Women and Political Participation; A Survey of The Impact of Women Socio-Economic Status on Their Participation in Elective Politics in Four Selected Communities in Southern Yobe Axis of North-East Nigeria

Abstract: This study examined the factors that constituted women socio-economic status in southern Yobe axis of north-east Nigeria. It also examined how those factors impact on women participation in elective politics in the Axis. The study came up with policy suggestions on how women socio-economic status can be improved to facilitate their active political participation in the area of contesting for elective positions. The qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry were used. Secondary data were sourced from journal articles, newspapers, magazines and other electronic as well as print materials. Primary data were obtained through the administration of structured interview on one hundred respondents (all women) chosen from four communities in southern Yobe axis using the stratified sampling technique. Correlation Analysis (CA) was adopted in analyzing the data collected. Frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation tool was adopted in testing the hypotheses formulated to guide the study. The study found out that education, employment and wealth are three of those factors that constituted the socio-economic status of women in southern Yobe axis. And women socio-economic status especially illiteracy, unemployment and poverty impact on their participation in elective politics. The study suggested the encouragement and funding of girl child education and adult literacy program for women, special and advantageous criteria for job intake for women in both public and private sectors as well as effective poverty alleviation scheme for empowering women in southern Yobe axis as means to improving women socio-economic status for active participation in elective politics in the southern axis of Yobe state in Nigeria’s north-east region.

Keywords: Contest, Elective, Socio-Economic, Status, Participation and Politics.

INTRODUCTION

The desire to acquire political power and control it justify the essence of participation in politics either in a civilize or primitive society. Political participation especially in an elective politics is directed towards control of power, its acquisition and dispensation to organize society thereby, harnessing and distributing resources as well as influencing decision making based on organized ethics and in line with individual interests. The level of political participation among women in Nigeria is very low and discouraging. Women low level of participation in elective politics in the country is not only alarming but disturbing. Low level of participation in elective politics by women in Nigeria is seriously depriving them of contributing their quota to national development in the country. In position of responsibilities, women as empirical observations shown have proven to be hardworking and firm in their decision (Arowolo and Aluko, 2010:581). Women soundness in political position and responsibility are part of political participation. But hard work towards discharging such responsibilities has not affected positively, their contest for elective positions in elections. Women appearance in Nigeria’s political arena dwindles to the negative aspect with time. Instead of increasing, the number of women contesting for elective positions decrease with time. And at the moment, women participate more in voting than contesting to be elected into public positions. Their male counterparts are not helping matters. Attempt at balancing the inequality in terms of formal or conventional political participation has been minimal over years in Nigeria. Women form the bulk of voters in the country while men take the leading role in contesting for elective positions. These developments are more pronounced in the three geo-political regions of northern Nigeria with the north-east topping and Yobe state appearing as the most severe.
One of the most significant and sensitive topics of debate in Nigeria’s political discourse, is women participation in elective politics in the country. In Nigeria, women have been politically relegated to the background. Efforts by government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to make women active in elective politics in the country have not yielded expected dividends till date. Some of these efforts include the one made at the fourth World Conference on women in Beijing. Declaration made at the conference included an advocacy that 30% affirmative action and National Gender Policy (NGP) recommendation of 35% affirmative action for a more inclusive representation of women both in elective and appointive positions be signed and implemented by member nations. In reality, women in Nigeria are still being marginalized. Women in Nigeria are facing a number of challenges. Though, activism and advocacy from several women groups directed toward ameliorating these challenges are springing up on daily basis across the country. Education of women, clarion call for women empowerment and interest to participate in elective politics has attracted serious attention and positive energy from previous regimes in the country. Emerging attention from the side of authority to women participation in elective politics shows that a brighter future awaits the engagement of women in elective politics in Nigeria. The need to achieve such a brighter future indicates that relevant stakeholders must be advised to advocate for protection of women from abuse, empower them economically and politically and review the necessary legislations to accommodate the growing interest of women in politics both elective and appointive positions (Oloyode, 2016:13). Economic status bears a lot of meanings in relation to women contest for elective positions in southern Yobe axis of north-east Nigeria. Economically and politically, women in this part of Yobe state and Nigeria have not been adequately empowered to the extent of having the capability to contest for elective positions. Legal framework to balance the inequality on gender basis so as to create opportunities for women to have to not only contest but record victory into elective positions have been minimal in Southern Yobe Axis.

In Nigeria when elections are due, 51 percent of women are involved in voting. They constitute the largest percent of voters in the country democratic and political history but still, they are marginalized in both elective and appointive positions. In fact, over all political representation of women in government of Nigeria as available statistics shows is less than 7 percent (Agbalajobi, 2010:078). This indicates that Nigeria is yet to attained the 30 percent affirmative as prescribed by the Beijing Platform of Action. Though, women continue to participate in voting massively across the country than the men if compared on percentage basis. But still, women appearance in the political arena shrink with time in southern Yobe. Since the return to civil rule government in Nigeria in 1999, only two women have contested for elective positions in southern Yobe axis of north-east Nigeria. The first was Hajiya Fatima Talba who contested for the Federal House of Representative election to represents Potiskum and Nangere Federal Constituency. She was returned elected and served in this capacity from 2004-2008. She contested for senatorial position to represents the entire southern Yobe in 2008 but was defeated by her blood brother (Alhaji Adamu Talba) who contested from a different political party. The second was Mrs. Zainab Boni Haruna who also contested for Senatorial position to represents southern Yobe axis popularly known as zone “B” in the state politics. She too like Hajiya Talba lost the race. The two women lost the race to men despite the fact that women constituted majority of the voters in the Axis. And since then, till date, no woman had appeared in terms of contesting for elective position in southern Yobe axis again.

Although, both religion and cultural barriers played a serious role in the defeat of the two women contestants stated above. Hajiya Fatima Talba is a Muslim while Zainab Boni Haruna is a Christian. Islam, Christianity and Northern Nigeria culture do not accord women much role in public life. Women in politics or corridor of power are often equated with indecency and low moral profile by most people in northern Nigeria. But then, beside culture and religion, competing for elective positions in Nigeria requires huge financial backup which implies that women in most instances cannot compete for such positions owing to their disadvantaged socio-economic status compared to the men. Hajiya Fatima Talba was an incumbent Federal Parliamentarian while Mrs. Zainab Haruna was a state First lady-precisely the wife to the then Executive Governor of Adamawa state of Nigeria. Therefore, the average expectation was that Alhaji Talba was not financially buoyant enough to defeat a Federal Parliamentarian and a state Governor’s Wife. Contrary to this expectation, he outweighed the both women aspirants from other political parties. The issues of Hajiya Talba and Mrs. Haruna were expected to marked the beginning of women active participation in elective politics in the southern Yobe axis especially in contesting for elective position. But what came up instead is womenfolk more active in voting than contesting for elective positions. And even the voting behavior itself had been influenced by socio-economic factors.

**Statement of Problem**

Gender and politics offer one of the most stimulating areas of debate in the field of politics. Polemics surrounding women participation in politics especially in new democracies have made the area of gender politics an interesting aspect in the study of
Low participation of women in elective politics has been an age long phenomenon in southern Yobe axis. Studies like Oloyode (2016) and Agbalajobi (2010) have been conducted on women low level of participation in elective politics and how it can be improved with no attention paid to women in Southern Yobe Axis. Previous studies conducted using quantitative method of analysis have not actually provided a fair level ground for women to from part of the respondents whose views were sought for in the studies. In studies where few women were involved in primary data collection process as respondents, most of them were chosen from the urban high-profile women and not actually the rural based women who actually engaged in democracy and party politics. Adequate attention has not also been given to the use of enough qualitative data available in the area of gender politics. This problem of methodology has made suggestions given by previous studies as in Fayomi (2014), Yahaya (2012), Ngara and Ayabam (2013) on ways of encouraging women to contest than vote in elections incapable of breeding more women contestants than voters. Socio-economic factors and their impacts on women political behavior concerning contesting and voting in elections have not adequately been examined by previous studies as well. And, policy suggestions in previous studies have also failed to point out the areas in which the government can improve women economic status to breed more women contestants than voters in elective politics. These identified research gaps have made the need for additional studies on women participation in politics in Yobe south necessary. And, it is in order to bridge up the gaps created in knowledge by previous studies as stated earlier that this research was necessitated.

**Research Objective**

The research objectives of the study are to;

1. Examine the factors that constitute women socio-economic status in southern Yobe axis
2. Investigate how women socio-economic factors impact on their participation in elective politics in Yobe south.
3. Come up with policy suggestions on how women socio-economic status can be improved to facilitate their active participation in elective politics in southern Yobe axis.

**Research Question**

The research questions of the study are;

1. What are the factors that constitute women socio-economic status in southern Yobe axis?
2. How do these factors impact on women participation in elective politics in Yobe south?
3. Can women socio-economic status be improved to facilitate their active participation in elective politics in southern Yobe axis?

**Hypothesis**

The hypotheses formulated to guide the study are;

**H1;** Education, employment and wealth are factors that constitute women socio-economic status in southern Yobe axis.

**H2;** Women socio-economic status impact on their participation in elective politics in southern Yobe axis.

**H3;** Women socio-economic status can be improved to facilitate their active participation in elective politics in southern Yobe axis.

**Literature Review**

Women’s desire for attaining the peak of their career has often been battled by superior tendency put forward by men as undisputed champion in human society. Challenges emanating from culture, psychological and physical attributes as well as societal values have assisted in putting women at relegation to their men counterpart. Women who have reached the peak of their career have ended up been denied recognition in most cases. In some, others have been discredited and their reputation disregarded. However, disregard for women and relegating them to the back ground have contributed to the stagnation of Nigeria’s growth and development. Society in which women are relegated to the back ground often remains the object of mockery in terms of development among the comity of nations (Abiodun, 2015:2). Southern Yobe and the entire north-east region of Nigeria like every other part of the country is a patriarchal society. But this does not mean that politics should be presumed as man’s turf. Women constitute a larger proportion of the population of southern Yobe as well as the voters of the axis. Therefore, they deserve special inclusive principle in
politics and state governance. Politics and governance are centered around people and population-women fulfill these conditions. Although, their participation in politics is affected by their socio-economic status basic among which is finance.

Few women have contested elective positions in Nigeria with most of them defeated by male opponents. Politics in the country is an expensive venture thus seeking elective position requires huge sum of money with a solid financial backing. Women in Nigeria are financially incapacitated and their pathetic poor financial disposition has continued to be a serious challenge confronting their participation in politics as well as their defeat by male opponents in elections. Concession offered by some major political parties in the country has culminated in the reduction of prices of party nomination forms for women to encouraged them participate in elective politics (Yahaya, 2012; 8). This encouragement has not resulted in positive development on women participation in politics. Women contest for elective positions in Nigeria continues to remain low. Discount offered by some major political parties in prices of party nomination for women has not been able to improve their level of political participation in the country. Hence, in Nigeria, about 90% of women currently live below poverty line. The cost of realizing electoral ambition is still far beyond the reach of most women with support from elsewhere godfather who foots the bill in exchange for unlimited favor when the seat is eventually secured (Ngara and Ayabam, 2013;53). Considering the financial backing, the godfathers’ and other financiers of politicians in Nigeria prefer male political aspirants to female ones based on the societal value assumption that political activities are masculine and male candidates are believed to stand better chance of winning elections. In Nigeria, the women poor access to credit facilities, lack of inheritance rights for developmental purposes; including culturally unacceptable control of their income and resources while living with their husbands (for married ones) contribute to their lack of financial strength as a major challenge in their active participation in politics (Nwabunkeonye, 2014:286-287).

As a voluntary act, political participation includes a wide range of political activities ranging from joining political parties, attending political rallies, voting at election and contesting for political and party offices among others. In liberal democracies, political activities are free zones of operation to all qualified citizens. Citizens are not marginalized on ground of gender, wealth, education and other socio-economic and political variables. In African countries especially Nigeria, experiences have shown that female gender over the years has been systematically impeded from participating in politics by certain cultural values. This impediment to some degree has challenged the principle of participatory democracy as its encroaches into citizens franchise or right to vote and contest to be voted for in an election (Awofeso and Odeyei, 2014:1). Women in southern Yobe axis appear more at voting than contesting for elective positions. They may be scarce but some few attend political rallies. And women attending political rallies in southern Yobe is attached with serious stigmatization. Political participation is truly a voluntary act in most instances. But voting cost women less or nothing than contesting. And the cost of contesting is determined by a number of factors which make up women socio-economic status. Hence, women in southern Yobe are rendered incapacitated economically to contest for elective positions.

Women in Nigeria can improve their economic status and general standard of living. This they can do in order to carryout their rights of contesting for elective positions and voting in political leaders. Although, in Nigeria political terrain, women cannot successfully achieve these targets without education. The ingredient needed to make these targets achievable is education (Fayomi, 2014). The bulk of women population in southern Yobe axis are illiterates. Although, some are learned in Arabic language and Islamic Knowledge but others are not lettered in both the Western and Islamic knowledge. The basic educational requirement for contesting for any elective position in Nigeria is the Secondary School Certificate while no education is needed for one to be qualified as a voter. The basic educational requirement is not possessed by several women in southern Yobe. Hence, women in this part of Nigeria, make more appearance in voting than contesting for elective positions in elections. Although, in addition illiteracy which is highly pronounced among women in southern Yobe axis, other factors derived from their socio-economic factors too impact on their level of political participation.

In Nigerian politics, the predominantly domestic female role which has continued to pegging women down at home is one of the major factors restricting them from active participation in party and elective politics. Some cultural values disagreed with women exposing themselves in public for political activities such as campaign rallies while others considered them incapable of making sound decision. Money needed to be involved in politics, fueling violence against opponents and thuggery to destabilized opponent strong hold are not available to women due to their relegated economic status. These have contributed to women low appearance in political participation in Nigeria (Arowolo and Aluko, 2010; 583-589). The link between social, economic and politic exclusion of women lends credence to the presupposition that the empowerment of women along either of these lines: social, economic and politics holds prospects for increased participation on other aforementioned fronts. Building on the premise of the existence of a clear inexorable interconnection between women’s
deprivation and some economic and socio-cultural factors, it therefore follows that to address women’s participation on any front efforts must be made to address the barriers to participation on the two other fronts.

Age, lineage and achievement provide the basis for social ranking of women in Nigeria. The way women in the country perceived themselves and the community is greatly affected by the manner of their economic empowerment. The nature of women empowerment affects the level of their participation in social, economic and political spheres. Women empowerment need adequate attention in Nigeria. Their placement in elective and appointive positions also need urgent attention. Women are gifted in both talents and skills like their male counterpart. But, because they are not given sufficient recognition coupled with their weak economic status, their level of participation in elective politics is discouraging in the country. Urgent measures necessary to tackle low women participation in elective politics in the country include full ratification of the Berlin conference affirmative action which allocates certain percent of place to elective and appointive positions to women in countries that have ratified the agreement. Non-discriminatory laws both in document and operation would make women participation in economic activities and elective politics possible and easier in Nigeria. They can with such laws in operation own properties, compete with their male counterpart in socio-economic and political spheres. They can also own properties without recourse to the approval of existent and non-existente spouses; they can access finance for their business ideas without the ridiculous requirement of approval from their spouse as it is the case in some parts of Africa (Afolabi, 2009:6). In southern Yobe axis, poverty is part of the socio-economic barriers responsible for the exclusion of women from political participation. With the predominant population of women in the Axis living below the poverty line stated by the United Nations, the pressing needs for women in Southern Yobe would not be political participation but scraping a living for themselves and their families especially in homes where women have been widowed and children orphaned by the age long insurgency in the north-east region of Nigeria. However, three quarters of all economic activities in southern Yobe axis ascribed to men. Women in the axis perform fifty three percent of the work. But the problem is that, they feature prominently in the informal sectors of the economy. And this impact on the level of their political participation especially contesting for elective positions.

Taking part in elective politics is not an easy task for women in Nigeria. Support and mentoring required to make such participation easier are not adequately available to women willing to compete for elective positions in the country. And, like in some countries in Africa, many voters in Nigeria do not feel comfortable and find it beneficial having a mix of men and women in government. This feeling and action it created has resulted in low representation of women at all levels of government in the country. Women candidates fared beyond expectation in 2011 general elections in the country. Out of 469 members at the national parliament, only 32 were women which is barely 8% representation (Eme et al, 2014:1). In Yobe State in the 2015 General Elections, only one female contested for the Federal House of Representative position. She won and was later appointed a Federal Junior Minister of Foreign Affairs. The woman is Hajiyi Khadija Bukar Abba Ibrahim from Yobe north-east axis. Honorable Fatima Mohammed Paga from Yobe north-west was the only woman who contested in the state house assembly election in 2015 and was elected. But in Yobe south axis, no single woman contested for any elective position in the 2015 general elections. Women low appearance in political participation especially elective politics in Yobe south has continue to make the place and position of women in public governance precarious in southern Yobe axis.

Systematically, women and the girl child in Nigeria suffer discrimination and disadvantage which are similar with those in poorest states and society. Compare to men and their sisters in other countries, Nigeria’s 80.2 million women and girls suffer worse life chances. Women constitute 60-67 percent of the rural work force in the country but the potential and privilege to own land are more available to the men. More tax is collected from women than men owing to their population size which outnumbered that of the men. In formal sector, they are paid less compare to the men and many judges and permanent secretaries are men rather than women. Only 4 percent of local government councilors are women. Up to one third of Nigerian women have been subjected to violence. And if women participation in politics and decision making in Nigeria is to be examined, it becomes apparently clear that women have been discriminated against either in participation of election of political leaders or emerging as political leaders. There is huge gender inequality in political leadership. Meanwhile, it has been established that gender inequality is a constraint to growth and poverty reduction while a more equitable gender relation is an accelerator of poverty reduction. Women all over the world share a common feature of marginalization in all spheres of life (Igbuzor, 2009:112 and Thewill, 2016:1). This development in relation to women participation in politics especially in the areas of elective politics is also applicable to southern Yobe axis.

**Methodology**

The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods. Secondary data were sourced through journal articles, newspapers, magazines, textbooks, lecture notes and other internet-based information. Primary data were obtained through the
administration of structured interview on one hundred respondents chosen using stratified sampling technique. Southern Yobe axis comprises of four Local Government Areas namely Fika, Funе, Nangere and Potiskum Local Government Areas. One community each was selected from the four local governments. The four selected communities include: Kukar-Gadu in Fika, Ngelzerma in Funе, Mamudo in Potiskum and Dazigau in Nangere.

| r>o indicated positive relationship |
r<o indicated negative relationship |
r= +1.0 described a perfect positive correlation |
r= -0.1 described a perfect negative correlation |

The closer the coefficients were to +1.0, the greater the strength of relationship and the closer they were to -0.1 the lower and weaker the strength of relationship as specified below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value of r</th>
<th>Strength of relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-1.0 to -0.5 or 1.0 to 0.5</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-0.5 to -0.3 or 0.3 to 0.5</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-0.3 to -0.1 or 0.1 to 0.3</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-0.1 to 0.1</td>
<td>Non-or very weak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, the frequency percentage mean standard deviation tool was adopted in testing the hypotheses formulated to guide the study.

**DATA PRESENTATION**

Below is the presentation and analysis of data collected for this study:

**Table 1:** Socio-economic status of women and their participation in elective politics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>0.1</th>
<th>0.3</th>
<th>0.5</th>
<th>1.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VWR</td>
<td>WR</td>
<td>MR</td>
<td>SR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>Education, employment and wealth are factors that constitute women</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>socio-economic status in southern Yobe axis.</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>Lack of illiteracy, joblessness and poverty are not constituents of women</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Socio-economic status in southern Yobe axis</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>Women need sound education, good jobs and sound capital to be able</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>participate in elective politics in southern Yobe axis</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>High rate of illiteracy, unemployment and poverty among women do not</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>affect their capability to contest for elective positions in southern Yobe</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>axis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>Provision of quality education, creation of job opportunities and</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>alleviation of poverty among women in southern Yobe axis will result in</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>their active political participation especially contesting for elective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>positions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>Socio-economic empowerment of women in southern Yobe axis will not</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>result in their active participation in elective politics</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q-Question</td>
<td>VWR-Very Weak Relationship, WR-Weak Relationship, MR-Moderate Relationship, SR-Strong Relationship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Source: Author’s field survey (2020).

**ANALYSIS OF DATA**

Table 1 as given above shows a positive correlation between women socio-economic status and their participation in elective politics in southern Yobe axis. This correlation is demonstrated in the higher responses to 0.1 which is represented by r<0 where r=0.1 or r=-1.0 represents a perfect negative correlation. Sound education, good job and sound capital have relationship with women capability to contest for elective positions in southern Yobe axis as 1.0 showed positive relationship where r>0 which is reflected by r=+1.0 demonstrated perfect positive correlation. The
relationship between high rate of illiteracy, unemployment and poverty among women as factors not affecting women participation in elective politics in southern Yobe axis is a negative one. This is reflected by higher responses to 0.1 and this is represented by $r<0$ and $r=-1.0$ demonstrated a perfect negative correlation. Positive relationship exists between provision of quality education, creation of job opportunities and alleviation of poverty among women in southern Yobe axis and women participation in elective politics in southern Yobe axis. This relationship is reflected in higher percent responses to 1.0 which is $r>0$ and $r=+1.0$ and described a perfect positive correlation. And also, table 1 further shows that the relationship between the view that socio-economic empowerment of women in southern Yobe axis will not result in their active participation in elective politics and contest for elective positions in southern Yobe axis. This negative relationship is demonstrated by the concentration of higher responses on 0.1 which implied $r<0$ where $r=0.1$ or $r=-1.0$ portrayed a perfect negative correlation.

\[ H \]

\[ H_1: \text{Education, employment and wealth are factors that constitute women socio-economic status in southern Yobe axis.} \]

\[ H_2: \text{Women socio-economic status impact on their participation in elective politics in southern Yobe axis.} \]

\[ H_3: \text{Women socio-economic status can be improved to facilitate their active participation in elective politics in southern Yobe axis.} \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H</th>
<th>FP</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$H_1$: Education, employment and wealth</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_2$: Women socio-economic status impact</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_3$: Women socio-economic status can be improved to facilitate participation in elective politics in southern Yobe axis</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>577.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 testing the hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H</th>
<th>FP</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$H_1$: Education, employment and wealth</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_2$: Women socio-economic status impact</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_3$: Women socio-economic status can be improved to facilitate participation in elective politics in southern Yobe axis</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H-Hypothesis, FP-Frequency Percentage, M-Mean, SD-Standard Deviation, SD-Strongly Disagreed, D-Disagreed, N-Neutral, A-Agreed, SD-Strongly Agreed

Discussion of Results

In southern Yobe axis, women economic status consists of variables like education, employment and wealth. The bulk of uneducated people in the axis are women. Majority of the women in southern Yobe axis have not acquired any formal education in their life. Some are learned in Arabic language and Islamic religion while others do not have both Arabic language and Islamic knowledge. Although, Yobe south is a heterogenous society with several ethnic minority languages and religions. Kukar-Gadu and Dazigau are inhabited by both Muslims and Christians living together in admirable harmony, peace and unity. The percentage of illiteracy among women is very high and well pronounced than among men in the axis. In this part of north-east Nigeria, the number of jobless people is higher among the women. Few women work in the formal sector while some others are into farming and trading in agricultural commodities. But still those without jobs are higher than those in business, civil
service and farming. Majority of the jobless women cannot read and write. And these have contributed to their inability to secure jobs in the formal sector. The working ones channel their income to the management of family affairs rather than investing them in elective politics. The income they earn are meager compared with the capital basis required to participate in elective politics in Nigeria. This implies that poverty is well pronounced among women in Southern Yobe. Some millions of monies are needed to purchase party forms for contesting elective positions. And majority of women in southern Yobe do not have such kind of money. The capital base needed to obtain party forms for contesting elective positions as well as funds needed to finance campaigns and rallies with other logistics are too exorbitant. These in addition to illiteracy and joblessness have continued to impact on women political participation in the southern Yobe axis of north-east Nigeria. Thus, women in Yobe south appear more active in voting than contesting to be voted in elections.

The view that women in southern Yobe axis need sound education, good jobs and sound capital base to be able to contest for elective positions in politics hold water tight. This cannot be argued or doubted. The high rate of illiteracy among women has continue to make their legibility to contest for elective positions impossible in southern Yobe. Although, the minimum educational qualification needed to contest for all elective positions in Nigeria is the GCE O/A level certificate. That is the certificate for the completion of secondary or post primary education. There are some few women graduates in the axis. But, the truth is that majority of the women in the axis do not even possessed the minimum required academic qualification to participate in elective politics. Those with qualifications above the minimum requirement for contesting elective positions are jobless talk less of having the means of generating fund needed to financed election campaigns and rallies among others. The educationally qualified and illiterate women in the axis are submerged in a vicious circle of abject poverty that thinking of participating in elective politics never occur on their minds. The bourgeois’ popularly known as political Godfathers and who are financially sound because of their business influences and connections prefer to sponsor male candidates than sponsoring women because of the stigmatization attached to women participating in elective politics in the axis. Since the establishment of democratic rule in Nigeria on 29th May 1999, only two women have contested for elective positions in southern Yobe. And they were both defeated by the male contestants. Hajiya Fatima Talba contested and won the Federal House of Representative Seat for Potiskum and Nangere federal constituency. In the bid for re-election, she lost to a male contestant who happened to be her own blood brother. Mrs. Zainab Boni Haruna then a wife of a seating Governor in Adamawa state in north-east Nigeria was the second woman. She contested for Yobe south senatorial position but was also defeated by a male contestant. Considering the education, socio-economic status and political influences of both Hajiya Talba and Mrs Haruna, it is apparently clear that majority of women in southern Yobe do not fit into the same social class and status with them. Though, since their defeats, they have been silent in the political arena of southern Yobe. But no woman after them had contested for any elective position in the axis till date. The non-appearance till date of women in the political arena of power tussle with men in contesting for elective positions indicates that, women capability to participate in elective politics in the axis is affected by socio-economic factors like illiteracy, unemployment and poverty among others.

The ratio of boy to girl intake in schools across communities in southern Yobe needs to be revisited. More girls are at home and out of school compared with the boys. Attention to girl-child education is an urgent measure needed to develop women who will be educationally qualify to contest for elective positions in the axis. Kukar-Gadu, Mamudo and Dazigau have only one functional primary school each despite the continued rise in number of children who by age are supposed to be in school. And in all, more boys are registered than girls. Ngelzerma has functional girls’ secondary school with majority of the students non-indigenous to southern Yobe. It also has a single primary school adjacent to the girls’ secondary school in which more boys than girls attend. Adult literacy program for women will also help. The only functional adult literacy class in southern Yobe is in Potiskum. Other areas have none. And in places where structures were initially established for adult literacy classes, they have been abandoned due to little governmental attention and threats by Boko Haram Insurgents on the other hand. Opportunities for job to thrive have to be created to make more women gainfully employed in the axis. Business and Engineering Skills Training (BEST) Centers exist in both Potiskum and Gadaka in Fika local government. But then, the capability in terms of manpower and funding needed for them to train women in the axis on economic empowerment and self-reliance are grossly inadequate. Special poverty alleviation program for women is also needed in southern Yobe. USAID and IFAD women support projects were initially in the core front of women empowerment in southern Yobe. The end of the projects marked the beginning of another era of abject poverty among women in the axis. The women empowerment projects championed by IFAD contributed tremendously in providing credit facilities for women to embark on self-businesses and create jobs rather than seek for them. But soon after the projects ended, communities like Dazigau and Dagare both in Nangere local government soon emerged with features of women in more severe forms of poverty than ever before. Women in such conditions struggling to make earns meet are not
expected to have the financial capability needed to participate in elective politics.

**MAJOR FINDINGS**

The followings are the findings of this study:

1. Education, employment and wealth are some of the factors that constitute women socio-economic status in southern Yobe axis of north-east Nigeria.
2. Women socio-economic status especially illiteracy, joblessness and poverty impact on their participation in elective politics in southern Yobe.
3. And, women socio-economic status should be improved to facilitate their active participation in elective politics in southern Yobe axis of north-east Nigeria.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the major findings made, the conclusion of this study is that education, employment and wealth are some of the factors that constitute women socio-economic status in southern Yobe axis of north-east Nigeria. The study also reached the conclusion that women socio-economic status especially illiteracy, joblessness and poverty impact on their participation in elective politics in southern Yobe axis. It also drew the conclusion that, women socio-economic status should be improved to facilitate their active participation in elective politics in southern Yobe axis of north-east Nigeria.

And, As A Result Of the Conclusion Reached, the Study Recommended That;

1. Government at the three different level must as a matter of necessity jointly commit more fund to the promotion of the girl-child education in southern Yobe axis. The federal, state and local governments should invest more in the area of girl-child education. Criteria for students’ intake should be reviewed to give certain fix percentage to the girls because as it is presently, the number of intake for boys in schools in the axis double the figure for girls. Furthermore, at the community level, government must show commitment through improve funding of adult literacy program. This should include both vocational and functional literacy programs for women. The one at Alagarno in Funke local government area was forced to stop soon after establishment as a result of attack launched on the community by Boko Haram insurgents. And the community managed adult literacy classes started at Dawasa in Nangere local government area were forced to shut due to lack of support to compliment community efforts in the areas of staffing and facilities. Kukar-Gadu, Ngelzerma, Mamudo and Dazigau never had adult literacy classes established either by community or government. The need to fund girl child education is an urgent one so as to produced women who will not be hampered by lack of educational qualification needed to contest for elective positions in southern Yobe axis. Also, special attention to adult literacy especially in the area of funding and management will result in the grooming of women who will not be prevented by illiteracy to actively participate in elective politics in southern Yobe.

2. Women in Yobe south are at relegation compare to their male counterpart in the area of employment opportunities. Though, job opportunities are minimal in southern Yobe. But then, majority of the available few are taken over by men. This has continued to affect the progress of women socio-economically. More men than women are gainfully employed in the axis both in public and private sectors despite the fact that the population of women is higher than that of the men in the axis. There is an urgent need to create a balance on gender basis in relation to placement for jobs in both public and private sectors for men and women. Special criteria that will give women the opportunities to elective and appointive positions should be created as an act of parliament and their enforcement must also be guided by law. Appointment to public and private sectors should be based on percentage divided between men and women so as to give women the chance to not only contribute their quota to societal development but also to uplift their socio-economic status to a suitable level required to actively participate in elective politics in southern Yobe. At least, sixty percent men and forty percent women ratio are okay for appointment and elective positions in the axis as against the zero-sum principle where men take all political appointments accrue to the axis from federal and state governments with only few job placements given to women in both public and private sectors. Creating an avenue for women to secure jobs in both public and private sectors as well as appointive positions will make women more vulnerable to social exposure and political influence required to facilitate their active participation in elective politics in southern Yobe axis.

3. Socio-economic empowerment of women in southern Yobe is a matter of urgency. The kind of empowerment that will enable women to overcome poverty is the right measure to adopt. Distributing detergent, soap, wrapper, salt, sugar, rice, sewing machine as well as other consumable items to women will not make them empowered to the extent of participating in elective politics. These are not actually empowerment. They are merely political gimmick meant to further entrenched women role in politics as voters rather than contestants. These are commodities which satisfy immediate needs of women but do not accommodate their future requirements. There are dozens of politicians working as Businessmen and Contractors and making huge fortunes through the government. Women in southern Yobe also deserve this kind of opportunity if they are to measure up with the men in capital required to contest for elective positions. The sum of five thousand naira a month to women is never a sound and suitable poverty alleviation project. It will rather promote instead of alleviate poverty among women. This poverty
eradication measure only leaves women struggling at the subsistence level trying to satisfy their primary needs like food and shelter. Though, majority may be illiterate and not educated but they are not lazy. Women in southern Yobe are hardworking in the areas of crop production and animal husbandry. These areas create possible avenue for them to be empowered so that they can overcome poverty and acquired sound capital needed to participate in elective politics.

4. Assessment of agricultural credit facilities should be promoted among women in southern Yobe axis. This should attract a single digit interest with repayment spread across lengthy duration and period of time. Although, majority of women in the axis are Muslims and may view credit facilities with interest as unreligious. This can be handled especially with Islamic banks established all over northern Nigeria. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) can negotiate with Islamic banks to front the disbursement of the facilities hence interests are not attached to their services. This type of empowerment is the poverty alleviation needed for women in southern Yobe axis. It will give them the financial strength to expand their agricultural production, make more profit and reinvest them in other sector of the economy. This will result in their sound socio-economic status and create avenue for them to not only eradicate poverty in their life but also to gather the financial muscles required to participate actively in elective politics with their male counterpart in southern Yobe axis.

REFERENCES