



**THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN PROMOTING WOMEN'S  
POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN GHANA'S PARLIAMENT: THE CASE OF  
ABANTU FOR DEVELOPMENT.**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

I LETICIA STACEY TETTEH, declare that this study is my own work carried out by the supervision of Dr. Kwame Asah-Asante in the Department of Political Science at the University of Ghana, Legon. I hereby do state that this work is not a reproduction of anybody's work either in part or in whole. I also do confirm that all sources of materials used and consulted have been duly cited and acknowledged.

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## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to the Almighty God whom I serve for seeing me through this work, and to my Parents, Theophilus John Tetteh and Mariam Adjin and my siblings, my loved ones and friends for their love and support.

To all women in the world, especially the women who relentlessly contribute to the struggle for gender equality. God bless and Thank you

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## **ABSTRACT**

The historical subordination of women has been widely discussed and efforts have been made to address the issue globally. It is in this light that this study sought to assess the Roles Civil Society Organizations with special reference to Abantu for Development play in increasing the political representation of women in Ghana's parliament. The study made use of Arnstein's theory of participation developed in 1969. A qualitative descriptive approach is used to describe the current status of women's political representation in Ghana's Fourth Republic while exploratory design is used to provide information where a small amount of information is given. It also adopts interpretive paradigm to investigate the impact of the civil societies in enhancing substantive and symbolic women's representation in Ghana's parliament with special reference to AFD. To aid the study, officials of CSO's were interviewed. Apart from relying on primary data from the respondents, the study also used secondary sources from available data to reinforce the findings. The study discusses the importance of women's political representation. It indicates that women's political participation is likely to result in tangible gains for the country's nascent democracy. This will lead to greater responsiveness to citizen's needs, increased cooperation across party and ethnic lines, and a more sustainable future development programmes for the country.

At the end of the study it found out that symbolic representation most often leads to substantive representation since more women are needed to vote on issues concerning women in parliament. It also highlights the roles civil societies like Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF Ghana), Abantu for Development (AFD) and Network for Women's Right in Ghana (NETRIGHT) play in an attempt to bridge the gender disparity that has plagued the country. The study finds out

that, AFD since its inception has engaged in vigorous training and capacity building for women in the political space of the country.

It highlights the means by which they administer these roles and identifies financial challenge as a major constraint of CSO's. The study recommends that CSO's should approach gender sensitization from the grass root.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

Following the abolishing of colonial rule in Africa in the 1960s, a number of countries on the continent became one-party states. To most of the leaders of the continent, the essence of this policy was to, among other things, avoid divisions in the society and also ensure total control of the people without tolerance for opposing views. The policy, which was also meant to ensure rapid development, existed for a while before they were finally abolished by soldiers, who later took over the administration of most states. Despite problems such as corruption, exclusion of certain groups of people including women and members of the opposition, human rights abuses and general bad governance that characterized the said administrations, the regimes of the military persisted for a long while before they were finally swept away by certain pro-democracy forces including opposition groups, civil society organizations and the international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) in the late 1980s (Bortey, 2017).

Ghana, which had similar history, made several attempts after its independence in 1957 to establish democratic rule, but that has not come without the challenge of political instability. With the exception of the Fourth Republic, which appears to have defied the odds by surviving seven democratic elections, none of the regimes under the various republics has survived for that long without interference from the military. From 1966 to 1992, the political space was dominated by the military.

Notwithstanding the instability that characterized the political administration of the country, it has so far been able to produce four republics, which are, the first, second, third and fourth with each

of them having institutions such as the legislature, which have so far served as the link between the people and the government. Unfortunately, women's representations with regard to the various legislatures of the republics have so far been skewed in favor of men. During the first Republic of Ghana, the parliament under Dr. Kwame Nkrumah passed a law which allowed special representation of ten women increasing membership to 114 (Frempong, 2017).

Even under the Fourth Republic, the situation has not changed. Out of 275 members of parliament, only 37 are women. In fact, under the first Parliament of the Fourth Republic, only fifteen women were voted into parliament. The number appreciated to nineteen in 2001 and twenty-five in 2005 (Yartey, 2012). In 2009 and 2013, however, women who were voted into Parliament were twenty-nine and thirty respectively. Though in numerical terms, women's representation in Parliament has seen considerable increase over the years, the number is still not significant enough as few women have been voted into Parliament despite the continuous increase of their population. That said, scholars have also argued that since political equality is central to democratic governance, it is important for the state to address the current problems of low women's representation in Ghana's political landscape if the country is to improve and strengthen its democratic efforts. This shows that the place of women in a democratic government, such as Ghana's cannot be overemphasized and evidence of this can be seen in the speech of the former Secretary of State of the US, Madeline Albright, who at the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in the US in 2010 said, among other things that 'if democracy is going to put down strong and healthy roots, it must profit from all the full and equitable participation of women in national and local leadership positions and in a full range of advocacy roles.' It is not enough to say that women have important roles in a democracy (Hamah, 2015).

Over the years, successive governments have made tremendous efforts with the view to improve the situation, but very little has been achieved. Under the United Nations (UN), Ghana has

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approved and supported a number of programs and policies aimed at empowering women in general in the country. Typical of such programs and policies include the Beijing declaration and platform for action, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (Hamah, 2015). Further to this, Article 17 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana prohibits all forms of discrimination, including the discrimination of women as well as the 1998 Affirmative Quota Policy, which enjoins governments to afford women 40% participation in public policy making (Hamah, 2015). There is no doubt that all these measures aim at empowering women and enhancing their participation in politics, however, very little has been achieved with respect to women's participation in politics in general and representation in parliament in particular.

Abantu for development (AFD) was set up in faraway Britain in 1991 by a group of dedicated feminist African women from Western, Eastern and South Africa to address gender issues. This was because women were bearing a greater share of social and economic burden while they were largely excluded from politics and policy making. It was established in recognition of the urgent need to build capacity of the African women to participate in transforming their societies and building gender equality. The organization established the first gender and climate change coalition in West African sub region ( <https://www.britannica.com/topic/ABANTU-for-Development>).

The word 'Abantu' means 'people' in a number of languages spoken in Eastern and Southern Africa. It exists to strengthen the capacity of women to participate in decision making at all levels, to influence policies from gender perspectives and to address inequalities and injustices in social relations. It seeks to achieve this through advocacy, training, research institutional training and networking with other organizations committed to the same principles. (Abantu for Development, 2017).

This research seeks to bring to light the causes of low representation of women in politics and the roles civil societies play in increasing women's political representation especially that of AFD.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Gender inequality has been with the country since its inception. From both patrilineal and matrilineal societies in the country, the practices and customs of the people in these societies have contributed to the situation where women, in spite of their talents and potentials, have been relegated to the background and this has undermined their status and authority in society.

With the attainment of independence in 1957 coupled with the management of the country by Ghanaians themselves, one would have thought that the situation would be lessened if not eliminated. However, in the post-colonial era, the situation has not changed much. The emergence of the democratic system of government with some of its attendant problems such as political instability, bad governance and politics of exclusion have therefore worsened the situation by limiting the political space of women, including their participation in parliament.

In order to deal with the problem, the government of the Convention Peoples' Party (CPP) under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, introduced affirmative action programs that saw women in public offices and other male-dominated professions. This led to a number of decisions which were taken by the CPP government to deal with the problem. For instance, in 1960, the President created ten parliamentary seats, a situation that increased the number of women parliamentarians from ten to eighteen in 1965. This feat by the Nkrumah's government was made possible when he realized that the country's Parliament was made up of only men. To this end, he introduced the Representation of People's Amendment Bill, which made it possible for the CPP government to increase the representation of women in Parliament (Bortey, 2017).

That said, the status quo did not change much after 1966, when the Nkrumah government was removed from office by the military, that is, the National Liberation Council (NLC). Due to the decay and political instability in the country, the civilian regimes that came after the CPP government did not last. Both the governments of the Progress Party (PP) and the People's National Party (PNP) lasted for about 24 months each. Though the tenure of the two regimes ended abruptly, the representation of women in the legislatures of both regimes did not improve much. For instance, in the Second Republic, while the number of women in Parliament was one, the Third Republic had six women in the country's legislature (Bortey, 2017).

Even in the Fourth Republic, the story was not different. After nearly two decades of the existence of the military, that is the government of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), the first parliament of the Fourth Republic had ten women. Despite the increasingly role of civil society in the bid to encourage women's participation in parliamentary level politics, only 16 of them were voted into the second parliament of the Republic. This means that out of 200 members of parliament, only 16 were women, thus translating into eight percent. Almost a decade on, out of 230 seats in Parliament, women occupied only 25, that is 10.9% (Tsikata, 2009).

As a way of dealing with the problem, the government established in the 1970s, the National Council on Women and Development. This was in response to the United Nation (UN)'s call on government to set up such national institutions to further the course of women. In the first years of its existence, the Council concentrated its efforts on literacy projects and moved on to establish small scale income generating projects for women to enhance their capital base. That aside, several NGO's that emerged afterwards played numerous roles including engaging in advocacy programmes for the political, uplifting women in the country. Notable among such groups included the 31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement, established by the former first lady, Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings (Bortey, 2017).

Further to this, the Women's Manifesto for Ghana, a document that sets out critical issues of concern to women, put together in 2004 by the Coalition of the Women's Manifesto for Ghana and hosted by Abantu for Development (AFD), acknowledges that in spite of the pivotal role women play within the family, community and society at large, they however occupy limited positions of influence. The AFD also found out that despite the fact that the country had undertaken a lot of measures including ratifying major international instruments that call for affirmative action policies, creating a specific Ministry for Women and Children with explicit objectives to improve the socio-economic wellbeing of women and children, there still exists a disconnect between the existence of these concrete policies and the effective creation of avenues for women's participation, both in politics and organizations (Abantu for Development, 2012 ).

AFD has regional offices in Nairobi, Kenya and Accra, Ghana, with an affiliate Country Office in Kaduna, Nigeria. The organization has special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. AFD is a Pan African International non-governmental organization that trains women for leadership in sustainable development. Its vision statement focuses on realizing gender discrimination as key obstacle to sustainable development and social justice. The organization has equipped over 500 African women "trainers" through its workshops throughout Africa and UK. It does this through the use of adult learning techniques and recognizing learning differences between genders, AFD trainers strive to both educate and solicit participant contributions to help empower women to occupy political positions in a country. They thus target women who are not in parliament as well (Abantu for Development, 2017).

The issue of what causes low women representation in our side of the world begins to plague the mind. The struggle for women to gain acceptance and get involved in politics has been lengthy since time immemorial. The progress has been very slow and seems almost unachievable

considering all these years. This is because although there are a lot of writings under this study, they are on informal basis and not empirical.

Now the central question is: How effective could civil society organizations (CSOs), especially AFD function to ensure increased women's political participation at the level of the legislature?

### **1.3 OBJECTIVES OF STUDY**

For some time now, the country's democracy has been hailed as one of the best in Africa. However, there are a number of challenges that confront it. One such problem is the issue of low women representation in parliament. This problem has persisted for some time and it is really affecting the image of the country's democratic credentials. In order to address this problem head on, we are therefore interested in pursuing the following objectives:

1. Identifying roles that CSOs, particularly AFD plays in order to help support the efforts of increasing women's participation in parliament.
2. Find out the challenges that face CSOs like AFD in their effort to ensure increased women's representation in Parliament.
3. To examine the means by which AFD influences women representation in the country's lawmaking body
4. Provide relevant recommendations for addressing the challenge of low women representation in parliament

### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In order to effectively deal with the problem under consideration, the following research questions will be used to guide the study:

1. How important is women's political representation?
2. Does symbolic representation lead to substantive representation?

3. What are civil societies doing to solve the problem of under representation of women?

## **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

In the light of the above research problem, the purpose of this research is to examine the opportunities and problems that underpin representation of women in Ghana's parliament. It seeks to examine the roles civil societies play in examining women's representation and what they plan or seek to do under the Fourth Republic of Ghana. It will also give recommendations on what can be done to increase women's participation in parliament.

## **1.6 CHAPTER OUTLINE**

### **Chapter One**

This portion of the study deals with themes such as introduction to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study and the chapter outline.

### **Chapter Two**

Chapter Two is solely dedicated to the review of the literature relating to women's political representation in Ghana's parliament. It makes an assessment of previous and current literature on the subject matter with the view of determining the status of the argument and also plugging the gaps thereof.

### **Chapter Three**

This chapter discusses the methodological approaches used to examine the issue of the study. The chapter seeks to shed light on the various methods used in the collection and analysis of data for the study. It also presents a theoretical framework to the study.

## **Chapter Four**

This chapter focuses on the analysis of the issues involved in the study. It makes use of all the relevant information that is necessary to aid the examination of the phenomenon.

## **Chapter Five**

This chapter presents a summary of the findings and conclusions of the study. It crowns the work up by making recommendations for the study

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## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

Large volume of literature exists on civil society organizations and women representation. For purposes of placing this study in its proper perspective, this review of the literature has been divided into two parts, namely studies on civil society organizations (CSOs) and studies on women representation.

#### **2.1 STUDIES ON CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS**

The work of Coker (2008) focuses on the definitions, functions and features of CSOs in the state. As regards definitions and functions, Coker views CSOs as a third and nonprofit sector of the state which provides effective support towards the administration of the state. In addition to this, he views CSOs as a set of diverse non-governmental institutions which perform a number of functions in the state including counter balancing the overbearing powers of the executive. He further states that CSOs are institutions made up of norms, networks and patterns that contribute effectively to ensuring the survival of the state.

On the issue of features, Coker goes on to explain the membership of CSOs, which includes citizens and associates, among others. He says membership of such organizations is not compulsory and people can enter or leave at any time. He explains further that such organizations lie between the state and individual households in the state.

Turning his attention to Africa, Coker observes that states on the continent tend to create the enabling conditions for CSOs to flourish thereby fostering popular participation and partnership in the state.

Coker's work is important because it touches on CSOs, which is one of the important variables of this study. In addition to this, Coker's work also touches on the role and characteristic of CSOs which are important materials for understanding the concept of civil society. He however failed to look at CSOs in relation to women, which is the focus of this study. Our study will fill this gap by looking at the contributions of CSOs in promoting women representation in the legislature with particular reference to Ghana.

Edwards (2004) explores the practical and theoretical significance of CSOs in the state. He states that part of the role of CSOs is to expand the frontiers of individual liberties in the state by serving as a link between the people and the government of the day. According to him, the success of every democracy depends on the liberal and vibrant nature of its independent groups, particularly CSOs. He argues that both the UN and the World Bank see CSOs as key to reducing poverty levels and also ensuring good governance in a country.

He observes that despite the roles that CSOs play in the state, it is sometimes difficult to comprehend the true meaning of the concept due to the fact that there are more questions that remain unanswered with regard to the nature of such organizations. Some of the questions he identifies are whether the definition of CSOs includes families or not and the place of CSOs as a bulwark to overbearing powers of the state. These questions, he maintains, tend to create confusion in the minds of people and as a result making it difficult, if not impossible, for scholars to arrive at a generally acceptable definition for the term. He attributes the problem to the fact that there are different scholars as different views about the term. And this, he says, makes the concept difficult to define and comprehend.

Addressing the problem, Edwards maintains that a greater clarity of the term can be achieved when scholars focus their attention on the roles and potentials of such organizations instead of concentrating their efforts at providing only definitions

Edwards' work on civil society is of great importance to this study because it focuses on CSOs, which is one of the important variables our study seeks to examine. Besides, the study also touches on some of the problems associated with the concept and thereby suggesting a way in which the problem can be addressed. Though part of Edwards' study touches on the roles of CSOs, the study however fails to identify the role of CSOs in Ghana. Our study will fill the gap using AFD to understand the role of such CSOs towards the promotion of women participation in the country's legislature.

The work of Botwey (2018) centers on civil society (CS) and democratic consolidation in Ghana's Fourth Republic. He studies the activities of CSOs in the country and how these organizations contribute to the consolidation of the country's democracy. The study by Botwey examines three CSOs in the country, including the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD) and the Institute of Democratic Governance (IDEG). Among the things the study focuses on the contributions of these institutions towards the deepening of democracy in the country.

The study by Botwey reveals that the activities of CSOs in the country have contributed to the promotion of electoral integrity to enhance electoral process in the country. Besides, he also notes that through the advocacy programs of the think tanks, the state has experienced major policy changes leading to the passage of a number of important laws, including the Disability and the Right to Information laws. The study also reveals that the institutions have done a lot to inculcate democratic values of civic participation, political engagement and tolerance in the electorate, and this, he notes have contributed immensely towards civic education in the country. That said, the study also identifies a number of problems associated with the work of CSOs in the country. Among the problems the study observes include funding and commitment on the part of CSOs to

pursue the interest of the people as opposed to their own. He notes that lack of funding is one of the factors that affect the implementation of some of the major programs of the think tanks.

The relevance of Botwe's work lies in the fact that it dovetails into our study. This is so because the study looks at some of the challenges that confront CSOs operations in the country. Though his study reveals among other contributions, the role of CSOs towards the democratic governance of the country, the study however fails to shed light on the significant role that CSOs in the country, particularly AFD makes towards political representation of women in the legislature. We intend to take a cue from this study and use the ideas associated with Botwe's work to fill the gaps in our study.

## **2.2 STUDIES ON WOMEN AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

Writing on the topic: *Troubled Sisterhood: "Women and Politics in Southern Africa"* with case studies from Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana, Geisler (1995) argues that whatever the status of a state and the politics associated with it, women are never central to the scheme of things in the state. She argues that even in Western democracies where women enjoy equal status with their male counterparts as well as the existence of equal voting rights, the conditions in those countries are not the same for each of the countries concerned. She cites examples from some of the Nordic countries, where women have over the years experienced low political participation with respect to the decision making at the national level. She observes that despite the glaring under representation of women in political decision making, Western feminism, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s, did not place much emphasis on getting women into formal spheres of politics including parliament.

Besides Western societies, Geisler also turns her attention to Africa where she states that until recently, African women have largely withdrawn from politics to pursue other interests. According

to her, the present lack of interest in politics on the part of women is not necessarily due to political apathy as some African men would want people to believe, but rather based on the fact that women enter politics on terms of their male counterparts who take undue advantage of the efforts of such women for the selfish ends of those male citizens. She explains that in situations where women are even given opportunity to serve in politics, they are mostly given subordinate positions, which limit their scope to influence major important policies and programmes. This practice, she argues alienates women from important political positions.

According to her, it is only recently that a number of independent, middle class women questioned the unequal power relations in the household as a basis for women's overall status in the political realm.

She further argues that ideologies that define the domestic sphere as the female domain and the political sphere as male prerogative are deeply engrained in the minds of people, which are backed by recourse to tradition and laws that create barriers for women to deal independently with the world outside the home.

She states that in Africa, particularly Botswana and Zambia, marriage put men in higher status than women and this goes a long way to deny women certain opportunities than men.

She states that there are instances where constitutions of countries guarantee sexual equality, as the case may be in Zambia, except in areas where customary laws are ill defined. He maintains that this is so in countries where conscious efforts have been made to address gender inequality using law and order.

On the other hand, in Zimbabwe for instance, the availability of equitable laws has not always guaranteed their application. Indeed, the rights and wrongs of many women are still to a large extent defined by both males and tradition. She reveals that for the women's league in the United Independence Party (UNIP) to get positions, they had to market themselves in a way that men

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understood that even if they worked at the same place, when they get home the men would still be their bosses. She observes that in Zimbabwe, the people had to appeal to the government to make policies that relate to equality due to the fact that men still dominate that society and that the best way to such law passed is through a humble appeal. She however states that women tend to be their own enemies as they always vote against women in their societies.

Though the work of Geisler relates to Zimbabwe and Zambia, it however touches on women's political participation, which is important to our work. The study also provides solution for dealing with the problem of women representation in the legislature. However, the study by Geisler did not address the problem of low women representation in Ghana's parliament. Our study will fill this lacuna by examining the means by which AFD can be used to bring about change in the situation.

In a related study, Bauer (2012) writes on women representation in African parliaments. She indicates that all over the world, women's representation in national legislatures has seen tremendous improvement since the early 1990s and that nowhere has the increase been so remarkable than the sub-Saharan Africa.

She says Uganda led the way, with its first post-conflict election, which brought in a number of women to the country's parliament, thus bringing the representation of women to 17.6 per cent. This example, according to her, was followed by Uganda in their election of 1989, where the country became one of the countries in the world to have more women representation that is 56.3 per cent, in the national legislature than that of men.

Other countries she identifies which had more representation in their legislatures, especially in 2012 are Seychelles, South Africa, Mozambique, Angola and Burundi. She notes that these countries were among the top 30 countries worldwide, with more than 30 per cent of women in a single or lower house of their legislatures. The study also touches on Tunisia where after its 2011

elections, had a number of women elected to its legislature. This increases the number of women in that parliament to 26.7 per cent. Further to that, the study also explains the situation regarding Kenya and Senegal who have recently adopted measures that in the view of Bauer will bring more women into parliaments in the next election (Bauer, 2012).

The strengths of the study by Bauer lie in the fact that it touches on women representation in parliament and how their numbers are constantly being improved by the day. What the study fails to do is to look at women's representation in Ghana, which our work intends to do, taking into consideration the contribution of AFD towards influencing women representation in the country's law-making body.

Writing on the topic: Increasing Women's Participation: "The role of women-friendly Districts, Pyeatte and Yanus (2018) state that historically, women did not participate in public meetings and selection of people for public position. This, they note affect their input and representation in political institutions in the long run. They explain that this is actually the situation in the United States, which explains the lack of representation and participation of women in the political sphere sometimes. They examine whether the contextual factors in the friendly districts increase women's political representation in America.

They argue that American women in particular are less interested or engaged in politics as their male counterparts. This, according to them, dilutes political power and poses significant obstacle to descriptive and substantive representation of women. They further argue that significant gender differences exist in political knowledge, interest and efficacy. They make a case that symbolic representation leads to substantive representation.

The scholars ask whether living in a political system where the supply and demand for female political leaders is higher tends to close the gender gap with regard to political

participation. They observe that in more women-friendly districts, women like men, freely participate in politics.

The strength of this work is that it looks at political participation of women. It also answers the question of whether symbolic representation leads to substantive representation. The work however fails to focus on the importance of women's political representation. It did not also examine the roles of CSOs in increasing women's political representation. Our study will fill the lacuna by identifying the importance of women's political participation and how CSOs, particularly AFD can be used to deal with the problem in the country.

### **2.3 STUDIES ON WOMEN AND POLITICAL REPRESENTATION**

In her work entitled: "We do not enjoy equal political rights: Ghanaian women's perception of political participation in Ghana", Sossou (2011) investigates the perception of women on issues of gender equality in the country. Under this theme, she tries to examine how women exercise their political right with regard to political participation.

She observes that women face a number of problems in the country's political sphere. Some of the problems she identifies include the relegation of women to the background of politics and the occupation of subordinate positions by women in political parties. Besides, she also discovers that women face cultural, educational and financial barriers. She recounts some of the negative experiences of women, which according to her, are symptomatic of the negative cultural and traditional practices that work against women's participation in politics.

She moves on to assess the magnitude of the problem and discovers that the problem is not only age-long but also widespread, thus relating to both rural and urban dwellers.

Soussou's work is salient to this study because it discusses some barriers to women's political representation. We have however flagged the study for failing to assess the perception of the

electorate with regard to the promotion of women's representation in parliament. Also, the study did not discuss the importance of women's political participation. Our study however seeks to address these gaps and examine the contribution of AFD towards increasing women's political representation.

Adatuu and Apusigah (2018), write on "Gender, political participation and local governance". Their work discusses the contextual and conceptual analysis of political participation. They state that political participation is fundamental to democracy as it affords every individual the opportunity to participate in the affairs of their country. It is against this background that they view political participation as the *sine qua non* for democratic governance.

They explain that political participation involves active involvement of both males and females in the political affairs of the state.

Part of their discussion touches on local governance. To them, a definition of governance relates to the ability of government to make and enforce rules as well as deliver services to make life better for the people. They go on to explain local governance as a form of governance that allows for the use of resources (including rules and regulations) to make life better at the local level. An aspect of their study also touches on gender and local political participation. They view gender as relating to roles that society assigns to the sexes. This aspect of the study centres on the general level of inclusion of women in governance or their involvement in governance activities at the various levels of the state. They also discuss the factors (both positive and negative) that affect the representation of both males and females in politics. On the positive side, they argue that the inclusion of women in politics satisfies the equality principle that is required of a democratic government. Among the negative factors they discuss include intimidation and discrimination and the general perception that women are not fit for leadership positions.

The strength of their work is seen in its ability to shed light on the relationship between women and political representation. Part of the study also establishes the connection between democracy/good governance and political representation. Another strength of the work is that it identifies traditions and culture as major factors that explain under representation of women in politics. Apart from this, the work is salient to this study in the sense that it looks at political participation which is a variable for this study. However, the study of the two scholars fails to note the importance of women's representation. Also the study fails to assess some of the roles that have been played by civil societies in order to increase women's political representation. Our work seeks to take a cue from these scholars and fill the various gaps.

Writing under the theme "Women's participation and representation in politics: Perspectives from Ghana", Bawa and Sanyare (2013) discuss the state of women's involvement in politics. They note that part of the country's success story is its continuous efforts at ensuring improved women's representation in national decision making bodies. They point out that women's political representation has declined steadily. They explain that the series of political coups after Nkrumah's overthrow have been the cause of the slow progress of women's political representation.

Besides the administration of Nkrumah, women's representation in politics did not improve in most of the governments that the country has so far seen. They therefore cited the example of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) where women's empowerment suffered a severe setback, especially under the economic front.

Bawa and Sanyare dilate women participation and representation in the country's body politics. It is clear that their work is relevant to the current state of women's representation in Ghana since most of their work is on the historical perspective. Unfortunately, the work fails to recognize the roles CSOs in general play in ensuring women's political representation in the country's parliament.

Their work did not speak to the importance of women's political representation and identify if symbolic representation leads to substantive representation.

Writing on the topic: "Examining the correlates of gender equality and empowerment of married women in Zambia", Boateng et al (2014) examine the factors that determine the involvement of women in decision making within households in Zambia. Their study delves into the determinants of gender equality and women empowerment. They indicate that at the multivariate level, wealth, education and employment significantly influence women's involvement in household decision making. They also identify that older women are more likely involved in house hold decision processes.

They observe that in the northwestern and western part of the country, women are more likely to engage in patriarchal bargain and negotiate spaces of power than those from the Lusaka province. They state that such findings will be beneficial to programmes and policy making decisions with regards to women empowerment and gender equality in the country. They further state that women's involvement in decision making with their partners and within the households has the potential of increasing the people's participation in politics and ultimately improving their welfare. Notwithstanding the context of the study, that is Zambia, the work of these scholars is significant because, it touches on women's representation in partisan politics. The findings of the work also contribute to the empowerment of women. However the work fails to identify how to empower Ghanaian women to take up representation role in parliament. We will also find out the means by which AFD uses to influence women representation in the country's lawmaking body. Our study seeks to touch on these gaps with the view to fill them using the channel of AFD.

## **2.4 STUDIES ON PARLIAMENT**

Musah (2013), writes on “Women and political decision making; perspectives from Ghana’s parliament”. He argues that historically, women, whether rural or urban, contribute to political and socio economic growth of the country. He identifies the 1992 Constitution as the basis for women’s place in the country’s democratic enterprise. This position, he notes, is supported by Article 27 of the Constitution. He maintains that women are motivated and encouraged by this provision of the Constitution to participate actively in decision making processes of the state including the legislature.

He maintains that participation of women is key for people-centered development. He identifies a number of branches that political participation is prominent and they include the executive, legislature and judiciary. He states that having a voice in the legislative assembly is critical although the arms of government work interdependently. According to him, the legislature provides a platform for national law making in addition to serving as a forum for various shades of interests and opinions in the state. He states that ideally all geographical sections of the society are represented in legislature.

He explains that representation of women in the country’s legislature is important because it provides grounds for national development and empowerment of women.

Musah’s work is instructive because it delves into issues of women and political decision activities in the country. Also, it touches on the trend of women’s political representation from the First to the Fourth Republics. He also highlights the importance of the representation of women in politics of the country. Although the study examines the role of affirmative action in increasing women’s political representation, it fails to look at the roles that civil societies play to increase women’s political representation. It also fails to provide relevant recommendations for addressing the challenge of low women representation in the country’s parliament. Our work will take a cue from

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Musah's work and examine the means by which AFD can influence women's representation in the country's parliament.

Barken (2008) writes on the rise and decline of Ghana's parliament. He opines that the current democratic experience in the country is one of the political success stories in Africa, which has produced four successful elections from 1992 to 2008, with the 2000 election resulting in an alternation of power from an incumbent to opposition.

He notes that the successful elections experienced in this Republic with only two of the political parties, that is, both the NDC and NPP having the political wherewithal to win power and form government exclusive to themselves, has therefore contributed effectively towards the current two-party electoral system that we have in the country.

He also discusses the performance and impact of parliament in the present democratic dispensation. He touches on the policy impact of parliament adding that it has been able to perform its duty as fairly as is required of it. He showers praises on members of parliament (MPs) for working passionately and meticulous to make this happen. He however, bemoans how parliament in spite of its performance, has so far not been able to have full influence on the national budget of the state.

Barken's work underscored the rise and decline of Ghana's parliament. His work is important because it focuses on parliament, which is one important variable for this particular study and has so far contributed significantly towards the nurturing of the current democratic dispensation.

However, his study did not just fail to touch on the women in parliament but also fails to address how there could be parity in terms of gender in parliament. It did not also touch on civil societies and some of the challenges they face. Our work will fill the lacuna by exploring the role of CSOs, particularly AFD and the role it has been playing to increase women's political representation in parliament.

The work of Owusu-Mensah (2017) seeks to investigate government's responses to gender inequality in Ghana's Fourth Republic from 2001 to 2016. He uses the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs/Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection as a case for the study. His study touches on government responses on gender issues and certain gender related policies put in place by governments to address the issue of gender disparity that has plagued the country for a long time. In his study, he examines the extent to which government has been implementing the policies with the formation of the ministry of gender and children affairs and evaluated the work of this ministry.

According to him, the governments of the Fourth Republic have responded positively to issues of gender for some time now. He reveals that over the years, governments have been making a lot of policies to addressing the gender inequality problem. He however identifies a number of factors that hinder gender equality in the country. However, he states two outstanding ones to be cultural practices and inadequate budgetary allocation resulting in financial challenges.

Owusu-Mensah has investigated government responses to gender inequality. The strength of the work is that it identifies some of the factors that have led to gender inequality in decision making. However, his work fails to look at the relevance of women's political representation. It also does not look at the efforts by CSOs to ensure women participate in politics. It also fails to attend to the challenges faced by CSOs in the administration of their roles in the country. Our work seeks to take a cue from his work and to fill the lacuna. It seeks to find the roles that AFD need to play to ensure that a number of women enter into parliamentary politics.

In a related study, Gyampo (2013) writes on the "Youth in Parliament and Youth Representation in Ghana". In his work, he states that CSOs and youth activists were elated when the youth aged between 21 and 40 years were given prominent role in Ghana's parliament after the 2012 elections.

He identifies 44 young people who after the 2012 parliamentary elections were elected to

parliament. According to him, before this time, the number of MPs who were in their youth did not mean much. Though he admits there is still room for improvement, he expresses joy that the number has seen tremendous improvement with regard to the representation of youth in parliament. He maintains that although the youth have contributed effectively towards the development progress of the country, they have been under represented in decision making, this, he explains has led to the incessant calls for their increased representation of the youth in parliament. He notes that it is not difficult for the state to begin to put measures in place to make it possible for them to have more youth representation in parliament like it was the case in the 1950s. He states that the 2012 parliamentary election was hailed as unprecedented and described by many as a giant step towards youth representation in national decision making. He quickly added that the presence of a number of youth in parliament does not guarantee effective representation in national decision making of the youth adding that it may be mere tokenism

Gyampo's work is relevant to this study because it identifies the importance of representation although it looks at representation in the context of the youth. Another strength of the work is that it makes us aware that the mere presence of people in parliament does not lead to representation but could just be mere tokenism. This somehow addresses our quest to understand whether symbolic representation leads to substantive representation. Also, the work does not address the issue of women representation. It also does not assess the roles of CSOs and the challenges they face in administering these roles in their quest to increase women's political representation, particularly in Ghana's parliament.

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# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.**

### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter aimed at introducing the research strategy adopted by this study, the empirical techniques used and the theoretical framework of the study. The strategy included research design, data collection tools and techniques. Other aspects of the design were data sources, sample size and sample selection processes. Beyond stating the strategies, this chapter explains the rationale for selecting each research method.

### **3.1 Research Design**

Research design, according to Sekaran (2003), is set up to decide on issues including, how to collect further data, analyze and interpret them, and finally, to provide an answer to the problem. This study adopts the qualitative research design. Unlike quantitative design where it is important for a researcher to have a statistical conclusion, qualitative is primarily exploratory in nature. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and motivations. The study uses interview to seek information from CSOs to explain some of the systems and measures being put in place to increase women's representation in the country's legislature. Besides, the methods of gathering data for the study were mainly primary and secondary.

### **3.2 Data Collection Method**

Data collection is an important and essential aspect of any research. The study used both primary and secondary data collection techniques to obtain data for analyzing the phenomenon under consideration.

### **3.3 Primary Data**

Primary data is gathered and collected for research purposes. By the use of surveys, interviews and experiments, a researcher collects primary data from first hand sources (Bortey, 2017). The strength of this data collection technique lies in the fact that it has better accuracy as it is collected from a specific population. One of the problems associated with this technique is that it is time consuming (<http://intellspot.com/primary-data-vs-secondary-data/>).

In this study, primary data was obtained using unstructured interviews with Mrs. Hamida Harison, Mr. Frank Bodza, Mrs Sabia Kpekata and Mrs Patricia Akakpo staff of AFD, WiLDAF Ghana, Gender Ministry and NETRIGHT respectively. Our decision to rely on these people for the study was based on the fact that they occupy influential positions in these CSOs and for that matter, was capable of furnishing us with the relevant information we needed for the work.

### **3.4 Secondary Data**

Secondary data is obtained from published articles from other researchers. Secondary data is easily accessed since it has been published already. It is useful because it helps the researcher to pose relevant questions. Also, it aids understanding and thereby provides useful insights for the researcher. The main problem associated with this technique is that sometimes the data obtained maybe stale or inaccurate and this will definitely have negative implications for the study (Bortey, 2017).

For purposes of this study, we relied on official documents from Parliament, Ministry of Gender and Social Protection as well as office of AFD. We also depended on materials from journals, articles, books and theses.

### **3.5 Sampling Design**

In conducting research, it is highly impossible for a researcher to use the entire population. This is why researchers often use samples when collecting data for their studies. This way, a sample is a subset of a population being studied which represents a larger population and it is used to make inferences about an entire population (Crossman, 2018).

Sekeran and Bougie (2010) argue that the use of sampling techniques helps to reduce the risks of errors and other factors such as limited time, insufficient budget and human resource factors. The sampling design process therefore involves defining the target population, determining the sample frame, selecting a sampling technique, determining the sample size and sampling element. The design we did made it possible for us to understand our focus and direction with regard to the study.

### **3.6 Target Population**

The target population is the entire set of unit for which the survey data are to be used to make inferences. Thus it will have the specific key characteristics required for the research. Due to how complex the study of women's political representation in West Africa is, this study focuses only on the impacts of civil society organization in enhancing women's political representation in Ghana's parliament with reference to Abantu. It is with regards to this that only some members of CSOs will be interviewed.

### **3.7 Sampling Technique**

There are two main types of sampling techniques for conducting a research. These are probability and non-probability sample techniques. With probability sample technique, the population is already known. Besides, the researcher has a list of the sample and there is a chance of selecting

all sampling elements. However, in the case of non-probability sampling technique, the elements of the population are not known. This means that the probability of selecting each element is unknown.

In this work, we used non probability technique because we could not collect a list of the full members of the population we were studying. According to Sekeran and Bougie (2010), there are four types of non-probability sample technique. These are convenience, judgment, quota and snowball. This study made use of convenience sampling method. It is a method where participants or subjects included in a particular study are selected due to their convenience and their proximity to the researcher (Bortey 2019). Due to the fact that participants who responded to our interviews were far from us, we decided to do some of the interviews through telephone calls.

### **3.8 Sampling Size**

The sample size is important because it may affect the findings of the study. This study considered only few respondents from CSOs.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

There is a large wealth of literature on political representation of women since the phenomenon is not recent. In order to analyze the study, a qualitative design will be employed alongside exploratory research design. A qualitative descriptive approach is used to describe the current status of women's political representation in Ghana's Fourth Republic while exploratory is used to provide information where a small amount of information is given. It also adopts interpretive paradigm to investigate the impact of the civil societies in enhancing substantive and symbolic women's representation in Ghana's parliament with special reference to Abantu for Development.

### **3.10 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THEORY OF PARTICIPATION**

A number of theories exist in the area of political participation, but to put this study in context, we employed the Theory of Participation (TP) to analyze and explain the phenomenon we considered for this work.

The theory which was developed by Arnstein in 1969 brings to the fore eight stages of political participation, which define among other things, citizen's power from a non-participatory stage to a stage of total control. He explains that each of the stages of participation brings to light the level of power that is exercised at that particular stage.

According to the theory, manipulation is the first stage of the Arnstein's ladder of participation. At this stage, people are placed on various advisory committees or boards for the purpose of giving support to those who put them into such positions (Arnstein, 1969). Because of how people are recruited into such positions, there is no genuine participation by the people as those placed at this stage only exist to protect the interest of their masters. It is enough to say that the people placed in this position have no say with regard to the issues that relate to their positions and they are mostly used to approve decisions they have not been part of (Arnstein, 1969).

The next stage of the ladder is the manipulation and therapy stage. At this stage, though people are allowed some minimal level of participation, they are however prevented from taking part the decision making process of the organisation.

The next stage is the informing stage. According to the theory, people found at this position are informed of their rights, responsibilities, and options and this can be the most important first step towards legitimate citizen participation. However, emphasis is placed on a one-way flow of information, that is, from officials to citizens with no opportunity for feedback and negotiation. Among the means used to control the people include news media, pamphlets, posters, and responses to inquiries (Arnstein, 1969).

The fourth stage on the ladder of participation is the consultation stage. This is the stage where information and the citizens' opinions are sought but the people are still prevented from taking part in important decisions. Even here the means of consultation most frequent methods used for consulting people are attitude surveys, neighborhood meetings and public hearings. When power holders restrict the input of citizens' ideas solely to this level, participation remains just a window-dressing ritual. People are primarily perceived as statistical abstractions and participation is measured by how many come to meetings, take brochures home, or answer a questionnaire (Arnstein, 1969). What citizens achieve in all this activity is that they have "participated in participation." And what power holders achieve is the evidence that they have gone through the required motions of involving "those people." (Arnstein, 1969).

Placation is next on the ladder of participation. It is at this level that citizens begin to have some degree of influence though tokenism is still apparent. An example of placation strategy is to place a few hand-picked "worthy" poor on boards of Community Action Agencies or on public bodies like the board of education, police commission, or housing authority (Arnstein, 1969). If they are not accountable to a constituency in the community and if the traditional power elite hold the majority of seats, the have-nots can be easily outvoted and outfoxed. Another example is the Model Cities advisory and planning committees. They allow citizens to advise or plan ad infinitum but retain for power holders the right to judge the legitimacy or feasibility of the advice (Arnstein, 1969). The degree to which citizens are actually placated, of course, depends largely on two factors: the quality of technical assistance they have in articulating their priorities; and the extent to which the community has been organized to press for those priorities (Arnstein, 1969).

The levels of Informing, Consultation and Placation afford citizens a "tokenistic" participation whereby their interests are promised but do not result in any guarantee of it being addressed.

Uneven power relations imply the underdog-citizens lack the ability to command response to their interest from the prevailing order.

The next point on the ladder of participation is the partnership stage. At this rung of the ladder, power is in fact redistributed through negotiation between citizens and power holders. They agree to share planning and decision-making responsibilities through such structures as joint policy boards, planning committees and mechanisms for resolving impasses (Arnstein, 1969). After the ground rules have been established through some form of give-and-take, they are not subject to unilateral change (Arnstein, 1969). Partnership can work most effectively when there is an organized power-base in the community to which the citizen leaders are accountable; when the citizens group has the financial resources to pay its leaders reasonable honoraria for their time-consuming efforts; and when the group has the resources to hire (and fire) its own technicians, lawyers, and community organizers (Arnstein, 1969). With these ingredients, citizens have some genuine bargaining influence over the outcome of the plan (as long as both parties find it useful to maintain the partnership) (Arnstein, 1969).

The seventh on the ladder is the delegated power stage. According to Arnstein, negotiations between citizens and public officials can also result in citizens achieving dominant decision-making authority over a particular plan or program (Arnstein, 1969). At this level, the ladder has been scaled to the point where citizens hold the significant cards to assure accountability of the program to them. To resolve differences, power holders need to start the bargaining process rather than respond to pressure from the other end (Arnstein, 1969).

The final stage is the citizen control. Though no one in the nation has absolute control, it is very important that the rhetoric will not be confused with intent. People are simply demanding that

degree of power (or control) which guarantees that participants or residents can govern a program or an institution, be in full charge of policy and managerial aspects, and be able to negotiate the conditions under which "outsiders" may change them (Arnstein, 1969).

Evidently, although Arnstein's participatory framework appears too simplistic nonetheless it is relevant to this study as it could explain the dynamics of women participation in Ghanaian politics at the national level. Inferring from the theory, the participation of women in the country's politics at the national level can at best be described as "tokenistic", in the sense that only few women participate in politics at the national level relative to men, also their extent of influence to ensure any real meaningful changes in decision making at executive and legislative arms of government is overtly inconsequential.

Using Arnstein's participation theory, Ghanaian women engaging in national level politics operate at the stages of Informing, Consultation and Placation; characterized by low female representation, low influence in decision making process at the national level and low outcomes in terms of articulating their interest.

Underpinning the uneven power dynamics of political participation at the national level is described by some scholars as the evidence of glass ceiling effects.

Although Ghanaian women have achieved relative success in altering their socio-economic and political positions, the historical marginalization and discrimination of women especially in the developing countries including Ghana cannot be overemphasized (Kurz & Johnson-Welch, 2000). Arnstein's participation theory analyzes the limitation of Ghanaian women's progression in the political process to the level of partnerships, delegated power and citizen control at which stage women would attain an equal or a dominant stake in the power circles. These limitations are

described as ‘those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization into management level positions’ (Martin, 1991, and Lorber, 1994:227). The Ghanaian woman is confronted with multiple discriminations, marginalization and even in some cases isolation, sustained by the cultural fabric of the society. The contemporary fields of politics and leadership circles is no different despite the international effort to ensure equity of representation of genders in decision making spheres, women are still faced with discriminations. According to Gidengil (2003) the media is very significant in defining ethics and stereotypes of women political candidates. The uneven participation of women in politics at the national level can be attributed to the many invincible barriers that hinder their accession to the high echelons of power despite the provisions of legal and constitutional frameworks that give every citizen the rights to engage in politics. Therefore, this study attempts to unearth the roles civil society organizations are playing to increase women’s political representation.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, we discussed the methodology of the study. This chapter presents the analysis and findings of the roles of civil society, with particular reference to AFD in promoting representation of women in Ghana's Parliament.

#### **4.2 Importance of Women's Political Representation from the Perspective of CSOs.**

The low rate of women at the highest level of politics is an enduring problem of gender inequality. There is growing recognition of the untapped capacity and talents of women and women's leadership. Over the last two decades, the rate of women in national legislatures globally has increased from 11.8 per cent in 1998 to 23.5 percent in 2018 (Pepera, 2018). Some regions have seen particularly dramatic increases, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, where in the last 20 years, the number of women in parliaments has risen from 11 percent to 23.6 percent and the Middle East region, which has seen an increase from 3.1 to 17.5 percent (Pepera, 2018). However, total global representation is still below the 30 percent benchmark often identified as the necessary level of representation to achieve what is referred to as the 'critical mass' (Pepera, 2018).

While the number of women in Ghana's parliament is still not yet at the optimal level, the inception of the Fourth Republic and the democratic consolidation so far has added a fillip to women participation in politics and the attendant jump in the number of women in the legislature.

Full and equitable participation of women in public life is essential to building and sustaining strong and vibrant democracy. In an interview, the Programmes Manager of NETRIGHT, Mrs.

Patricia Akakpo notes that, women are important stakeholders in the development process of the country. She argues that, reasonable representation of women is important because they represent the bulk of the country's population. The Sustainability Manager of AFD, Mrs. Hamida Harrison and the Programmes Manager of WiLDAF Ghana, Mr. Frank Bodza corroborate the position of Mrs. Akakpo. Similarly, the Senior Programmes Officer, of the Gender Department argues that if there is a public clamor for gender equality in the country, efforts must be made by the state to bridge the gender disparity gap (Sabia interview, 2019). Over the years, scholars have argued that the meaningful participation of women in national, local and community leadership roles has become an important focus on global development policy (Pepera, 2018). It is against this background that Mrs. Akakpo maintains that women should at all cost be fully represented in parliament, arguing that their absence will create the situation where policies will be skewed to favour men without addressing the concerns of women in the society (Akakpo interview, 2019). She postulates that, if women are not adequately represented in the legislature, the nation's developmental efforts would be undermined. She suggests that, women's political participation is likely to result in tangible gains for the country's nascent democracy. This will lead to greater responsiveness to citizen's needs, increased cooperation across party and ethnic lines, and a more sustainable future development programmes for the country (Pepera, 2018). It has been argued that women's participation in politics helps advance gender equality and eventually affects both the range of policy issues that get considered and the types of solutions that are proposed. This assertion is supported by Hamida Harrison who maintains that it is important that women are adequately represented in the legislature to underscore the principles of equality in the country's democracy. According to her, everyone is born free and is equal before the constitution of the country (Harrison interview, 2019) adding that Article 17 (1) of the 1992 Constitution maintains that "All persons shall be equal before the law" and that Article 17 (2) of the Constitution asserts

that “A person shall not be discriminated against on the grounds of gender, race, color, ethnic origin, religion, creed or” socio-economic status. She also argues further that, Parliament under 17 (4) (a) to (d) is empowered to enact laws to address the structural and/or historical discrimination that infringe on the human right of any group of persons that prevent them from enjoying their citizenship rights.

Harrison further states that, if women are not represented in parliament, issues affecting them will not be brought to the table for discussion. In her view, men are more interested in the construction of roads and infrastructure while women support social-related policies like maternal health care, educational programmes and many more (Harrison interview, 2019). There is also strong evidence that, as more women are elected to office, there is increase in policymaking that emphasises quality of life and reflects the priorities of families, women, and ethnic and racial minorities (Pepera, 2018).

According to the chairman of the National Democratic Institute’s (NDI), Madeleine Albright, women in power “can be counted to raise issues that others overlook, to support ideas that others oppose, and to seek an end to abuses that others accept” (Pepera,2018). However, it is important to recognize that women are not a homogenous group. Depending on whether women are young or older, educated or uneducated, live in rural or urban areas, they have very different life experiences that lead to different priorities and needs. Moreover, not every woman elected to parliament or another legislative body will place women’s issues or rights at the forefront of her own agenda. Clearly, women’s representation is not the only factor, but it is a critical factor for the development of inclusive, responsive, and transparent democracies (Pepera, 2018).

Further, Hon Gifty Ampofo maintains that Ghana could do better with regards to women's political representation in parliament. She opines that, it is only through the symbolic representation of women in parliament that the issues regarding gender can be brought to light. She states that, this would go a long way to help the Gender Ministry towards coordinating programmes which establish the interaction among the state and policy framework aimed at addressing pertinent or critical concerns of women in the country (Ampofo Twum interview, 2017). Indeed, the positive impact of women in politics is undeniable. The late United Nations Secretary General Kofi Anan said that "there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women. No other policy is as likely to raise economic productivity or to reduce child and maternal mortality. No other policy is as sure to improve nutrition and promote health, including the prevention of HIV/AIDS. No other policy is as powerful in increasing the chances of education for the next generation" (Pepera, 2018).

Furthermore, Madeleine Albright states that, the world is wasting a precious resource in the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, often resulting in the exclusion of women's talents and skills in political life (Pepera, 2018). Hamida Harrison supports this assertion by stating that women are a valuable resource to be tapped and used by the state. She therefore argues that until women are adequately represented in Parliament, the country will not develop (Harrison interview, 2019). In recent time, a number of scholars have argued that male and female legislators must work together in order to solve the myriad problems in their countries. In order to meet worldwide development goals and build strong, sustainable democracies, women must be encouraged, empowered and supported in becoming strong political and community leaders.

### **4.3 Symbolic and Substantive Representation of Women**

When arguing in favour of the descriptive representation of women, advocates usually hypothesize that it has two positive effects. First, some argue that female voters are more likely to feel included in the political system once there are more women in parliament (symbolic effect). Second, it is often said that female MPs are in some way ‘better’ at representing women than men (substantive effect).

On the issue of symbolic representation, the adoption of affirmative action to facilitate the political participation of women is crucial to increase visibility and awareness of gender issues and to improve states responsiveness to women’s needs (CEGENCER, 2016). Affirmative action in the form of gender quotas appears to be a key component for the effective implementation of Domestic Violence and for the provision of comprehensive protection studies (CEGENCER, 2016). Political parties across the globe should therefore be encouraged to introduce gender quotas. It is also important to note that gender quotas and parity rules should not merely aim to increase women’s participation but also to improve access to public or political decision making spaces (CEGENCER, 2016).

On the issue of substantive representation, CSO’s should work closely with female parliamentarians to address the specific interest of women (CEGENCER, 2016). It is important to shape leadership among female parliamentarians regardless of party affiliation so that they can rise above partisanship and work in the interest of women generally as the female parliamentarians in Mexico have shown with their pacts (CEGENCER, 2016).

Patricia Akakpo is of the view that representation should not just be symbolic but substantive in a way that they champion the interest of women. She states that as civil societies, they can work with women in parliament to make sure the concerns and interests of all women are promoted.

According to Hamida Harrison, numbers matter especially when votes are needed. She states that, even if the women in Parliament are not working to reflect the issues of women, for the meantime, the situation demands that women are pushed to the top. She supports her argument by saying that there are men in parliament who are equally just symbolic (Harrison interview, 2019). In her view, when women get to parliament, they serve as mentors for other women, who in the course of time avail themselves and believe they can also get there since other women have been able to make it. This helps address the erroneous misconception that politics is a game for only men. Hamida Harrison asserts that, symbolic representation cannot be done away with because it will lead to substantive representation. Sabia Kpekata also states that there must be the numbers and they must have the right information to work with, thus arguing that the two go in tandem.

#### **4.4 Roles played by some CSOs in the country regarding women's representation in Parliament:**

There are a number of CSOs in the country who play important roles with regard to the promotion of women's political interest in the country. Notable among them are The Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT), Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF) and Abantu for Development (AFD).

##### **4.41 Network for Women's Rights in Ghana**

NETRIGHT was established in 1999 by a group of gender activists and gender oriented CSO's and organisations, aimed at building an effective platform to promote national advocacy on issues affecting women in the country. It is currently made up of 94 organisations and has membership of 300 individuals.

In an interview, the Programmes Manager of the organisation, Mrs. Patricia Akakpo indicates that, NETRIGHT has member organisations which work on specific issues that concern women in the country. Some of the organisations included AFD, WILDAF Ghana and Women's Manifesto Coalition (WMC), which are responsible for ensuring women's political participation and representation in the country's law-making body. According to her, part of the responsibility of NETRIGHT is to provide support for women in the areas of political representation at both local and national levels. Below is an outline of the roles that NETRIGHT are required to play in their bid to support the efforts of the state in increasing women's political participation in the country's Parliament:

Trains and supports women aspiring to be District Assembly Members;

Trains and works with political parties to see how best they can help support the course of promoting women's political interest;

Campaigns for women in order to win elections to the country's legislature;

Responsible for the preparation of women's manifesto;

Convenes biannual feminist forum to discuss political issues affecting women in the country;

Responsible for the development of the official mouthpiece – newsletter for the organisation;

Organise outreach programmes with the view to involve focal persons/organizations to stimulate discussions around pertinent social, economic and policy issues of concern and relevance to women within specific regions of the country;

Responsible for organizing workshops, seminars, fora in all regions of the country;

Collaborates with regional and international organizations/networks to carry out advocacy on international programmes.

Partner other CSOs to work to improve the political interest of women in the country.  
(Akakpo interview, 2019)

#### **4.42 Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF)**

WiLDAF is a pan- African organisation established in 1991 dedicated to promoting the right of women and gender. Speaking with the Programmes Manager, Mr. Frank Bodza, he indicated that the main strategy of WiLDAF is to use the law as a tool for the promotion of women development in the country. He said the institution has over the years been advocating for a law that will get more women into the parliament. He revealed that part of the role of the institution is to build the capacity of women in the country so as to enable them take up political leadership. He said the role of WILDAF in the politics of the country is based on their belief that for women in the country to be voted for, it is necessary that Ghanaians understood the importance of women's leadership before canvassing for vote for them.

#### **4.43 Abantu for Development (AFD)**

As indicated above, besides NETRIGHT, AFD has also been in charge of promoting women's interest in the country. According to Mrs. Harrison, AFD has taken up the responsibility of promoting education and sensitisation as well as advocacy programmes relating to women and politics. This role, she noted, has been informed by the negative views people have about politics which often discourage people from participating in it. There is no gainsaying that in Ghana, most women who show interest in partisan politics are sometimes discouraged by their family members and this tends to affect their representation in politics. It is against this background that the AFD has since its inception decided to educate and sensitise the public about the need for women to

have meaningful representation in every part of politics, including parliament. In addition, the AFD has over the years embarked upon education of women who work in public institutions with the view to equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to perform their duties.

#### **4.5 Means by which CSO's Influence Women Representation in Parliament**

Since its inception in 1991, the AFD has devised a number of ways to influence women representation in the country's parliament. These include: the use of the media, other publications, training, research on issues relating to gender and other capacity building initiatives.

##### **The Media**

In the case of the media, Mrs. Hamida Harrison said it is one of the means by which her organisation depends on in educating and informing the public, especially women with regard to issues that border on their political life and gender. Furthermore, Mrs. Harrison said her organisation has been training journalists on gender and political issues. According to her, the dividend of her initiatives is evident from the wider publicity the media give to female parliamentary candidates in the country.

##### **Training and Capacity Building**

Like the media, AFD has been organising special seminars, conferences and training workshops for Women MPs. In an interview, Hamida Harrison maintained that AFD has been holding public fora to explain issues and disseminate information about the need for people to vote for women to represent them in the country's legislature. She said it was important for people to take gender equality seriously, arguing that it had serious negative consequences with regard to the achievement of SDGs by the state. Besides that, AFD have been in charge of selecting prospective people who had shown interest in politics and trained them accordingly (Harrison interview, 2019).

Continuing, Hamida Harrison disclosed that for the past 14 years, AFD has been providing modular programmes with the view to building the capacity of women in the country. This role, she noted, her organisation has been able to perform with the support of a foreign CSO, that is, Frederick Herbert Foundation. Other groups, according to her, the AFD had over the years had useful cooperation with political parties, who have provided her organisation with most of the women they have been training. According to her, in some instances, her organisation embarked upon nation-wide tours to train women aspirants for district assembly and parliamentary elections. Such training, according to her were done to build the capacity of women who are interested in representing their people on the legislature.

### **Research on issues of gender sensitivity and mainstreaming**

Another means by which AFD influences women representation in parliament is through gender sensitivity and mainstreaming. Mrs. Harrison explained that since most women representatives in parliament have always been very busy and hardly get time to update themselves with current trends and changing patterns of gender related issues, they relied on her organisation for the needed information and education. She suggests that, the state cannot have effective deliberations if members had limited information on the subject matter. She noted that some women sometimes relied on AFD to conduct research on issues relating to gender mainstreaming and sensitivity. She noted that, when women representatives tend to have fair knowledge on issues, it would equip them in performing their role as legislators (Harrison interview, 2019).

### **Publications**

Publication is another method by which women get influenced into partisan politics. The organisation, according to Mrs. Harrison has carried out various publications in order to

disseminate information and educate people about the need for women to represent their society in parliament and other public places. This, Mrs. Harrison maintained, had made it possible for her organisation to attract the attention of various members of society, particularly policymakers. She disclosed that every year, AFD publishes its findings on issues with gender dimensions in journals and magazines to make it easy for women MP's to access such information (Harrison interview, 2019).

#### **4.6 Challenges faced by CSOs in promoting Women's Political Representation**

Hamida Harrison states that, although the country has a system where civil societies can work very freely, the challenges come from the beneficiaries. This is because convincing women to avail themselves is a difficult task. The erroneous misconception by women that politics is dangerous is one factor. Also, families fear that they would be exposed to public ridicule. Sometimes women do not avail themselves to politics because of the stereotype attached to women who engage in politics. Even their male counterparts often try every means to get them out of the game by cooking up stories about them (Harrison interview, 2019). Expressing support for these views, Patricia Akakpo believes that the difficulty in getting women to show interest in politics is traceable to cultural factors, where society views politics as the preserve of men.

Next to culture is finance. In Harrison's view, financial constraint is a major challenge facing women in their effort to get elected to parliament. She noted that, the financial standing of most women is weak and for that matter does not make it possible for them to sponsor themselves for electoral politics, which in this country is heavily driven by cash. She said money is essential for mobilisation of women legislators as well as providing training and conferences for them. She argues that, without government support and funding for the women political programmes,

initiatives by groups such AFD to ensure Women representation in parliament will always be hampered (Bortey, 2017).

#### **4.7 Success Stories of AFD**

On the issue of success stories, Patricia Akakpo pointed out that though the organisation does not have the desired numbers like the 30% in District Assemblies, the fact that women have availed themselves for elections, to her, is a success. She asserts that, CSO like AFD have through their work created awareness all over the country regarding women's issues in general and political representation in particular. According to her, the reduction of filing fees for female aspirants in elections is the work of her organisation and other groups. She underscored the effort by AFD and other women's right organisations who are currently working with political parties towards the passage of Affirmative Action Bill. She concludes that, the Women's Manifesto itself as a document cataloging some key demands that need to be met is part of the success story of AFD and other civil society groups (Akakpo interview, 2019).

Corroborating the above achievements, Mrs Harrison explained that the Women's Manifesto for Ghana is a testimony for the work of AFD (Harrison interview, 2019). She says so far her organisation has trained a lot of women who have served in District Assemblies and Parliament. To her, the fact that the association has been able to maintain the training of women for 14 years is in itself a success. She added that, the AFD has contributed immensely to the gender literature and has also organised biannual conferences for all District Assemblies in the country. Finally, she affirms that, the AFD has formed coalitions for women and have also served on many committees in the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection (Harrison interview, 2019).

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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, COJNCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This study examines the role of CSOs, especially AFD in ensuring women's political representation in Ghana's parliament. It also highlights the concept of civil society and democratisation as well as the types of representation of women in politics.

The scope of the study is purely qualitative and utilizes the exploratory qualitative case study design for its analysis. The objectives of the study are to identify the roles CSOs, particularly AFD play in supporting the efforts of the state in increasing women's political representation in Ghana's Parliament. Broadly, the study seeks to find out the means by which CSOs, particularly AFD played these roles and the challenges they face in the course of their work. It also tries to find out if symbolic representation leads to substantive representation. Finally, the study seeks to make recommendations on how to increase women's political representation.

#### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

The following findings were derived from the study based on the analysis of data gathered from the interviews and literature reviews, taking into consideration the statement of the problem, research questions and objectives of the study.

First, the study notes that, the quest for increasing women's political representation in Ghana dates back to the 1960's. This was when the first President through the Representation of People's Act, reserved 10 seats for women. The first parliament of the Fourth Republic was made up of 15 women, appreciating to 19 in 2001 and 25 in 2004. After the general elections in 2012, the number

increased to 29. Currently, women representation of 36 is as a result of the relentless efforts of CSOs, particularly AFD. However, there is still a vast gap in gender disparity.

Furthermore, it is clear from the study that, the country since 1992 has been under-utilising important resources of the country by giving women low representation in Parliament. Studies have shown that, the more representation of women in a country's legislature, the more quality the laws that are borne out of parliamentary bills. So, in a country where women form more than 50% of the country's population, it is just not appropriate that they will be under-represented in one of the highest decision-making bodies, that is, Parliament.

The study also reveals that; symbolic representation often leads to substantive representation of women. This is because numbers are needed to accumulate votes on substantive issues. Further to that, the study reveals that due to the high gender disparity gap, substantive or symbolic should not be the issue. Numbers are needed in parliament to vote for issues concerning women. The study also revealed that there are men in parliament who are equally symbolic and not substantive.

The study also identified AFD as very instrumental organisation in ensuring an increase in women's political representation in Ghana's Fourth Republic.

In terms of the roles played by AFD in promoting women representation in Parliament, the study finds out that, AFD since its inception has engaged in vigorous training and capacity building for women in the political space of the country, and this, has gone a long way to make it possible for some of them to be elected to parliament.

The study also revealed that, the AFD and some of its activities, particularly its research activities on issues such as gender and mainstreaming have made it possible for women MP's to update

themselves on current trends and changing patterns on gender-related issues, which have eventually enriched their debates on the floor of Parliament.

Also, the study indicates that apart from AFD, other CSOs such as WiLDAF and NETRIGHT have contributed significantly towards the representation of women in the country's Parliament. This includes the training they received when occupying some key position such as the District Chief Executives and Members of Parliament.

The study also finds out that, though the laws in Ghana do not support discrimination in any form, however, the representation of women with regard to certain political positions, especially in parliament leaves much to be desired.

Furthermore, the study identified some of the causes of under representation of women in public sphere to problem of socialisation, negative stereotyping, name-calling, poor education and the monetisation of the country's democracy.

Further to that, the study revealed that CSO's face certain challenges in their quest to help increase the political representation of women. These challenges are in the form of financial constraints, socialisation, culture and the unwillingness of women to avail themselves for high political offices.

## **5.2Conclusions**

Based on the findings of this study, we therefore conclude that Ghana has made giant strides towards increased women's political representation from 1916 to 2019, but more work needs to be done since there is a vast gender gap. Indeed, the ability of the country to deal with the problem will give real meaning to the equality principle which is enshrined in the 1992 Constitution as well as providing support for the current democratic dispensation.

From the analysis of the study, it is concluded that CSOs, especially, NETRIGHT, WiLDAF and AFD have contributed to not only the current democratic culture but also the increasing numbers of women in the country's Parliament.

The study also concludes that, civil societies in Ghana can work more effectively to promote the interest of the state to get more women in Parliament if the problems confronting them are addressed head on.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

The study recommends that, women and civil society groups should continue to fight for more women representation and muster more courage to challenge the status quo. They should take bold steps in building their own confidence.

In addition, the government as well as political parties should establish a fund to aid CSOs in their quest to bridge the gender disparity that has plagued the country.

Furthermore, CSOs should be resolute in their programmes and also establish mentorship programmes. They should also approach gender sensitisation and advocacy from the grass root level. When this is done, it becomes easier to incorporate that consciousness in girls or women even if they are not in leadership positions. This is the case of Rwanda which has confidence in women's leadership but this is lacking in Ghana even among educated women.

It is also recommended that political parties should begin to hold discussions on how to create more opportunities for women to enable them compete effectively for political positions within their respective parties.

Also, the constitution should be amended and specific provisions made for women to enable them have equal opportunities to compete for political office instead of the current general provision on the matter, which does not in any way support the course of women in the political realm. In this connection, government should have the political will to implement women's right and gender equality programmes and standard conventions that support the political rights of women in the country.

Moreover, successive governments should stop making the claims of not finding suitable women to fill political positions since there is reasonable number of women ready for such tasks. In this regard, the Affirmative Action Bill should be passed into law to enable the country attain gender parity. It is the responsibility of government to reduce discrimination as it has signed on international laws like the CEDAW, Beijing Platform of Action, ECOWAS Protocol for Equality and the African Union Charter on Gender and Equality.

Furthermore, the study recommends that there should be attitudinal change towards women who engage in politics and also the erroneous misconceptions and stereotypes should be done away with.

In addition to the above, successive governments should stop the rhetoric. They should show commitment and stand for action. This will give women the legal backing as a lot of directives are not working because they have no legal backing.

Abantu means people and not women and therefore, AFD should go beyond targeting women and include men in their calculation for increased representation, especially giving the current makeup of Ghana's Fourth Republic Parliament. The quest for equal representation becomes impossible if

the focus is only on women. Development and justice is not only the preserve of women. We should not always think that women's issues are only dealt with by women.

## Appendix

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

TOPIC: The Role of Civil Society Organisations in Promoting Women's Political Representation in Ghana's Parliament: The Case of Abantu for Development.

**NB: THE PURPOSE OF THIS INTERVIEW IS SOLELY FOR ACADEMIC WORK AND NOTHING ELSE.**

#### CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

1. Can you tell me a brief history about your Organization?
2. How important do you see women's representation in the political life of the country?
3. Why do you think it's important that women are fairly represented in Ghana's parliament?
4. What is your understanding of symbolic and substantive representation of women?
5. Do you think symbolic representation leads to substantive representation of women?
6. What roles have your organisation played over the years in the bid to support the efforts of increasing women's political participation in Ghana's parliament?
7. What means do you use in administering these roles?
8. Have you achieved any success in this directions?
9. Are there any challenges your organization faces in promoting women's representation in Ghana's parliament?
10. How can such challenges be addressed?
11. What do you think are some of the possible ways for addressing these challenges?

#### WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT

1. Do you think the representation in Ghana's Parliament is skewed in favour of male MPs?
2. How can that imbalance be addressed?

3. What is your understanding of women's Political representation?
4. What are some of the obstacles to women's political representation?
4. How are they addressed?

#### PARLIAMENT

1. What is the state of women's representation in parliament currently?
2. Has the progress been slow?
3. Do you think CSO's are important in the promotions of women's representation in Parliament?
4. What are some of the activities they engage in to increase women's political representation?
5. What are some of the measures government is putting in place to ensure equal representation of both men and women in Ghana's Parliament?
6. What role is the Ministry of Gender and Social Protection playing for the realization of this dream?

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