated under law), socially, economically, in education, and in the home is at the heart of liberal feminism and this has direct bearing on the subject matter. The theory works within the gendered social system is gearedtowards diminishing discriminatory effects on women, and addresses the objectives of the study which is reflected in the examination of the impact of socio-economic status on women's political participation. This theory serves as the best tool of analysis for the study based on its rich context on the nature of gender, gender relations andinteractions in the political environment.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0: Introduction

This chapter covers the basic research tools employed by the study. The research methodology which is also known as research design or plan usually consists of a combination of procedural steps to conducting a research. A research plan or design refers to a technique used to guide the research towards resolving problems identified or stated. The research plan includes the types and sources of data, methods of data collection, population of the study, sampling size and sampling procedure, instrumentation and method of data analysis.It also presents problems encountered during data collection.

3.1: Research design

This study used survey research and documentary methods. The choice of survey research and documentary methods is informed by the need to collect information of a larger group through a randomly selected group of people for population inclusion and measurement of attitude and behavior, in order to establish the socio-demographic status of the people in the area under study within which the study of the impact of socio-economic status as defined by income and education is conducted. Survey research studies both large and small populations by selecting and studying samples chosen from the population to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interrelations of sociological and psychological variables (Nachmias andNachmias 2009) According to them this kind of survey covered by this definition is the sample

survey. The descriptive and inference (survey) method which is selected involves the collection of data which is to be used for describing and interpreting existing conditions. The central purpose of descriptive research is therefore the discovery of meaning, classification, and analysis. Thus survey research gives direction to this study and is appropriate in making generalizations.

Hence the responses of respondents on gender and political participation in the South West region of Cameroon with the intent to assess the impact of socio-economic status as defined by income and education on the political participation of women in the south west region of Cameroon is examined using the survey method. Considering the fact that survey method has the weakness of not being able to give comprehensive information on past issues relating to the subject matter under study, the gap is bridged by the use of documentary method which gives information on the past issues relating to the subject matter under study. The tools for the survey research method include questionnaires, observation, and interview methods.

3.2: Sources of data

The study made use of both primary (sampling views and opinions) and secondary data.

3.2.1: Secondary data

Any information that has been documented for the purpose of references or any other data that can be accessed without necessarily involving a face to face interaction or any of the survey methods of collecting information (questionnaires, observation, interview, group discussions) is regarded as secondary. Some of these data maybe collected for some other purposes like administrative purposes for government institutions among others. The secondary data is a rich source for compiling a large number of statistics. For this research work, the information from the secondary data were obtained from the United Nations publications on gender and political participation in democratic processes in Africa, Cameroon and the world at large. Newspapers, journals, unpublished and published thesis, and other related materials also provided great sources of information for the study. However the study made tremendous use of varied and diverse academic materials drawn from libraries like, Kashim Ibrahim Library A.B.U zaria, University of Buea Library, Department of gender and women studies library University of Buea, and internet materials, seminar papers, publications from government institutions in order to enrich the review of literature, understanding of the theories and the tools of investigation and analysis.

3.2.2: Primary sources

The study relied primarily on the use of questionnaire as the research tool to elicit data for the study.The primary source of data gives firsthand information on the subject matter. This source allows the researcher the privilege of meeting stakeholders and getting their views on the particular subject of interest.

Questionnaires: Questionnaires are most commonly used tools in surveys research because they are easier to respond to and at the same time score and code. Respondents on the other hand, find them easy and more convenient because they do less or no writing at all. They provide descriptions of the individual or group characteristics such as their personal data like gender, age status etc. The focus is to make comparison between groups, and between individuals and see the dynamics or differences in perception.

According to Kothari (2004), primary data is the collection of facts and figures relating to the population. The primary source of data for this study consisted principally of questionnaires. The choice of questionnaire is inspired by the fact that it allows for wider collection of information on any given matter as well asallows respondents to elaborately supply ample information at their convenience. The choice of questionnaire therefore rests on dependability and reliabilityof the respondents' responses. For the purpose of this study, the

questionnaire specifically addressed issues pertaining to gender and political participation in the South West region of Cameroon with specific reference to socioeconomic status as defined by the levels of income and education. Being the major survey instrument for the study, a total of 1500 questionnaires were administered. To the non- literate population, they had interpreters around mostly their children and grand- children who were very much eager for their parents/grand-parents views to be recorded.

The structured questionnaire is designed to consist of mostly close ended questionsand a few open ended questions which all centered on issues of gender and political participation, in the South West region of Cameroon. Ten field assistance were recruited for the exercise.

3.3: The study area

3.3.1: THE GEOGRAPHY AND POLITICAL HISTORY OF CAMEROON

Cameroon is located in the West Coast of Africa in the gulf of Guinea and contains a sequence of inter-tropical climate, from the equatorial in the south to Sahelian in the North. The climate rhythm is two broad seasons, the raining season between March and October which is being interrupted in August by a short dry season. The dry season lasts between November and March, and the temperatures ranges, between 24^0 centigrade (79^0 Fahrenheit) and 30^0 centigrade (86^0 Fahrenheit).Cameroon's rainforest is dense and has a mountain called Mount. Cameroon in the South West region as the highest

point of the country (4,070 meters high). The woleu-Ntem peneplain, average altitude between 400 – 700 meters occupies the South and Centre regions and presents a uniform landscape of low plateaux. The Ngoundere (Adamaoua) plateaux rise to 1,000metre and in the NorthWest region the high Adamaoua Plateaux seems like mountains with altitudes of 1500metres. In the North (Garoua) the Mandara Mountains rise to 2,000 meters north of the Benue, the plateau drops gradually to the depressed alluvial plains of the Lake Chad basin. Meanwhile the Adamaoua plateaux are the source of the river benue, an affluent of the Niger. Cameroon with its rich geographical features, is boarded to the North by Chad, west by Nigeria, east by Central African Republic and by Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon in the south (Ngoh, 1996). The country has a land mass of 475,440km^2, with a population of about 19,029,433 according to 2006 estimation (CBS, 2008).

In the 19th century, following the Berlin conference of 1884 and the subsequent partition of Africa, the Germans took effective control of the territory which they administratively organized to suit their economic activities of extracting raw materials for their home industries (Ngoh, 1996). By 1914 the First World War escalated and stretched to the colonies of the Great powers and eventually pushed the Germans out of Kamerun. In 1922 the territory was declared a trusteeship territory under the League of Nations and to be administered by France and Britain. The French took over the vast eastern region as part of French Equatorial Africa under strong policy assimilation while the British governed the relatively smaller but much more resourceful region as part of

Nigeria under the policy of indirect rule. Both regions got independence in 1959 and 1960 respectively (Ngoh, 1996).

In 1961 the southern and eastern regions merged to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon; the south comprising of two regions and the east eight regions(then provinces). In 1972 the east and west Cameroon became united and this saw the abolishment of the federal character of the country; and the country became known as the United Republic Cameroon(Ngoh 1996) .Once more in 1984 the unitary aspect was subdued and the country took the appellation of "Republic of Cameroon"(Encyclopedia of nations ,2003) ,this suppressing the historical fact that there had once been two states with different socio-cultural backgrounds which voluntarily decided to unite after independence.

Since independence, Cameroon has had a highly centralized, autocratic political system with a strong executive, a judiciary under the control of the executive, and a National Assembly dominated by the ruling party (CPDM). Administratively, Cameroon is divided into regions which are further divided into divisions, sub-divisions, districts and councils. The regions are headed by governors who are appointed by the president, as well the Divisions by the divisional officers (DOs) the districts by sub-divisional Officers (SDOs) and the councils which are divided into two urban and rural councils are headed by government delegates and elected mayors respectively. Cameroon became a de facto one-party state in 1966 and was dominated by the Cameroon National Union, a union of six political parties; it was renamed the Cameroon Peoples'

Democratic Movement in 1985. Other major political parties include the National Union for Democracy and Progress, the Cameroon People's Union, and the Social Democratic Front.

After significant political unrests and a number of violent clashes, a constitutional amendment in 1990 established a multiparty system. Following reforms on the strongly centralized 1972 constitution, the National Assembly adopted a number of amendments in December 1995 which were promulgated in January 1996. The amendments call for the establishment of a 100-member senate as part of a bicameral legislature, the creation of regional councils, and the fixing of the presidential term to 7 years, renewable once. One-third of senators are to be appointed by the President, and the remaining two-thirds are to be chosen by indirect elections.

As of July 2008, the government had not established the Senate or regional councils.The Cameroonian president presides over the unicameral(1-house) National Assembly, comprising 180 seats. Members are elected by popular vote to a 5-year term of office, but the president has the power to lengthen or shorten the term of a government. Though Cameroon is a stable country with ostensibly democratic institutions, political power remains concentrated in the hands of President Paul Biya and his ruling party. Like the heads of state of many neighboring countries in sub-Saharan Africa, President Biya has developed a democratic facade while maintaining effective control of most governmental institutions. Past elections have been marred by serious fraud, which led to most major opposition parties to boycott the elections in 1997.

President Paul Biya was reelected in 2004 and subsequently. The ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) has dominated Cameroonian politics and controlled government since independence (CNU renamed CPDM),(Encyclopedia of Nations 2003). Since 1990, many opposition parties have freely organized themselves to compete in elections, but the opposition remains divided.

The most prominent opposition parties include the Social Democratic Front (SDF), led by John Fru Ndi; the National Union for Democracy and Progress (UNDP), led by Maigari Bello Bouba; and the Cameroonian Democratic Union (UDC), led by Adamou Ndam Njoya. All of these parties espouse similar ideologies of free enterprise. Cameroon is handicapped by the lack of an effective and independent judiciary. Judges are appointed by the president, and courts are subject to the influence of money and politics. The 1972 constitution of the Republic of Cameroon as modified by 1996 reforms provides for a strong central government dominated by the executive. The president is empowered to name and dismiss cabinet members (regardless of parliamentary representation), judges, generals, provincial governors, Divisional officers, sub-divisional officers, and heads of Cameroon's parastatals (about 100 state-controlled) firms, obligate or disburse expenditures, approve or veto regulations, declare states of emergency, and appropriate and spend profits of parastatals firms. The president is not required to consult the National Assembly. (Encyclopedia of Nations, 2003). In 2008, a constitutional amendment was passed that eliminated term limits for president.

The judiciary is subordinate to the executive branch's Ministry of Justice. The Supreme Court may review the constitutionality of a law only at the president's request.All local government officials are employees of the central government's Ministry of Territorial Administration, from which local governments also get most of their budgets.While the president, the minister of justice, and the president's judicial advisers (the Supreme Court) top the judicial hierarchy, traditional rulers, courts, and councils also exercise functions of government. Traditional courts still play a major role in domestic, property, and probate law. (Wikipedia, 2008)Lack of an independent court system further deters foreign companies from investing in Cameroon.

Socio-economic and political status of women in Cameroon

The socio-economic and political status of women in Cameroon leaves much to be desired. According to Ezuma and Fonsah (2004:89) most of the skilled, supervisory and management staff positions are held by men. The reasons they argued is due to the fact that women lack educational qualifications for supervisory positions as well as the influence of culture. The ESCC (2008) stated that Cameroonian women are poorly represented among employees of businesses, constituting only 11.8% of all workers, 5.2% of skilled work force and 10% of administrative or managerial workers. Attributing the under-representation to limited access to training, the reluctance to hire women, and the confining of women to certain administrative roles and other sociological and family related considerations. This structure is exacerbated by women's level of access to quality education. Illiteracy for women under 25 years is

29% against 15% for men. For primary education, the percentage of school enrolment for girls rose from 0.83% to 0.89% between 2001/2007. In 2006/2007, it stood at 75.44% against 80.76% for boys. In 2008/2009 79% for boys and 69% for girls. Enrolment figures by sex in secondary school revealed that in 2008/09, the schools enrolled 629809 (55.85%) boys and 497882(44.15%) with a total of 1127692(100%). In higher institutions, state higher institutions, female enrolment stood at39.7% in 2005, 41.75% in 2006, 43.9% in 2007 and 44.27% in 2008. (Minister of Women Empowerment and Family, 2009) From the figures revealed above, the school enrolment for the girl child in Cameroon is increasing, though the increase does not reflect the percentage of the women's population in the country.

However, this disproportion in socio-economic structure along gender lines in Cameroon leave women financially dependent on men, and vulnerable to crisis situations. In this regard, Som (2000) argued that the co-existence of written laws with customary traditions that do not always favour the promotion of women's rights and lack of resources allocated to the mechanisms to promoting women's development have further compounded impacted negatively on the realization of women's role in politics. Thus the marginalization and the exclusion of women in organs of decision making in Cameroon is eminent. In view of the formal human rights framework, Mungwa (1991:12) argued that gender inequality in political participation is persistent in Cameroon and is exacerbated by bad governance, mismanagement, corruption and in virtually all sectors of public life.

The tables below reflect the level of gender inequality in Cameroon since independence.

Table 3.1:Cameroon's female members of parliament from 1960-2009

Year	No of Members	No of women members	Percent of women members
1960-1965	50	1	.8%
1966-1970	141	2	1.4%
1970-1973	137	5	3.6%
1973-1978	120	7	5.8%
1978-1983	120	12	10%
1983-1988	120	17	14.2%
1988-1992	180	26	14.5%
1992-1997	180	23	12.8%
1997-2002	180	10	5.5%
2002-2007	180	20	11.1%
2007-2009	180	15	8.3%

Source: Ministry of Women empowerment and Family (2009),Cameroon tribune No 6644, July 1998.

The table above shows that from the post-colonial political scenario, Cameroonian women are gradually becoming politically active. Considering the fact that women represent 52% of the country's population, contribute 75% of agricultural work force and produce 80% of the nation's food, this level of

women's political representation is quite low thus ensuring low level of women's representation in key political positions in the country.

Table 3.2 : Women ministers in Cameroon between 1990 and 2009

Year	Total No of ministers	No of women ministers	Percentof women ministers
1995	27	02	7%
1998	49	03	6%
2004	65	06	9.3%
2009	62	06	10%

Source: Ministry of Women empowerment and Family, 2009

The above table shows an increasing trend in women's ministerial appointments. It is worthy of note that appointments into government offices are subject to the chief executive's (president) decision. Though women's position in politics in the country is improving, they are still grossly discriminated against and this is working against their abilities to contribute meaningfully to the country's socio-economic and political development.

At the local councils, the country had no female mayor between 1982-87; in 1987-1992 it had 1 female mayor; 1996-2001 there were 2 female mayors. The figures increased between 2002-2007as it stood at 10female mayors and between 2007-2012 there were 24 female mayors in the country. A detail look at the above figures reveal that the number of female mayors are increasing though not proportionate to the women's population in the country.

Table 3.3: Female councillors in Cameroon from 1980-2009

Year	Councillors	Female Councillors	Percent
1982-87	5107	336	7%
1987-1992	5347	436	8%
1996-2001	9932	1061	11%
2002-2007	9963	1302	13%
2007-2009	10632	1651	15%

Source: Ministry of Women empowerment and Family, 2009

From the above tables, women's position in the political spheres in Cameroon is increasing gradually. Women in decision- making positions have increased also in the ministries . At administrative levels, women's ratio stands at 58 out of 336 constituting 15.5% , in the judiciary, there are 215 out of 1157 constituting 18%. According Nguelle (1997:32) this level of representation is negligible compared to the population, dynamism and productive force of women. Within political institutions, he argued that the marginalization of women takes place at the level of investiture operations because the investiture automatically reflects the results at the polls. This no doubt seriously affects the chances of women being voted into political offices.Further, political parties kind of refrain from investing in women substantive candidates in their electoral stronghold. In 1992 general elections, CPDM invested in 25 women as substantive candidates to vie for 180 seats in the parliament, NUDP invested in 9 women to vie for 133 seats, UPC invested in 4 to vie for 122 seats and MDR invested in 1 to vie for 80 seats in the various constituencies. The main

opposition party, SDF had no female candidate (Cameroon Tribune, No 2633, 7thMay 1997). Again in 1997, of the 2290 substantive candidates and alternative candidates invested in by various political parties, 110 women were substantive candidates as well as 163 women alternatives. From these numbers, CPDM had 13female substantive candidates, SDF had 10, NUDP had 14, CDU had 5, UPC/K had 7, MDR had 2. Non from MLJC. It is worthy of note that at this juncture the country had about 150 registered political parties (Cameroon tribune, no 2633, 7th May 1997). This limited number of women as candidates for political parties, deny them the opportunity which may allow them influence reactions in the political sphere. From the above analysis, it is evident that Cameroonian women are predisposed to discrimination and marginalization in terms of access to socio-economic and political resources as well as equal opportunity to participate in politics.

The South West region

The study specifically covers the South West Region of Cameroon from 1990-2009. The region lies between latitude and longitude 4^0 8^1 42^1 N and 9^0 8^1 17 E. The region has a population of about 1,316,079 inhabitants(2006 estimate) and covers a landmass of 25410$km^{2.}$ The total male population is 666822 and female population stands at 649257. (CBSPS, 2009) The region has six divisions namely Fako Meme, Manyu, Koupe-Manengouba ,Lebialem, and Ndian, 26 subdivisions and 5 districts. It is home to several ethnic groups among which include Bakweri, Bakundu, Limba, Anyang, Ejagham, Bafaw, with several indigenous languages. Fako division has a total population of

539,352 (2006 census) , with a landmass of 2,093km^2 , among which the male population stands at 234145 constituting 50.3 % and female population stands at 232267 constituting 49.7 % . Meme division, with landmass of 3105 km^2, has a population of 326,734, with 167554 males constituting 51.3 % and 159180 females constituting 48.7 %. Manyu division covers 9,565 km^{2}and has a total population of 181039 with 91135.males and 89904 females. (CBSPS, 2009.)

The South West region is the seat of the headquarters of the former West Cameroon German protectorate; as such it has all the privileges of lasting infrastructure laid by colonial masters and successive governments. The region had served as a focal point for political and socio-economic development for the nation as such it is imperative to find the extent to which its residents are involved in the political process of the region.

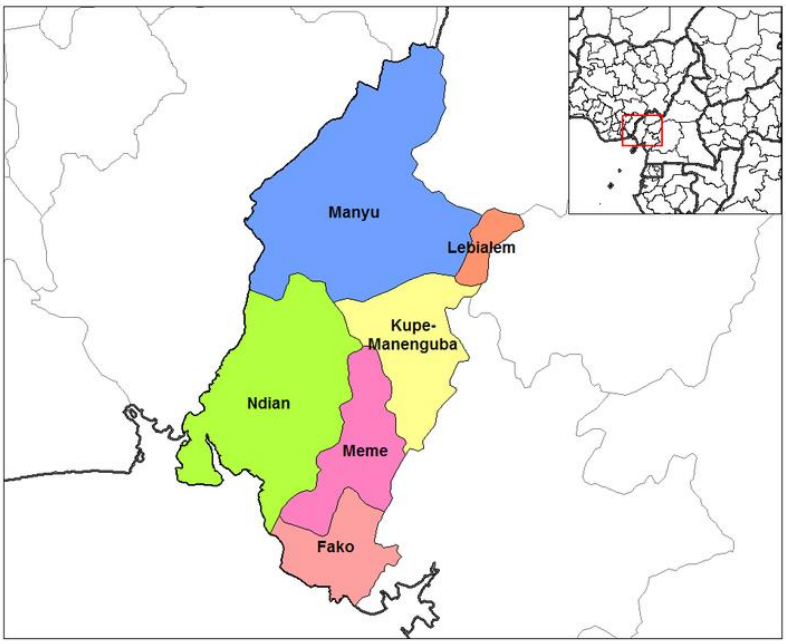


Fig 2: Map of South West Region showing all divisions and case study areas (Fako, Meme and Manyu Divisions)

Most of its major cities enjoy good mix of tribes, religions and diverse cultural and socio-political arrangements. The structure of the region's population reveals that the majority of its citizenry live more in urban and semi urban towns like Buea, Limbe , Kumba, Mamfe, Tiko , Muyuka, and Mutengene.

Socio-economic and political history of women in the South West region of Cameroon

The South West region of Cameroon, existed as part of Southern Cameroons constituting of North West and South West provinces. These areas were administered by the British as part of Nigeria between 1922-1961. As such the activities of women in these areas were usually linked together or as part of Nigeria, thus representation was mostly for both provinces. Though Adams, (2005); Awasom, (2002); maintained that Cameroonian women were involved in political activities before and during colonial times, Atanga (2010:7) argued that women's involvement in political activities during same period of time existed but was minimal and peripheral since they were not involved in the daily running of their communities. That female traditional political positions existed but were very few. According to Fombe, (2005) before and during colonialism, women formed 'women groups' which performed the function of checks and balances and moderate the activities in their various local communities and villages in Cameroon. With specific reference to the South west province now South West region, the women formed groups in the

various local communities like the 'Liengu' (Tande, 2006) , These groups were constituted in cases of emergencies to check the excesses of men in the society especially in extreme cases of human rights violation. Stevens (2006) maintained that women who constituted this group were older women within the society. Stevens (2006); Ngwang, (2004) stated that these older women are considered the 'power of powers' since they use 'genital powers' but have no say in the day to day running of their societies. The public participation of this group of women is usually non-verbal, although they may have representatives who talk on their behalf. They normally present their discussions and petitions not in the general assembly of men and women but in protest forms in open spaces. Example is the 'Anlu' which was constituted in 1958 during the British colonial administration when the administration introduced far-reaching modern reforms in the agricultural sector(taxes and laws regulating farming techniques). These frightened the women and the impromptu group constituted itself and took to the streets during the Endeley government (Adams 2006, Atanga, 2010).

However, the British administration, tried to incorporate women into the public sphere by providing women in Southern Cameroons with certain opportunities for education, travel abroad and salaried employment (Adams, 2006:4) . Despite these efforts, there existed significant disparity in the kind and length of education for girls and boys, with more benefit accruing to boys. Additionally after acquiring such education of which specific courses(nursing, secretaries, librarians, home economics, cookery etc) designed along gender

lines limited women's space in the labor market, only led to women being recruited for a narrow range of positions. It is worthy of note that colonial administration and women's associations were constructed as inherently non-political bodies. According to Adams(2006:4), the complex nature of the educational systems in the territory, which included government, native authority and mission schools, presented difficulty in gathering total school enrollment and attendance figures for girls before, during and after colonial administration. However, the British reports to the league of Nations and later to the United Nations provided general data on girls' school attendance rates in the Southern Cameroon, which indicated that they increased in the course of British colonial rule.

"Prejudice against the education of women dies hard,
but the number attending school is increasing gradually
throughout the territory"
(Great Britain, 1958:50 cited in Adams 2006:4)

In the zeal to encourage female education in Southern Cameroons, the Bristish Adminsitration launched a special training program to increase the number of educated women in Nigeria and Cameroon who take on senior service posts I the territories. This resulted into 5 women, from Southern Cameroons who travelled for higher education in Nigeria and Great Britain.The reports in the 1950s show that a growing number of women worked as nurses, teachers, and clerks. By 1958, the territory recorded 222 female teachers, 5 nursing sisters and 55 nurses and midwives and a number of women who held clerical positions in the public service and in commercial concerns (Great Britain,

1959:166 cited in Adams, 2006: 7). Thus higher education provided to women by the British Administration gave them opportunities to explore other aspirations outside their home, especially opportunities for professional employment. Women also learnt other skills in areas like cookery, baby craft, health and hygiene and local crafts. Indeed women acquired knowledge in diverse fields which enabled them take on leadership roles which could and often did serve as stepping stones to broader involvement in public life. (Konde, 1991) . More so these women with common interest and backgrounds were encouraged to form women groups and organizations where they would share ideas and skills acquired among themselves and other women thus spreading the western norms and values and consequently address a wider range of issues affecting women.

It is worth mentioning at this point that in pre-colonial societies in Cameroon, women's authority stemmed from their reproductive and productive roles. Hence the introduction of cash crop by the colonial administration and their discriminatory method of recruitment- mainly preference for recruiting men to senior civil service posts limited women's socio-economic and political status. This was confirmed in 1954 when the British colonial government sought to establish women's participation in native authorities. They found out that women's participation throughout the territory was generally low due to the fact that participation was linked to payment of tax, very few women had salaried jobs then or could establish some form of financial independence from men. Therefore only women could vote and be voted for.

However, the forms of women's participation in public life in the Southern Cameroons and the South west region in particular was modified with the introduction of formal education for women and girls by the British colonial administration. An eminent transformation from non-verbal to verbal methods of participation and direct involvement in decision making processes of their society.

Though, Cameroonian women got suffrage in 1946, in practice, they only cheered and voted their male counterparts into positions of powers. Particularly, the women in Southern Cameroons got access to political roles following the adoption of the December 1957 Southern Cameroons electoral regulations which allowed women to vote and stand for elections without taxation requirements that limited women's ability to participate in political affairs earlier (Great Britain 1958).

Following these developments, a report of Great Britain in 1958 on the Cameroons notes that 1 woman was present on the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly to represent the interests of women, 1 woman was appointed to Southern Cameroons scholarship board and in 'Victoria Division' now Limbe each council nominated women councilors to represent women's interests on councils and 1 woman was appointed a court member in the Tiko council (Great Britain, 1958:165). In a few councils specifically Bamenda, South West province and south east native authorities allowed for special female representatives of women's interests on the councils of which 4 women participated in the first council authority and subsequently 3 of which the

South West province had 1 woman representing the interest of women in the province.

It is worthy of note that though women participation increased, it was not proportionate to their male counterparts, as well as they did not have equal rights with their male counterparts. Also, the fact the British colonial administration encouraged women to form women groups and organizations as earlier mentioned is worth reiterating. Following the formation of women's groups in 1950s, women's participation in public life increased. The colonial administration did not only support the formation of these groups they also encouraged external linkages., allowing women in these groups to create links with international associations provided their intentions were non-political – not challenging the colonial authority. In this regard, Circular 212/60 stated

'women were increasingly participating in the
social and public affairs of the community… and
the development of women's groups in Southern
Cameroons and women's clubs has been symptomatic
of the new movement (NAB, Safe , 1960).

Some of the women's group in the South west province included, the 'Young ladies Improvement Society- Victoria', Women's progressive society- Kumba, Ladies democratic society –Buea, Ladies Glee Club – Mamfe, Ndolo Bitu women's fellowship-Buea. By 1960, women in Southern Cameroons, had form groups and organizations and clubs meant to carry on with activities learnt from their expatriate counterparts. Britain ruled Southern Cameroons as part of

Nigeria until 1961 when the UN Trusteeship Council organized a plebiscite in the British controlled territories to determine whether they should join Nigeria or Cameroon. Northern Cameroon voted to join Nigeria, while Southern Cameroon chose to reunite with East Cameroon (French Cameroon)

According to Konde (2005), women in post- colonial Cameroon were co-opted into politics from the women's organizations. He stated that in recent times the Catholic women's associations (CWA) has been particularly successful in setting member in political offices stating the CWA is next in to the CPDM (ruling party) in having members in the parliament. Looking at the educational level of women in the South West region between 1990-2009, the structure is exacerbated by women's level of access to quality education. Enrolment figures by sex in secondary schools revealed that in 2000/2001, 69503(48.5%) girls and 73855(51.5%) boys with a total of 143358(100%) were enrolled, in 2005/2006 the enrolment figures stood at 105993(49.1%) for girls and 110095(50.9%) for boys with a total of 216088(100%), in 2007/2008, 110511(49.4%) girls and 113291(50.6) boys were enrolled with a total of 223802(100%) 2008/09, the schools enrolled 116956 (47.3%) boys and 130531(52.7%) with a total of 247487(100%) (Ministry of Secondary education, 2010). In higher institutions, state higher institutions, female enrolment stood at 41.5% in 2002, 38.5% in 2007 and 44.4% in 2008 (Convocation booklet, University of Buea, 2002, 2007, 2008). For vocational training, the enrolment statistics revealed the followings 74% for boys against 25% girls in 2008, in 2007 it stood at 67% for boys and 32.5% for girls and in

2006 it stood at 65% for boys and 35% for girls in the south west region (Regional delegation for employment and vocational training, 2009). From the figures revealed above, the school enrolment for the girl child in Cameroon is increasing, though the increase does not reflect the percentage of the women's population in the country.

However, the employment statistics of the South West region reveals that out of the 1259 applicants who got job placements in the region, only 245(19.5%) were females in 2008 and in 2007 the figures stood at 7008(38.8%) females against 11041(61%) males (Regional delegation of employment and vocational training 2008). This reveals a gender disparity in job acquisitions in the south west region. This gap is working against females in the region.The distribution of women's participation in politics with regards to women voted into parliament between 2000-2009 reveals that out of the 15 parliamentarians from the region, only 5 are females, 5 female mayors, and of the 852 councillors, 153 are females. This reveals a clear disproportionate level of political participation along gender lines in the South West region of Cameroon.

3.4: Population of the study

Population here refers to the aggregate of survey elements which is specific and delineative from which survey sample is actually selected. Population for a survey can be categorized into two namely the target population and the accessible population. The elements in the group that are within the reach of

the researcher are referred to as the accessible population. The target populations of the study are adult males and females of selected council areas of the South West region of Cameroon aged 20 years and above. According to the constitution of Cameroon a person is able to vote and be voted for from the age of 20 years;hence this population is considered to have adequate knowledge of the state of the nation and status of women in politics, their socio-economic status and its impact on their participation in politics in the South West region. The population of the South West region of Cameroon largely depends on government provided jobs like working in government plantations and the civil service, while a part of the population works in the private sector.

3.4.1: Sampling Method and Procedure, Sample Size

Sampling is the process, or technique of selecting a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population. Considering the large population of the South West region, there is a need for the population to be divided into different stages from which samples can be drawn to provide estimates of the unknown parameters from simple statistics that can easily be calculated (McGraw-Hill, 2003). The multistage cluster sampling method was used to determine the sample size of the study. It is a kind of sampling design whereby two or more levels of units are embedded one in the other. At first, a sample of primary units is selected and afterwards, in each of those selected, a sample of secondary units is selected and the process continues. The simplest version of this procedure is to

use simple random sampling at each stage including simple random sampling (SRS) of primary units, and an SRS of secondary units within each selected primary unit. It is worthy of note that the primary units do not need to be the same size and you do not need to select the same number of secondary units within each primary unit. According to Battaglia (2008), a multi-stage sample is one in which sampling is done sequentially across two or more hierarchical levels, such as first at the county level, second at the census track level, third at the block level, fourth at the household level, and ultimately at the within-household level. Thus the study adopted the multistage cluster sampling procedure to determine the sample population for the study.

Using simple random sampling method to select three divisions from the South West region of Cameroon which has six divisions namely Fako, Meme, Manyu, Ndian, Kepe Muanenguba, and Lebialem divisions. The selected divisions included Fako, Meme and Manyu divisions. Using the simple random sampling procedure, two sub-divisions were randomly selected from each of the three selected divisions , thereby constituting six sub-divisions. From the already existing council areas, two council areas were randomly selected from each sub division comprising one urban council and one rural councilarea. The selected councils areas included Limbe City council and Idenau rual council from Fako division, Manfe City council and upper Bayang rural council from Manyu division and Kumba City council and Mbonge rural council from Meme division. Further, one village was randomly selected from each council area and one or two or three main streets were selected using

simple random sampling method. More so households were randomly selected and the research instrument was administered to the respondents.

Table 3.4: Distribution of the divisions and Councils areas of the South West Region and Selected Councils

Divisions	Sub divisions	Councils	Selected Councils
Fako	Buea, **Limbe**, **Tiko**, Muyuka	Buea, Muyuka, Tiko, Limbe, Idenau	**Limbe, Idenau**
Kupe Muanenguba	Bangem, Tombel, Nguti	Bangem, Tombel, Nguti	
Lebialem	Fontem, Wabne, Alou	Alou, Fontem , Wabane	
Manyu	**Mamfe**, Akwaya, Eyumojock, **Upper Bayang**	Mamfe, Akwaya, Eyumock, Upper Bayang	**Mamfe, U. Bayang**
Meme	**Kumba*, Mbonge**, Koye	Kumba, Mbonge Koye	**Kumba, Mbonge**
Ndian	Mundemba, Bamussa, EkondoTiti, Isangele, Kombo Abejimo,	Bamusso, EkondoTiti, Isangele, Kombo Itindi, Idabato, Toko Mundemba	

	Kombo Itindi, Idabato	

Source: South West Region Master Plan for Sustainable Development, MINEPAT 2005

The above table shows the divisions of the South West region, sub-divisions, council areas of the selected divisions, selected sub-divisions and selected council areas for the study are highlighted.

Table 3.5: Distribution of selected councils, population and households

Selected councils	Population	Households
Urban		
Limbe	82,774	16554
Mamfe	47,758	9552
Kumba	199,477	30,826
Total	330009	56932
Rural		
Idenau	1896	201
Upper Bayang	4085	580
Mbonge	1001	166
Total	6,982	947

Souce: CBS, 2009 & South West regional master plan for sustainable development, MINEPAT 2005

Table 3.2 above shows the selected council areas and the population and household population of the selected council areas for the study. The selected council areas are administratively categorized into two to represent urban and rural councils. The entire population for the selected council areas is 336991 inhabitants and the total household is 57879. The study did not use the entire

population of the region as it made use of the multistage sampling procedure and Yamane formula of sample size determination. A sample therefore is a smaller group of elements drawn through a definite procedure from a specific population, and the elements making the sample are those that are actually studied. The choice of the Yamane's formula is because it presents us with a minimum and manageable sample size. This technique does not discriminate between samples as selection is done with the view that the samples share the same characteristics. Therefore the sample size for the study was derived using Yamane (1967:886) formula for deriving sample size in order to arrive at the appropriate number of people to be administered questionnaires.

Yamane's Formula for Determining Sample Size

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where

n = the sample size

N is the population

1 = constant

e = margin of error (level of significance)

Yamane (1967) seeks to give minimum sample size under $\pm$5 for the study ensuring reasonable coverage. Therefore the sample size for was determined thus:-

Urban council areas

$$n = \frac{330009}{1+330009(0.05)^2} = 400$$

For the urban councils, the sample size is 400

For the rural council areas the sample size is calculated thus;

$$n = \frac{6987}{1+6987(0.05)^2} = 367$$

Total sample size determined for the study is 400+ 367= 767.

Hence **n= 767**

Yamane's formula seeks to give a minimum manageable sample size.Though the sample size is determined as stated above, the researcher administered 1500 questionnaires in order to ensure a wider coverage of the targeted population and study area. Questionnaires were therefore distributed accordingly. More so, the same formula was used to determine the sample households.

3.5 Administration of research instrument

The questionnaires were administered by the researcher and ten research assistants. The researcher together with three field assistants covered Fako division specifically Limbe urban council area and Idenau rural council area, while two research assistants covered Manyu- Mamfe urban council and Upper Baying rural council and five field assistants covered Meme divion- kumba

urban council and Mbonge rural council. Questionnaires were therefore distributed accordingly to respondents from selected households in the selected areas under study. The table below explains the distribution of questionnaires according to the population of the selected areas.

Table 3.6: Distribution of questionnaires according to sample size

Selected councils	Total Population	Total Household	Sample size (%)	No of households to be administered questionnaire	No of questionnaire administered
Urban					
Limbe	82,774	16554	25	169	375
Mamfe	47,758	9552	14	96	210
Kumba	199,477	30,826	59	394	875
Rural					
Idenau	1896	201	1	7	15
Upper Bayang	4085	580	1	7	15
Mbonge	1001	166	0	3	10
Grand total	336991	57879	100%	676	1500

Source: Field survey, 2012; CBS, 2009&South West regional master plan for sustainable development, MINEPAT 2005

The above table presents the selected council areas under study, the human and household populations, the sample size percentages and number of

questionnaires distributed to the respondents in the area under study, in the South West region of Cameroon. The total household for the study is 57879. Based on their differences in categorization, the sample size percentage for each council area was derived thus sample size percentage was determined thus:

Divide the population of a council by the total population and multiply by 100

i.e. for Limbe

$$\frac{82774}{330009}\text{x}100 = 25\%$$

This formula was applied to all selected council areas to determine their sample size percentages as shown on the table above.

To get the total number of questionnaires to be distributed to each council area based on their sample size percentage, the total number of questionnaires for the study is multiplied by the sample size percentage of a particular council area in the same category and the value is divided by one hundred

e.g for urban council area say Limbe :

$$\frac{1500\ x\ 25}{100} = 375$$

The same formula was used to determine the number of households to be selected per selected council area. A total of 676 households were randomly selected from the study area and the research instrument was distributed accordingly as shown on table 3.3 above.

From the 6 councils areas that were randomly selected, one village was randomly selected from each council areafrom which one main street was randomly selected from areas with lower number of questionnaires, and two and three main streets for the areas that had more questionnaires. So from Mamfe two main streets were randomly selected, from Upper Bayang and Mbonge, one main street each were randomly selected and from Limbe two main streets, kumba three main streets, comprising a total of nine main streets which were randomly selected from the selected council areas. Furthermore, the simple random sampling was used to select the households and the research instrument was administered to respondents, one male and one female respondent based on availability from age 20 years and above. The total questionnaires summed up to 1500 administered in both the urban and rural councils in the selected divisions from the South West region of Cameroon. The respondents included both genders and in as various professions as possible like trading, housewives, farmers, bankers, school teachers, civil servants political office holders and respondents were met at their various homes during the process. The intention of the research was to get information for the study from both genders within different dispositions in life and different experiences. A total of 1430 questionnaires were returned, constituting 95% of the total questionnaires administered in the selected areas.

Table 3.7: Summary of responses to questionnaires

Selected councils	Population	No of questionnaires administered per council	No of questionnaires returned per council

Urban			
Limbe	82,774	375	350
Mamfe	47,758	210	205
Kumba	199477	875	835
Rural			
Idenau	1,896	15	15
Upper Bayang	4,085	15	15
Mbonge	1,001	10	10
Grand total	33,6982	**1500**	**1430**

Source:
Field survey: 2012; CBS 2009 &South West regional master plan for sustainable development, MINEPAT 2005

Out of the 1500 questionnaires administered in all selected council areas in the south west region of Cameroon, a total of 1430 were returned constituting 95% of the sample. The analysis was done on the number of questionnaires returned.

3.6: Procedure for data presentation and analysis

The data collected for this study were analyzed using a combination of inferential and descriptive statistical techniques. These were presented in frequency distribution tables, simple percentages andcross-tabulations. The data were sorted out for the use of those that best explain the subject matter. The variables were categorized into two namely the independent and dependent variables. The independent variables are those that described the socio- demographic characteristics of the respondents which included gender, age, marital status etc. The dependent variables are those that identified the nature and level of political participation which include membership in political parties, voting in elections, attending political rallies, and occupation

of political posts. The gender analysis was done by segregating the data to elicit the understanding of the effect of socio-economic status as defined by income and education on women's political participation. The simple percentage methods were used in analyzing the data. The qualitative mode included the use of frequency distribution tables, and simple percentages to achieve the descriptive and impact outcomes of the study objectives.. The data collected was edited coded and analyzed using the statistical package for social science (SPSS). Inferential statistics (chi-square) and descriptive statistics (frequency distribution and percentages) were used to analyze the results. Chi-square analysis was used to determine the relationship between variables.

The chi-square according to Leven & Rubin cited in Abubakar (2011) is used to measure the level of discrepancy between observed and expected frequencies and is given thus

$$X = \sum = \frac{(0 - E)^2}{E}$$

Where:

X^2=Chi-square

O= Observed frequencies

E= Expected frequencies

$\sum$= Sigma of summation

The expected frequency is usually calculated by multiplying the column total by the row total and divide the results by the grand total for each cell

$$E = \frac{CT \times RT}{GT}$$

Where:

E= Expected frequency

CT= Total Column

RT= Total Row

GT= Grand total

The degree of freedom is the number of freely varying scores with the sample. It is calculated as df=N-1, in a 2x2 contingency table. But in a computer generated results, the degree of freedom is most likely to vary in each test of hypothesis. The level of significance refers to the maximum probability with which risk can be taken. For the purpose of this study, the level of significance is 0.05 because it agrees with Yamane's formula for sampling adopted by the study. This means that the maximum probability that risk can be taken is 5%

Variables

Proposition 1

Independent variable - socio-economic status (income and education)

Dependent variable - Peoples' political participation

Proposition 2

Independent variable - Socio-economic status (income and education)

Dependent variable – Women's political participation

JUSTIFICATION FOR METHOD OF ANALYSIS

This study adopted the above method of analysis because it attempted to test for dependence among variables in the propositions and searches for discrepancies and causal relationships between variables.

3.7: Problems encountered during data collection

During data collection, the researcher experienced some hardship which affected the cost and time implications of the data collection process. The researcher met with resistance and reluctance as some of the respondents in the Limbe urban council and Idenau rural sluggishly accepted to collect and fill the questionnaires. The reasons according to them were that their views do not matter in a country where one party has dominated politics for more than 20 years with just a change of name from Cameroon National Union (CNU) to Cameroon People Democratic Party (CPDM). So they have no contributions to make in terms of the politics in Cameroon; asking the researcher what difference it makes if they participate in politics or not. Some of those who agreed to collect and fill asked the research to pay them some money before they could proceed with whatever the questionnaire was about ,believing it was

a government based research. As a result, the researcher spent time explaining the questionnaires were meant for academic purposes and not one of government's tools to cajole the public into voting their candidates. This led to the researcher showing letter of introduction to enable her to carry out the research from the department of political science to some respondents and a student identity card. For some it was a 'go and come back' matter. As they were not in the mood to fill the questionnaires and others were busy with house chores. The researcher went back severally; some respondents who collected the questionnaires were never available whenever the researcher returned at the given time and as a result, some of the questionnaires were not returned.

CHAPTER FOUR

GENDER AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE SOUTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.0: Introduction

This chapter covers the presentation, interpretation and analysis of the responses generated from the questionnaires administered during the field survey carried in the months of December 2011-January 2012, in order to examine the impact of socioeconomic status as defined by income and educational levels on women's political participation in the South West region of Cameroon from 1990-2009. It consists of the socio-demographic data, data

on gender and political participation, data on women's socio-economic status in terms of educational and income levels, and the examination of the impact of socio-economic status as defined by income and education on women's political participation in the South west region of Cameroon. In view of political participation, the study used the following variables; membership in political parties (registration), voting in elections, and attending political campaigns and rallies. Data for this study relied principally on primary source-questionnaires, though it made wide use of secondary sources of information-articles from journals, internet materials to substantiate its research findings.

4.1 Data presentation

4.1.1: Descriptive statistical analysis (frequency distribution, simple percentages and pie chart

The data from the survey is displayed below to determine their rate of response return. The field survey was carried out from December 2011-January 2012. Similarly, responses on each question are presented using frequency distribution, pie charts, tabulations for easy comprehension and subsequent analysis. This section also presents the socio-demographic profile of the respondents. The variables presented in the tables are used to determine the social and economic status of the respondents which are likely to influence their participation in politics in the South West region of Cameroon.

Table 4.1: Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

Variables	Level	Frequency(n=1430)	Percentage
Sex	Male	708	49.5%
	Female	722	50.5%
Age	20-34	479	33.5%
	35-49	616	43.1%
	50-above	325	22.7%
	No response	10	0.7%
Marital status	Married	684	47.8%
	Single	619	43.3%
	Divorced	41	2.9%
	Separated	44	3.1%
	Widowed	42	2.9%
Employment status	Employed	921	64.4%
	Unemployed	465	32.5%
	No response	44	3.1%
Nature of employment	Government	416	29.1%
	Private	429	30.0%
	Self	233	16.3%
	Others	212	14.8%
	No response	140	31.1%
			9.8%
Income level	50000-1490000	350	24.5%
	150000-249000	407	28.5%

	250000-349000	333	23.3%
	350000-above	144	10.1%
	No response	196	13.7%
Level of educational attainment	No formal education	231	16.2%
	FSLC	313	21.9%
	GCE O Level	290	20.3%
	GCE A level	391	27.3%
	University degree & others	174	12.2%
	No response	31	2.1%

Source:Fieldsurvey,2012

An analysis of the respondents' socio-demographic profile shows the following details 708 (49.5%) of the respondents are males while 722 (50.5%) are females revealing an almost equal representation of males and females in the sample. The age distribution of the respondents shows that 479 (33.5%) are aged 20-34 years, and 616 (43.1%) are aged 35-49 years, while 325 (22.7%) of the respondents are aged50 years and above. The data further reveals that the majority 684(47.8%) of the respondents are married, 616(43.3%) of the respondents are single, while very few 41 (2.9%), 44(3.1%) and 42(2.9%) are divorced, separated and widowed respectively. The data further shows that the majority 921 (64.4%) of the respondents are employed while 465 (32.5%) are unemployed. This indicates better socio-economic status for people in the south west region of Cameroon. More so the majority, 429 (30%) of the respondents work in the private sector, 416 (29.1%) work with the government, while 233 (16.3%) are self- employed and 212 (14.8%) indicated they have other means of employment but failed to specify them. Though the data reveals a high level of employment rate, 350(24.5%) indicated that their

monthly income fall between 50,000- 149000 frs while the majority 407(28.5%) of the respondents have their income levels located within 150,000-249000frs monthly and 333(23.3%) within 250,000-349,000 frs. Very few respondents have their income levels located between 350,000 frs and above monthly. Finally, the above table shows that 231 (16.2%)of the respondents have no formal education and 313(21.9%) are FSLC holders; while the majority of the respondents 391(27.3%) are holders of the GCE "A" level certificates, and 174(12.2%) have university degrees and other certificates equivalent to or above university degrees.The data on income and educational levels reveals a considerable level of educational attainment with relatively high income levels for most of the respondents.This is an indication that the people in the South West region of Cameroon are relatively exposed to better understanding of the issues relating to gender and political participation. The breakdown of the socio-economic status of the respondents based on gender is presented in a cross tabulation of the data using frequency distribution and percentages on gender, income and education.

Table 4.2: Distribution of respondents' classification by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	708	49.5
Female	722	50.5
Total	1430	100

Source: Field survey,2012

The above table reveals that 708 malesrepresenting 49.5%and 722 females representing (50.5 %) responded to the research instruments (questionnaires). By implication, it signifies that the female group is at the forefront of responding to gender related issues than their male counterpart. This is based on the response rate of the respondents as indicated in the above table where the large part of the respondents is female (722) As a result, it is not unlikely that the views expressed are bound to be tilted toward the female biases.

Table 4.3: Distribution of respondents' classification by age

Gender	Responses	Frequency	Percent
Male	No response	8	1
	20-34	223	16
	35-49	271	19
	50-above	206	14
Female	No response	2	0
	20-34	256	18
	35-49	345	24
	50-above	119	8
Total		1430	100

Source: Field survey, 2012

From the above table, the analysis of the age reveals that 33.5% (479) of the respondents comprising 16% (223) males and 18% (256) females are aged between 20-34 years. The age distribution further shows that 43.1% (616) of the respondents comprising 19% (271) males and 24% (345) females are aged 35 -49 years. Between ages 50 years and above, out of the 22.7% (325) of the respondents, 14% (206) are males and 8% (119) are females. Looking further, those between ages 35-49 years responded massively to the questionnaires (43.1%) with female respondentsconstituting the bulk (24%). This implies, the female gender have an understanding of gender issues in the region and are readily available to make their contributions, hence their high response rate.

Table 4.4: Respondents classification by marital status

Gender	Responses	Frequency	Percent
Male	Married	386	27
	Single	258	18
	Divorced	20	1
	Separated	26	2
	Widowed	18	1
Female	Married	298	21
	Single	361	25
	Divorced	21	2
	Separated	18	1
	Widowed	24	2

Total	1430	100%

Source: Field survey , 2012

As revealed in the table above, 47.8% (684) of the respondentsstated that they are married; comprising 27% (386) males and 21% (298) females. Furthermore, 43.3% (619) of the respondents agreed that they are single, comprising of 18% (258) males and 25% (361) females. Again, 2.9% (41) of the respondents stated that they are divorced comprising 1% (20) males and 1% (21) females. Furthermore, 2.9% (42) of the respondents stated that they are widowed comprising 1% (18) males and 24% (2) females. These results show that when it comes to gender issues, those respondents who are married have appreciable knowledge. This is seen in their response rate constituting the highest at 47.8% with married male respondents constituting the bulk, with a response rate of 27% (386). This is not unconnected with the fact that marriage exposes the ways in which men's and women's negotiation of work and family roles may be quite different. As a result, married respondents tend to respond more and better to gender related issues than other respondents, considering the fact that they respond to these issues on individual basis and also as married persons (two persons in one).

Table 4.5: classification of respondents by employment status

Gender		Frequency	Percent
Male	No response	26	2%
	Employed	530	37.3%

	Unemployed	152	10.2%
	No response	18	1 %
Female	Employed	391	27.6%
	Unemployed	313	21.9 %
Total		1430	100 %

Source: Field survey, 2012

From the above table, the information on employment status showsthat 530 (37.3%) of male respondents and 391 (27%) of female respondents are employed;while 152(10.2%) of male respondents and 313 (21.9%) of female respondents are unemployed and 26(2%) of male respondents and 18(1%) of female respondents did not answer the question. The table further reveals that more male respondents are employed than their female counterparts. This is seen in their response rate which stands at 37.2% as against that of their female counterpart which stands at 27.6%. Again, the female respondents who are unemployed are more than their male counterparts maintaining a 21.9% unemployment rate as against 10.2% of their male counterparts. By implication, this means that, the male respondents will have a better economic status than their female counterparts given their high employment rate.

According to Brady et al (1995); Schur (2003); Sobel (1993) when one is employed, he/she is exposed to useful capabilities and competences which are acquired in the workplace through working experiences. The position of women according to their employment status above is such that they are less likely to engage in activities that can empower them politically, economically and socially due to their lower access to the socioeconomic resources that come with employment. To Schlozman et al (1994,1999), men are more like to be employed full-time than women and they main that employment is positively related to political engagement, information and efficacy. By implication, the above results indicate that men in the region are more likely to participate in politics given their employment status which includes socioeconomic resources such as time, money and civic skills.

Table 4.6: Distribution of respondents' income Level

Sex	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Male			
	No response	54	4%
	50,000-149,000 frs	138	10%
	150,000-249,000frs	203	14 %

	250,000-349,000frs	204	14 %
	350,000frs-above	109	8%
Female	No response	142	10%
	50,000-149,000frs	212	15%
	150,000-249,000frs	204	14%
	250,000-349,000frs	129	9%
	350,000frs-above	35	2%
Total		1430	100%

Source: field survey, 2012

From the above table,respondents' details show that 350 (24.5%) of the respondents' income fall between 50,000 to 149000 frs per month, comprising 138 (10%) males and 212 (15%) females. Furthermore, 407 (28.5%) of the respondents' income fall between 150,000-249,000 frs per month, comprising 203(14%) males and 204(14%) females indicating an almost equal representation of men and women within the income level. Again, 333(23.3%) of the respondents comprising 204(14%) males and 129 (9%) females income level fall within 250,000-349,000 frs month. The response rate of females within this income level is lower than that of men. Furthermore,144(10.1%) of the respondents, comprising 109 (8%) males and 35 (2%) female respondents'

income fall within 350,000 francs and above per month. A further look at the table reveals a high response rate from respondents with a monthly income of 150,000- 249,000 frs per month with both male and female respondents constituting equal representation. Again, as income level increases, male response rate is seen to be higher than that of female. This is an indication that the socio-economic status as defined by income level is higher for menthan for women in the South West region of Cameroon.

Table 4.7: Distribution of Respondents' level of educational attainment

Gender	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Male			
	No response	13	1%
	No formal education	95	7%

	FSLC	149	10%
	GCE ‘O’ Level	151	11%
	GCE ‘A’ Level	202	14%
	University degree and others	98	7%
Female	No response	18	1%
	No formal education	136	10%
	FSLC	164	11%
	GCE ‘O’ Level	139	10%
	GCE ‘A’ Level	189	13%
	University degree and others	76	5%
Total		1430	100%

Source: field survey, 2012

The structure of the educational attainment of the respondents as revealed in table 4.7 above shows that, 231 (16.2%) of the respondents comprising 95 (7%) male respondents and 136 (10%) female respondents stated thatthey have no formal education, while 313(21.9%) of the sampled population stated they have FSLC constituting 149 (10%) males and 164 (11%) females indicating an almost equal representation of men and women in this educational attainment bracket. Further 290 (20.3%) comprising 151 (11%)male respondents and 139(10%) female respondents agree that they have GCE ‘O’ level certificates. From the table, the majority of the respondents 391(27.3%) have GCE ‘A’ certificates comprising 202 (14%) males and 189 (13%) females again

constituting an almost equal representation of males and females; while 174 (12.2%) of the respondents comprising 98(7%) males and 76 (5%) femaleshold university degrees and other higher qualifications. From the descriptive statistical analysis of the level of educational attainment indicated in the above table, it is observed that more females had no formal education than males, though across all other levels of education men are more than women. This is an indication that both men and women in the region are relatively exposed to education in the South West region of Cameroon.

Table 4.8: Distribution of responses by respondents' on political participation by year of participation

Year	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
1992	713	645	1358

1997	562	566	1128
2004	616	670	1286

Source : Field survey, 2012

From the above table, 1358 respondents constituting 95% of the respondents agreed that they participated in various political activities in the south west region of Cameroon in 1992. Further the results show that 713 of male respondents constituting 49.9% as well 645 of female respondents constituting 45.1% stated they participated in political activities in the region.

In 1997, 1128 respondents constituting 78.9% agreed they participated in political activities in the south west region. This constituted 562 (39.3%) male respondents and 566 (39.9%) female respondents. While in 2004, 1286 (89.9%) constituting 616 (43.1%) of male respondents and 670(46.9%) of female respondents stated they participated in various political activities in the South West region of Cameroon.

From the above results, the level of participation in higher in 1992 and 2004 while it dropped in 1997. This may not be unconnected with the failure of the opposition to secure victory in the 1992 elections. It further revealed that more female participated in political activities in 1997 and 2004 and more males in 1992. A look at the overall trend, the political participation of male is higher than that of women in the south west region of Cameroon.

Figure 4.1 indicate responses to question 9:Do men and women participate freely in political activities in the south west region of Cameroon? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Figure 4.1 shows that 523(37%) of the respondents agreed that people in the South West region participate freely in politics; while 821 respondents constituting (57%) stated otherwise. Meanwhile, 86 respondents representing 6% did not answer the question.

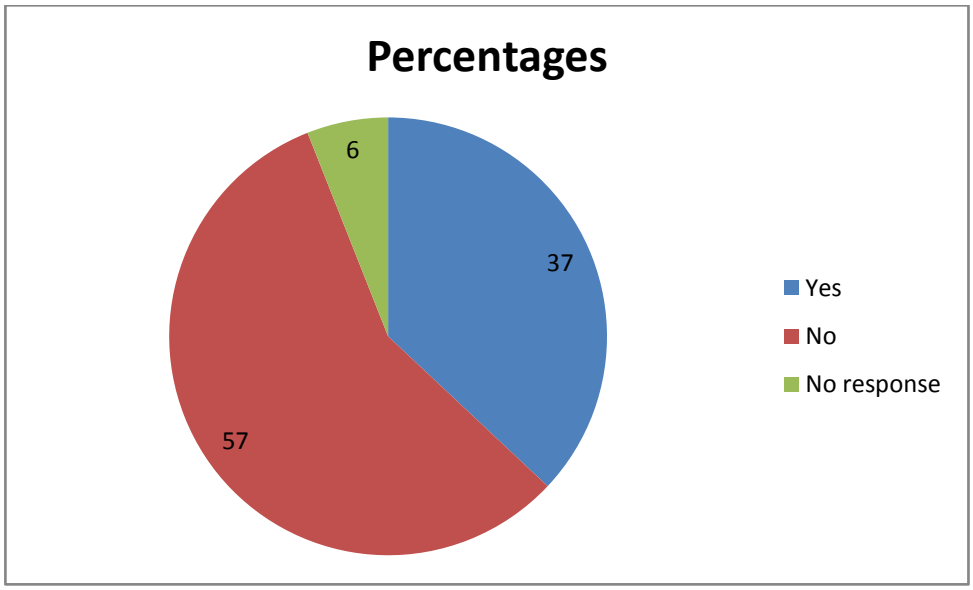


Fig 4.1: Responses on whether men and women participate freely in politics in the South west region. Source: Field survey, 2012

A detail look at the above chart reveals that though men and women are allowed to participate freely in politics in the South West region one gender is not favored in political participation in the region. This is seen in the high response rate of those respondents who stated otherwise 57%.

Figure 4.2 indicate response to question 10: 10 Are there equal opportunities for people (men and women) to gain access to the factors that determine political participation in the South West region? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Figure 4.2 shows that 610(42.7%) of the respondents agreed that there are equal opportunities in terms of resources for both men and women in the south west region to participate freely in politics; while 768 respondents constituting 53.7% stated otherwise. Meanwhile, 52 (3.6%) of respondents did not answer the question.

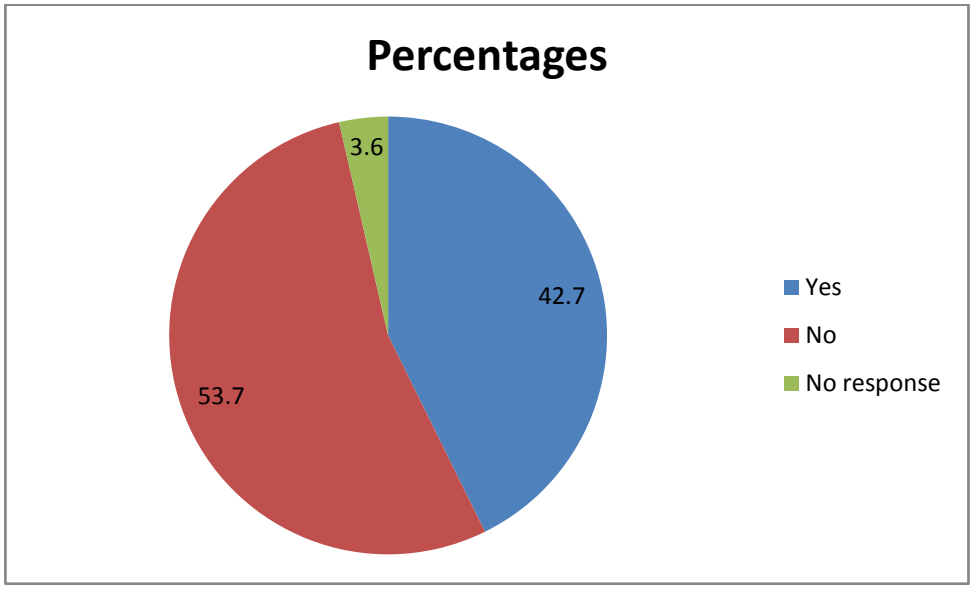


Fig. 4.2: Responses on whether there exist equal opportunities in terms of resource availability for both men and women to participate freely in politics in the south west region. Source: Field survey, 2012

A detail look at the above chart reveals that though men and women are allowed to participate freely in politics in the South West region one gender is not favored with regards to the opportunities (resources) available or needed to participate in politics in the region. This is seen in the high response rate of those respondents who stated otherwise 53.7%. It is worthy of note that the results on figures 4.1 and 4.2 reveal that there is a gap in the opportunities to access resources that determine political participation in the south west region of Cameroon. Therefore any group that will have limited opportunities in the

region will surely have low level of political participation. In order to identify the factors (major factors) that influencepolitical participation in the South West region of Cameroon, the researcher asked the respondents to choose among the listed factors giving them an option to name one or more factors. Their responses are presented below

Figure 4.3: indicate responses to question 11:which of the following factors determine political participation in the south west region? (*tick as many as possible*)

i Education ( ) ii Marriage ( ) iii Income ( )iv Government policies/ programs ( ) v Traditions and customs ( )

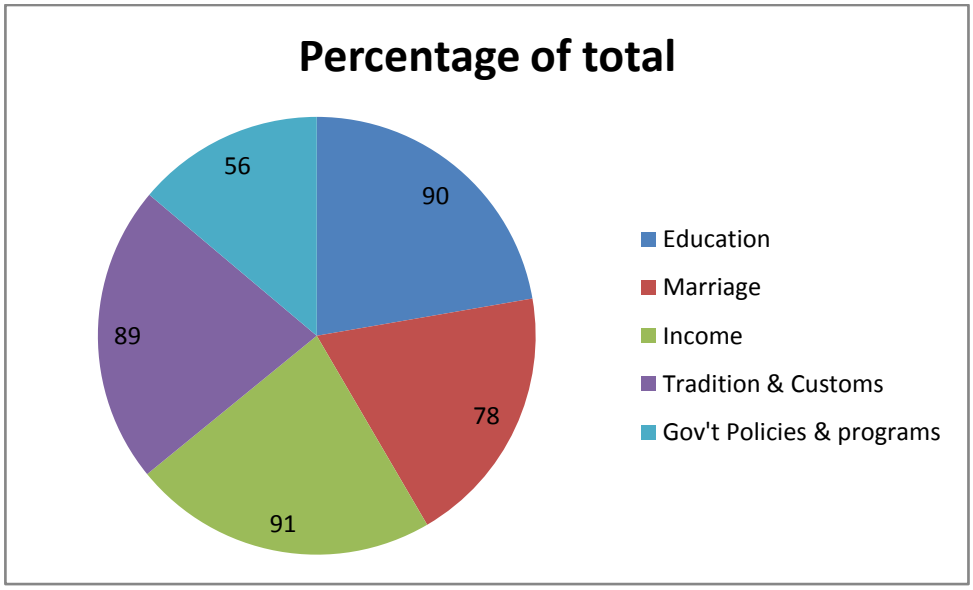


Fig. 4.3 Responses on factors that determine political participation in the South West Region. Source: Field survey, 2012

Figure 4.3 shows that the level of educational attainment influences political participation in the region with a response rate of 90% of the total sample who agreed to that. Followed by income level which is seen to have 91% response rate of the sampled population, then tradition and customs are also stated as

factors which influence political participation in the South West region of Cameroon with a response rate of 89% of the total respondents. Furthermore, government policies and programs are also seen as factors that influence political participation in the region. Judging from the descriptive statistical analysis shown on figure 4.3 above, the major factors that determine political participation in the South West region of Cameroon are level of educational attainment, income level and customs and traditions with response rates of 90%, 91% and 89% respectively.

However the descriptive statistics of the factors that determine political participation is presented in the tables below in order to facilitate the understanding of the major factors that determine political participation in theSouth West region of Cameroon.

Table 4.9.1: Education as a factor that determines political participation in the south west region

Responses	Frequency	Percentage

Yes	1287	90%
No	8	1%
No response	135	9%
Total	1430	100%

Source: Field survey, 2012

From the table above, 1287 (90%) of the respondents stated that educational level determines political participation in the South West region; while 8 respondents constituting 1% stated otherwise. Meanwhile, 135 of the respondents representing 9% did not answer the question.

Table 4.9.2: Marital status as a factor that determines political participation in the South west region

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1117	78%
No	32	2%
No response	281	20%
Total	1430	100%

Source: Field survey, 2012

From the table above, 1117(78%) of the respondents stated that marital status determines political participation in the south west region; while 32 respondents constituting 2% stated otherwise. Meanwhile, 281 respondents representing 20% did not answer the question

Table 4.9.3: Income as a factor that determines political participation in the South west region

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1304	91%
No	10	1%
No response	116	8%
Total	1430	100%

Source: Field survey, 2012

From the table above, 1304(91%) of the respondents stated that income level determines political participation in the region; while 10 respondents constituting 1% stated otherwise. Meanwhile, 116 respondents representing 8% did not answer the question.

Table 4.9.4: Tradition and customs as factors that determine political participation in the South west region

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1267	89%
No	63	4 %
No response	100	7 %
Total	1430	100%

Source: Field survey, 2012

From the table above, 1267 (89 %) of the respondents stated that traditions and customs determine political participation in the region, while 63 respondents constituting 4% agreed otherwise and 100 respondents representing 7% did not respond to the question.

Table 4.9.5: Government policies as factor that determines political participation in the South west region

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	807	56 %
No	54	4 %
No response	569	40 %
Total	1430	100%

Source: Field survey, 2012

From the above table 807 of the respondents representing 56% stated that government policies and programs determine political participation in the South West region of Cameroon while 54 respondents constituting 4% stated otherwise. Meanwhile,569 respondents representing 40% did not answer the question.

Table 4.10 indicate responses to question 12

Table 4.10: Which sex is more likely to be favorably affected by any or all of the above factors in terms of political participation?

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	819	57 %
Female	344	24 %

No response	267	19 %
Total	1430	100%

Source: Field survey, 2012

From the above table, men are likely to be favourably affected by major factors that determine political participation in the region as agreed by 819 respondents constituting 57% as against 344 respondents constituting 24% who agreed otherwise, while 267 respondents representing 19% did not answer the question. By this result it is not unlikely that men's political participation in the region would be higher than that of women

Table 4.11: Respondents' responses to question 13

Table 4.11: Which sex is more likely to be negatively affected by any or all of the factors in terms of political participation?

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	152	11%
Female	1122	78%
No response	156	11%
Total	417	100%

Source: Field survey , 2012

The above table reveals that women are more likely to be unfavourably affected by the available opportunities to access the factors which determine political participation in the South West region as agreed by 1122 of the respondents constituting 78% as against 142 respondents constituting 11% who responded otherwise, while 156 of the respondents constituting 11% as

well did not answer the question. These responses from the above tables(4.9&4.10) show that men are more likely to participate in politics in the region than women. It is also revealed in the results on table 4.8.1-4.8.5 that among the major factors which determine political participation in the region are education, income and tradition and customs with education and income levels having highest response rates. More so, the income and educational levels of women in the South West region is lower than that of men (Tables 4.6 and 4.7). It is further revealed in the results above that the socioeconomic status in terms of income and educational levels determine political participation in the south west region. One of the arguments of the study is that socioeconomic status as defined by income and educational levels is a major determinant of political participation, so any group discriminated against in terms of these factors is likely to produce low political participation in the region. By these results, it is not unlikely that men may participate more in politics in the South West region than women.

The data in the next four tables represent the respondents' responses on their level of political participation in the South West region of Cameroon based on gender

Table 4.12.1: Gender and membership of political parties (1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	385	26.9%
	No	323	22.5%
Female	Yes	281	19.7%
	No	434	30.4%
	No response	7	0.7%

Total	1430	100%

Source: Field survey, 2012

In table 4.11 above, 385(26.9%) of the respondents agreed that they are registered members of various political parties in the South West region while 323(22.5) stated otherwise. Meanwhile 281(19.7%) of female respondents also agreed that they are members of various political parties and 434(30.4%) stated otherwise while 7(.5%) of female respondents did not answer the question. A further look at the table reveals that more men (26.9%) are registered members of political parties in the south west region than women. It will not be unlikely that most political and decision making bodies and processes in the region would be dominated by men as they are likely to vie for political positions, stand for elections and likely to beappointed politically.

Table 4.12.2: Gender and voting during general elections (1990-2009)

Gender	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Male	No response	29	2 %
	Yes	440	31%
	No	239	17%

Female			
	No response	62	4 %
	Yes	326	23%
	No	334	23%
Total		1430	100%

Source: Field survey, 2012

As can be seen on table 4.12, 440(31%) of male respondents agree that they voted in various elections, while 239(17%) stated otherwise and 29(2%) did not answer the question. Furthermore, 326(23%) of female respondents stated they voted in various elections and 334(23%) of the female respondents stated otherwise and 62(4%) did not answer the question. Again the data reveals more men being politically engaged than women in the region. This is not unlikely that politically motivated decisions in the south west region would be tilted towards male biases.

Table 4.12.3: Gender and participation in political Campaigns and rallies(1990-2009)

Gender	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Male	No response	89	6%
	Yes	474	33%

	No	145	10%
Female			
	No response	155	11%
	Yes	410	31%
	No	157	9%
Total		1430	100%

Source: Field survey, 2012

From the above table, 474(33%) of male respondents stated that they attend political campaigns or rallies, while 145(10%) stated otherwise, and 89(6%) did not answer the question. On the other hand, 410(29%) of female respondents stated that they attend political campaigns and rallies as well, while 157(11%) stated otherwise and 155(11%) of female respondents did not answer the question. A detail look at the data revealed that more men attend political campaigns and rallies in the South West region than women. This is an indication that men are more politically active than women in the south west region.

The next nine tables present respondents response on level of political participation by year of participation along gender lines.The results reveal the following:

4.13.1Gender and membership in political parties in 1992

Year	Gender	Response	Frequency	Percent
1992		Yes	116	8
	Male			
		No	100	7

Female	Yes	123	9
	No	104	7
Total		443	31

Source: Field survey, 2012

From the above table, 116(8%) of male respondents agreed that they were members of political parties in 1992 while 100(7%) of male respondents stated otherwise. Further 123(9%) of female respondents stated they were members of political parties in 1992 while 104 constituting 7% stated otherwise. A look at the table show a higher level of membership in political parties for the female respondents.

4.13.2: Gender and voting in elections in 1992

Year	Gender	Response	Frequency	Percent
1992		Yes	161	11
	Male			

		No	101	7
		Yes	126	9
	Female			
		No	30	2
	Total		418	29

Source: Field survey, 2012

From the above table, 418(29%) of the respondents constituting 161(11%) of male respondents agreed that they voted in elections in 1992 while 101(7) of male respondents stated otherwise. Further 126(9) of female respondents stated they voted in elections as well in 1992 while 30 constituting 2 % stated otherwise. A look at the table show a higher voters' turnout for male in the region in 1992.

4.13.3: Gender and attendance of political campaigns/rallies in 1992

Year	Gender	Response	Frequency	Percent
1992		Yes	163	11.4
	Male			

		No	72	5.0
	Female	Yes	171	12.0
		No	91	6.4
	Total		497	34.8

Source: Field survey 2012

From the above table, 497 (34.8%) of the respondents constituting 163(11.4%) of male respondents who agreed that they attended political campaigns/rallies in 1992 while 72(5%) of male respondents stated otherwise. As well as 171(12%) of female respondents who stated that they attended political campaigns/rallies in 1992 while 91 constituting % stated otherwise. A detailed look at the table show a higher level of attendance of political campaigns/rallies for the females in the region in 1992. This is not unconnected with the fact the introduction of multi-partism in Cameroon in 1990 saw a higher entrance of women into politics with a higher demand for gender mainstreaming in government institutions and agency as well as improved political landscape for greater gender equality.

Table 4.14.1: Gender and membership in political parties in 1997

Year	Gender	Response	Frequency	Percent
1997		Yes	168	12
	Male			

		No	41	3
		Yes	115	8
	Female			
		No	116	8
	Total		440	31

Source: Field survey, 2012

From the above table, 379(27%) of the respondents constituting 168(12%) of male respondents agreed that they voted in elections in 1997while 41(3%) of male respondents stated otherwise. Further 115(8%) of female respondents stated they voted in elections as well in 1997 while 55 constituting 4 % stated otherwise. A look at the table show a higher membership rate for male in the region in 1997.

4.14.2: Gender and voting in elections in 1997

Year	Gender	Response	Frequency	Percent
1997		Yes	160	11
	Male			

		No	80	6
		Yes	113	8
	Female			
		No	120	8
	Total		473	33

Source: Field survey, 2012

From the above table, 543(37%) of the respondents constituting 160(11%) of male respondents agreed that they voted in elections in 1997 while 141(10) of male respondents stated otherwise. Further 113(8) of female respondents stated they voted in elections as well in 1997 while 120 constituting 8 % stated otherwise. A look at the table show a higher voters' turnout for male in the region in 1997.

4.14.3: Gender and attendance of political campaigns/rallies in 1997

Year	Gender	Response	Frequency	Percent

1997		Yes	195	14
	Male			
		No	33	2
		No response	40	3
		Yes	135	9
	Female			
		No	28	2
		No response	75	5
	Total		506	35

Source: Field survey, 2012

In table above, 506(35%) of the respondents attended political campaigns/rallies in 1997. The results further show that 195(14%) of male respondents agreed that they participated in political campaigns/rallies in 1997 in the South west region of Cameroon while 33(2%) stated otherwise and 40(3%) did not answer the question. Furthermore, 135(9%) female respondents stated they attended political campaigns/rallies as well, ad 28(2%) stated otherwise. Again 75(5%) of female respondents did not answer the question. A detail look at the table reveal more male participated in political campaigns/rallies in 1997 in the south west region of Cameroon.

4.15:1Gender and membership in political parties in 2004

Year	Gender	Response	Frequency	Percent
1997		Yes	101	7
	Male			
		No	182	13
		Yes	43	3
	Female			
		No	214	15
		No response	7	0
	Total		540	38

Source: Field survey, 2012

From the above table, 540(38%) of the respondents agreed that they were members of political parties in 2004 in the South West region of Cameroon. Further the above results reveal that 101(7%) of male respondents agreed that they were members of political parties in 2004 while 182(13%) of male respondents stated otherwise. Further 43(3%) of female respondents stated they were members of political parties as well while 214 constituting 15 % stated otherwise and 7(0%) did not answer the question. A look at the table show a higher membership rate for female in the region in 2004.

4.15.2: Gender and voting in elections in 2004

Year	Gender	Response	Frequency	Percent
1997		Yes	119	8.3
	Male			
		No	58	4.1
		No response	29	2.0
		Yes	87	6.1
	Female			
		No	184	12.9
		No response	62	4.3
	Total		539	38

Source: Field survey, 2012

From the above table, 539(38%) of the respondents constituting 191(8.3%) of male respondents agreed that they voted in elections in 2004 while 58(4.1) of male respondents stated otherwise and 29(2%) did not answer the question. Further 87(6.1) of female respondents stated they voted in elections as well in 2004 while 184 constituting 12.9 % stated otherwise. Again 62(4.3%) of female respondents did not answer the question. A look at the table show a higher voters' turnout for male in the region in 2004.

4.15.3: Gender and attendance of political campaigns/rallies in 2004

Year	Gender	Response	Frequency	Percent
1997		Yes	116	8
	Male			
		No	40	3
		No response	49	3
	Female	Yes	104	7
		No	38	3
		No response	80	6
	Total		427	30

Source: Field survey, 2012

From the above table, 427(30%) of the respondents attended political campaigns/rallies in 2004. The results further show that 116(8%) of male respondents agreed that they participated in political campaigns/rallies in 2004 in the South west region of Cameroon while 40(3%) stated otherwise and 49(3%) did not answer the question. Furthermore, 104(7%) female respondents stated they attended political campaigns/rallies as well, ad 38(3%) stated otherwise. Again 80(6%) of female respondents did not answer the question. A detail look at the table reveal more male participated in political

campaigns/rallies in 2004 in the south west region of Cameroon. From these results, it is not unlikely that male interest would dominate political demands.

A detail look at the descriptive statistics above on political participation by year of participation show that participation for male respondents is higher than that of females across the various years of participation. Further the level of participation for both gender was higher in 1992, dropped in 1997 and rose again in 2004 though not as high as in 1992. This is not unconnected with the fact that the level of anxiety and zeal for participation was higher in 1992 following the introduction of muliti-partism in 1990 in Cameroon, a situation which enabled a palatable environment for all to participate in the political processes of the country. Further, participation for male respondents was higher in 1992 and for female participation was higher in 2004. On a comparative basis, political participation for people in the south west region of Cameroon, was higher in 1992 than in all others years during the period under study. More so, the males in the region exhibit a higher level of political participation in the region that females an indication that the men in the region are more politically activities than the women.

The next four tables present respondents' responses on political participation across income levels in the south west region of Cameroon from 1990-2009

Table 4.16.1:Respondents' responses on Income level of 50,000-149,000frs and membership of political parties(1990-2009)

Gender	Responses	Frequency	Percentage

Male	Yes	49	3.43%
	No	105	7.34%
Female	Yes	40	2.80%
	No	153	10.7%
	No response	3	0.21%
Total		350	24.5%

Source: Field survey 2012

From the above table, it can be seen that 49(3.43%) of male respondents with monthly income level of 50,000-149,000frs agreed that they are registered members of political parties in the south west region, and 105(7.34%) stated otherwise, while 40(2.8%) of female respondentswithin the same income bracket agreed as well that they are members of various political parties in the South West region of Cameroon and 153(10.70%) stated otherwise and 3(0.21%) did not answer the question. A further look at the table reveals that female membership in political parties within this income level almost equal that of males in the south west region: an indication that women's level of political awareness has increased in recent times.

Table 4.16.2:Respondents' responses on Income level of 50,000-149,000 frs and voting in elections(1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	73	5.1%

	No	58	4.1%
	No response	10	0.7%
Female	Yes	61	4.3%
	No	106	7.4%
	No response	42	2.9%
Total		350	24.5%

Source: Field survey 2012

The above table shows 73(5.1%) of male respondents and 61(4.3%) of female respondents agreed that they vote during elections in the South West region; while 58(4.1%) of male respondents and 106(7.4%) of female respondents stated otherwise and 10(0.7%) of male respondents and 42(2.9%) of female respondents did not answer the question. The table further shows that more males than females on this income level voted during various elections in the region, an indication of increased male participation in electoral-related activity.

Table:4.16.3:Respondents'responses on Income level of 50,000-149,000frs and participation in campaigns and rallies(1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage

Male	Yes	71	5.0%
	No	36	2.5%
	No response	31	2.2%
Female	Yes	104	7.3%
	No	62	4.3%
	No response	46	3.2%
Total		350	24.5%

Source: Field survey 2012

From the above table, 71(5.0%) of male respondents agreed that they participate in political campaigns and rallies in the South West region of Cameroon as well as 104(7.3%) of female respondents;while 36(2.5%) of male respondents and 62(4.3%) of females respondents stated otherwise. Again 31(2.2%) of male respondents and 46(3.2)of female respondents did not answer the question. Detail look at the above table shows a higher participation rate of females within this income bracket in campaigns and rallies in the South West region of Cameroon.

Summarily, for respondents within the above income level, male dominance in political participation is evident in activities like membership in political parties and voting during elections while more females participated in political activities like attending political campaigns and rallies than their male counterparts. This is an indication that when women have a source of income no matter how small, they tend to participate in the political processes that determine their existence. Hence, it can be inferred from these results that

when women's income levels increase, their participation would increase and vice versa.

Table 4.17.1:Respondents' responses on Income level of 150,000-249,000 frs and membership of political parties(1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	107	7.48%
	No	112	7.83%
Female	Yes	49	3.43%
	No	139	9.72%
Total		407	28.46(28.5%)

Source: Field survey 2012

In table 4.13.1 above, respondents were asked whether they were members of any political party. From the above income level, 107(7.48%) of the male respondents and 49(3.43%) of the female respondents agreed that they are registered members of political parties, while 112(7.83%) of male respondents and 139(9.72%) of female respondents stated otherwise. A detail look at the table above shows that more men than women are registered members of political parties in the region within this income levels. It is not unlikely that political participation for the males in the region within this income level would be higher than that of females of the same income levels.

Table 4.17.2: Respondents' responses on Income level of 150,000-249,000frs and voting in elections(1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage

Male	Yes	133	9.3%
	No	64	4.5%
Female	Yes	97	6.8%
	No	113	7.9%
Total		407	28.5%

Source:Fieldsurvey 2012

From the above, 133(9.3%) of male respondents and 97(7%) of female respondents agreed that they vote during general elections in the South West region. 64(4.5%) of male respondents and 113(7.9%) of female respondents stated they do not vote during elections.

Table4.17.3:Respondents'responses on Income level of 150,000-249,000frs and participation in campaigns and rallies(1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	146	10.21%
	No	29	2.03%
	No response	32	2.24%
Female	Yes	118	8.25%
	No	37	2.59%
	No response	45	3.15%
Total		407	28.46(28.5%)

Source: Field survey 2012

As to whether they participate during political campaigns or rallies, the data on the above table shows,that on income levelof 150,000-249,000frs monthly 146(10.21%) of male respondents and 118(8.25%) of female respondents agreed that they participate in political campaigns and rallies, while 29(2.03%) of male and 37(2.59%) of female respondents stated otherwise. Again 32(2.24%) of male respondents and 45(3.15%) of female respondents did not

answer the question.Further look at the table shows that more males attend political campaigns and rallies in the region than females within this income levels, indicating an increase in the political participation of men against women as income levels increase. Also an increase in female political participation as income level increasesis evident as well. This is seen in the number of women who participated in the various political activities on income levelsof 50,000-149,000 frsmonthly and 150,000-249,000 frs monthly.

Table 4.18.1: Respondents' responses on Income level of 250,000-349,000frs and membership of political parties(1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	149	10.4%
	No	36	2.5%
Female	Yes	88	6.2%
	No	60	4.2%
Total		333	23.3%

Source: Field survey 2012

From the above table, 149(10.4%)of male respondents and 88(6.2%) of female respondents on income level of 250,000-349,000frs monthly agreed that they are members of political parties. While 36 of male respondents constituting 2.5% and 60 of female respondents constituting 4.2% stated they are not members of any political party. The results further show that more males than females are registered members of various political parties within this income level in the region. The far reaching implication for these results is that

participation in other politics related activities of men within this income level would be higher than that of women in the south west region.

Table 4.18.2: Respondents' responses on Income level of 250,000-349,000frs and voting in election(1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	141	9.9%
	No	52	4.6%
Female	Yes	74	5.2%
	No	43	3.0%
	No response	23	1.6
Total		333	23.3%

Source: Field survey 2012

From the above table,141(9.9%) of male respondents and 74(4.6%) of female respondents on income level of 250,000-349,000frs monthly agreed that they vote during general elections in the region. While 52(3.6%) ofmale respondents and 43(3.0%) of female respondents stated they do not; while 23(1.6%) of female respondents did not answer the question. The results further show that more males than females voted during general elections within this income level in theSouth West region. This implies that participation in politics related activities of men within this income level is higher than that of females in the South West region.

Table 4.18.3: Respondents' responses on Income level of 250,000-349,000frs and participation in political campaigns and rallies(1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	160	11.19%
	No	34	2.38%
Female	Yes	92	6.43%
	No	22	1.54%
	No response	25	1.75%
Total		333	23.29(23.3%)

Source: Field survey 2012

The data on income levels of 250,000-349,000frs monthly in the above table shows that 160(11.19%) of male and 92(6.43%) of female respondents agreed that they participate in political campaigns and rallies. While 34(2.38%) male and 22(1.54%) of female respondents stated otherwise. 25(1.75%) of female respondents did not answer the question. Furthermore, the results show that more males attend political campaigns and rallies in the region than females within this income levels. Again male dominance in political activities in the region is prominent.

Table 4.19.1: Respondents' responses on Income level above 350,000frs and membership of political parties(1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percent
Male	Yes	77	5.38
	No	19	1.33
Female	Yes	28	1.96
	No	17	1.19
	No response	3	0.21
Total		144	10.07(10.1%)

Source: Field survey 2012

From table 4.15.1 above, 77(5.38%) of male respondents and 28(1.96%) of female respondents on income level from 350,000frs and above monthly agreed that they are members of various political parties in the region; while 19(1.3%) of male respondents and 17(1.19%) of female respondents stated they are not.3(0.21%) offemale respondents did not answer the question. The results further showed that more males than females are members of political parties in the region. This implies that participation in political activities with regards to membership of political parties of men within this income level is higher than that of females in the south west region.

Table 4.19.2: Respondents' responses on Income level above 350,000 frs and voting in elections(1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	77	5.38%

	No	33	2.31%
	No response	3	0.21%
Female	Yes	28	1.96%
	No	3	0.21%
Total		144	10.07 (10.1%)

Source: Field survey 2012

From the above, 77(5.38%)of male respondents and 28(1.96%) of female respondents agreed that they vote during general elections in the region. 33(2.31%) of male respondents and 3(0.21%) of female respondents stated they do not vote during any elections and 3(0.21%) of male respondents did not answer the question.Again more males within this income bracket vote during general elections in the south west region. This implies the results would definitely reflect the choices of the male gender.

Table4.19.3:Respondents'responses on Income level above 350,000frs and participation in campaigns/rallies(1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage

Male	Yes	80	5.59%
	No	18	1.26%
	No response	8	0.56%
Female	Yes	30	2.1%
	No	8	0.56%
Total		144	10.07(10.1%)

Source: Field survey 2012

From the above table, 80(5.59%) of male respondents agreed that they participate in political campaigns and rallies in the south west region of Cameroon as well as 30(2.1%) of female respondents. 18(1.26%) of male and 8(0.56%) of female respondents stated otherwise. Again 8(0.56%) of males respondents did not answer the question. Detail look at the table shows a higher participation rate for men within this income bracket in campaigns and rallies in the south west region of Cameroon.

From the presentation of the data on tables 4.14.1-3-17.3, it can be deduced that an overwhelming majority of the sample agree that they participate in the various political activities which include; membership in political parties, voting in elections, participation in political campaigns and rallies. More so the income levels of majority of female respondents is located within 50,000- 149,000frs and 150,000-249,000 frs monthly. The implication of these results is that the income level of females in the region is lower than that of males and this may likely account for their lower political participation in the region; thus ensuring gender differentials in political participation in the region based on income levels. The results so far show that women's political

participation increase as their level of income increased; though not comparable with the increasing trend for their male counterparts

The tables below present distributions of respondents' response on the level of political participation across their educational attainment levels. Thus responses to questions 16- 20 on political participation across educational levels

Table 4.20.1: Distribution of respondents' responses on No formal education and membership of political party(1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	33	2.31
	No	62	4.34
Female	Yes	40	2.80
	No	93	6.50
	No response	3	0.21
Total		231	16.15

Source: Field survey 2012

From the above table, 33of male respondents constituting 2% agreed that they are registered members of various political parties while 62 of male respondents constituting 4% agreed otherwise. 40 of female respondents constituting 3% agreed that they are registered members of various political parties,93 of female respondents representing 7% agreed otherwise and 3 of female respondents representing 0% did not answer the question. The above results reveal that female respondents have higher level of membership in political parties than male respondents constituting 3% against 2% from this

educational attainment level. This indicates an understanding of the political processes and environment by women in the region.

Table 4.20.2: Respondents' responses on no formal education and voting in elections(1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	48	3.4%
	No	41	2.9%
	No response	12	0.8%
Female	Yes	30	2.1%
	No	87	6.1%
	No response	13	0.9%
Total		231	16.2%

Source: Field survey 2012

Table 4.16.2 above shows that 48(3.4%) of male respondents with no formal education vote during general elections in the South West region as well as 30(2.1%) of female respondents. Meanwhile, 41(2.9%) of male respondents and 87(6%) of female respondents stated otherwise. Again 12 (0.8%) of male respondents and 13(0.9%) of female respondents did not answer the question.

The results show a male majority during voting exercise for people with no formal education. This is an indication that no matter the educational level, the male folk is determined to partake in the political process that determines their livelihood and their active participation in politics as well as maintain the status quo of male dominance in politics

Table 4.20.3: Respondents' responses on no formal education and participation in political campaigns/rallies(1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	43	3.01%
	No	40	2.80%
	No response	13	0.91%
Female	Yes	54	3.78%
	No	66	4.62%
	No response	15	1.05%
Total		231	16.17(16.2%)

Source: Field survey 2012

From the above table, 43(3.01%) of male respondents agreed that they participate in political campaigns and rallies in the South West region of Cameroon as well as 54(3.78%) of female respondents. 40(2.8%) of male respondents and 66(4.62%) of female respondents stated otherwise. Again 13(0.9%) of male respondents and 15(1.05%) of female respondents did not answer the question. Detail look at the table show a higher participation rate for females within this income bracket who participate in campaigns and rallies in the south west region of Cameroon. This is an indication of an active female population in the South West region with regards to politics as well the desire to contribute to the political process that determines their existence.

Table 4.21.1: Respondents' responses on FSLC and membership of political party(1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	38	2.7%

	No	111	7.7%
Female	Yes	51	3.7%
	No	111	7.7%
	No response	3	0.2%
Total		313	22%

Source: Field survey 2012

From the above table, 38(2.7%) of male respondents agreed that they are registered members of various political parties while 111(7.7%) of male respondents agreed otherwise. Furthermore, 51(3.7%)of female respondentsagreedthat they are registered members of various political parties and111(7.7%) of female respondents agreed otherwise. Again 3(0.2%) of female respondents did not answer the question. The above results reveal that female respondents have higher level of membership in political parties than male respondents constituting 3.7% against 2.7% for people with FSLC. This indicates an increase in women's political knowledge.

Table 4.21.2: Respondents' responses on FSLC and voting in elections(1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	71	5%

	No	74	5%
	No response	23	2%
Female	Yes	61	4%
	No	84	6%
Total		313	22%

Source: Field survey 2012

The data in table 4.17.2 showed that 71(5%) of the male respondents agreed that they voted during various general elections in the South West region as well as 61(4%) of female respondents. However, 74 (5%) of the male respondents agreed otherwise as well as 84 (6%) of female respondents. The results reveal a higher level of political participation for men with FSLC in voting exercise in the South West region.

Table 4.21.3: Respondents' responses on FSLC and participation during political campaigns and rallies(1990-2009)

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	77	5.4%

	No	44	3.1%
	No response	40	2.8%
Female	Yes	76	5.3%
	No	15	1.0%
	No response	61	4.3%
Total		313	22%

Source: Field survey 2012

From the above table, 77(5.4%) of male respondents agreed that they participate in political campaigns and rallies in the South West region of Cameroon as well as 76(5.3%) offemale respondents. 44(3.1%) of male respondents and 15(1.0 %) of female respondents stated otherwise. Again 40(2.8 %) of male respondents and 61(4.3%) offemale respondents did not answer the question. Detail look at the table shows a higher participation rate for men with FSLC in campaigns and rallies in the South West region of Cameroon.

Table 4.22.1: Respondents' responses on GCE O Level and membership of political party(1990-2009)

	Response	Frequency	Percentage

Male	Yes	110	7.7%
	No	41	2.9%
Female	Yes	53	3.7%
	No	86	6.0%
Total		290	20.3%

Source: Field survey 2012

From the above table, 110 of male respondents constituting 7.7% agreed that they are members of various political parties as against 41 of male respondents constituting 2.9% who agreed otherwise; while 53of female respondents constituting 3.7% agreed that they are members of various political parties as against 86of female respondents constituting 6% who agreed otherwise.

Table 4.22.2: Respondents' responses GCE O Level and voting in elections(1990-2009)

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	104	7.3%
	No	43	3.0%
Female	Yes	72	5.0%
	No	58	4.1%
	No response	13	0.9%
Total		290	20.3%

Source: Field survey 2012

The above table shows responses on voting during elections of respondents who hold GCE O level certificates. The results show that 104(7.3%) of male respondents agreed that they vote during generals in the south west regionduring the period under study while 43(3.0%) agreed otherwise. Meanwhile, 72(5.0%) of the female respondents agreed that they vote during

general elections in the South West region while58(4.1%) agreed otherwise and 13(0.9%) did not answer the question. The results above reveal an overwhelming male majority for voters' turnout during elections for people with GCE O levels. However there is a gap along gender lines during voting exercises for people within this educational level in favor of men. It is worthy of note here that women's participation in voting exercises increased as well for women with GCE O level.

Table 4.22.3: Respondents' responses GCE O Level and participation in political campaigns and rallies(1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	114	8.0%
	No	11	0.8%
Female	Yes	99	6.9%
	No	30	2.1%
	No response	36	2.5%
Total		290	20.3%

Source: Field survey 2012

The data in table 4.18.2 indicate that 290(20.3%) of the sampled population agreed that they attend political campaigns and rallies in the south west region constituting 114(8.0%) males and 99(6.9%) females. However a total of 47(2.9%) of the respondents agreed otherwise constituting 11(0.8%) males and 36(2.5%) females. The results reveal an overwhelming male dominance inpolitical campaign and rallies within this educational level in the south west region.

Table 4.23.1: Respondents' responses GCE A Level and membership in political parties(1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	119	8.3%
	No	83	5.8%
Female	Yes	72	5%
	No	117	8.2%
Total		391	27.3%

Source: Field survey 2012

From the above table, 119(8.3%) of male respondents agreed that they are members of various political parties while83(5.8%) of male respondents agreed otherwise. Again, 72(5%) of female respondents agreed that they are members of various political parties as against 117(8.2%) of female respondents who stated that they are not registered members of any political party in the region. The table shows a higher membership rate for men in the region within this educational level.

Table 4.23.2: Respondents' responses GCE A Level and voting in elections(1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	116	8.1%
	No	71	5.0%
Female	Yes	97	6.7%
	No	83	5.8%
	No response	24	1.7%
Total		391	27.3%

Source: Field survey 2012

From the above table, 116(8.1%) expressed that they vote during general elections in the south west region as against 71(5%) of male respondents who stated otherwise. 97(6.7%)of female respondents expressed that they vote during elections in the region as against 83(5.8%) of female respondents who stated otherwise and 24(1.7%) of female respondents did not answer the question. The above table further reveals that more men than women with GCE A levels voted in the general elections during the period under study.

Table 4.23.3: Respondents' responses GCE A Level and participation in political campaigns and rallies(1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	138	9.65%
	No	43	3.01%
Female	Yes	116	8.11%
	No	33	2.31%
	No response	61	4.27%
Total		391	27.34(27.3%)

Source: Field survey 2012

From the above table, 138(9.65%) of male respondents agreed that they participate in political campaigns and rallies in the south west region of Cameroon as well as 116(8.11%) of female respondents. 43(3.01%) of male respondents and 33(2.31%) of female respondents stated otherwise. Again 61(4.27%) of female respondents did not answer the question. Detail look at the table shows a higher participation rate for men within this income bracket in campaigns and rallies

Table 4.24.1: Respondents' responses on University degree/ equivalent and membership in political party (1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	84	5.9%
	No	14	1.0%
Female	Yes	30	2.1%
	No	44	3.1%
	No response	2	0.1%
Total		174	12.2%

Source: Field survey 2012

From the above table, 84(5.9%) of male respondents agree that they are members of various political parties in the region while 14(1%) of male respondents stated otherwise. Further, 30(2.1%) of female respondents concur that there are registered members of various political parties as against 44(3.1%) of female respondents who agreed otherwise. 2(0.1%) of female respondents did not answer the question. A deeper look at the table reveals that more male respondents are members of various political parties in the region than female respondents indicating 5.9% as against 3.1%.

Table 4.24.2: Respondents' responses on University degree/ equivalent and voting in elections (1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	92	6.43%
	No	6	0.42%
Female	Yes	62	4.34%
	No	10	0.70%
	No response	4	0.28%
Total		174	12.17 (12.2%)

Source: Field survey 2012

From the above table, 92(6.43%) of male respondents agreed that they vote during elections in the region. While 6(0.42%)of male respondents expressed otherwise. The table further reveals that 62(4.34%) offemale respondents vote in elections in the region. While 10(0.7%) of female respondents expressed otherwise and 4(0.28%) did not answer the question. It can be deduced from the above table that men within this educational attainment level are more politically active than women in the south west region.

Table 4.24.3: Respondents' responses on University degree/ equivalent and participation in political campaigns and rallies (1990-2009)

Gender	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Male	Yes	92	6.43
	No	6	0.42
Female	Yes	60	4.20
	No	12	0.84
	No response	4	0.28
Total		174	12.17 (12.2%)

Source: Field survey 2012

Table 4.20.3 above shows that 92(6.43%) of male respondents participate in political campaigns and rallies as well as 60(4.2%) of female respondents; while6(0.42%) of male respondents and 12(0.84%) of female respondents agreed otherwise. Again 4(0.28%) of female respondents did not answer the question. An overwhelming male dominance is evident for people with University degree and above in the participation in political campaigns and rallies

4.2: IMPACT OF SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS POLITICAL PARTICIPATION:CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

The study used socio-economic status which index is income and educational levels as independent variable; and four dependent variables for the analysis of correlates of political engagement or participation in the South West region of Cameroon. The index for dependent variables include membership in political parties, voting in elections, attending political campaigns and rallies. The analysis of the data for this study is divided into two sections which include:

4.2.1: LEVEL OF GENDER DIFFERENCES IN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE SOUTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON

In order to determine if there are differentials in political participation in the South West region, based on gender, the chi-square test was used and the results are presented below in tables 4.23.1 -4.23.3 based on respondents' responses to questions 16, 17, 19, 20

Table 4.25.1: Cross tabulation of responses on Gender and membership in political party: (1990-2009)

	Male		Female		Total	
Responses	Count	exp count	Count	exp.count	Count	exp. Count
Yes	385	316.4	251	319.6	636	636.0
No	323	391.6	464	395.4	787	787.0
Total	708(49.5%)		567(39.7%)		1427(95.5%)	

Source: Field survey,2012; Chi-square sig Pearson χ^2=53.461, df 1, p= .000

To determine if there is difference in the membership of political parties along gender lines in the South West region of Cameroon, the chi-square test was used; membership of political party was chosen as the dependent variable and gender which is the ability to label one's self male or female was chosen as the independent variable.

Gender difference in membership in political participation is prominent as seen in table 4.21.1 above. 385(26.6%) of male respondents agreed that they are members of various political parties as well as 251(17.6%) of female respondents. To check whether these numerical differences are statistically significant, the chi-square test was employed. The results showed a statistical significant relationship between gender and membership in political parties in the south west region. The calculated chi-square value of53.461 is greater than the critical χ^2 = 5.991. This implies that the difference is statistically significantfor men and women who are registered as members of political parties in the South West region. This structure of party membership is in

favour of the male gender as the number of men is higher than that of women. This implies that being a man does not invariably affect registration as a member of political party. But as a woman, membership of political party is limited somehow. Thus more men are members of political parties in the region than women. Hence, the difference between men and women who are members of political parties in the South West region is statistically significant. However, gender differences in political participation that are observed in large national population surveys such as the works of Burns, Schlozman, and Verba (1995) support this result.

Table 4.25.2: Cross tabulation of responses on gender and voting in elections:(1990-2009)

	Male		**Female**		**Total**	
Responses	Count	exp count	Count	exp.count	Count	exp. Count
Yes	440	388.4	326	422	766	766.0
No	239	290.6	334	144.4	573	573.0
Total	679(47.5%)		567(39.7%)		1339(93.6%)	

Source: Field survey, 2012;Ch-square sig: Pearson χ^2= 32.453, df 1, p= 000

Table 4.21.2 illustrate that 440(30.8%) of male respondents stated that they vote during elections. Again, 326(22.8%) of female respondents agreed that they vote as well. To check whether these difference in the number of men and women who vote during general elections are statistically significant, the chi-square test was employed. Gender was chosen as the independent variable

while voting in election was chosen as the dependent variable because it is a political participation related activity.

The chi-square analysis showed a statistical significant relationship between voting in elections and gender. The computed chi-square value of 32.453 is greater than the tablevalue of 5.991. Hence there is a statistical significant relationship between gender and voting in elections in the South West region. Further look at the data revealed that more male vote in elections. This implies that the difference in voters' turnout in the South West region of Cameroon is in favour of the men.Voting in election is considered a vital aspect of political participation. High voters' turnout for men in the south west region is an indication that men are more politically conscious in the region, and understand the need for political engagement as well as their desires to influence the political system. A basic precondition for women's political participation is her right to vote. The quest for women suffrage commenced in the 1920s. Cameroonian women acquired the right to vote in 1945. Theresults revealed an increasing trend in women's political participation (291 women as members of political parties, and 391 voted during elections). This is an indication that women's political action has greatly improved. This is supported by the works of Konde (2005) who stated that an improvement on women's political action in Cameroon is against their initial role in political engagement during pre-colonial and colonial days which was basically to support men's political aspirations as noted by (Konde, 2005). However, women's political action is still limited and needs to be expanded. More so low

voters' turnout for women in the region does not invariable reflect their inability to contribute meaningfully to the political system. This is seen in the almost equal participation between male and female as reflected in the percentages (male 47.5% female 46.2%). The implication of these results is that there is generally a high level of political knowledge in the South West region; meaning people of the South West region have information about politics in the country and south west region in particular. Having political knowledge plays a vital role in influencing political participation and ensures active participation in the political processes. This is seen in the higher voters' turnout for men than women during general elections

Table 4.25.3: Cross tabulation of responses on Gender and attendance of political campaigns and rallies during elections(1990-2009)

	Male		Female		Total	
Responses	Count	exp count	Count	exp.count	count	exp. Count
Yes	474	461	410	422	884	884.0
No	145	157	157	144.4	302	302.0
Total	619(43.3%)		567(39.7%)		1186(83%)	

Source: Field survey 2012; Pearson χ^2= 28.36, df 1, p= .002

The above table shows that 474(31.3%) of male respondents attend political campaigns or rallies as well as 410(28.7%) of female respondents. To check whether there is statistical significant relation between the variables the chi-square test was employed. Gender was chosen as the independent variable and attending political campaigns or rallies as the dependent variable because it is a political participation related activity.

The chi-square analysis shows statistical significant relationship between the variables that is gender and attendance of political campaigns and rallies. The calculated chi-square value 28.36 greater than the critical chi-square value of 3.841. The results show that, men attend political campaigns and rallies more than women according to the table above, thus it is not unlikely that during campaigns and rallies men would push for policies and programs that would best suit their interests.

4.2.2 IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (INCOME AND EDUCATION) ON WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

In almost all societies, women and men differ in their activities and undertakings, regarding access to and control over resources, and participating in decision-making processes. In addition they are involved in social and political activism. Chalets (1990) opined that wage labour increases the status of women which influences women's effectiveness in governing power in other realms of the society, including politics. For the purpose of achieving the objectives of the study, the following socio-economic variables were examined; income and educational levels as they account for differentials in political participation in theSouth West region; as well as the impact of these differentials in political participation based on income and educational levels on women political participation in the region. In view of examining the impact of socio-economic status as defined by income and educational levels on women'spolitical participation in the South West region of Cameroon, the study used three dependent variables of the correlates of political participation namely; membership in political parties, voting in any of the general elections,

attendance of political campaigns and rallies. Firstly the study determined if there are gender differences in the political participation, it determined if there are gender differentials in political participation based on income and educational levels. To this effect, the results are presented in the tables above. Secondly, this section examines the extent to which socio-economic status (income and educational levels) accounts for gender differentials in political participation, and further examined the impact of the differences in the socio-economic status (income and education) on women's political participation.

4.2.2:1 THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AS DEFINED BY INCOME ON WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE SOUTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON

It is widely accepted that politics is increasingly becoming commercialized as more and more money is needed to participate in politics. Milbrath and Goel , cited in Cho, 1998) explore this relationship, finding that those with higher class status and income are more likely to engage politically as a result of greater resources, greater opportunity, and social norms which encourage such behaviour. According to Phillip (2001: 255), there is large a gender disparity between women and men in terms of their personal earnings. It was family income, however, that had a strong effect on political activity.The extent to which individuals become involved in politics and thereby gaining access to decision-making channels is directly correlated with the resources they have at their command; that all else being equal, those who have everything else get political power as well' Corroborating the above position, Duke II (2009) argued that women lack access to and ownership of productive resources which limit the scope of their political work. He maintained that more than

men, women suffer an acute lack of access to capital for business and other purposes. With limited access to land or total denial of land-ownership rights hence no economic activities of any commercial significance. Women's unequal access to and control of resources is therefore an important problem and is at the heart of the causes of their low level of political participation. From this position, this study examines the impact of income level on women's political participation in the region. In order to determine if there are statistical differences between men and women and their participation in politics based on their income levels, and the impact of these differences of income levels on women's political participation, the chi square test was employed. The results are presented below in the following tables;

Table 4.26.1: Tabulation of responses on Income levels and membership of political parties(1990-2009)

	Yes		No		
Income level					**Total**
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	
50,000-149,000					
Count	49	40	105	153	347
Exp. Count	80.6	58.8	73.4	134.2	347.0
150,000-249,000					
Count	107	49	112	139	407
Exp.count	93.4	46.2	115.4	152.0	407.0
250,000-349,000					
Count	149	88	36	60	333
Exp. Count	131.4	73.0	65.8	62.8	333.0
350,000-above					
Count	77	28	19	17	140
Exp. Count	76.6	27.0	17.4	19.0	140.0
Total					
Count	382	205	272	368	1227
Exp. Count	382.0	205.0	272.0	368.0	1227.0

Source: Field survey 2012; Pearson χ^2 = 57.199, df 3, p= .000

In order to analyze the impact of income levels on political participation along gender lines in the South West region of Cameroon, a tabulation of the responses based on two variables are presented in table 4.24.1 above. Income level is chosen as the dependent variable and membership in political parties is chosen as the dependent variable.

The chi-square analysis showed a statistical significant relationship between income levels and membership in political parties in the South West region. The calculated chi-square value of 57.199 is greater than the critical chi-square value of 7.815. This implies income levels affect membership in political

parties in the South West region of Cameroon;hence, it is not unlikely that any group with higher income levels would have higher membership in political parties in the South West region. Also, the results reveal that there is gender differential in membership in political parties based on income levels. Although the overall levels of membership of political parties' shows a moderate rate for women (205 female members as against 382 male members), the difference between men and women in membership for political parties is prominent. For women, the results reveal a lower income levels as the majority of the income levels of female members of political parties' are seen between 150,000-249,000frs and 250,000-349,000frs monthly. Revealing a lower income levels for women, membership of political parties reflects a low rate as well. Hence women's income levels account for their low membership of membership in political parties in the South West region of Cameroon and the reverse is true for men. The results reveal an increase in women's membership in political parties as their income levels increase. With a total of 35 women(table 4.6) who indicated that their income level falls between 350,000frs monthly, 28 are members of political parties, an indication that women with higher income levels participate more in political activities in the South West region of Cameroon.

Table 4.26.2:Crosstabulations of responses on income levels and voting in elections(1990-2009)

Income levels	YES		NO		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
50,000-149,000					
Count	73	61	58	106	298
Exp. Count	71.2	86.1	44.3	96.4	298
150,000-249,000					
Count	133	97	64	113	407
Exp. Count	142.4	99.5	68.6	96.5	407
250,000-349,000					
Count	141	74	52	43	310
Exp. Count	129.7	59.0	63.3	58	310
350,000-above					
Count	77	28	33	3	141
Exp. Count	80.7	15.4	30.8	14.1	141.0
Total					
Count	424	260	207	265	1156
Exp. Count	424.0	260.0	207.0	265.0	1156

Source: Field survey 2012; Pearson χ^2= 9.472, df 3, p= .024

In order to analyse the impact of income levels on voting during elections in the South West region along gender line, the chi-square test is employed. The result is presented in table 4.22.2 above. One dependent and one independent variable were chosen for the analysis. Income level was chosen as the independent variable while voting during election was chosen as a dependent variable because it is an electoral related activity, a component of political participation. Table 4.22.2 shows the gender of the respondents, the income levels and the political participationrelated –activity -voting during elections. The chi-square analysis shows a statistical significant relationship between gender, income level and voting during elections. The calculated chi-square

value of 9.472 is greater than the critical chi-square value of 7.815. This implies that people's political participation is affected by their levels of income. From the same table, a gender difference in voting during elections in the region is quite prominent. The finding reveals that better income levels account for higher voting rate during elections. Gender difference is equally prominent in the levels of income. The results reveal that more women in the South West region who voted during elections have their income levels located from150,000-249,000 frs monthly and above. Though the number of women who voted during elections from income levels of 250,000-349,000frs monthly stood at 74 women, the number remained relatively high for women with income level of 350,000frs and above monthly (28 women out of 35 women of the income level of 350,000frs monthly).

However,the men in the region also maintained an increasing trend as their income level increased and maintained higher participation rate against the women. This indicates that voters' turnout for women in the south west region is lower than that of men. This no doubt reflects low political engagement of women in the South West region, as a result of their inability to influence the political system and process because they are not proportionately part of the process that elect their leaders or decision makers; hence the interest of the majority of the population (women) is far from protected. This political arrangement is beneficial to the men who maintained an increasing trend in the voting exercises in the region across all the levels of income. The implication of these results is that women tend to be less engaged in the voting exercises in

the South West region because their income levels have remained relatively lower than that of their male counterpart. What is clear from this result is that, the gender differences in electoral-related activities that are observable in large national population surveys such as in the works of Burns, Schlozman,and Verba (1995) are also apparent in this survey of the South West region of Cameroon.

Table 4.26.3: Responses on income levels and attendance of political campaignsand rallies (1990-2009)

Income levels	YES		NO		Total
	Yes		No		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
50,000-149,000					
Count	71	104	36	62	273
Exp. Count	85.2	118.8	21.8	47.2	273.0
150,000-249,000					
Count	146	118	29	37	330
exp. Count	139.3	112.7	35.7	42.3	330.0
250,000-349,000					
Count	160	92	34	22	308
Exp count	154.5	82.9	39.5	31.1	308.0
350,000-Above					
Count	80	30	18	8	136
Exp. Count	78.0	29.6	20.0	8.4	136.0
Total					
Count	457	344	117	129	1047
Exp. Count	457.0	344.0	117.0	129.0	1047

Source: Field survey 2012; Pearson χ^2 =14.384, df 3, p= .002

From the above table, two variables were chosen to analyze the impact of income level on political participation with regards to participation in political campaigns and rallies in the South West region of Cameroon, income level was

chosen as the independent variable while participation in campaigns or rallies was chosen as the dependent variable.

The chi-square analysis shows a statistical significant relationship between income and participation in campaign and rallies. The calculated chi-square value of 14.384 is greater than the critical chi-square value of 7.815.This implies that income levels determine participation in political campaigns or ralliesin the South West region. Gender difference is evident in the above table across all levels of income and participation in political campaigns and rallies. These gender differentials in participation in political campaign and rallies based on income levels is in favor of men, meaning that more men in the south west region participate in campaigns and rallies than women because their income levels are better than those of women. This is seen in the results above where more men attend political campaigns and rallies across all levels of income except on 50,000-149,000frs monthly, while women maintain an increasing trend though their number is lower than men's. The relationship between income and participation in political campaign and rallies is in favor of men. The income level of women in the region is low and this affects their participation in political campaigns and rallies. The far-reaching implication for the women in the south west region of Cameroon is that it limits their chances to show-case their self-esteem and self –image which are necessary ingredients to build up the confidence needed for political participation.

4.2.2.2: THE IMPACT OF SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AS DEFINED BY EDUCATION ON WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE SOUTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON

Education gives citizens the skills and resources needed to participate in politics. For instance, Verba et al. (1995) argue that education not only directly increase levels of participation, it also allows citizens to acquire the civic skills necessary to effectively communicate their concerns to politicians. Similarly, Rosenstone and Hansen(1993:136) argue that education ''imparts the knowledge and skills most essential to a citizen's task….Because of their schooling, the highly-educated have the skills people need to understand the abstract subject of politics, to follow the political campaign, and to research and evaluate the issues and candidates'' From this point of view, it is the process of formal education that causes increased political participation, thus it is from this perspective that this study examines the effect of education on political participation in the region with formal education as the basis for analysis . Phillip (2001:255) opined that ideally higher levels of political participation by greater numbers of women should result in more attention to gender-equity in social and economic policy, and thus promote better lives for women generally, while Individual and group political skills and resources are obviously enhanced by endowments of human capital (chief among them education) as well as material resources. In view of this position this section examines the influence of education on women's political participation in the region

Table 4.27.1 Cross-tabulation of response on education and membership of

political parties (1990-2009)

Levels of educational attainment	Yes		No		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
No formal education					
Count	33	40	62	93	228
Exp. Count	52.5	46.9	42.5	86.1	228.0
FSLC					
Count	38	51	111	111	311
Exp. Count	82.3	55.9	66.7	106.1	311.0
GCE O Level					
Count	110	53	41	88	292
Exp. Count	83.4	51.1	67.6	89.9	292.0
GCE A level					
Count	119	72	83	117	391
Exp. Count	111.6	66.7	90.4	122.3	391.0
University degree & equivalent					
Count	84	30	14	42	170
Exp. Count	54.1	25.4	43.9	46.6	170.0
Total					
Count	384	246	311	451	1392
Exp. Count	384.0	246.0	311.0	451.0	1392

Source: Field survey, 2012;**Pearson χ^2=126.0, df 3, p=.000**

In order to determine the influence of educational levels on political participation, the chi-square test was employed. The above table shows the results of the chi-square analysis. Two variables were chosen namely educational level as the independent variable and membership of political parties as the dependent variable. The chi-square analysis showed that there is a statistical significant relationship for political participation of people in the

South West region of Cameroon and their educational level.Gender difference in membership of political parties is prominent. Women do tend to be less engaged in this kind of activity than men and the difference is statistically significant.Furthermore, there is increase in women's membership of political parties as educational levels increase and this increase is statically significant. This is seen in the calculated chi-square value of 126.0 which is greater than the critical chi-square value of 7.488. This may not be unconnected with the fact that to become a member of a political party one does not need to be educated or possess certain attributes in relation to education. All that is needed is your ability to understand their ideologies and if it suits your interest then you can register as member. This situation has provided equal opportunity for both men and women to decide to become members of political parties. No doubt, quite a number of women are able to register as members of political parties.

Table 4.27.2: Cross-tabulation of responses on education and voting in elections (1990-2009)

Level,of educational Attainment	Yes		No		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
No formal education					
Count	48	30	41	87	**206**
Exp. Count	57.6	61.5	31.4	55.5	**206.0**
FSLC					
Count	71	61	74	84	**290**
Exp. Count	93.8	68.5	51.2	76.5	**290.0**
GCE O Level					
Count	104	72	43	58	**277**
Exp. Count	95.1	65.0	51.9	65.0	**277.0**
GCE A level					
Count	116	97	71	83	**367**
Exp. Count	121.0	85.0	66.0	95.0	**367.0**
University degree & equivalent					
Count	92	62	6	10	**170**
Exp. Count	63.4	42.0	34.6	30.0	**170.0**
Total					
Count	431	322	235	322	**1310**
Exp. Count	431.0	322.0	235.0	322.0	**1310.0**

Source: Field survey, 2012;**Pearson χ^2=92.422, df =4, p=.000**

Table 4.23.2 aboveshows the influence of educational level on voting during elections in the south west region of Cameroon. Irrespective of their educational level, the male respondents were dominant in voting exercises than their female counterparts. To analyse if this difference in educational attainment determines political participation along gender lines, the chi-square test is used. Educational level is chosen as the independent variable while voting during elections is seen as dependent variable. The calculated chi-

square value of 92.422 is greater than the critical chi-square value of 9.488. This shows a statistical significant relationship between the variables along gender lines. This implies that educational level influence voters' turn out in the South West region of Cameroon. This situation is in favour of the educated men and women and more for the educated men; hence men have a higher voters' turn out compared to women in the region. To determine the impact of educational attainment on women's political participation the result from the chi square test is used. Education determines the political participation of women as it revealed that voting during elections increase as women educational attainment increase. The highest statistically revealed is for women with university degree and above with 62 count out of 76(total) and expected count stood at 42 for women in this category revealing a higher participation level.This may not be unconnected with the fact that women do not have and perhaps choose not to obtain political knowledge given their trio role in the society (reproduction, productive and community)Voting is one of the most fundamental aspects of civic engagement. Because political participation can also influence public policy, others are concerned that lower participation could result in policies that are not necessarily representative of key constituencies, like those who tend to vote less (Archer 2003:26-30). The link between education and voting is also well-established (Blais et al. 2004;221-236) as a result, the voter turnout rate is used as one indicator of civic engagement. So, low voter's turnout for women in the South West region may

limit their political space to a large extend making it difficult for women to fully partake in politics.

Table 4.27.3: Tabulation of response on education and attendance of political campaigns and rallies(1990-2009)

Levelsof educational Attainment	Yes		No		**Total**
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
No formal education	43	54	40	66	**203**
Count	63.3	86.6	19.7	33.4	**203**
Exp. Count					
FSLC	77	76	44	15	**212**
Count	92.3	69.4	28.7	21.6	**212**
Exp. Count					
GCE O Level					
Count	114	99	11	30	**254**
Exp.Count	95.5	89.4	29.6	39.5	**254**
GCE A level					
Count	138	116	43	33	**330**
Exp. Count	138.1	107.6	42.9	41.4	**330.0**
University degree & equivalent					
Count	92	60	6	12	**170**
Exp. Count	74.8	52.0	23.1	20.1	**170.0**
Total	464	405	144	156	**1169**
Count	464.0	405.0	144.0	156.0	**1169.0**
Exp. Count					

Source: Field survey, 2012;**Pearson χ^2=66.125, df =4, p=.000**

Table 4.23.3shows the influence of educational level on participation in political campaigns and rallies in the South West region of Cameroon. Irrespective of their educational level, the male respondents are dominant in the attendance of political campaigns and rallies than their female counterparts. To analyse if this difference in educational attainment influence political

participation with regards to campaigns and rallies along gender lines, the chi-square test is used. Educational level is chosen as the independent variable while voting during elections is seen as dependent variable. The calculated chi-square value of 66.125 at 5% level of confidence is greater than the critical chi-square value of 9.488. This shows a statistical significant relationship between the variables along gender lines. This implies that educational level determines participation in campaigns and rallies in the South West region of Cameroon. For its impact on women's attendance of political campaigns and rallies, the results reveal that participation increases as educational attainment increased. Going by the expected count and the count results, participation is highest for women with degree. Thus the higher the level of education the higher the level of women's political participation. Generally, more men in the South West region attend campaigns and rallies than the women. This implies that educational attainment influence participation in campaigns and rallies in favour of men. It is widely accepted that women may stay away from political campaigns and rallies because of the violence associated with them most times. The political landscape and electoral process is most times undermined by political violence which in turn reduces the possibility of women's participation in political and election processes. Female candidates and their supporters are routinely confronted with gender-based intimidation that creates an aggressive climate and makes some women abandon their campaigns. Hence it is not unlikely that the participation of women in political campaigns and rallies in the South West region would be lower as revealed in the table

above. This result is supported by Carrillo (2009) who asserted that even though women haveadvanced in the quality and quantity of their political participation in almost every country, women still experience gender based harassment and violence in politics and they continue tobe victims of harassment and violence. This has forced some African women into renouncing their positions, leaving men in the positions of power.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0: Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings as deduced from the data presented in chapter four. These discussions are done in relation to the research questions, objectives and the propositions of the study. The study upheld two main propositions namely:

- Socioeconomic status as defined by income and educational levels is a determinant of political participation. Therefore any group that is discriminated against in terms of resource distribution will be at lower level of political participation in the south west region of Cameroon
- Women's political participation is determined by levels of income and education. Therefore the higher their levels of income and education, the higher their levels of political participation in the south west region of Cameroon and vice versa.

From the proposition tested, the study drew its major findings thus

5.1: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF THE RESPONDENTS

The socio-demographic data of the respondents show a close representation of both male and female as revealed in the study sampled population constituting 708 males and 722 females. The study distributed the research instrument to both gender in order to ensure bias free data on the impact of socioeconomic status on peoples' and women'spolitical participation

in the South West region of Cameroon. The age distribution of the respondents revealed that the majority of the respondents fall between ages 35 – 49 years old followed by 20-34 years. This age range is typical of people who engage in certain political activities like voting in elections, participation in political campaigns and rallies. It is not unlikely that majority of those who responded to the research instrument fall within these age groups. The older generation are more involved in occupying political posts and registering as members of various political parties.

The distribution of the respondents' level of educational attainment revealed that the majority of the respondents have GCE A levels followed by GEC O levels. Quite a good number had no formal education and a few had university degree and it equivalents. The level of educational attainment of the respondents is relatively moderate and revealed gender differentials in the level of educational attainment in favour of men. It further reveals that women are dominant at the lower level of education that is FSLC (11.5%). It can be deducedfrom this data that men in the South West region have higher educational level than women and that women's educational level is lower than that of men in the South West region. Education is known to increase the level of interactions in socio-economic and political environment; some of which are accesses to financial opportunities like loans, establishment of private enterprises, interactions with political office holders and high level of conscientization and political awareness. It can be inferred therefore that the low educational level of women in the South West region accounts for theirlow

participation in politics. This is expressed in women's inability to raise capital for private businesses, capacity to explore more empowerment opportunities, engage in community politics which may lead to their gradual integration into the political processes at the regional and national levels.

Again, the employment status of the respondents revealed that more men than women in the region are employed. This is not unconnected with the fact that there exists a gap in the opportunities necessary for empowerment along gender lines. This necessitates low income levels for women than men in the region

Respondents' income levels reveal a gap in the levels of income between men and women in the region. More men have their income levels located within 250,000-349,000 frs monthly while more women's income level are located within 150,000-249,000 frs monthly. Furthermore, the number of men whose incomes are located within 350,000 frs and above far out-numbered the women 109 men against 35 women.

A look at the socio-economic status of the respondents as defined by income and education as revealed above shows there is differentials in educational level, marital status, employment status and income levels according to gender in the region. The above data further revealed that men have better educational background, employment status and income levels than women, thus ensuring a higher socio-economic status.According to the different levels of income more females have their income levels situated between 150,000- 249,000 frs

per month (table 4.6) while more males have their income levels situated within 250,000- 349,000 frs per month as well as 351,000 frs per month and above The situation for the educational level is not different, more females are revealed to have lower educational background / qualification ranging from FSCL, GCE O level and GCE A levels.

The higher educational qualification ie university degree and professional trainings category which also facilitate recruitment in lucrative jobs have lower percentages of women in these categories. The data further revealed that more male are employed than female in the region.

The implication of this is that males have better or higher levels of income and education than their female counterparts in the region, hence a higher socio-economic status. The implication of these results is that women are likely to participate lower than men in political activities in the region. These findings corroborates Lawless and Fox (2001:362-385) who argued that low-income citizens often do not have the financial resources, free time, civicskills, or level of engagement necessary to participate effectively or be recruited for politicalaction by public officials, candidates, and political activists. Given theirsocioeconomic status, impoverished citizens lack material and social resources that motivateparticipation. For instance, higher income people are more likely to participate in politics as anextension of their job. In the same vein, (Manturuk, Linblad, & Quercia, 2009), maintain that economic development is associated with sharp increases in the general level of political participation and has vast consequences for social and political life.

In addition, low-incomeresidents have historically been seen as less politically active or engaged in civic lifethan other groups due to the relative lack of opportunities for activism in disadvantaged areas. Furthermore, they argued that this relative lack of political engagement means that some of the most disadvantaged citizens may be cut off from local political structures that could afford them increased opportunities. However, the ever increasing rate of women tendencies to improve their socio-economic status by first of all getting formal education is an indication of their capabilities to increases their chances to explore opportunities in both the social and political spheres.

Though the levels of socio-economic and political empowerment cannot be compared to their male counterpart, there is the general tendency to promote and encourage self-conscious awareness of their status in order to prevail towards political participation and receive greater resources. This is seen in their level of political participation which increases as their income and educational levels increased. Generally, the socio-economic profile of the respondents revealed that men have a better socio-economic status than women in the South West region.

5.2 Identifying factors that determine peoples' political participation in the south west region of Cameroon

From the quantitative data, the findings showed that income and educational attainment level determinepolitical participation in the South West region of Cameroon as shown on figure 4.3 and tables' 4.8.1-4.8.5. This is seen in the response rate of the respondents revealing 90% of the respondents who agreed

that education determines political participation in the South West region. Again 91% of the respondents agreed that income levels determine participation in politics.

Meanwhile, in table 4.2, 4.9 and 4.10 respondents attributed the low participation of women in politics in the South West region to their unfavorable access to the factors that determine political participation in the South West region of Cameroon. The implication of these results is that women's limited accesses to the factors that determine political participation in the south west region of Cameroon adversely affect their participation in politics in the region. These results are supported by the works of Fonjong (2001:226) who argued that despite the numerical strength of women in Cameroon, who also are a major force of development in the country, they do not have equal share of the country's wealth and resources compared to their male counterparts. He notes further that they constitute 2/3 of the work force; but receive $1/10^{th}$ of the total income (Akuku 1997; Ngwa 1995) however, maintain that this disproportionate distribution of resources that determine political participation in the South West region leaves women less engaged in politics and relatively absent in political and trade union activities, thereby limiting their ability to influence the political processes in the South West region.

5.3: Gender differentials in political participation

Looking at the above results on gender and political participation in the region, there is gender discrimination in the political process in the region. Available literature holds that this is not unconnected with the nature of the African family which is the main institution of patriarchy, which is an important concept in explaining gender inequality. Literarily, it means "the rule of the father"; more broadly, it refers to a society ruled and dominated by men over women. This is inherent in most African families she insisted. Reiterating the persistence of gender discrimination in political participation, Siyanbola & Adetowubo, 2004) maintain that in the family, gender roles restrict male participation in domestic chores and child-rearing while limiting women's participation in decision making.

The results of the study showed that there is gender gap in political participation in the region and this gap is in favour of men. This translates into the fact that men are more likely and do participate in politics in the South West region than women.

This result is supported by the work of Iverson and Rosenbuth (2007) who opined that the nature of political market is a powerful intervening factor especially in voter's demand for female politician, giving men a higher social status over females and this has crept into public life, which also reflects in state activities. Furthermore, the socialization of children to expect and accept different roles in life has created a social mechanism for the development of values that engender the several forms of discrimination against the female

sex. The implication of this socio-political arrangement is that gender discrimination ensures the low political participation of women in the region. The far reaching implication is the continued stereotyping of women and justification for their subordination.

The system of proportionality is a better guarantor of women's representation as permanent actors in civil society. This result is further reflected in the occupation of political posts among both genders in the council areas in the region which reveal a highly disproportionate ratio as revealed in table 5.1 below. It is worthy of note that there has never been a female governor, a female senior divisional officer or a female president of the court of appeal in the South West region

Table 5.1: South West Data Sheet on Municipal Councils as at the 2007 to 2013 Mandate

Division	COUNCIL	No. of Councilors	No. of Women
Fako:	Buea	41	15
	Idenau	25	3
	Limbe I	25	3
	Limbe II	25	3
	Limbe III	25	3
	Muyuka	41	7
	Tiko	41	9
	*Limbe City	19	4
Kupe Mwanenguba :	Bangem	25	3
	Nguti	25	3
	Tombel	25	3
Lebialem:	Alou	25	3
	Menji	25	3
	Wabane	25	3
Manyu:	Akwaya	31	1
	Eyumojock	25	3
	Mamfe	25	5
	Tinto	25	3
Meme:	Konye	25	3
	Kumba I	25	5
	Kumba II	25	3
	Kumba III	25	3
	Mbonge	35	6
	❖ Kumba City	19	4
Ndian:	Bamusso	25	5
	Dikome Balue	25	3
	Ekondo Titi	25	4
	Idabato	25	5
	Isangele	25	8
	Kumbo Abedimo	25	6
	Kumbo Itindi	25	11
	Mundemba	25	6
	Toko	25	5

***City Council derive their councilors from the Sub Divisional Councils**
SOURCE: MUDEC GROUP, 2013, BUEA CAMEROON.

From the above results, there is no doubt that there is severe gender gap in political participation in the region and this greatly affects the group which is discriminated against in terms of resource distribution. The result is supported

by the works of Kenworthy & Malami (1999) who opined that the lack of female involvement in the government would have developmental consequences for the modern world. The danger of excluding women in government is an inefficient use of human resources, weakening of democracy, and hindering of national development. Although there has been notable progress towards equitable political participation worldwide, men still hold more share of political authority and female leadership are absent at the highest level of government.

Quite often the 30 per cent, which is the percentage deemed sufficient critical mass in order to exercise power has not been met by a large number of nations (Cameroon inclusive).

Again, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995:398)suggest that low-income citizens often do not have the financial resources, free time, civic skills, or level of engagement necessary to participate effectively or be recruited for political action by public officials, candidates, and political activists. All political activities require an input of either time or money, but certain activities, such as contacting a public official or working on a campaign, also require certain "civic skills" that can be acquired in various non- political settings, but when applied to politics, can allow for more meaningful and effective participation. Since impoverished citizens are "so poorly endowed with these participatory factors," they have become "a very inactive group".

Furthermore, they note that individuals are more likely to participate in the political system when they are motivated by personal needs, such as jobs,

housing, and health care. Ultimately, resources are more indicative of patterns of political participation than are the issues around which citizens might participate.

However, the far reaching implication of the above results is that gender discrimination is a major cause of women abstinence from political participation in the region. Furthermore, that with the absence of women in prominent positions in national legislatures and local government, it is unlikely that the full range of gender issues would be addressed.

5.4: The impact of income on women's political participation in the south west region of Cameroon

Onvalidation of proposition two which states that women's income and educational levels determine their political participation in the South West region; the higher their levels of income and education the higher their participation in politics and vice versa. The quantitative and qualitative data revealed that women's income and educational levels in the South West region is lower than that of men.

This is corroborated by the data on table 4.6. In order to determine if the difference in income levels along gender lines determine political participation in the South West region of Cameroon, the chi-square test was employed. The results in tables 4.23.1-3, show statistical significant relationship between the independent variable- income and the dependent variables membership of political parties, voting during elections, participation in political campaigns and rallies. This implies income levels influence political participation in the

South West region. This statistical relationship between the variables is in favor of the group with higher income levels meaning men participate more in political activities in the region than women. Hence women's political participation in the south west region across the levels of income is lower than that of men. Though their level of political participation increases as their income levels increase.

The implication of these results on women is that women are unable to influence the political process and explore greater opportunities to address their strategic needs such as education, trainings, healthcare, inadequate access to credit, opportunities to own lands and be economically empowered, as a result gain a voice, have mobility, establish a presence, obtain control over different aspects of their lives and overpower structures or change them.

This is supported further byFomunbod (2012) who opined that in Cameroon, women do not and in most cases cannot participate in political activities as vital as voting, occupation of political posts among others because they are not grounded financially. He explained further by saying to obtain a voters' card in Cameroon, women need passport photograph. The women would rather use their money to get food for their children, than get the passport photograph needed for a voters' card. The woman's priority is then placed on the family and this limits their participation in politics. Thus based on the above tables generally women have lower income level in the region compared to men and this reflect in the number of female respondents who participate in the various political activities in the region across the various levels of income maintaining

low level of political participation for women in the South West region of Cameroon.

5.5: Impact of educational levels on women's political participation

Still on the validation of proposition two, the data on tables 4.7 affirmed that women have lower education attainment compared to their male counterparts in the South West region of Cameroon. This adversely affects their participation in politics. Revealing that women's participation in political activities increases as well as those of their male counterparts though not proportionately tables 4.24.1-3 affirm that education determinespolitical participation in the South West region of Cameroon.

However, it is important to note here that education is crucial for political engagement.Therefore, it is expected that the higher the educational level of women the higher their political participation .But women in the South West region tend to participate less in politics as revealed in the study. The highest participation levels are seen within , GCE 'O' and 'A' levels and university degrees as revealed in table 4.24.1- 3. The results indicate a high participation rate for women with university degree and other educational attainment level above or equal to degrees. It is worthy of note that the enhancement in educational opportunities for girls and women has influenced the participation of women in politics. An improvement in women's education in most African countries has led to the emergence of a larger group of proficient women who are in a position to compete with men for political power in various levels. In support of the above finding, Schlozman and Verba (2001:286) asserted that

education is a ‘powerful predictor of political participation’. Education has empowered many women to join political parties and form political parties enabling them to participate in political activities.

Evidences from researches, have shown that education is one of the most imperative paths for encouraging women to speak out. This has been made possible by the consequential acquisition of essential knowledge and improved communication skills useful for their political engagement. It is a known fact that education is crucial for unlocking other opportunities not only for women but all mankind which are necessary for political participation. As a result, education has been a foundation for women to access high-income jobs that provide the resources and contacts for political activity, and access to non-political associations such as charitable organizations or religious establishments that can be a recruitment ground for political activity (Schlozman and Verba: 2001:141-2).

From the analysis of the survey results above as well as inferences from supplemental evidence from secondary sources presented in the study, the following findings are discernable:

-That the main factors identified as determining political participation in the South West region of Cameroon are education, income and government policies and programs. Considering the fact that the study seeks to examine the impact of socio-economic status as defined by income and educational levels it did not explore the third major factor.

- That there are differentials along gender lines in the socio-economic status of the people of the South West region of Cameroon. These differentials in socio-economic status are in favor of men; meaning that men have a better socio-economic status than women in the region.

- That the income and educational levels of women in the region are low. This translates into their lower level of political participation.

-That women participate more than men in some political activities like membership in political parties across some income and educational levels though generally men participated more in political activities in the South West region than women.

-That the level of women's political participation in the South West region as deduced from the responses to the questions asked especially in their participation in voting exercises, and attendance of political campaigns and rallies, indicate a reasonable level of exposure to political knowledge- an understanding of their civic rights, and zeal to acquire skills to compete for political posts and ensure representation in decision-making bodies that may address issues pertaining to women. Hence minimize the exclusion of women from democratic practices. Furthermore, it is revealed in the study that where male participation is at highest, the same applied to women on income levels between 150,000-249,000frs monthly and on educational level for people with GCE O and A levels.This rating for women is an improvement on their level of political participation as it increases as the levels of income and education

increases. Statistically, it is revealed in the study that the participation is high for women with university degree and above, as well as on income level of 350,000 cfaf monthly and above.

Liberal feminism which is used as the theoretical base for the study submits that the creation of equal opportunities particularly in education and work ensures human progress and determines change in the society. What the core findings of the study shows however is that women have less opportunities to access the major factors that determinepolitical participation in the South West region of Cameroon. As a result, their levels of political participation turns out to be lower than that of men, though women tend to participate more with increase in their income and educational levels.

More so, though women's participation in politics in the south west region is allowed, their participation in decision-making processes is low as this is revealed in the number of women who are appointed or elected into political offices in the region. This no doubt limits their opportunities to explore their full potentials necessary for political empowerment.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.0: Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study and research findings, conclusion and recommendation of the research work. The summary recapitulates the salient issues raised in the study with a view to facilitating the understanding of the impact of socioeconomic status on women'spolitical participation in the South West region of Cameroon as well as summary of the research findings. The conclusion analyzed lessons learnt in the study in view of questions raised in the introduction and propositions outlined in the study.

6.1: Summary

Given the forgoing, this study was undertaken to examine the impact of socioeconomic status as defined by income and education on women's political participation in the South West region of Cameroon. The time frame is from 1990-2009. The objectives of the study were basically two-folds. The first was to identify the major socioeconomic factors that determine political participation in the south west region of Cameroon. The second was to examine the impact of these socioeconomic factors (income and educational) on women's political participation in the region. Data for the study was gotten from two sources namely primary and secondary sources of information. The primary source consisted mainly of questionnaires while the secondary source consisted of information from books, journals articles, official documents of the country and region specifically. Multistage cluster sampling technique was employed in arriving at the sample size of the study. Hence a total of 1500 respondents from selected divisions in the region were selected based on

availability. Chapter one of the study dealt with the general introduction, statement of problem, research objectives, propositions, scope and limitations of the study, rational for the study and chapter outline. Chapter two focused on the review of literature on gender issues generally, gender issues in Cameroon and the south west region of Cameroon; the study located women political participation within, membership in political parties, voting in elections, participation in political campaigns/rallies. Women's socioeconomic status is located within educational and income levels. The study situated its analysis within the liberal feminist theory, to explicate the findings on the impact of socioeconomic status as defined by income and education on women's political participation in the south west region of Cameroon

Chapter three dealt with the research methodology in which the research design, types of data, instrument of data collection, population, sample size, sampling technique methods of data presentation and analysis. It revealed that the study used both primary sources of data and secondary sources of information with the primary data consisting principally of questionnaires and secondary sources of information consisting mainly of information gotten books, journals, radio news, and newspaper clippings, internet, unpublished materials, on pertinent aspects of the Cameroon woman's socioeconomic statusand political participation. On data analysis, the study used frequency distribution and simple Percentages and chi-square analysis. Findings and conclusions were drawn based on results of the chi-square test.

Chapter four contained the presentation and analysis of data as related to the two main propositions upon which this research work is anchored. This chapter examined the impact of socioeconomic status as defined by income and educational levels on women's political participation in the South Westregion. In this regard, its first section explored the socioeconomic status of people in the South West region of Cameroon. Further, it examined the level of differences in people's participation in politics based on their socioeconomic status as defined by income and educational levels. Again the chapter examined the impact of socioeconomic status with regard to income and educational levels on women's political participation in the region. Building upon the results revealed in this chapter, and subsequent ones, the findings of the study are summarized thus:

- That there exists gender gap in political participation in the south west region. That this gap is in favor of the male gender.
- That socioeconomic status as defined by income and educational levels is a major factor in determining political participation in the region
- That the socioeconomic status of women in the region is low and eventually their participation in politics in the region is low.
- That the income and educational level of women in the region is low and this translates into their low participation in politics in the region
- Women's political participation increased as income and educational levels increased

Chapter five handled the discussions of the findings as they relate to the propositions of the study. The discussions are done in relation to the socio-economic profile of the respondents, the differentials in political participation along gender lines based on socio-economic status (income and educational levels) and the impact of income and educational levels on women's political participation in the South West region

Chapter six summarized each of the above chapters and also dwelled on the conclusion and recommendations.

The study contributed to the understanding of the impact of socioeconomic status as defined by income and education on women'spolitical participation in the South West region of Cameroon.

6.2: Conclusion

Years after the emergence of multi-partism in Cameroon and the clamor for increased gender mainstreaming in government policies, women's participation in politics still leaves much to be desired. This undesired nature of women political participation, has engendered a consciousness of women's participation in public life in the South West region of Cameroon.

This study investigated the impact of socioeconomic status as defined by income and education levels on women's political participation in the South West region of Cameroon from 1990-2009.

Based on the findings from the data analysis of the study, the conclusion drawn include:-

Findings on the socioeconomic status of people in the south West region revealed that there is gender gap in the socio-economic status of people in the

south west region of Cameroon and that this gender gap exists in favor of men. Thismeans the men in the south west region have better socioeconomic status as defined by income and education than women; the overwhelming majority of respondents confirmed these finding tables 4.6 and 4.7

From the questionnaires administered, the study further gathered that the income and educational levels of women in the region is lower than that of men and they maintain low levels of income and educational levels in the region and consequently their participation in politics in the region is greatly undermined.

Furthermore, the study found out that an increase in the income and educational levels of the women in the region would boost their participation in politics in the region. An overwhelming majority of the respondents confirmed this finding as the results reveal that peoples' political participation increased as their income and educational levels increase. Particularly for women their participation in some political activities in the region increased as their income and educational levels increase, thus validating the second proposition which states that income and educational levels of women in the region determine their participation in politics; the higher their income level, the higher their level of political participation

The data analyzed in the study on women'spolitical participation in the South West region of Cameroon is done within the tenets of liberal feminist theory, which suggests that education and work, universalism and complementarity between men and women, democracy and political balance are major

determinants for human progress and socioeconomic and political development.

The implication of the results on women in the region is that women's participation in politics in the region is low due to low socioeconomic status. This is not unconnected with the fact that socioeconomic and political development in Cameroon at large is slow and low. It is hoped that as it increases, there would be increase in the socioeconomic and political status of various groups of people in the country including women. With regard to the suggestions of liberal feminist theory, when women in the south west region of Cameroon are able to enter into free market, acquire better credit facilities, better paid jobs, more employed women, increased educational levels and accrue resources capable of ensuring their recruitment into politics in the region, their level of political participation would definitely be of good standing capable of influencing policies that affect them.

However, the study revealed that despite women's central role in sustaining the family and their contribution to nations' development, they have largely been excluded from political life and decision making processes. An attempt has been made in this study to establish the impact of the low level of women's participation in politics in South West region of Cameroon. This has been located within the deep socio-economic barriers that serve to impede women's inclusion in politics and have been found to still exist. These barriers are reflected in the nature of gender relations, income and educational levels in the

region. Women's low economic status has been found to further compound women's inability to become meaningfully involved in democratic politics.

The continued denial of land and other property ownership rights serves to perpetuate this problem. The consequence of this is that the majority of the women remain in a position in which they cannot actively participate in politics. The relatively high level of illiteracy serves as an instrument of disempowerment for women. With the current limited access to education, women remain marginalized in their inspiration to attain very high levels of education which, in turn, check-mate their advancement in politics, economic, and other spheres of societal life. However other factors were identified to include the rising incident of electoral violence which played a key role in ensuring the exclusion of women from hands-on participation in political activities, particularly elections and campaign processes. Because of their physiological make-up, women are targeted and deterred from engaging fully in politics, especially at the crucial points of elections. Furthermore marital status and employment status, culture and traditions as well as government structures were identified to impacting on women's political participation in the region. These factors were not fully explored because they are not within the scope of the study though worth mentioning.

The implication of this is that gender discrimination is a barrier to women's full participation in politics in the region, thus there are few women in higher political levels and this automatically weakens the voices of women in politics.

6.3Contribution to knowledge

The study has gone some length to filling the gap in the literature in the areas of gender and political participation (specifically the impact of socio-economic status as defined by income and educational levels on women's political participation in the south west region of Cameroon from 1990-2009, and has highlighted the relationship between gender, income and educational levels and participation in political activities. Other contributions of this study include the highlights on;

Gender differences in socio-economic status and the impact on political participation specifically, the impact of income and educational levels on political participation with specific reference to women.

Gender differences in socio-economic status and the impact on political participation

Studies on gender and political participation have moved away from quantitative approaches to 'gender differences' paradigm claiming this is a binary approach which polarizes the subject into socially or biologically themesthereby portraying gender differences as a reflection of gender rather than as constructed

Researchers also claim that many gender relations and issues of discrimination and power are today very 'subtle' (Bergvall et al. 1996, Holms and Meyerhoff 2003, Lazar 2005). Studies of gender differences (Verba, et al. 1993; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995) however served as pioneer work in analyzing gender differences in political participation.

According to (Cameron 2003:187, 197) studies on gender differences are not entirely incompatible with social constructionist approaches and often lead to generalizations, accomplished through quantitative analysis and are also not incompatible with contemporary feminist views of gender as social construct and social practice. In view of the gender differences and the impact on political participation based on socio-economic status the study showed that

- There is gap in political participation along gender lines in the South West region of Cameroon. This is seen in the result on tables 4.21.1-4.21.3 where membership of political parties stands at 26.6% for males and 17.6% for females, voting in elections 30.8% for male and 22.8% for females, and attending campaigns and rallies 31.3% for males and 28.7% for females.
- In an era where women in Cameroon are predominantly marginalized in the political and decision making processes, but where women's rights and empowerment are highlighted internationally, there exist gap in the socio-economic status of the people of the south west region with this gap negatively impacting on the women of the region. This is seen on tables 4.6 and 4.7where more males are seen to have higher income levels than women. 250,000-350,000 frs monthly shows 14% of male and 9% of female respondents, 350,000 frs monthly and above 8% of male and 2% female respondents. On educational level, 7% of male and 5% of female respondents have university degree and above. On employment status 37.3% of male against 27.6 % of female

respondents are employed.More females are unemployed 21.9% against 10.2% of males.

- Using a large quantity of data, this study established a useful baseline data of gendered participation in the political processes in the south west region of Cameroon. This is an indication that the issue at stake is not only for female participation in the public sphere or decision making process but also their active and functional participation as well as making positive contributions to socio-economic and political development in the region and country at large.
- Although both men and women participate in political activities in the South West region, there are limitations to the acquisition of resources necessary for participation. These limitations are severe on the women. This is seen in figure 4.2 where 53.7% of the respondents stated otherwise.
- The socio-economic and political landscape of the South West region enabled male dominance in the political space in the South West region of Cameroon.
- The study showed that women are allowed to participate in politics in the South West region but their participation in political processes and decision making bodies and structures are severely limited. This is seen in the number of women who are elected into political offices in the region (Table 5.1)

- Due to male dominance in the politics of the South West region, male politicians articulate, dominate and uphold practices that maintain male hegemony and dominance and then foster gender inequality in political participation. (table 5.1)
- On gender and political participation in the south west region of Cameroon, there is a paucity of research in this area linking socio-economic status as defined by income and educational levels to political participation.

6.4: Recommendation

In order to suggest ways of improving women's political participation in thesouth west region of Cameroon the study suggest the followings:

1. That women leaders of grassroots organizations should find a way to build informal networks with other women leaders of women organizations in the various regions in the country. This will enhancewomen's ability to reach representatives inthe higher political circles in the country as a result open venues in which women's issues could be included in thenational agenda and could be transformed into public policies that would enhance women's lives.In this way, even when women are not represented in the main governmental bodies, they might possess a collection of ties through which their demands could reach the national agenda. This would be a bottom-top strategic first step towards political

participation and increased women's political participation in the region especially in decision making bodies in the political system.

2. That they should be the facilitation of active engagement of the female population of the South West region in economic activities in unlimited fields of endeavor is imperative. This can be done by ensuring access to business capital, extension, and other business development services for female entrepreneurs by deliberate government policy and programs. Example is the establishment of a 'women's corperatives' (focused on lending to female entrepreneurs): Such a specialized financial institution may be better placed to provide, specifically, for the needs of women in the region, using well-trained personnel who understand their special circumstances and needs. Asa support to this, lending quotas, guidelines, and policies on personal and business lending should be specified for regular commercial banks.
3. The study also suggests the promotion of the education of women/girl-child.A discriminatory school fee regime/structure or even tuition-free policy, that deliberately subsidizes the education of female students, can be introduced as a way of encouraging widespread education of the female folk in the South West region of Cameroon. According to Negash (2006), efforts in this direction offer tremendous benefits to national economies as it is estimated

that every additional year spent in school raises a woman's earning capacity by 15 percent, when compared to 11 percent for men.

4. That the government and NGOs should institute asensitization process and continuous creation of awareness to inform women on the need to be economically empowered as a way of facilitating their entry into and relevance in politics: as well as the need for women torunfor and support women running for public offices.
5. The establishment of special economic skills training and education in business management for women. This will help concentrate on providing the necessary skills needed for women's capacity in starting and managing businesses, hence empower them economically.
6. The need for the government of Cameroon to enact relevant laws that will give full backing to the reservation of the 30% quotas for women proposed in the Beijing Platform of Action in every political institutions and political parties until the situation of women's marginalization becomes substantially addressed. To this end, the study maintains government's attention will be drawn to the realization that the present empowerment agenda has not met its target as women's involvement in decision-making and political processes remain low in the South West region. Thus the ceding of cabinets positions to women would be an instrument of political empowerment for the female folk and women in the South West

region would equally explore their potentials in socio economic and political development.

7. The government should put up proper machinery to eradicate political violence so that women can freely take part in the election processes. Female candidates and their supporters have been routinely confronted with gender-based intimidation that creates an aggressive climate and pushes some women to abandon their campaigns.
8. That limited knowledge of political systems and policy mechanisms restrict women's ability to formulate an effective campaign platform. Political inexperience makes it much harder for women to access existing power structures and know how to influence them. Thus there is need to support women in the South West region to acquire skills in fundraising, public speaking and campaigning skills, which are very essential to run an effective campaign and win public support. Women should be assisted with financial resources to run effective constituency campaigns such that they can compete with established men in the communities they live in. Women can achieve this by coming together in various groups like women in education, market women among othersand establishing a strong financial base to support women in politics.
9. The need for women to organize and build their own economic base and regain some of the control over their destinies that they enjoyed

in pre-colonial times cannot be overemphasized. New agricultural technologies should be made adaptable and available to women farmers in both the rural and urban areas in the South West region of Cameroon. NGOs and other women organizations can support women of the region in these areas. This will boast women's economic base in the South West region and promote gender sensitivity in development programs.

10. The need for genuine female solidarity across the country, and women's organizations across the country should be "women-centered' awareness groups with mutual aid as their main goal irrespective of class. This should boast women's active campaigns for women's participation in politics and increase support for women running for public offices. All these efforts would be geared towards breaking the male hegemony which characterizes the Cameroon's political atmosphere.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE ON GENDER AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE SOUTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON 1990-2009

Dear Respondents,

This questionnaire is designed to generate data for a PhD dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of PhD in Political Science at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria Nigeria.

I would be pleased if you could kindly provide answers to the questions asked and feel free to make your comments where necessary and to the best of your knowledge and ability.

Please be assured that all information collected from you is for academic purpose only and shall be treated confidentially

Thank you for your cooperation

Ruth Kinge

SECTION A

Tick as appropriate

SOCIO- DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1 Division…….....subdivision……Council area……

2 Sex : Male[ ] Female [ ]

3 Age : 20-34 [ ] 35- 49 [ ] 50- above [ ]

4Marital status: Single [ ] Married [ ] Divorced [ ] Separated [ ] widowed [ ]

5 Employment Status: Employed [ ] Unemployed [ ]

6 nature of employment: Government [ ] Private [ ] self [ ] others

7Income level: 50,000-150,000 [ ] 151- 250,000[ ] 251,000 -350,000 [ ] 351,000 above[ ]

8 Highest level of education: FSLC [ ] GCE O Level [ ] GCE A Level [ ] University degree and others

SECTION B

INDENTIFYING FACTORS THAT DETERMINE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE SOUTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON

9Do men and women participate freely in political activities in the south west region of Cameroon? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If your previous answer is no

Give
reasons……

10 Are there equal opportunities for people (men and women) to gain access to the factors that determine political participation in the South West region? Yes [ ] No [ ]

11 which of the following factors determine political participation in the south west region? (*tick as many as possible*)

i education ( )

ii marriage ( )

iii income ( )

iv Government policies/ programs( )

v Traditions and customs( )

12 If your response to question 10 is YES which sex in the region do you think is more likely to be positively affected by the factors mentioned in 11?

13 If your response to question 10 is NO which sex in the region do you think is more likely to be negatively affected by the factors mentioned in 11?

14 Give as many reasons as possible for your response to question 12

15 Give as many reasons as possible for your response to question 13

SECTION C: **LEVEL OF POLITICAL PARTICAPATION**

16 Did you register as a member of any political party from 1990-2009?

Yes ( ) No ( )

17 If yes, tick the year (s) 1992( ), 1997 ( ), 2004 ( )

18 Did you vote during general elections from 1990-2009? Yes ( ) No ( )

If your response to question 17 is YES which of the elections did you vote in?1992( ) 1997( ) 2004 ( )

19 Did you participate in any political campaigns and rallies from1990-2009?Yes ()No ( )

20 If yes state the year (s)…….

21 Freely comment generally on women political participation in the South West region of Cameroon……..