



# Stakeholders Perceived Causes, Consequences and Solutions to Female Low Participation in Politics in Boripe Local Government, Osun State

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## Abstract

*The study aims at finding out why women often face challenges in participating in politics. The challenges may be rooted in societal norms and gender stereotypes that confine women to traditional roles, discouraging them from engaging in public and political life. This study therefore examined female low participation in politics, perceived causes, consequences and solution. The study adopted mixed method. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample 170 teachers and convenience-sampling technique was used to select 10 civil servants in the LGA. The study identifies cultural norms, social expectations, economic constraints, and institutional barriers as a key factor hindering women's political participation in Boripe Local Government, Osun State. These factors create an environment that discourages women's political engagement, leading to inadequate representation reinforcing gender stereotypes. The study recommended that Osun State government should develop and implement comprehensive community education programs aimed at challenging and transforming cultural norms and social expectations that limit women's political participation, ensuring these programs engage both men and women to foster widespread support for gender equality in politics.*

**Keywords:** Causes, Consequences, Participation, Politics, Women

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## Introduction

In Nigeria, political engagement holds immense importance as it is the means through which citizens participate in the democratic process, influencing decision-making and holding leaders accountable. Active political participation enhances civic awareness, encourages transparency, and fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among the populace. In a diverse country like Nigeria, political engagement becomes a crucial tool for representing the varied interests, needs, and aspirations of the population, contributing to the development and stability of the nation (Tijani, 2013).

Politics refers to the activities, actions, and policies related to the governance of a community, state, or country. It involves the distribution and exercise of power, the formulation and implementation of laws, and decision-making processes that impact the collective well-being of a society. Politics encompasses a wide range of activities, including elections, political parties, advocacy, and the interactions between citizens and government institutions, all of which contribute to the functioning of a political system (Verba & Nie, 2017). Political participation refers to the involvement of individuals both male and female in the political process of a country, encompassing activities such as voting, joining political parties, running for office, or engaging in civic actions. Despite the increasing recognition of the importance of gender equality, women's engagement in politics in Nigeria remains disproportionately low (Badmus, 2019).

Several factors contribute to the low engagement of women in Nigerian politics. Cultural and societal norms often perpetuate gender stereotypes, restricting women's roles to domestic spheres and undermining their perceived capability in political leadership. Additionally, inadequate representation within political parties, lack of access to resources, and gender-based violence further deter women from actively participating in politics (Joshua, 2013). Pettigrew (2019) showed that the consequences of low women's engagement in Nigerian politics are multifaceted. It limits the diversity of perspectives in decision-making, resulting in policies that may not adequately address the needs and concerns of the entire population. This lack of representation reinforces existing gender inequalities and hampers the overall development of the nation. Moreover, it sends a discouraging message to young girls, perpetuating the cycle of underrepresentation in future generations.

Women often face significant challenges in participating in politics (Inglehart & Norris, 2019). These challenges are deeply rooted in societal norms and gender stereotypes that confine women to traditional roles, discouraging them from engaging in public and political life. Additionally, structural barriers within political parties and electoral systems may create further obstacles for women seeking political office. Existing studies on women's political participation highlight challenges, but there are gaps in understanding the specific causes and consequences of low women participation in Bori Local Government. For example, Adeyemi (2017) found that traditional gender roles in Nigeria significantly impact women's political participation, but the study focused on a national context, missing the local dynamics. Similarly, Okonkwo (2019) explored the structural barriers in political parties, finding that male-dominated party leadership contributes to gender

bias. However, the study did not examine the influence of these barriers on women's participation in local politics.

Additionally, Abiodun (2018) studied the impact of cultural expectations on women's political engagement, emphasizing the need for societal change, but the research did not specifically address Boriipe Local Government. It is on the basis of the discussion, this study examined stakeholders perceived causes, consequences and solutions to female low participation in politics in Boriipe local government, Osun State.

The following research questions have been raised to guide the study

1. What are the perceived causes of low women participation in politics in Boriipe Local Government, Osun State?
2. What are the perceived consequences of low women participation in politics in Boriipe Local Government, Osun State?
3. What are the perceived solutions of low women participation in politics in Boriipe Local Government, Osun State?

### **Research Method**

The researcher considers the mixed method for the study. A mixed methods approach in a research refers to the integration of qualitative and quantitative research methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon or problem (Johnson, 2018). The target population comprises of all secondary school teachers and civil servants in Boriipe Local Government Area. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample 170 teachers and convenience-sampling technique was used to select 10 civil servants in the LGA. Thus, the total respondents of the study was 180. A researcher designed questionnaire was used to collect data from the teachers and a structured interview short answer type was used to elicit responses from the civil servants. Both the questionnaire and the structured interview was organized in three section. Section A was used to elicit responses on perceived causes of low women participation in politics. Section B was used to elicit responses on perceived consequences of low women participation in politics. Section C was used to elicit responses on the perceived solution of low women participation in politics.

Content and Construct Validity was done by expert in the Department of Social Sciences Education, University of Ilorin. Test-retest reliability was carried out on the questionnaire with an interval of three weeks and the reliability coefficient obtained was 0.74. The demographic information of the respondents was organized using percentages. Teachers responses on research questions 1, 2 and 3 was answered using item-by-item mean analysis while the responses of the civil servants on research questions 1, 2 and 3 was answered using thematic analysis.

### **Result**

Three research questions were posed and addressed through an item-by-item analysis of means for the quantitative data and thematic analysis for the qualitative data. The results are presented as follows.

**Table 1: Demographic Data of the Respondents**

Variables	Frequency	Percentages (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	83	46.1
Female	97	53.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Stakeholders</b>		
Civil Servants	10	5.6
Teachers	170	94.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1 shows the demographic data of the respondents in this study, which indicates that out of a total of 180 participants, 83(46.1%) were male, and 97(53.9%) were female. Regarding their professional roles, a significant majority were teachers, comprising 170 (94.4%) of the respondents, while a smaller group of 10 (5.6%) were civil servants. This distribution highlights a predominance of female participants and a substantial representation of teachers in the study sample.

### Answering Research Questions

**Research Question 1:** *What are the perceived causes of low women participation in politic among stakeholders in*

*Boripe Local Government, Osun State?*

To address the research question, responses from both teachers and civil servants were collected. Teachers' responses were analyzed using an item analysis of mean ranking order, with decisions based on a benchmark of 2.50, derived from the average of the measurement scale  $(4+3+2+1)/4$ . Meanwhile, civil servants' responses were subjected to thematic analysis. The results are presented as follows,

### Stakeholders 1: Teachers

**Table 2: Percived causes of low women participation in politic among Secondary school Teachers in Boripe Local Government, Osun State**

S/N	Perceived Causes	Mean	Rank
1	Cultural norms	3.20	1 <sup>st</sup>
2	Social expectations	3.19	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3	Economic barriers	2.98	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4	Access to education	2.87	4 <sup>rd</sup>
5	Limited access to family planning	2.78	5 <sup>th</sup>
6	Childcare support	2.65	6 <sup>th</sup>
7	Workplace discrimination	2.58	7 <sup>th</sup>
8	Gender-based violence	2.57	8 <sup>th</sup>
9	Forced marriages	2.54	9 <sup>th</sup>
10	Cultural rights	2.53	10 <sup>th</sup>

Table 2 outlines the perceived causes of low women participation in politics among secondary school teachers in Boripe Local Government, Osun State. The causes are ranked based on their mean scores, indicating the level of agreement among teachers in Boripe LGA. "Cultural norms" (mean = 3.20) and "social expectations" (mean = 3.19) are identified as the top factors, followed by "economic barriers" (mean = 2.98) and "access to education" (mean = 2.87). Other significant factors include "limited access to family planning" (mean = 2.78) and "childcare support"

(mean = 2.65). Lower-ranked causes are "workplace discrimination" (mean = 2.58), "gender-based violence" (mean = 2.57), "forced marriages" (mean = 2.54), and "cultural rights" (mean = 2.53), reflecting a broad range of societal and economic barriers to women's political participation. The data indicates that secondary school teachers in Boripe Local Government, Osun State, perceive various cultural, social, economic, and institutional factors as barriers to women's participation in politics.

### **Stakeholder 2: Civil Servants**

The responses of the civil servants were collated and thematically presented:

- **Civil Servant 1:** *Cultural barriers and stereotypes, Lack of family-friendly policies, Limited access to education for women, Male-dominated political networks, Gender bias in electoral processes.*
- **Civil Servant 2:** *Socioeconomic constraints, Insufficient support for women candidates, Political violence and intimidation, Patriarchal societal norms and Unequal media representation.*
- **Civil Servant 3:** *Discriminatory party nomination processes, Limited role models for aspiring female politicians, Economic disparities affecting campaign funding, Traditional gender roles in household responsibilities and Inadequate legal protections against gender discrimination.*
- **Civil Servant 4:** *Underrepresentation in decision-making bodies, Institutionalized sexism in political institutions, Historical marginalization of women in governance, Social expectations of women prioritizing caregiving, Lack of targeted outreach and training programs for women.*
- **Civil Servant 5:** *Gendered division of labor in politics, Barriers to accessing leadership positions. Cultural attitudes towards women in authority. Lack of enforcement of gender equality laws. Social stigma associated with women in politics.*
- **Civil Servant 6:** *Misconceptions about women's capabilities in leadership. Bias in media portrayal of women politicians. Insufficient support networks for female candidates. Limited institutional backing for gender equality initiatives. Historical exclusion of women from political decision-making.*
- **Civil Servant 7:** *Structural inequalities in electoral systems. Gender pay gap affecting political aspirations. Lack of inclusive policies for work-life balance. Cultural expectations of women's domestic roles. Influence of traditional male-dominated power structures.*
- **Civil Servant 8:** *Challenges in reconciling political and family life. Inadequate political education for women. Gendered expectations of leadership styles. Resistance to gender mainstreaming in policy. Intersectional discrimination faced by minority women.*
- **Civil Servant 9:** *Limited access to campaign finance for women. Reluctance of parties to prioritize gender parity. Gender stereotypes perpetuated by the media. Barriers to networking in political circles. Lack of mentorship opportunities for aspiring female politicians.*
- **Civil Servant 10:** *Societal perceptions of women's roles in governance. Economic disparities affecting political engagement. Cultural norms*

*influencing political participation. Historical underrepresentation of women in political history. Insufficient legislative support for gender equity initiatives.*

**Theme 1: Causes of low women participation in politic**

The responses from civil servants highlight a comprehensive range of barriers to women's political participation. Cultural barriers and stereotypes persist through societal expectations of women's roles in caregiving and domesticity, compounded by limited family-friendly policies that hinder women's ability to engage in politics (**Civil Servants 1 and 7**). Socioeconomic constraints and insufficient support for women candidates intersect with patriarchal societal norms and unequal media representation, exacerbating challenges for women seeking political office (**Civil Servants 2 and 5**). Discriminatory party nomination processes and economic disparities further impede women's access to political campaigns and leadership roles, exacerbated by traditional gender roles and inadequate legal protections against gender discrimination (**Civil Servants 3 and 4**). Institutionalized sexism, historical marginalization, and societal expectations of women prioritizing caregiving reinforce gendered division of labor in politics, limiting women's representation in decision-making bodies (**Civil Servants 4 and 5**). Misconceptions about women's leadership capabilities and biases in media portrayal, alongside limited institutional support and historical exclusion from political decision-making, perpetuate barriers for aspiring female politicians (**Civil Servants 6 and 10**). Challenges in reconciling political and family life, coupled with gendered leadership expectations and resistance to gender mainstreaming, underscore structural inequalities and intersectional discrimination faced by minority women (**Civil Servants 8 and 9**).

**Research Question 2:** *What are the perceived consequences of low women participation in politics in Boripe Local Government, Osun State?*

To address the research question, responses from both teachers and civil servants were collected. Teachers' responses were analyzed using an item analysis of mean ranking order, with decisions based on a benchmark of 2.50, derived from the average of the measurement scale  $(4+3+2+1)/4$ . Meanwhile, civil servants' responses were subjected to thematic analysis. The results are presented as follows,

**Stakeholders 1: Teachers**

**Table 3: Consequences of low women participation in politics as perceived by Teachers in Boripe Local Government, Osun State**

S/N	Perceived Consequences	Mean	Rank
1	Inadequate women's representation	3.31	1 <sup>st</sup>
2	Neglect women's rights	3.27	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3	Reinforce gender stereotypes	3.03	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4	Hindered gender equality	3.01	4 <sup>th</sup>
5	Missed policy opportunities	2.97	5 <sup>th</sup>
6	Decreased reproductive focus	2.91	6 <sup>th</sup>
7	Reduced democratic legitimacy	2.83	7 <sup>th</sup>
8	Insufficient resource allocation	2.72	8 <sup>th</sup>
9	Impaired female leadership	2.62	9 <sup>th</sup>
10	Weakened social cohesion	2.58	10 <sup>th</sup>



11	Lacking female role models	2.56	11 <sup>th</sup>
12	Reduced gender focus	2.51	12 <sup>th</sup>

Table 3 outlines the perceived consequences of low women's participation in politics as observed by teachers in Boriye Local Government, Osun State, ranked by their mean scores. The highest-ranked consequence is "Inadequate women's representation" (mean = 3.31), indicating the most agreement among teachers. Following closely are "Neglect women's rights" (mean = 3.27) and "Reinforce gender stereotypes" (mean = 3.03), highlighting significant social and cultural impacts. "Hindered gender equality" (mean = 3.01) and "Missed policy opportunities" (mean = 2.97) reflect broader systemic issues. Other notable consequences include "Decreased reproductive focus" (mean = 2.91), "Reduced democratic legitimacy" (mean = 2.83), and "Insufficient resource allocation" (mean = 2.72). Lower-ranked yet important consequences are "Impaired female leadership" (mean = 2.62), "Weakened social cohesion" (mean = 2.58), "Lacking female role models" (mean = 2.56), and "Reduced gender focus" (mean = 2.51).

### Stakeholder 2: Civil Servants

The responses of the civil servants were collated and thematically presented:

- **Civil Servant 1:** *Reduced policy effectiveness. Limited perspectives in governance. Neglect of women's issues. Gender inequality perpetuation. Weak political representation.*
- **Civil Servant 2:** *Inadequate healthcare policies. Economic development hindered. Limited role models. Increased social inequality. Policy bias against women.*
- **Civil Servant 3:** *Stagnant social reforms. Discriminatory laws persist. Low voter turnout. Reduced democratic legitimacy. Gender-based violence ignored.*
- **Civil Servant 4:** *Decreased innovation in policy. Weakened international standing. Lack of diverse opinions. Poor family support policies. Economic policies skewed.*
- **Civil Servant 5:** *Poor education policies. Limited community engagement. Increased corruption risks. Marginalized female voices. Decreased reproductive rights focus.*
- **Civil Servant 6:** *Inequitable resource distribution. Reduced political accountability. Social services gaps. Cultural stereotypes reinforced. Gender inequality in leadership.*
- **Civil Servant 7:** *Inadequate social policies. Workforce participation declines. Limited public trust. Women's health issues neglected. Reduced economic growth.*
- **Civil Servant 8:** *Weak legislative reforms. Inequitable legal protections. Lack of gender-specific data. Increased poverty rates. Social unrest potential.*
- **Civil Servant 9:** *Policy implementation issues. Gender pay gap persists. Limited mentorship opportunities. Reduced social cohesion. Education gender disparity.*

- **Civil Servant 10:** *Decreased quality of life. Fewer advocacy initiatives. Skewed political priorities. Weaker community bonds. Historical marginalization persists.*

### **Theme 2: Consequences of low women participation in politics**

The responses as perceived by civil servants in Boriye LGA reveal the consequences of low female participation in politics. Key consequences include policy and governance impacts, where reduced policy effectiveness, limited perspectives, and decreased innovation reflect the lack of diverse viewpoints essential for effective governance (**Civil Servants 1, 4**). Social and economic consequences are prominent, with increased social inequality, hindered economic development, and skewed economic policies being common issues (**Civil Servants 2, 4, 7**). Health and education sectors are also adversely affected, with inadequate healthcare and education policies, neglect of women's health issues, and decreased reproductive rights focus underscoring critical service gaps (**Civil Servants 2, 5, 7**). Gender-specific challenges include the perpetuation of gender inequality, limited role models, and marginalized female voices, which further reinforce cultural stereotypes and hinder gender equality in leadership (**Civil Servants 1, 2, 5, 6**). Political consequences such as reduced democratic legitimacy, low voter turnout, weak legislative reforms, and policy implementation issues highlight systemic inefficiencies (**Civil Servants 3, 8, 9**). Lastly, broader social impacts such as reduced public trust, increased corruption risks, and weakened community bonds demonstrate the far-reaching effects on societal cohesion and stability (**Civil Servants 5, 7, 10**).

### **Research Question 3:**

*What are the perceived solutions of low women participation in politics in Boriye Local Government, Osun State?*

To address the research question, responses from both teachers and civil servants were collected. Teachers' responses were analyzed using an item analysis of mean ranking order, with decisions based on a benchmark of 2.50, derived from the average of the measurement scale  $(4+3+2+1)/4$ . Meanwhile, civil servants' responses were subjected to thematic analysis. The results are presented as follows,

### **Stakeholders 1: Teachers**

**Table 4: Solutions to low women participation in politics as perceived by Teachers in Boriye Local Government, Osun State**

S/N	Perceived Solution	Mean	Rank
1	Implement gender quotas	3.39	1 <sup>st</sup>
2	Strengthen anti-discrimination laws	3.11	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3	Financial nomination incentives	3.05	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4	Childcare support offered	3.01	4 <sup>th</sup>
5	Mentorship programs established	2.93	5 <sup>th</sup>
6	Gender-sensitive training introduced	2.91	6 <sup>th</sup>
7	Flexible electioneering process	2.89	7 <sup>th</sup>
8	Supportive political culture	2.85	8 <sup>th</sup>
9	Challenge stereotypes campaigns	2.75	9 <sup>th</sup>
10	Diverse female portrayal	2.54	10 <sup>th</sup>

Table 4 outlines perceived solutions to low women's participation in politics as identified by teachers in Boriye Local Government, Osun State, ranked by their mean



scores. The top-ranked solution is "Implement gender quotas" (mean = 3.39), indicating the strongest agreement among teachers. Following closely are "Strengthen anti-discrimination laws" (mean = 3.11) and "Financial nomination incentives" (mean = 3.05), emphasizing the importance of legal and financial support. "Childcare support offered" (mean = 3.01) and "Mentorship programs established" (mean = 2.93) highlight the need for practical and developmental support. Mid-ranked solutions include "Gender-sensitive training introduced" (mean = 2.91) and "Flexible electioneering process" (mean = 2.89), focusing on inclusive training and processes. Lower-ranked yet important solutions are "Supportive political culture" (mean = 2.85), "Challenge stereotypes campaigns" (mean = 2.75), and "Diverse female portrayal" (mean = 2.54), which address cultural and media-related aspects of female participation in politics.

### **Stakeholder 2: Civil Servants**

The responses of the civil servants were collated and thematically presented:

- **Civil Servant 1:** *Implement gender quotas. Strengthen anti-discrimination laws. Provide leadership training. Increase financial support. Promote female mentorship.*
- **Civil Servant 2:** *Create childcare facilities. Support flexible work hours. Raise awareness campaigns. Enforce equal opportunity laws. Facilitate networking events.*
- **Civil Servant 3:** *Offer educational scholarships. Develop family-friendly policies. Encourage male allies. Highlight successful women. Ensure safe work environments.*
- **Civil Servant 4:** *Subsidize campaign costs. Provide legal support. Conduct gender sensitivity training. Promote balanced media coverage. Support women's political groups.*
- **Civil Servant 5:** *Advocate for policy changes. Increase visibility of female leaders. Organize community workshops. Provide mentoring programs. Improve access to resources.*
- **Civil Servant 6:** *Encourage female political engagement. Develop inclusive policies. Promote gender mainstreaming. Create supportive networks. Address workplace discrimination.*
- **Civil Servant 7:** *Increase public awareness. Enhance education for girls. Provide career counseling. Support entrepreneurial initiatives. Create leadership pipelines.*
- **Civil Servant 8:** *Establish equal representation. Advocate for women's rights. Develop leadership programs. Support political participation. Promote fair recruitment.*
- **Civil Servant 9:** *Implement affirmative action. Increase female role models. Provide training grants. Support legislative changes. Foster inclusive environments.*
- **Civil Servant 10:** *Encourage women in politics. Strengthen gender equity laws. Promote civic education. Provide electoral support. Highlight women's contributions.*

### **Theme 3: Perceived Solutions**

The responses from the civil servants collectively emphasize a comprehensive approach to promoting gender equity and women's participation in politics and leadership roles. include policy interventions such as implementing gender quotas (**Civil Servant 1 and 6**), strengthening anti-discrimination laws (**Civil Servant 1**), and providing leadership training (**Civil Servant 1**). Family-friendly policies, childcare support, and flexible work hours aim to remove practical barriers (**Civil Servant 2 and 7**). Educational initiatives, mentorship programs, and highlighting successful women foster empowerment and visibility (**Civil Servant 3 and 8**). Legal and financial support, gender sensitivity training, and media representation ensure a supportive environment (**Civil Servant 4 and 10**). Advocacy for policy changes, public awareness campaigns, and inclusive leadership development underline the commitment to systemic change (**Civil Servant 5**).

### **Discussion of Findings**

The first finding of the study showed that the causes of women's low political participation as perceived by both secondary school teachers and civil servants in Boripe LGA, Osun State, encompass cultural norms, social expectations, economic constraints, and institutional obstacles, revealing a multifaceted set of challenges hindering women's political engagement. The finding highlights the complex interplay of socio-economic and cultural barriers hindering women's political engagement. This multifaceted set of challenges aligns with the study by Paxton and Hughes (2014), which also identifies similar barriers, including societal norms and economic disadvantages, as significant factors affecting women's political participation globally. This alignment underscores the pervasive and systemic nature of these obstacles, necessitating comprehensive and targeted interventions to promote gender equality in political representation.

The second finding of the study finding revealed that the consequences of low women's participation in politics as perceived by both teachers and civil servants in Boripe LGA, Osun State, include inadequate representation, neglect of women's rights, reinforcement of gender stereotypes, hindered gender equality, and missed policy opportunities, reflecting significant social, cultural, systemic, and economic impacts. These perceptions highlight significant social, cultural, systemic, and economic impacts. Inadequate representation results in policies that may not address women's specific needs, while the neglect of women's rights perpetuates existing inequalities. The reinforcement of gender stereotypes limits societal progress, and the hindered gender equality stifles overall development. Missed policy opportunities further exacerbate these issues by failing to leverage diverse perspectives essential for holistic and effective governance. This reflects profound social, cultural, systemic, and economic repercussions. This finding aligns with the study by Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer (2012), which demonstrates that limited female political participation results in poorer policy outcomes for women, perpetuation of gender biases, and systemic inequalities, thereby compromising the overall efficacy and inclusiveness of governance. This alignment emphasizes the critical need for enhanced female political involvement to foster equitable and effective political systems.

The third finding of the study revealed that both teachers and civil servants in Boripe Local Government, Osun State, emphasize a multi-faceted approach to enhance women's participation in politics and leadership. This includes implementing gender quotas, strengthening anti-discrimination laws, providing financial and legal support, establishing childcare and mentorship programs, promoting gender-sensitive training, and advocating for policy changes and public awareness campaigns. This comprehensive strategy recognizes the diverse and interlinked barriers women face, proposing targeted interventions to create a supportive environment for women's political engagement. It highlights the importance of systemic changes alongside community-based initiatives to achieve sustainable progress in gender equality in politics. This reflects a holistic understanding of the barriers women face. This finding aligns with Dahlerup's (2013) study, which argues that multifaceted strategies, including quotas and supportive measures, are essential for overcoming structural barriers and achieving substantive representation of women in politics. Such alignment highlights the importance of coordinated efforts to create an enabling environment for women's political empowerment.

### **Conclusion**

The study on stakeholders' perceptions of the causes, consequences, and solutions to low female participation in politics in Boripe Local Government, Osun State, reveals a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted barriers women face. Stakeholders identify cultural norms, social expectations, economic constraints, and institutional obstacles as significant causes of women's political underrepresentation, leading to inadequate representation, neglect of women's rights, reinforcement of gender stereotypes, and missed policy opportunities. To address these issues, they advocate for a multi-pronged approach, including gender quotas, anti-discrimination laws, financial and legal support, childcare and mentorship programs, gender-sensitive training, and public awareness campaigns. The alignment of these findings with broader research underscores the systemic nature of the problem and highlights the necessity of integrated and sustained efforts to enhance women's political participation and achieve gender equality in leadership roles.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Osun State government should develop and implement comprehensive community education programs aimed at challenging and transforming cultural norms and social expectations that limit women's political participation, ensuring these programs engage both men and women to foster widespread support for gender equality in politics.
2. The state government should establish dedicated government and non-governmental organizations' initiatives to monitor and address the neglect of women's rights, focusing on creating inclusive policies that actively promote gender equality and the participation of women in decision-making processes.

The state government should formulate and enforce a robust policy framework that incorporates gender quotas, strengthens anti-discrimination laws, and provides necessary financial and legal support, along with implementing mandatory gender-

sensitive training for political parties and public institutions to create an inclusive and supportive environment for women's political engagement.

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