



**Research Article**

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## Female student teachers' political participation in a Ghanaian College of Education; a Myth or Reality

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### Abstract

All over the world, women are underrepresented at socio-political levels. This study investigated the political interest and engagement of female students of the Seventh-Day Adventist College of Education, and the rationale for their low political engagement. The study adopted the transformative philosophical worldview with quantitative backing. Employing stratified and convenience sampling approaches, the study considered 405 female student teachers. Data from questionnaires were analysed descriptively and inferentially with means, standard deviation, multiple linear regression, and Pearson two-tailed correlation using SPSS V.20 and are presented in tables. The study found that female student teachers moderately involve themselves in politics-related issues and activities. The study also found that the society around student teachers is responsible for their lower political engagement. Demographic characteristics of female student teachers were found to be significant predictors of their political engagement. The study found a statistically inversed relationship between female student teachers' political engagement index and both their academic performance and their level in college. The study also found that with higher Commutative Grade Point Average (CGPA), there is a significant chance that female student teachers will maintain their political interest as they progress to advanced levels in the College. It has been recommended that society should rethink gender roles and as such, strengthen women empowerment programmes to groom women and build their competence and interests in the field of politics.

**Keywords** – Education, Gender, Political engagement, Student-teachers

### 1. INTRODUCTION

According to Brown, Duriesmith, Rahman and True (2020), per the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), women's equal inclusion in power and decision-making with men is part of their fundamental right to participate in

politics and is the pivot of gender equality and women empowerment. As democracy has been gaining universal acceptance, McBride and Mazur (2010) are of the view that the significance of democracy, including its responsiveness to women's needs, can be assessed by the degree of its inclusiveness and representation of the interests of women. Kumar (2018) states that women are still facing constraints in their political engagement internationally, even in the twenty-first century. With a population of over seven billion persons, women constitute about half of the universe's population. Of this, women's representation in global politics constitutes only about 23% of parliamentary seats (Chalaby, 2017).

According to the Brown et al. (2020) report on gender equity and gender equality, 25% of all parliamentary seats are held by women also have access to decision making roles at local levels of up to 36 percent; women gained 30% of parliamentary seats in countries with quotas and 18% in countries without quotas. For the achievement of equity, sustainable growth, peace, and democracy and the incorporation of their viewpoints and experiences in decision-making processes, the active representation, and involvement of women, on an equal footing with their male counterparts, at all levels of decision making and political participation are crucial (Mlambo, Kapingura & Meissner, 2019). At every socio-political level and in parliaments all over the world, women are marginalized, least represented and are almost exempted from the decision-making process (Mlambo et al., 2019), making Hayes and Bean (1993), Burns & Verba (2002), Bernstein (2005) to assert that politically, it is imperative to note that young women are more detached than men are. Studies have shown that women have less interest in pursuing politics (Capella & Jamieson, 1996; Conway, Steuernagel & Ahern, 2005; Bennett, Rhine, Flickinger & Bennett, 1999; Inglehart & Morris, 2003; Bernstein 2005), and by the mid-1980s, the sex differences in political orientations had been labelled as 'gender gap'. According to Bennett and Bennett (1989), Burns and Verba (2002), Conway et al. (2005), Carpini (2005), Studlar, McAllister and Hayes (1998), Tolleson Rinehart (1998) and Bernstein (2005), four explanatory factors have been linked with gender disparities in politics: socialization of the role of gender, socioeconomic variables, situational variables, and political orientations.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.2. Theoretical underpinning – The Social Role Theory of Sex Differences (Eagly & Wood, 2016)

As a social psychological theory, the social role theory is relevant to differences in sex and or synonymity in social behaviour. The key assumption to this theory is that the discrepancies and similarities emerge primarily from the division of men and women within their society into social roles. Via socialization and the development of gender roles, the actions of either sex typically promote and bolster the division of labour. The classification of social roles between women and men is manageable but constrained by the intrinsic characteristics of women and men the socioeconomic growth and ecology of any society. In particular, sex-typed roles emerge from the interplay of (1) the gender distinctions reflected by the physical features of each gender as well as other relevant activities such as the childbearing and breastfeeding of women and the greater height, speed, and upper body strength of men and (2) the contingent factors represented in society by the social, economic, technical and ecological forces.

Owing to these physical differences, either men or women perform special tasks more effectively. Because of these physical variations, certain activities are more efficiently performed by either men or women. This is to say that men perform strength-intensive activities more efficiently than women, while affective roles are better performed by women than men. This is empirically witnessed by Aletta (2020) who identified female athletes, as well as their performance, are marginalized with sexists' sports-media reportage, whilst the males' receive better and wider media coverage. The perception that sports activities and all the thrills that come with them are efficiently delivered by men account for this sex-biased reporting of female sports events. This is because the audience is interested in reports on male sports events, especially football. In short, a division of labour that varies across cultures is jointly generated by human biology and the environment.



The division of labour underscores the gender roles of every culture, which are mutual aspirations of males and females by consensus. Also, as it has been argued by theorists of expectation states theory such as Ridgeway (2011), such perceptions are derived from regular observations of activities carried out by women and men. People conclude on various psychological characteristics that match these behaviours to the extent that they witness the sexes participating in different types of activities. As women commonly are observed performing housekeeping and nurturing activities in caretaking roles such as mothers, nurses and teachers of young children, people assume that women tend to be nurturing and caring. A basic social cognitive concept known as correspondent inference or bias in correspondence is the possibility of inferencing provisions that conform to observable behaviour. Observations of the social roles of women and men produce conclusions about the features of either sex through this process. However, social perceivers typically prioritize them by seeing them as deeply rooted in the genetics or social history of women and men, instead of seeing these qualities as simply reflecting the stresses of social roles.

### 3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The case of women political disconnectedness as outlined is mirrored into students' campus political scenes. The students' political arena of the Seventh-Day Adventist College of Education, a coeducational teacher education institution at Asokore Koforidua, has over the years assumed a masculine nature. Over the years in the college, female college students do not participate in the College's Student Representative Council's political contest, where the percentage of women in the Students' Representative Council (SRC) ranges between 12.5% and 36%. This is in tandem with Brown et al. (2020) which states that up to 36% access to decision making positions at local levels is held by women.

This situation underscores the gender bias in students' politics and women political disconnectedness. The study, therefore, addresses the problem by investigating into and establishing the rationale for the low political engagement of the female student teachers of the Seventh-Day Adventist College of Education. The findings of this study inform decision making and express the case in literature and add to knowledge on women political disconnectedness.

### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the transformative philosophical worldview with a quantitative approach. The transformative philosophical worldview was upheld for the interest of the study on how women have been marginalized politically and constrained by oppression with social thoughts. Creswell and Creswell (2018) held that the transformative worldview places a premium on the study of lives and the experiences of a group of people who have traditionally been marginalized. According to them, researches premised on the transformative worldview focus on inequalities that contribute to asymmetric relationships of power based on gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual preference, and socioeconomic status. They also argued that research in the transformative worldview connects political and social action to certain inequalities and uses a theory of assumptions about how a programme works and questions the existence of inequality, dominance, and power relationships.

The study adopted the survey research design for the assertion by Creswell and Creswell (2018) who postulated that the survey design is ideal for generalizing from a sample to the entire population, as it offers a quantitative overview of patterns, behaviours or views of a population by studying a sample of that population (Fowler 2008; Creswell & Creswell 2018). The study sought quantitative data by administering an electronic questionnaire of close-ended questions which is based on Bernstein (2005) to sampled female student teachers. The targeted population was all 705 female student teachers of the Seventh-Day Adventist College of Education in Asokore Koforidua in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

A sample of 405 female student teachers was drawn by combined techniques of stratified and convenience sampling. This was necessary because the stratified sampling offered the study the stand to include students from all levels in the College, and as they have almost uniform ideas on the subject of the study, the convenience sampling



was worth adopting for the study. The total 705 female student teachers' population was sectioned on grounds of their academic levels in the College and this, three strata were identified as first year, second year and third-year students. The strata respectfully constitute 272, 229 and 204 female student teachers. The convenience sampling technique was then employed to draw students from each stratum. The number of students from a stratum was determined according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), who posited that for a population of about 220, a sample size of 140 should be adopted; 132 for a population of 200; and about 133 for a population of 202. In all 405 female student teachers were sampled from the three strata of first year, second year and third-year students.

Data from the electronic questionnaire was exported as a CSV file to be able to be read in Microsoft Excel. The data was managed and organized in Excel and was imported into Statistical Package and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 20 to be analysed. The data were analysed in SPSS using descriptive and inferential statistics where means with standard deviations, linear multiple regression, and Pearson two-tailed correlation were computed.

## **5. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **5.1. Demographic characteristics of respondents**

The study collected data on age, students' academic performance by soliciting their CGPA, average monthly income, marital and parental status. The results are presented in Table 1. The study did not consider information on the gender of respondents as only female student teachers of the Seventh-Day Adventist College of Education constituted the study's targeted population. The study found that the ages of respondents ranged from 19 to 29 years. On the ages of students, the study found that the majority (86.2%) of the students fall within the ages of 20 to 25 years. However, there are about 12% of the respondents who fall within the age bracket of 26 to 29 years, with 8% of them being 19 years old. The mean age of students was found to be 22.7 years.

The study further found that the majority of the students are averagely scored in terms of academic performance. The study found that about 45% of the female student teachers have CGPA standings of between 2.1 to 3.0, while 44% were found with CGPA of 3.1 to 4.0 and 10% of them have CGPA below 2.1. On the incomes of students, the study found that the majority (76%) of the students have monthly incomes of below or up to 500 cedis. About 18% of them, however, have monthly incomes from 500 to 1000 cedis while about 6% of them gets over 1000 cedis per month. What the study found is the norm for students in the Ghanaian context. This is because most Ghanaian students do not hold jobs while they are in school and tend to depend on parents and other relatives for survival in terms of finances. The study also found that a few of the students are married with about 94% of them being single. This as well is the custom according to Ghanaian students. This is because while they are still enrolled in school, students tend to focus on academic business but most times consider marriage after securing a job after school.

Finally, sounding awkward when laid side by side with the marital status of students, the study found that about 27% of the students are parents yet about 6% of them have indicated that they are married. The study did not query the type of parents this 27% of students are as the study was only interested in the playing of the parental role and not who has biologically given birth. With this, it cannot be concluded on face value that they meant they are biological parents. It is possible that these students are only performing parental roles but have not given birth to be parents.

**Table 1:** Demographic characteristics of respondents

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 20	8	2.0
20 – 25	349	86.2
26 – 30	48	11.9
<b>Academic level</b>		
1st year	140	34.6
2nd year	133	32.8
3rd year	132	32.6
<b>Academic performance (CGPA)</b>		
1.0 - 2.0	40	9.9
2.1 - 3.0	184	45.4
3.1 - 4.0	181	44.7
<b>Average income</b>		
Less than 500 Cedis	308	76.0
500 to 1000 Cedis	74	18.3
1000 to 2000 Cedis	23	5.7
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	381	94.1
Married	24	5.9
<b>Parental status</b>		
Not a parent	295	72.8
Parent	110	27.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

## 5.2. Political interest and engagement of female student teachers of S. D. A. College of Education

The study sought to build an index for female student teachers' political interest and engagement. A political engagement 'basket' which contained variables as presented in tables 2 and 3 were used to build respectively, the political interest and engagement index. The study found that female student teachers generally have a moderate interest in political issues as the study recorded a mean of 3.1 for political interest index. This is corroborated by a mean of 3.17 for college women political engagement index. According to the study, college women have expressed that they occasionally engage in political activities. As presented in table 3, female student teachers' who responded to the study occasionally discuss political issues with their family and friends. Also, the study revealed that female student teachers somewhat follow political discussions/campaigns and hence, occasionally research about political candidates and or political issues, including manifestos. Female student teachers were identified by the study as persons who rarely sign petitions on political issues.

**Table 2:** Political interest of female student teachers of S. D. A. College of Education

	Mean	Std. Deviation
In general, how much interest do you have in politics?	3.23	1.36
How much interest do you have in the upcoming general election?	2.97	1.33
Political interest index	3.10	1.28

N = 405, Minimum = 1, Maximum = 5

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

However, seeming positive about the subject of the study, female student teachers, as revealed by the study, often exercise their franchise and as such persuade people around them to also take part and vote during elections. On average, the study found that these female student teachers are not always, yet not dissociated from political issues; they are moderately involved and occasionally participate in political issues and happenings.

**Table 3:** Political engagement of female student teachers of S. D. A. College of Education

	Mean	Std. Deviation
In general, how often do you discuss politics with your family and friends?	3.15	1.37
How often do you follow political campaigns/discussions?	3.42	1.37
How often do you research political candidates?	3.39	1.50
How often do you contact public officials to express an opinion?	3.26	1.37
How often do you contact radio/TV to express an opinion?	3.80	1.19
How often do you send e-mails/WhatsApp/SMS/telegram etc to express an opinion?	3.58	1.40
How often do you sign petitions on political issues?	4.01	1.17
How often do you contest in elections?	2.88	1.48
How often do you vote during elections?	2.04	1.60
How often do you persuade others to exercise their votes during elections?	2.19	1.64
Political Engagement Index	1.52	0.75

N = 405, Minimum = 1, Maximum = 5

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

### 5.3. Determinants of political interest and engagement of female student teachers of S. D. A. College of Education

Proceeding, the study established the determinants of female student teachers' political engagement. The study presented a five-point Likert's scale to which sampled female student teachers expressed their agreement and or disagreement. The study found that female student teachers view politics as a 'masculine' affair in which women have little role to play. Supporting the finding of this study, literature on gender roles in politics suggests that stereotypical views of women's roles and abilities can change their political careers, especially when the office that they seek is high powered and masculine, such as a presidency (Murray, 2010).

Supplementing the theoretical background and the findings of the current study, Huddy and Capelos (2002) and Thomas and Bittner (2017) argue that common gender stereotypes present women as warm, gentle and kind, while men are seen as aggressive, assertive and decisive; masculine stereotypes are more desirable for political and elected office than feminine stereotypes, especially at the highest levels (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993; Thomas & Bittner, 2017).

However, these female college students were indifferent when their views were sought on the statement that ‘women see men as superiors’.

**Table 4: Factors militating against female student teachers’ political participation**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Women see politics as a ‘dirty game’	1.49	0.71
Women lack confidence in themselves	2.30	0.77
The societal perception of a woman's place hampers women's political participation	1.54	0.77
Poverty and or lower financial status of women limits their interest in political engagements	1.25	0.43
The burden of domestic tasks hampers women's political participation	1.24	0.43
Limited or absence of well-developed educational and training systems for women leadership	1.88	0.68
Politics is more masculine than feminine	2.09	0.62
Some school policies do not favour women participation in politics	3.02	1.60
Women see men as superior	3.11	1.09
Electorates approve of men in front positions than women	1.52	0.75

N = 405, Minimum = 1, Maximum = 5

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

Also reporting female student teachers’ indifference, the study found a mean of 3.02 for the statement ‘some school policies do not favour women participation in politics. This is because the study identified that there are no College policies which restrain female student teachers from engaging in politics. However, respondents expressed moderate to strong agreement to the fact that there are limited or absence of well-developed educational and training systems for women leadership. This suggests that College Authorities should consider hosting periodic leadership training and seminars for students especially for women to empower them to be able to stand to and face political battles, and to assume leadership mantles.

Characteristically of Africans, the study found that female student teachers strongly agree that the societal ideology of a “woman’s place” hampers female students’ political participation. According to this common ideology, the place for a woman is the kitchen, not the political arena. Supporting this, respondents agreed that the burden of keeping up with domestic or household chores hampers women’s political participation. These corroborate the respondents’ assertion that politics is more masculine than feminine. Sounding like a bias against femininity, respondents indicated their agreement to the assertion that electorates approve of men’s dominance in political scenes and as a result, they tend to vote in favour of male political candidates over female candidates. Lastly, like most other studies, the study found that poverty and or low financial status of female student teachers limit their political participation.

Adding to this, the general perception that politics is perceived as a dirty game by women limits their interest in the game of politics and hence hamper their political engagement. As presented in table 4, the study recorded a mean of 1.49 indicating that indeed female student teachers, like most other women, bear the perception that politics is a ‘dirty’ game. Recording a mean of 2.3, the study found that female student teachers moderately agree that women lack confidence in themselves and hence their low political engagement. Laying this side by side with a thesis in Political Science by Blomgren (2010) of the School of Social Science of the Linnaeus University, the findings of this study are affirmed. According to Emilie's thesis just as found by this study, traditional values which are equated to the societal ideology or public opinion, lack of confidence and or ambition, low priority of gender equality and lack

of civic education for women, social trust in men in the field of politics, limited economic or financial avenue for women political empowerment were identified as the factors that militate against women’s political participation.

#### 5.4. Effects of demographic characteristics of female student teachers on their political engagement

It is evident from Table 5 that the aspects of demographics of female college student teachers used in the regression analysis; age, academic performance, financial status, the marital and parental status of respondents collectively explain 27% of the variance in their political engagement index.

**Table 5:** Model summary of demographic characteristics that predict the political engagement index of female students of S. D. A. College of Education

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R <sup>2</sup> Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.536 <sup>a</sup>	.287	.277	.64023	.287	26.749	6	398	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Parental status, Age, Academic level in the College, Financial status, Marital status, Academic performance

**Source:** Fieldwork (2020)

Impliedly, the demographic characteristics of female student teachers were good predictors of their political participation index. Given this, the study further examined the relative effect of each demographic characteristic on the political engagement index of female student teachers. Uniquely, the ages of female college students significantly contributed to the prediction of their political engagement index as 13.5% of the variance in female student teachers’ political engagement index is explained by the ages of female student teachers of S. D. A. College of Education. Significantly and positively correlating with political engagement index, the use of ages of female student teachers is supported by Holt, Shehata, Strömbäck and Ljungberg (2013) as a determiner of political interest and engagement. According to them, political interest, measured in terms of interest in politics in general, and as interest in the election campaigns, increases with age. However, the case with age is witnessed from a different perspective by Quintelier (2007). According to her, there exists a lifecycle effect on political participation. This is so because as her study found, people become more active and politically engaged as they grow older (up until their fifties). However, once passed their fifties, their interests and engagement in politics-related activities decline (Quintelier, 2007).

Female student teachers’ academic performance and academic level as demographic characteristics make significant and non-significant contributions respectively towards predicting their political engagement index. The scope of female student teachers’ academic performance in the study explains 10.4% of the variance in their political engagement index, while their academic level explains 0.032%. Justifying the findings of this study, Salter, Kuemmerling, Bond and Sabates (2017) have indicated that, the learning process itself can bring about increased self-esteem (identity capital) which can create greater social cohesion. Increased self-esteem logically influences individual’s quest with political engagement.

**Table 6:** Effects of female student teachers' demographic characteristics on their political engagement index

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	T	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity	
	Coefficients		Coefficients			Zero-	Partial	Part	Toleran	VIF
	B	Std. Error	Beta							
(Constant)	-3.976	.446		-8.922	.000					
Age	.110	.013	.374	8.651	.000	.393	.398	.366	.959	1.043
Academic performance	.577	.076	.448	7.576	.000	.121	.355	.321	.511	1.957
Academic level in the College	-.17	.039	-.018	-.428	.669	-.051	-.021	-.018	.995	1.005
Financial status	.074	.057	.056	1.283	.200	.027	.064	.054	.957	1.045
Marital status	.261	.155	.082	1.684	.093	.157	.084	.071	.758	1.319
Parental status	.744	.102	.444	7.330	.000	.162	.344	.309	.493	2.030

a. Dependent Variable: Political Engagement Index

\*p<0.05 significant

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

A Pearson two-tailed correlation analysis on the academic performance of female student teachers, the level they are in the College and their political engagement index reveals a weak and non-significant negative correlation between the academic levels of female student teachers in the College and their political engagement index. As well, the study presents a weak and non-significant negative correlation between female student teachers' level in the College and their academic performance. However, their political engagement index correlates positively yet not significant with their academic performance. This implies that as female student teachers progress in the College by getting promoted to higher levels, their political engagement index declines. Despite this, the higher their CGPA, the likelihood that they would maintain a higher political engagement index. By this, the study reveals that female student teachers of S. D. A. College of Education would still be interested in politics as they get promotions in the College, on condition that they satisfy the caveat of higher or better academic performance.

Supporting the positive correlation between academic performance and political engagement as this study found, Burns and Verba (2002) explained that education increases political engagement more or less directly through the acquisition of skills such as the ability to speak and write and the knowledge of how to cope in an organizational environment, both of which are important to political participation. Not wholly supporting the findings of the current study, Lewis-Beck, Norpoth, Jacoby and Weisberg (2008) indicate that a stronger interest in politics, a greater concern for elections, greater faith in one's position as a citizen and a deeper dedication to the standard of being a good citizen comes with more formal education. Through this, they concluded that education enhances skills and awareness that can influence political engagement and effectiveness; factors that all eventually cause involvement.

**Table 7:** Correlation matrix for academic performance, academic level and political engagement index of female students

		Academic Performance	Academic Level in the College	Political Engagement Index
<b>Academic Performance</b>	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	405		
<b>Academic Level in the College</b>	Pearson Correlation	-.006	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.901		
	N	405	405	
<b>Political Engagement Index</b>	Pearson Correlation	.121*	-.051	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	.304	
	N	405	405	405

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Source:** Fieldwork (2020)

Related studies are however skewed towards the association of level of education at the expense of academic performance with political interest and engagement. A study by Hillygus (2005) bridges that gap by looking at and associating academic score or performance with political interest and engagement. According to Hillygus (2005), the findings on the effects of Scholastic Aptitude/Assessment Test (SAT) scores on political involvement of persons are to some extent surprising. If the combination of mathematical and verbal capacities constitutes overall intellectual capacity, then more intelligence does not seem to improve potential political participation. There is no proof that general intelligence affects political participation, given the opposing effects of mathematics and verbal SAT scores on democratic political involvement. Buttressing this, after all, he claimed, politics is a game of language, persuasion, and oral written communication; a person must have the verbal acuity to express a stance in order to politically persuade better. The relationship between politics and language has long been stressed by political theorists. The result of verbal aptitude, by contrast, is exactly the opposite. Some four years after completing college, people who performed well in the verbal parts of the SAT before starting college were significantly more likely to engage in politics. It is probably of little surprise that verbal capacity is a significant determinant of the degree of political involvement of a person. This as well explains the weak, and non-significant correlation coefficient that the study has found.

This is so because the general CGPA which is used as the standard in this study includes scores from courses and programmes that are not directly relevant to the scope of political activities. The financial status of female student teachers makes no significant contributions to the prediction of their political engagement index. Only 0.3% of the variance in the female student teachers' political engagement index is explained by their financial status. Yielding a correlation coefficient of 0.027, the finding of this study is supported by Perrin and Gillis (2019) who found that low income is associated with less likelihood of political participation expressed by participation in elections and or voting. Also, Burns and Verba (2002) cited in Onken and Lange (2014) posits that the wealthier the family, the more likely members are to have access to newspapers and other political resources, which influence their engagement with politics. According to them, higher family economic wealth and advanced occupational history of parents encourage a social climate that stimulates political participation of young people.



Also, with a significance value of 0.089, the marital status of female student teachers' makes no significant contributions towards predicting their political engagement index as only 0.52% of the variance of their political engagement index is explained by their marital status. This aspect of the demographic characteristics of female student teachers of S. D. A. College of Education is identified by the regression model as making no significant contribution to predicting their political engagement index. This may be the result of the study also identifying that almost all (94%) of the female student teachers are single and hence the influence of their marital status in predicting their interest and engagement in politics is infinitesimal if not zero. Despite not contributing to the prediction of political engagement index as the regression model has identified, van Zoonen (1998, 2006) viewed that women legislators are more likely to be single.

Lastly, it is known from the regression model that the parental status of female student teachers makes a significant contribution to the prediction of their political engagement index by explaining 9.6% of the variance in their political engagement index. In affirmation of the findings of the study, van Zoonen (1998, 2006) posit that studies have demonstrated that women legislators are more likely to be childless, unlike their male counterparts who are always or often family men. The financial and marital status of female student teachers as found by the regression model makes no significant unique contributions to the prediction of the political engagement index of the female student teachers of S. D. A. College of Education. This may be due to overlap with other variables in the regression model and or with variables that were not captured by the study.

In all, the academic performance of female student teachers makes the strongest unique contribution to predicting their political engagement index. This is followed by their parental status and ages. The financial and marital status and the academic level of female student teachers of S. D. A. College of Education made the least contributions to predicting their political engagement index.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The standard of democracy can be measured by the extent to which it is inclusive and representative of social interests, including its reactivity to the interests of women. Women are underrepresented in parliaments and are more politically disconnected at every socio-political level. Over the years in S. D. A. College of Education, SRC politics and elections have witnessed low women participation. With an attempt to establishing the rationale for the case witnessed in the College's SRC politics, it was revealed that female student teachers of the College have a moderate interest in political engagements. Female students of S. D. A. College of Education are not politically isolated yet are not always and actively engaged in politics. The perception that politics is a dirty game, the burden of domestic tasks, the masculine nature of politics and political activities, the general preferences for male political candidates, limited or absence of well-developed training schemes for women empowerment training and the public perception of women's place as home keepers were the primary reasons for which female student teachers of S. D. A. College of Education are not always interested in engaging themselves politically. The demographic characteristics of female student teachers of S. D. A. College of Education predict and explain their low political involvements. In general, 27.8% of their political engagement index is explained by female student teachers' demographic characteristics.

It is recommended that society should rethink gender roles. In this, the perception that the place of a woman is in home-making should be reviewed. Household chores such as cooking and cleaning should be seen as life-supporting activities which either gender can perform but not entirely be made a general role of females. Women empowerment schemes should be laid in colleges as well as other institutions of higher learning, where seminars, education and training programmes which will build confidence in women and groom them for leadership roles to make them viable for political competition. More space should be created for civic associations and groups for women, including feminist ones. Women's collective mobilization should be championed as it has been crucial for the advancement and protection of gender equality. Healthy political competition between male and female student teachers should



be encouraged by establishing a reasonable quota for women for political representation. Feminist demands should be heeded to and as well, liberal financial schemes should be set up to support or fund or ease the funding of political activities for women who have exhibited political interest. Husbands are hereby advised that they should do everything feasible and reasonable to support their political-oriented spouses. This, in a way will limit the 'mummy' problem.

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