

# Critical analysis of women participation in Politics

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# Paper Focus

- Historic trend in terms of women participation(one party rule – multiparty era)
- Feminist perspective/Justification for the need for more women in politics
- Legal framework
- 50-50 campaign experience: did it add any value to the increase in 2009?
- Conclusion and recommendation

# AN OVERVIEW OF ISSUES ON WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

- Key observation: In Malawi women constitute the majority of the population (51%) but are relatively invisible in key political decision making processes and men continue to dominate.

# Table 1: Women composition at Parliamentary level

## 1966-1992

Year	Total composition of Parliament	Elected members of Parliament		Nominated Mps		Total composition		% of female members of parliament
		M	F	M	F	M	F	
1966	52	47	1	4	0	51	1	1.96
1972	58	50	1	7	0	57	1	17
1977	78	64	5	0	9	64	14	17.94
1982	94	49	8	14	23	63	31	32.97
1987	92	74	5	12	1	86	6	6.5
1992	102	79	3	15	7	86	10	9.6

# Trend of Women representation in National Assembly (1994-2009)

Year	men	Women	total
1994 National	167	10(6%)	177
1999 National	174	18 (9.3%)	192
2004 National	160	27 (14.4%)	187
2009 National	150	42 (22%)	193

# What do these figures mean?

- Significant increase in women participation is there when there is deliberate efforts
- Political will is necessary
- Deliberate affirmative action is key (legislated and at party level)

# Trend of Women Representation in Cabinet (1994-1999)

Year	Number of Full Ministers	Number of Deputies
1994	1	1
1995	1	1
1996	2	1
1997	1	2
1998	2	2
1999	2	2

# Cabinet positions as of 2008

Position	Total	Male	Male %	Female	Female %
Cabinet Ministers	20	16	80	4	20
Deputy Ministers	21	18	85.6	3	14

# Recent cabinet (2009)

Position	Total	Male	Male %	Female	Female %
Cabinet Ministers	22	16	72	6	27
Deputy Ministers	20	15	75	5	25

# Women Cabinet post trend

- Evidence of Positive trend
- Political will is key
- Anticipate more appointments – a pool of qualified women are there

# **Why is women access to echelons of power an issue for Malawi**

- Four arguments have been put forward and viz:
- Democratic justice
- Interest representation
- Resource utilisation
- Empowering process

# 50-50 campaign: Malawi experience in 2009

- **What is it all about?**
- A vigilant deliberate campaign to meet the SADC and AU protocol 50/50 representation target by 2015
- Rationale:-In absence of affirmative action- 50/50 only way to meet this threshold by 2015
- MoWCD in collaboration with NGOGCN developed the programme

# 50/50 major strategies

- capacity building for women aspirants to run successful campaigns
- Campaign boost (campaign start up fund, T-shirts and Caps)
- Community mobilisation and candidate profiling
- Lobbying and advocacy with political leadership
- Support to female candidate monitors

# Key players and roles in 50/50

- MoWCD – provision of policy direction, coordination (did it play its role? Coordination vs implementation)
- NGOGCN & other CSOs-Implementation of the programme (... any issues of conflict of interests!!, timely distributing of campaign material?)
- Devt partners (technical support & funding, how? Was it adequate? why fund such programme?, challenges- duplication of fund?, delay in disbursement, )

# Political party role

- Appointment and nomination of female candidates –(other parties have set a pace,: fielding more women, presidential & running mates
- Manifestos- gender not adequately reflected in many manifestos, full of pledges without clear-strategies
- Management of primary elections.: -Marred by a lot of irregularities e.g last minute tactics:- sudden change of venue, harassment of unfavoured candidates, delayed primaries in some parties etc. This worked to the disadvantage of women.

# Was a 50/50 a success?

- With no affirmative action coupled with First Past the post system 22% is significant
- The number of women contested in 2009 was huge (237) compared to 154 in 2004.
- Before the primaries, NGOGCN registered over 400 women aspirants to contest at the primary level of political parties.
- Campaign has set the tone

# Conclusion and recommendations

- Empowering women to break through the glass ceiling requires action on many fronts (esp deliberate actions like quotas)
- Evidence is there from all the countries in Africa that have surpassed the 30% threshold (e.g case of Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Argentina etc)
- Review of the electoral laws to ensure that deliberate legislation stating clearly the proportions of female representation is a must

# recommendation

- The 50/50 campaign need to be fully embraced by political parties themselves. Clearly outlining in their manifestos and party policies, because unless political parties introduce quotas or are obliged to do so by law, the 50% target remains in question
- Establish a clear and well-focused mentoring scheme for aspiring women candidates

# Recommendation

- The next programmes for increasing women representation in politics need to spell out different strategies to meet different needs of incumbent female MPs and those campaigning for the first time
- 50-50 programme for the country should be treated as a deliberate and long term strategy rather than as an emergent stand alone programme. This will ensure gender responsiveness of the whole electoral process

# Thought provoking qns?

- Increased women representation in decision making ..what does it mean for democracy?
- Does affirmative action enhance women participation? Whose interests are women representing? Who decide on type of candidate entering govt via special measures? Is this good for democracy?