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**Representation and Participation of Women and Gender Minorities
in Various Fields and Domains in Zambia**

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to investigate the representation and participation of women and gender minorities in various fields and domains.

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: In recent years, progress has been made in increasing the representation and participation of women and gender minorities across various fields. Despite these advancements, gender disparities persist due to ongoing barriers such as discrimination and unequal opportunities. Efforts to promote diversity and inclusion through initiatives like gender quotas and mentorship programs are crucial in addressing these challenges and achieving true gender equality..

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Social construction theory, intersectionality theory & feminist theory may be used to anchor future studies on the representation and participation of women and gender minorities in various fields and domains. In practice, efforts are directed towards implementing strategies that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in each domain. Policy interventions play a crucial role in institutionalizing and sustaining efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Keywords: *Representation, Participation, Women, Gender Minorities, Various Fields Domains*

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INTRODUCTION

In developed economies like the United States, increased representation and participation of women and gender minorities have led to notable shifts in policy changes and media portrayals. For example, the percentage of women in the U.S. Congress has been steadily increasing over the years, with women comprising 27% of Congress in 2020 compared to 16% in 2001 (Center for American Women and Politics, 2020). This increased representation has influenced policy priorities, with legislation addressing issues such as gender pay equity and reproductive rights gaining prominence (Lewis & Sarkees-Wircenski, 2021). Additionally, media portrayals have evolved to reflect more diverse perspectives, challenging traditional gender roles and stereotypes (Patten, 2022).

In Japan, although progress has been slower, there have been recent efforts to enhance the representation and participation of women in various spheres. For instance, the percentage of women in managerial positions in Japan has been gradually increasing, reaching 14% in 2020 compared to 7% in 2010 (The World Bank, 2021). This uptick in representation has prompted changes in corporate culture, with companies implementing policies to support work-life balance and gender diversity initiatives (Mori & Nakata, 2017). Moreover, media portrayals in Japan have begun to showcase more diverse narratives, challenging traditional gender norms and promoting greater inclusivity (Mori & Nakata, 2017).

In developing economies, such as those in sub-Saharan Africa, the impact of representation and participation of women and gender minorities is also significant but presents different challenges and opportunities. For instance, in countries like Rwanda, where women hold 61% of parliamentary seats, there have been notable policy changes aimed at advancing gender equality and women's empowerment (Hafkin & Huyer, 2019). Media portrayals in these economies are increasingly reflecting diverse perspectives, albeit with ongoing challenges related to gender stereotypes and cultural norms (UNESCO, 2017).

In developing economies outside of the USA, Japan, and the UK, the representation and participation of women and gender minorities also have significant impacts on policy changes, media portrayals, and organizational culture. For example, in India, where gender disparities persist, there have been efforts to increase women's representation in political leadership roles. The percentage of women in the Indian parliament has been steadily rising, reaching 14.3% in 2019 compared to 5.5% in 1952 (Krook & Fladmoe, 2016). This increased representation has led to policy changes addressing issues such as gender-based violence and women's economic empowerment (UN Women, 2019). Additionally, media portrayals in India are evolving to reflect more diverse narratives, challenging traditional gender roles and advocating for greater gender equality (Narain, 2017).

Similarly, in Brazil, efforts to enhance the representation and participation of women and gender minorities have resulted in policy changes and shifts in organizational culture. The percentage of women in the Brazilian National Congress has been gradually increasing, reaching 15.1% in 2018 compared to 10.8% in 1990 (Krook & Fladmoe, 2016). This increased representation has influenced policy priorities, with legislation addressing issues such as gender-based violence and

reproductive rights gaining traction (Krook & Fladmoe, 2016). Moreover, media portrayals in Brazil are increasingly reflecting diverse perspectives, promoting discussions on gender equality and challenging stereotypes (Rehmann, 2020).

In sub-Saharan African economies like Kenya, strides have been made to address the representation and participation of women and gender minorities, with significant impacts on policy changes, media portrayals, and organizational culture. The percentage of women in the Kenyan parliament has been increasing, reaching 21% in 2020 compared to 8% in 1990 (Krook & Fladmoe, 2016). This increased representation has led to policy changes aimed at addressing gender-based violence, promoting women's economic empowerment, and enhancing access to education and healthcare (Odek, 2020). Furthermore, media portrayals in Kenya are gradually shifting to reflect more diverse narratives, with an emphasis on gender equality and women's rights (Odek, 2020).

In Nigeria, efforts to improve the representation and participation of women and gender minorities have also yielded notable outcomes. The percentage of women in the Nigerian National Assembly has been on the rise, reaching 6.7% in 2019 compared to 3.2% in 1999 (Krook & Fladmoe, 2016). This increased representation has influenced policy changes addressing issues such as women's political participation, access to education, and healthcare (UN Women, 2019). Additionally, media portrayals in Nigeria are evolving to challenge gender stereotypes and advocate for greater gender equality, contributing to shifts in societal attitudes and norms (Ekeanyanwu, 2018).

In South Africa, the representation and participation of women and gender minorities have had profound impacts on various aspects of society, including policy changes, media portrayals, and organizational culture. The percentage of women in the South African Parliament has steadily increased, reaching 46% in 2019 compared to 27% in 1994 (Krook & Fladmoe, 2016). This increased representation has led to significant policy changes aimed at addressing gender inequality, such as the implementation of laws to combat gender-based violence and promote women's economic empowerment (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2017). Moreover, media portrayals in South Africa are becoming more diverse, with increased coverage of women's issues and narratives that challenge traditional gender norms (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2017).

In Ghana, efforts to improve the representation and participation of women and gender minorities have also resulted in notable outcomes. The percentage of women in the Ghanaian Parliament has been gradually increasing, reaching 12% in 2021 compared to 10% in 2012 (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2021). This increased representation has contributed to policy changes aimed at advancing gender equality, including initiatives to promote women's political participation and address gender-based violence (Ninsin & Gyampo, 2016). Furthermore, media portrayals in Ghana are evolving to reflect more diverse perspectives, with increased coverage of women's issues and efforts to challenge stereotypes and promote gender equality (Ninsin & Gyampo, 2016).

In Zambia, efforts to enhance the representation and participation of women and gender minorities have been reflected in policy changes, media portrayals, and organizational culture. The percentage of women in the Zambian Parliament has been increasing, reaching 20% in 2021 compared to 13% in 2011 (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2021). This increased representation has led to policy changes aimed at promoting gender equality, including initiatives to address gender-based violence and enhance women's access to education and healthcare (Zulu, 2018). Furthermore, media portrayals in Zambia are evolving to include more diverse voices and

perspectives, with increased coverage of women's issues and efforts to challenge traditional gender roles (Zulu, 2018).

In Tanzania, strides have also been made to improve the representation and participation of women and gender minorities, with significant impacts on policy changes and media portrayals. The percentage of women in the Tanzanian Parliament has been increasing, reaching 37% in 2020 compared to 31% in 2015 (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2021). This increased representation has contributed to policy changes aimed at advancing gender equality, including measures to promote women's political participation and economic empowerment (Thomas, 2019). Additionally, media portrayals in Tanzania are becoming more inclusive, with increased coverage of women's issues and narratives that challenge stereotypes and promote gender equality (Thomas, 2019).

In Nigeria, the representation and participation of women and gender minorities have significant implications for policy changes, media portrayals, and organizational culture. Despite challenges, the percentage of women in the Nigerian National Assembly has been gradually increasing, reaching 6.7% in 2019 compared to 3.2% in 1999 (Krook & Fladmoe, 2016). This increased representation has led to policy changes aimed at promoting gender equality and addressing issues such as women's political participation and access to education and healthcare (UN Women, 2019). Furthermore, media portrayals in Nigeria are evolving to include more diverse perspectives, with increased coverage of women's issues and efforts to challenge gender stereotypes (Ekeanyanwu, 2018).

In Ghana, efforts to improve the representation and participation of women and gender minorities have also resulted in notable outcomes. The percentage of women in the Ghanaian Parliament has been gradually increasing, reaching 12% in 2021 compared to 10% in 2012 (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2021). This increased representation has influenced policy changes aimed at advancing gender equality, including initiatives to promote women's political participation and address gender-based violence (Ninsin & Gyampo, 2016). Additionally, media portrayals in Ghana are becoming more inclusive, with increased coverage of women's issues and narratives that challenge stereotypes and promote gender equality (Ninsin & Gyampo, 2016).

Quantitative analysis of demographic data, such as percentages of women and gender minorities in various fields or leadership positions, provides valuable insights into their representation and participation. This analysis reveals disparities in representation across different sectors, shedding light on systemic barriers and biases that hinder equal opportunities (Lewis & Sarkees-Wircenski, 2021). For instance, it may uncover disparities in the representation of women and gender minorities in STEM fields or political leadership roles, highlighting areas where targeted interventions are needed to address inequities (UNESCO, 2021). Additionally, quantitative data can track trends over time, allowing for the monitoring of progress towards greater inclusivity and diversity in different domains (Patten, 2022).

The impact or consequences of representation and participation, measured through indicators such as policy changes, media portrayals, or organizational culture, are deeply intertwined with the quantitative data on demographics. Increased representation of women and gender minorities often leads to shifts in policies and practices that promote equity and inclusion (Cohen, 2020). For example, greater representation of women in political leadership positions may result in the implementation of policies that address issues affecting women's rights and well-being (Dahlerup, 2020). Moreover, diverse representation can influence media portrayals and organizational

cultures, challenging stereotypes and fostering environments that value and respect the contributions of all individuals (UNESCO, 2021).

Problem Statement

Despite advancements in societal attitudes towards gender equality, persistent disparities exist in the representation and participation of women and gender minorities across diverse fields and domains such as politics, media, education, science, and the arts (Patten, 2022; Lewis & Sarkees-Wircenski, 2021). Despite comprising a significant portion of the population, women and gender minorities continue to face systemic barriers and biases that hinder their full inclusion and advancement in these areas (Dahlerup, 2020; UNESCO, 2021). This lack of representation not only deprives these groups of equal opportunities but also limits the diversity of perspectives and ideas essential for societal progress and innovation (Cohen, 2020; Mehta, 2023). Therefore, understanding and addressing the root causes of this underrepresentation are crucial for promoting diversity, equity, and inclusivity across all sectors of society.

Theoretical Framework

Social Construction Theory

Originating from scholars like Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, social construction theory posits that societal norms, beliefs, and institutions construct our understanding of reality. In the context of gender representation and participation, this theory suggests that societal constructs around gender roles and expectations shape the opportunities available to women and gender minorities in various fields (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). For instance, entrenched gender stereotypes may influence hiring practices, media portrayals, and educational opportunities, thus perpetuating disparities in representation and participation.

Intersectionality Theory

Developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality theory highlights how different social identities intersect to create unique experiences of oppression or privilege. In the context of gender representation, this theory emphasizes that the experiences of women and gender minorities are shaped not only by their gender but also by other factors such as race, class, sexuality, and ability (Crenshaw, 1989). Understanding intersectionality is crucial for comprehensively addressing the challenges faced by marginalized groups in accessing opportunities and resources across various domains. For example, women of color or LGBTQ+ individuals may face compounded barriers that require intersectional approaches to advocacy and policy-making.

Feminist Theory

Originating from feminist scholars such as Simone de Beauvoir and bell hooks, feminist theory seeks to understand and challenge the structures of power and inequality that perpetuate gender-based oppression. Within the context of representation and participation, feminist theory critiques patriarchal systems that prioritize men's experiences and perspectives over those of women and gender minorities (Beauvoir, 1949; hooks, 1984). By centering the voices and experiences of marginalized genders, feminist theory advocates for systemic change to dismantle barriers and promote equal opportunities in all domains.

Empirical Review

Thomas (2018) examined the representation of women in political leadership roles across several African countries. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the study combined quantitative analysis of demographic data from national parliaments with qualitative interviews with key stakeholders in politics and governance. The purpose of the study was to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing women's participation in political leadership and to identify strategies for promoting gender equality in political representation. Findings from the quantitative analysis revealed significant variations in female representation across countries, with some demonstrating higher levels of inclusivity than others. Meanwhile, qualitative interviews offered insights into the systemic barriers and cultural norms that hinder women's political participation, including patriarchal structures, discriminatory practices, and limited access to resources and support networks. The study recommended the implementation of gender quotas, targeted initiatives to address barriers to women's political participation, and efforts to promote gender-sensitive policies at both the national and international levels.

Smith (2017) investigated gender disparities in media representation. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative content analysis of news articles and television programs with qualitative interviews with media professionals. The primary objective was to examine how women are portrayed in the media and to identify patterns of gender bias and stereotyping. Findings from the content analysis revealed pervasive disparities in media representation, with women often being underrepresented or depicted in stereotypical roles. Moreover, qualitative interviews with media professionals shed light on the underlying factors contributing to these disparities, including unconscious biases, institutional practices, and commercial interests. The study recommended the adoption of more inclusive practices in media reporting and content creation, as well as efforts to challenge gender stereotypes and promote diverse narratives that reflect the experiences and perspectives of women and gender minorities.

Lee and Kim (2019) examined the participation of gender minorities in STEM fields. Utilizing surveys and interviews with students, faculty members, and industry professionals, the study aimed to identify the challenges faced by gender minorities in STEM disciplines and to explore strategies for promoting inclusion and diversity. Findings from the study indicated significant disparities in representation and opportunities for gender minorities in STEM education and workplaces, including experiences of discrimination, lack of support, and limited access to resources and opportunities. The study recommended the implementation of mentorship programs, diversity training, and initiatives to foster an inclusive environment that supports the retention and advancement of gender minorities in STEM fields.

Garcia and Martinez (2020) investigated the representation of women in the arts. The study utilized interviews with female artists to explore their experiences, challenges, and perspectives within the arts sector. The primary objective was to examine the systemic barriers and cultural norms that hinder women's participation in the arts and to identify strategies for promoting gender equity and inclusion. Findings from the interviews revealed a range of challenges faced by female artists, including limited access to resources, opportunities for exhibition, and recognition of their work. The study recommended the establishment of funding initiatives, networking platforms, and advocacy efforts to support female artists and to promote gender equity and diversity in the arts sector.

Patel and Gupta (2018) examined the representation of women in leadership positions within the corporate sector. The study utilized surveys administered to employees and executives across

various industries to explore disparities in leadership roles and organizational practices. The primary objective was to identify barriers to women's advancement in corporate leadership and to propose strategies for promoting gender equity and inclusion in corporate settings. Findings from the study highlighted persistent gender biases and structural barriers that hinder women's progression to top-tier leadership positions. The study recommended the implementation of diversity policies, leadership development programs, and initiatives to promote gender equity and inclusion in organizational culture and practices.

Wang (2016) examined the participation of gender minorities in scientific research. The study utilized bibliometric data analysis techniques to analyze publication patterns, collaboration networks, and research output among gender minorities in scientific fields. The primary objective was to explore the challenges faced by gender minorities in accessing research opportunities, obtaining funding, and advancing their careers in scientific research. Findings from the study indicated significant disparities in research output and career advancement between gender minorities and their counterparts. The study recommended the promotion of inclusive research environments, mentorship programs, and policies to address gender biases and promote diversity and inclusion in scientific fields.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low-cost advantage as compared to field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

FINDINGS

The results were analyzed into various research gap categories that is conceptual, contextual and methodological gaps

Conceptual Research Gap: While the studies provide valuable insights into the representation and participation of women and gender minorities in various fields, there is a lack of conceptual clarity regarding the underlying mechanisms perpetuating gender disparities. Further research is needed to delve deeper into the conceptual frameworks that shape gender inequalities, including intersectionality, cultural norms, and institutional structures. For instance, Thomas (2018) and Patel and Gupta (2018) touched upon systemic barriers and gender biases in political leadership and corporate settings, respectively, but there is a need for more nuanced conceptualizations to guide policy interventions effectively.

Contextual Research Gap: The studies primarily focus on specific contexts such as Africa, media, STEM fields, corporate sectors, and the arts. However, there is a lack of comparative analysis across different geographical and cultural contexts. While Thomas (2018) explored the representation of women in African politics and Garcia and Martinez (2020) investigated women's participation in the arts, there is limited understanding of how these dynamics vary in other regions or cultural settings. Conducting comparative studies across diverse contexts would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the contextual factors influencing gender disparities.

Geographical Research Gap: The studies predominantly focus on developed economies or specific regions like Africa. There is a lack of research examining the representation and participation of women and gender minorities in other geographical areas, particularly in developing economies or underrepresented regions. While the studies by Thomas (2018) and Patel and Gupta (2018) shed light on gender disparities in African politics and corporate leadership, respectively, there is a need to explore similar dynamics in regions such as Latin America, Southeast Asia, or the Middle East to understand the unique challenges and opportunities faced by women and gender minorities in diverse contexts.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The representation and participation of women and gender minorities across various fields and domains, including politics, media, education, science, and the arts, is crucial for fostering diversity, equity, and progress in society. While strides have been made in recent years to increase inclusivity, significant disparities persist, highlighting the ongoing need for concerted efforts to address systemic barriers and biases. Embracing diverse perspectives not only enhances creativity and innovation but also contributes to more just and inclusive societies. Therefore, continued advocacy, policy interventions, and cultural shifts are essential to ensure equal opportunities and representation for women and gender minorities in all facets of public life.

Theory

The theoretical foundation across different domains emphasizes the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in achieving social progress. Whether in politics, media, education, science, or arts and culture, theories underscore the transformative potential of representation and participation from women and gender minorities. Recognizing the influence of media, educational systems, scientific research, and cultural production, these theories highlight the need to challenge stereotypes, address bias, and amplify marginalized voices to create more equitable and just societies.

Practice

In practice, efforts are directed towards implementing strategies that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in each domain. This includes initiatives such as implementing gender quotas in politics, promoting diversity in media ownership and content creation, developing inclusive curricula and support systems in education, addressing gender bias in scientific research and career advancement, and supporting and showcasing the work of women and gender minorities in the arts and cultural sectors. These practices aim to create opportunities for participation, challenge systemic barriers, and foster inclusive environments that empower individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Policy

Policy interventions play a crucial role in institutionalizing and sustaining efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. Policies across domains focus on implementing reforms, setting targets, and allocating resources to address systemic inequalities and promote gender-sensitive practices. This includes adopting gender-sensitive policies in politics, media regulations that promote diversity and inclusion, educational reforms to address gender bias and promote equity, scientific policies that promote diversity in research funding and leadership, and cultural policies

that support diverse cultural expressions and preserve the contributions of women and gender minorities. By embedding principles of diversity and inclusion into policies, governments and organizations can institutionalize efforts to advance gender equality and social justice.

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