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WOMEN AND POLITICS: Underrepresentation of Women in National Parliament in Developing States

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I. INTRODUCTION

“Can a woman be a Prime Minister?” My answer would have been different if I had been asked this question 10 years ago. Generally women’s political behavior has received less attention, and women’s low representation in politics is a global concern. The stagnation of women in accordance with everything has too often been explained in both popular media and political spheres with reference to cultural and social traditions. Be it in the form of Hindu suttee, African female circumcision, Chinese foot binding, dowry system, or honor killing, are all misogynistic acts where women usually are the victims and men the perpetrators. Even though such practices are not so prominent in today’s world, we cannot deny the fact that there is a clear gender disproportion in the field of politics. I was particularly concerned by the fact that women are underrepresented in the parliament considering that equal representation of both men and women in the decision making body are key to pass down any brilliant laws or regulations in the country. Moreover, a balanced representation is important in decision making levels to have an equitable and sustainable development, to make sure both men and women are taken into consideration. Therefore, the main aim of my paper is to study why women’s representation in the national parliament is low in some developing countries.

The gender stereotype, which argues that women on purposefully avoid politics, has consistently been regarded as one of the most intuitive hypotheses in political science. However, despite much attention, scholars have repeatedly found little empirical support for its effect because stereotype is difficult to quantify. With very few women in politics, I assume that the society we live in holds the false belief that women are, by nature, less capable than men and discriminates against women in all sectors. People’s mindset about difference in a gender roles well justify that social and cultural norms play a role in creating gender a disparity in the society

which tends to favor men over women for any leadership roles. Women are less ambitious because they are raised to be nurturers, whereas young boys are taught to be ambitious. Through my rough assumptions mentioned above, I was motivated to study and research on the determinants of why women's representation is relatively low compared to men's representation in some developing countries. Therefore, in this paper, I attempt to analyze stereotype, drawing on different theoretical components to measure the concept of stereotype. I conducted a mixed-method bringing in the case study on Bhutan. The main purpose of the case study is to provide a more thorough analysis and provide supports for my theoretical framework I have developed in this paper. From the case study, I expect to examine the underlying stereotype that explains why only few women are active in the political sphere. Therefore, collecting data on different variables that would help measure stereotype and bringing in the case study of Bhutan enabled me to develop a plausible explanation to why there is underrepresentation of women in politics in some developing countries.

My interest in developing a case study on Bhutan was because, like elsewhere in developing states, the number of women in Bhutan contesting for election and being elected is comparatively low. Even though the constitution and electoral laws of Bhutan are gender neutral, the number of women in decision making including politics is very negligible. Some might question that should we be doing something special for women in this egalitarian society, why not for men? Nonetheless, if we leave it up to the desire and want of women and do nothing about it, this trend will be followed which will push women exclusively in the private domain. It is very crucial that we build in positive trend for the younger generation, and eradicate the gender disparity in any forums. Given that more than 50% of the population in Bhutan is women, there needs to be a series of explanations to interpret the relationship between women voters and

small number of women being elected. Therefore, I decided to gather different perspectives of Bhutanese men and women regarding stories of their political journey and their observations on the challenges candidates face along the way. Conducting fieldwork in Bhutan enabled me to address this issue. The detail about the case study will be discussed in the following sections. My quantitative research suggests that a higher rate of women labor force leads to higher rate of women representation in the national parliament. Additionally, voter turnout and legislated candidate quota have a significant effect on the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament.

Thus, in this paper, I will first discuss the previous research of women's low representation in politics. Then I will develop theories that surround the stereotype specifically and discuss how these theories lead to underrepresentation of women in politics, with the case study on Bhutan to justify. Followed by this, I will develop a research design and test my hypotheses by running ordinary least square (OLS) regression and subsequently analyze the findings of my research in relation to the hypotheses assumed. Finally, this paper also suggests some recommendations and policy implications drawing on my strength and limitations of the paper.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many previous researchers have investigated different reasons behind underrepresentation of women in politics, but not much has changed to increase women's participation in politics or to boost women's leadership in general. However, this is not to deny the fact that progress have been made by women in every fields or to undermine those prominent women figures in politics currently. Even though advances have been made, most countries have

not reached to a level where people feel comfortable about women's representation like that of men's. In this section, I will review some literature by different scholars who studies different factors that answers the question to what hold women back from taking active part in the field of politics as men.

A difference in gender roles at home is one of the most common explanations given for women's low representation in politics. Although some researchers tend to examine factors other than social values, many findings tend to revolve around the historical social construction of gender that acts as a barrier for women to come forward in politics. Irving (1975) focuses on gender inequalities which contribute to gender disparities in politics because "male dominance, and the ideologies and institutions sustaining it, have led to the identification of politics as both masculine and the prerogative of men" (1975). Because of the societal expectation of the traditional gender role, it results in sex stereotyping and it's unlikely for those women who come forward to win the game from their male counterparts. Similarly, Scott (1978) investigates the questions of women's slow advancement to participate in the democratic process, and he explains that "women are said to suffer from a social handicap, be family centered and deviate from the norm." Men, having been the dominating figure in the social system for decades, women are require to take up multiple roles of mother, daughter, wife, and home-maker. "It appears to be a trend in common knowledge that women are first of all linked to their family and the people surrounding them, and secondly to their professions" (Zamfirache, 2010). Therefore, women find it hard to balance time between home and their full-time career contributing to lower rate of women representation in politics.

Shvedova identifies three main obstacles women face in articulating and shaping their interests in politics. Comparable to Irving (1975), Scott (1978) and Zamfireche (2010), Shvedova

also points out that ideological and psychological hindrance as one among the three main obstacles for women in entering politics. Shvedova further divides ideological and psychological hindrances into traditional roles, lack of confidence, the perception of politics as 'Dirty' and the role of mass media. Women still find it difficult to balance between work and family because of the traditional ideology which emphasize that "women should only play the role of 'working mother', which is generally low-paid and apolitical" (Shvedova, 44). Habitually women adopt many of these socially stereotyped ideas and find it hard to challenge these expectations. A more recent study that focused on women's primary role as mothers and housewives finds that it restricts them from exploring the outside world include (Foley, 2013). Women's subordination in many cultural contexts which largely enclosed them into domestic spheres holds a prejudice over women becoming leaders or entering into political arena. He finds it problematic in the lack of proportionality in the incidence of women leaders and concerns the level of bias and restriction in the stations of elevation to leadership positions. These social and cultural barriers, including religious ideology, discourage women from entering politics in a variety of ways and degrees.

Another potential explanation given is the gender gap that appears on self-perception level and self-confidence level. Irrespective of equal opportunities available to both men and women in almost all the developing countries, there seem to be inherent barriers preventing women from walking out of their conventional roles. Lawless and Fox (2011) propose an idea regarding people's perceptions about the political arena being deeply embedded by culture and traditional norms. They find out that "Despite the comparable qualification and experience, accomplished women are substantially less likely than similar suited men to perceive themselves as qualified" (2010). Deeply engrained by a culture that tends to reinforce traditional gender roles, women identify themselves as marginalized group, especially in the field of politics.

Another author demonstrates how men and women think about themselves has an effect on identifying one's role in the society. Therefore, "it is not only an issue regarding the public, but also regarding the way oneself understands his or her roles" (Zamfirache, 2010) which does not allow women to think beyond the horizon of private sphere of life, like the family. In addition, Lawless and Fox, further identify that women are less confident and more risk averse than their male counterparts. "Not only are women more likely than men to doubt that they have skills and traits necessary for electoral politics, but they are also more likely to doubt their abilities to engage in campaign mechanics" (2010). Fear of failure often dissuades women from even starting, and this is one of the biggest obstacles women will have to overcome to increase women's representation in politics. Even the current composition of political spheres in many regions give rise to an idea that leadership is intrinsically male-oriented and "women have found themselves confronted by the practices based upon cultural assumptions that are circular in their logic and exclusionary in their effects" (Foley, 2013). Therefore, women internalize themselves as not worthy of being a leader and conceive politics as a male domain.

Many scholars emphasize that the absence of women from prominent political roles discourages young women to challenge the notion that leadership and politics are male centered areas. Campbell and Wolbrecht, have the same findings in two different articles, "Leading by Examples: Females Members of Parliament as Political Role Models" (2007) and "See Jane Run: Women Politicians as Role Models for Adolescents" (2006). Since current statistics show that women's representation in politics is comparatively low, young adolescent girls find it hard to look up to male politicians as an example. Their studies suggest that more number of female politicians may act as true role models, inspiring and encouraging other women and young girls to be politically active themselves, thereby developing their mindset that politics are an open

forum for all genders, races and classes. For instance, Campbell and Wolbretcht, finds out that “where there are more female members of parliament (MPs), adolescent girls are more likely to discuss politics with friends and to intend to participate in politics as adults, and adult women more likely to discuss and participate in politics” (2007). Gillespie and Spohn, (1987) carries out similar study on “Adolescents’ Attitudes towards Women in Politics: The Effects of Gender and Race.” They find out that “female students have very liberal attitudes toward women seeking high political office, while male students retain more traditional attitudes.” Younger generations, who are in the process of learning are more likely to normalize this idea of gender disparity in political arena and will influence them in the way they try to fit themselves in the society. Therefore, with fewer women in the parliament, adolescent girls are more likely to perceive themselves as less capable to take active part in politics.

The challenges women face during the campaign in politics is another explanation given to why there are fewer women coming forward in politics. Fox and Lawless, also recognize that women are discouraged by the challenges they face during the campaigns which decrease their willingness to participation in politics. It is crucial in politics for a candidate to be accessible to every corner of their constituency and interact with all people. For example, if one’s constituency is located in a remote site without access to modern transportation, it becomes harder for female candidates to reach out to the people. When they find themselves totally engaged and committed to work outside family, they feel completely neglected from home. They either have to neglect work or family. Women still remain responsible for the majority of childcare and household tasks, which makes it difficult for them to reach out to people. They hypothesize that “women react more negatively than men to many aspects of modern campaign” (2011) because women are more concern about how people might react and not so confident. Therefore, women just try

to give the right messages that are right for the people and the country. However, when women have to undergo these challenges it make them feel that politics is not a good option for them. Because of this, politics is seen as more of men's world and women usually remain non-political or inactive in the political arena.

In fact, some scholars have recognized very interesting point of how mass media plays a significant role in portraying women politicians, and how it affects their participation in the parliament. Media has a greater role in presenting the candidates because of its power to reach out to the mass and their influence on public opinions and public awareness. Similar ideas were put forward by Zamfirache (2010), and Shvedova on the role of mass media. "It appears that media has an important role in presenting the women politicians by emphasizing the appearance, therefore neglecting the more significant aspects, like the political agenda" (Zamfirache, 2010). The demonstrated gender inequality in the media has significant consequences because people generally create one's identity in relation to the images and information they get. Media's coverage is frequent and focused on the topics such as fashion design, beauty pageant, film stars or art and beauty with respect to woman; however, women as leaders or role models are rare. When media repeatedly show images of women as victims, dependent, sexualized, or in domestic roles, people tend to normalize these ideas, and it can seem unusual for women to be a leader or work outside of their homes. This can affect both men and women's idea about which careers women might be good at or how important it is for women to be attractive. Constantly portraying women in a low paid job or as a home-makers, and "lack of proper coverage of women's issues and the activities of women MPs, this contributes to a lack of public awareness about them, which in turn translates into a lack of constituency for women MPS" (Shvedova, 48). Therefore, women politicians tend to act more masculine in their speech and image in order

to lessen the fact that they are women because of the recurrence of media's depiction of politics as a male norm. This idea was further advanced by Foley (2013), who talk about how media privileges style over substance for women leaders. Since media is a powerful tool that provides people with information and it reflects our society, it has a greater role in telling the stories of women politicians and maximizing the coverage of events and organizations of interest to women.

Out of direct and indirect barriers that prevent women's political participation and their ability to fully engage in public life, institutional structures are identified as the most significant barrier by Hoodfar and Tajali (2011). These constraints include political systems, electoral rules, and political party structures which are seen as discriminatory against women. They refer to the mechanisms within the structure of political parties work to limit qualified and experienced female candidates coming forward to join decision making positions (Hoodfar and Tajali, 2011). Some political parties often work to undermine efforts to make politics inclusive making it more gender specific. In order to solve this issue, Markham (2013) attempted to look at the institutional structures and strategies to improve women's political participation. Some of the measures she suggest are special temporary measures, such as quotas and also trying electoral systems other than proportional representation (PR), which can play a larger role in women's political participation (Markham, 2013). Parties can increase the proportion of nominated females by reforming the formally created rules of a party.

Finally, due to the underrepresentation of women in politics, quotas are often adopted by some countries as a means to address this imbalance. Gender quotas are the policy designed to advance the political representation of women, which are a minority group, by reserving a certain number of seats for women. Some people feel that gender quota is demeaning women's

capabilities and erodes the confidence of women in general. However, some scholars recognize quota reservation as an important mechanism which functions as a gateway for women to enter the political field and explain that countries with quota reservation have high number of women in politics than those countries without. M. Tripp and Kang (2008) and M. Hughes' (2011) studies are useful in understanding the impacts of implementation of gender quota. Hughes finds out that "without the assistance of quotas, minority women's representation is abysmally low. Their odds of election are 1 in 14 compared to majority men, and 1 in 3 compared to majority women. But with assistance of quotas, some or all of these odds improved" (2011). Some countries have implemented some form of quotas as a measure to increase women's representation in the parliament. "The use of reserved seats, in particular, has the most favorable results in terms of outcomes for female legislators, although they are more often used in authoritarian and semi-authoritarian contexts" (Tripp and Kang, 2008). Likewise, Pande and Ford, (2011) also talk about how countries with set target for reserved seats help guarantee an increase in female leadership in the parliament. Countries like, "India, the Philippines, Burundi, and Eritrea have set higher levels of 30% and above, which contributed to a dramatic increase of women leaders associated with legislation of reserved seats at either the national or sub-national level" (2011). Therefore, it is essential for any country to adopt quota system for women to have access to political rights and have equal representation as that of men in the decision making body.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A lot of previous research has demonstrated that voters hold a gender-based stereotype when voting. One of the driving factors leading to underrepresentation of women in politics is gender-based stereotypes that voters hold, which places certain strategic obligations on female candidates. People associate a pattern of behavior and pass on certain beliefs based on pre-existing knowledge of gender. For instance, people associate men with careers and expect women to be practically good at care-giving, responsive to sympathy and approval following certain cultural norms, and less competent than men. These invisible barriers are based on the prejudiced stereotypes that stop women from accessing the ranks of power. Why should we actually care about gender stereotypes and biases? Stereotype is not seen as problematic until we apply those stereotypes beyond that quick assumption, because it leads to a complete undermining of the capabilities of those women who are equally competent as men, and for some women who can defeat men. It becomes problematic when almost all major industries and institutions are run by men, and limitations being applied to women who aspire to take up men's role, and until it become accepted as the norm. Therefore, stereotypes serve to unfairly distribution of work, sometimes unintentionally keeping qualified and capable people out of jobs or positions of power.

Gender stereotyping is problematic and an issue of concern because it prevents the advancement of women empowerment, limits a person's full potential, and conveys the false message that the normative is the natural. Because of the stereotypes, men and women tend to ignore their natural traits; instead they try and live up to the society's expectations, learning the expected gendered behaviors. It then conveys the message that this is the way things are because it has always been like this. Because of the fact that gender stereotypes are taken as a natural

ideology, the society that we live in organizes its structures and services according to this understanding. As a result, people feel threatened in situations which they believe that their performances are against society's expectations. Even for those women who could successfully overcome this obstacle, they are seen as more passionate on the issues like women's issues, domestic violence, and child abuse and not so forthcoming on the issues of force and violence in the parliament. The primary assumption here is that voters do not seem to vote for female candidates underestimating their potential in the fields of decision making. Voters are blinded by a gender-based stereotype and voters tend to favor male over female candidates as their leaders, whereas those women who come forward are seen as being bad nurturers. Therefore, I will draw on different theoretical components to measure stereotypes and explore how it affects women's participation in politics.

As women comprise half of the world's population, their contribution in social and economic development in the country is recognized by their labor force participation. Women are confined to the domestic sphere, and their participation in public life is constrained by their traditional roles as housewives and mothers. When women have to run the households, it keeps them busy and it becomes difficult to balance between a career and a family. Therefore, women prefer to stay home and manage the family, making sure that children are well taken care with love and care. As a result of women's self-sacrificing natures, less number of women is seen in labor market. Since we have no working women or apparently less number of working women, women's contribution towards labor force is very low.

The nature of women's labor force participation or any kind of works likely to empower women; have been matched by improving their status and decision-making within their families, increasing their economic or financial autonomy and limiting domesticity. These women in the

labor force have more possibilities to engage with organizations and institutions which have strong political ties. Thus, when women are involved in labor force, women tend to work closely with political institutions which increase their desire to be politically active. By engaging in certain paid jobs and money they call their own, women get the liberty to imagine the future of their own. It gives them the courage to stand up against their husbands, in-laws or even their parents, to claim their own share of rights and to decide what to and not to do. Women who are engaged in any labor force are not only better able to assert their rights, but also are more likely to have a significant impact on empowering their children. So women in labor force provide them the ability to fully enjoy human rights and raise their voice, which in turn increases the likelihood of women representation in politics. For example, a study conducted by Stockemer and Byrne, suggest a positive link between the rate of women in the workforce and the political representation of women, in which more women in the workforce ought to increase the pool of female candidates from which parties can draw upon (Stockemer and Byrne, 2011). Therefore, women labor force has a positive effect on women's representation in politics.

The participation of women in the labor force is in itself an important social and development goal, but also crucial from an economic growth and a stability perspective. However, there are many obstacles that prevent women from becoming economically active in the unlevelled playing field. Doing house work is supported by social norms and recognized as women's primary job. Moreover, house work is perceived almost as an occupation by women themselves. Even for those women who work outside, housework is still considered as their natural responsibility, in addition to their involvement in outside work. As a result, it creates a gender imbalance in labor force and perpetuate gender stereotype. When women bear the brunt of the unpaid but unavoidable domestic chores, it reinforces the notion that women cannot walk

away from that imaginary line drawn. As a result, most women do not prefer to participate in the labor force with the reason that they are already occupied with their household chores. When women get involved in daily domestic tasks like childcare and household chores, it fails to break down pre-existing stereotypes, but adds onto it. Therefore, roles attributed to women in the family based on social stereotypes, reduces women's labor force participation, which has a direct correlation with women's participation in politics. When women are bounded with family commitments and confined to the most vulnerable jobs, there are no examples to contradict stereotypes, and coming forward to contest in politics is far from their reach. Therefore, I propose that higher rate of women in labor force participation will increase women representation in politics because women's economic empowerment is linked to their decision making power.

Fertility rate is negatively correlated with women labor force participation. Researchers have found out that "over the last decades labor market participation of women increased, while fertility declined in most advanced countries" (Boca at all, 3). Women's primary task is recognized as child-bearing. With child-bearing comes an additional responsibility of giving care to a child along with the already assigned role of doing household chores. Therefore, when women are busy with their nurturing role, this leaves little or no time on the additional tasks of public services including politics. In addition, most women almost always are guilty about not being there to take care of their family if they are engaged in some public affairs, while men never have to deal with not being there for the family. Therefore, women tend to take nurturing role as their full time job not having to challenge themselves in terms of balancing time with family. Thus, fertility rate has a negative effect on the proportion of seats held by women in the parliament.

Fertility rate, growing at an increasing rate is an issue of concern for many countries and they come up with different measures to reduce birth rates. Higher number of women in labor force helps achieve their economic independence and reduces the need to have children, which help reduce fertility rate. Lower fertility rate can be a clear indication that gender stereotypes are changing as well, because it is a sign that women are exposed to opportunities to work outside the home. As fertility rate declines, stereotypes and ideas that keep women home also declines. When women are economically empowered as men, women tend to have access over fertility decision. Women who have agency over fertility decision can choose when to have kids or choose not to have them at all, thereby having enough time for themselves to engage in public activities.

However, in reality, the discriminatory practices experienced by women at home and at work still exist. Women are stereotyped to be homemaker, producing and raising children. When women are less empower or economically dependent on someone else, they do not have a greater say in family decision making, including infertility decisions. As a result, women stick to their unstable job of child bearing and doing household works and child caring. With responsibility of childcare and household work, women cannot achieve their own desired standard of living and are forced to depend on their male partner's earnings. With economically dependent on others and so many responsibilities to take care of, it is less likely for women to come forward. Women who just work inside the house have less potential to develop their interest in politics and to understand how political institutions function. When most of the women choose to stay home, with the primary task of nurturing, there is underrepresentation of women in politics. And as a woman, if you are not capable of child-bearing or if you are infertile, those women consider themselves to be different from the mainstream society. With this wrong idea as the perceived

social norm, women find themselves totally absorbed in reproductive activities and hardly find time for the public life. Therefore, I develop a theory based on this idea that lower rate of fertility rate will increase the proportion of seat held by women in the national parliament.

Political freedom is another factor which has a large impact on representation of women in political spheres. Political freedom in a country is denoted by a strong rule of law, respect for civil liberties, a lack of ethnic and religious conflict, open political competition, low levels of corruption, and an independent media (Puddington, 2008). If government guarantees political freedom to every citizen, then the ability of people to legislate what they most want out of their government will increase. The absence of interference of the government with the sovereignty of an individual will increase the likelihood of women participating in politics. According to Freedom House, if countries can afford their citizens with the right to free and fair electoral processes, competitive and open political participation, a well functioned government with freely elected officials and less corruption, associations to defend citizen's rights, laws revealing citizens their freedom of personal autonomy, individual rights, expression in the media, and freedom of religion, "[in those countries] it may be expected to have a higher representation of women in political leadership by providing an environment where individual citizens are allowed and encouraged to express their rights" (Freedom House, 2008). Liberty for a nation means liberty for every individual in that nation. Political freedom will also help to fight against any discriminatory practices that exist in the country by giving every individual their own share of rights. Therefore, in turn it will act as a positive reinforcement for women in the country to raise equal voice in making the laws that governs them, and help enhance their leadership skills.

However, if individual is not given the right to determine their own life or to realize their full potential in the country, it is more likely to perpetuate a stereotype and will decrease the rate

of women contesting in politics. For instance, if the government does not inhibit the participation of minority group (which eventually are women) through implementation of discriminatory laws, women are less expected to come forward in the public spheres. Therefore, the stereotype of women occupying the private areas will continue to exist and will have an effect in women's representation in the national parliament. Because women are stereotyped as weak and dependent, they often are victims in violence against women. Thus, countries with higher rates political freedom will possibly have more female participation in politics than those countries with either limited political freedom or no political freedom at all.

Education is identified as one of the main keys to women's employment. In some countries, there is a criteria of qualification required to be able to join politics. Many women in the labor force would not qualify for the jobs that require higher skills. Looking back in the past, most parents did not want to send their daughters to school. This goes back to the history of educational system, where boys were prioritized more than the girls to study. Girls were kept home either because parents wanted them at home to look after their domestic chores or married her away to someone rich to whom she can depend on. As a result, very less number of girls was enrolled in schools which lead to less women joining civil servant. Even those who have joined are in low ranked jobs compared to men.

The level of education affects women's political participation. Therefore, another significant reason holding women back from taking active part in politics are that they do not meet the qualification requirement. For many women either with no education at all or with low qualification, this acts as a setback from joining politics. Therefore, it is less likely women will come forward to join politics in countries with set qualification requirement to be eligible to join politics than those countries with no such requirement. Without much acquired knowledge,

women cannot exercise their leadership skills and build their potentiality to pave their way towards active political participation. Hence, they end up either with jobs in lower position which matched their qualification or completely step back from public sphere and stay home taking care of their families. Thus, with all the above outlined theoretical concepts, I narrowed it down to four main hypotheses:

H1: Countries with a higher rate of political freedom tend to have more women in politics compared to those countries with a lower rate of political freedom.

H2: An increase in of women in the labor force leads to an increase in women representation in the national parliament.

H3: Decrease in fertility rate leads to an increase in women representation in politics.

H4: Countries with set qualification requirement to be eligible to join politics are less likely to have more female politician than those countries with no such requirement.

IV. CASE STUDY ON BHUTAN

METHODOLOGY

The constitution of Bhutan does not allow any gender discrimination as women enjoy equal opportunities and freedom as men. However, a further insight is required to analyze the gender difference in politics to explain why Bhutanese women in politics are negligible even though politics in Bhutan is open forum to all sexes. We have had only second round of the national parliament election in Bhutan (one in 2008 and another in 2013), but I personally found this very problematic and I didn't like the trend women follow, which is underrepresentation of women in decision making body. Therefore, the main aim of my study is to figure out the

invisible obstacles holding women back from participating in politics. My study will not only help me understand those obstacles, but will also address the issues of concerns of many other youths like me. Thus, to find the explanations, I conducted an inductive research by interviewing a selected group of people in the summer of 2014.

I interviewed 18 people, out of which 9 were men and 9 were women including current politicians, former politicians, media people, and also some women leaders of different organizations/departments. My intention in selecting the candidates was solely based on candidates' availability of time and their personal interest in the field. The candidates I thought would be eligible to be my interviewee, according to the field they are currently engaged in and their prior experiences; I sent them a request letter asking them if they would be interested to talk about Bhutanese women politicians. Along with the letter, I also attached participation consent form, participation information sheet and the questionnaires prepared in AUW working closely with AUWIRB. For interested candidates who replied to me I went to meet them according to their time and place preferences. But very few people responded to my emails and I had to go to their offices to meet them personally. Since every person I opted for was of high post holder, I had to get an appointment to meet them. My initial plan was to include all women parliamentarians for my study, but due to their time constraint I could not get an appointment with all of them. However, since the focus of my study was on Bhutanese women, I managed women from different backgrounds; women currently in the parliament, women who has had once experienced in the parliament, women in media and women leaders of some departments and organizations. I also chose few male candidates for my interviews because I felt it was equally important for me to understand men's perspectives and to know what they think about women's leadership. I basically wanted to see if men's opinion actually matched with women's

or do they have whole different opinion on women leadership in Bhutan. Out of 9 men I interviewed, 8 of them were current politicians (some serving as a politician for the second term and some were fresh politicians). For those candidates whom I wanted to interview but did not respond to my request letter, I personally went to the National Assembly house and conducted on spot interview with those who agreed. Therefore, the selection of the candidates was entirely based on the candidates' availability of time. My research has been *Thimphu* (the capital city of Bhutan) centric and did not include the views of rural people. I designed one single set of questionnaire for all 18 candidates. Questions were based on their experiences, general observations and opinions about the subject matter. Furthermore, I also focused on interviewee's suggestions to what can be done to increase women's participation in the Bhutanese parliament and dealing with the issue of underrepresentation of Bhutanese women in politics.

Secondly, the concept of democracy is new to Bhutan since it has transitioned from the century old absolute hereditary monarchy into constitutional democratic monarchy in 2008, and people did not have enough time to understand this new concept. Not many people would come forward to speak up about politics considering the fact that they do not understand it fully and afraid that they might open the doors for the controversial talks. Therefore, conducting research in Bhutan, especially on politics, requires consideration of many ethical concerns and official works. I say official work here because since majority of my participants were the member of parliaments or those holding high post, I have to move according to their flow. I have to go beforehand and reserve an appointment so that it doesn't clash with their busy schedules. However, with the help of my academic adviser, the approval and supports from the Asian University for Women, Chittagong, getting an appointment was not so difficult for me. My questionnaires were prepared with the help of my advisers and ethical aspects were taken care

going through the entire process of AUWIRB (AUW Institutional Review Board) and getting approval from the board. Moreover, to make my research more consistent and unflinching in the Bhutanese context, I had supporting letter from the Royal Bhutanese Embassy, Dhaka, with a request to kindly facilitate interview with any candidates I chose for my interview, which really helped me to approach many people to ask if they are interested to be my interviewee.

Nonetheless, I had to explain them why I am interested in this particular topic and the purpose for conducting such research.

Ethical concerns were also considered very wisely while conducting interviews. I showed my interviewees the permission letters from the government and explained them the purpose of conducting interviews. Moreover, I also maintained the confidentiality with my interviewees in revealing their identities and leaking the recordings of their interviews if they prefer to be unidentified. The participants were also given the choice to decide where to conduct the interview and to drop off any questions they didn't feel comfortable speaking about it. It was a voluntary based interview so the interviewees were interviewed according to their own will. Before I began my interview, all the interviewees were given information sheet which stated the main objective of the study and that their participation is completely on voluntarily basis to decide whether or not to be part of this research. Additionally, I also filmed the interview to help me better analyze, with consent from every individual. To make my interview more interactive, on hearing women's experience, I, being a woman sharing the same concern of every women, I also shared of what and how I feel about it.

EVIDENCE

Bhutanese women, like women in every other country, occupy almost no major elected positions. In the current national parliament of Bhutan, women occupy only four seats out of 47 seats in the lower house, The National Assembly of Bhutan. Despite 25 seats in the upper house, The National Council of Bhutan, there are only two women representatives which are both His Majesty the King's nominees¹. The following is a case study of women in the parliament of Bhutan, drawing in different opinions from different individuals of Bhutan. Interviewees were asked to share their experiences being a part of the Bhutanese parliament and to others their opinions on why not many Bhutanese women are seen in the parliament today.

Out of 18 people I interviewed, almost all of them emphasized on the prevalence of gender stereotypes that prevent Bhutanese women from actively participating in public spheres like politics. We already have a traditional divided role of what a woman should do and man should do. Conventionally, men have won the public places and men play the greater role if it is to do anything outside of your house, where most important and critical decisions are always made by men. Women, on the other hand, are more concerned with caring for the welfare of the family and their self-sacrificing nature knowingly or unknowingly restrict them from doing anything beyond their homes. Because of this mental setup, women tend to hold themselves back from participating in politic thereby questioning their own ability to lead or to represent their people well. "Just because you become a member of parliament, it doesn't mean that somebody is going to help you with your role as a mother,"² said Namgay Zam, who is an independent journalist. So women have to juggle with their career when they are already busy with their nurturing roles and it makes it difficult for women to cope up with these multiple tasks. For men,

¹ The National Council of Bhutan consists of twenty-five members. Twenty members are elected by the electorates of the twenty districts, while His Majesty nominates five members to the House as eminent persons.

² Interview. Ms. Namgay Zam, an independent journalist, *Thimphu*.

we have a very traditional supportive family. For instance, if man is the sole bread earner of the family, women would do everything like cooking, cleaning, taking care of kids and elders, buying vegetables, and so on. Even the men interviewees accepted the fact that “women’s parenting role takes more of their time, both physically, mentally and intellectually”³. Therefore, this leaves little or no time to take on the additional tasks of public services like politics. Ms. Zam, also shared her experience of hearing the same phrase “How can she run the country, when she has to run a home?” over and again during the last parliamentary election in 2013 where two women party presidents came forward to contest with other men counterparts.

Even though most of my interviewees agreed that patriarchy is not necessarily an important factor in most parts of Bhutan because matriarchy is also practiced in some parts of Bhutan. However, “Most of the stereotyping of gender roles is carried forward by women within the households which greatly have an effect on girl child and which act as an inherent barrier preventing them from participating more actively outside the conventional roles.”⁴ On the other hand, some of the interviewees talked about women’s personalities from a completely different angle. The qualities women possess like compassionate, caring and selflessness can be very good in public life. Mr. Peljor Dorji, who has served the government of Bhutan since 1996, said “Women’s motherhood nature is the strong binding force in the family and if they could bring in their fantastic strength and unity into the politics, then sky is the limit for women in Bhutan.”⁵ The ongoing issue is not about neglecting all these roles of women, it is about these roles being shared by men counterparts. Male members in the family should equally contribute, not move away from it. There needs to be a very supportive system for women, so if women

³Interview. Dasho Dr. Sonam Kinga, Member of Parliament, National Council.

⁴Interview. Aum Chime P. Wangdi, Secretary General, Tarayana Foundation (NGO), Thimphu.

⁵Interview. Dasho. Peljor Dorji, advisor to the National Environment Commission, *Thimphu*.

have to work like men, men should be able to divide the job. If you don't have the family support, it will be very challenging to meet those obligations of public work.

Half of the people I interviewed don't consider underrepresentation of women as a bigger issue in Bhutan because they want to believe that politics in Bhutan is not matured enough to flourish women representations like other countries where they took years to reach to where they are now. Bhutan's democracy is very young because we are only in the second term. Bhutan's first ever woman minister, *Lyenpo*⁶ Dorji Choden said, "To start with, I am not worried actually about Bhutan. We are just beginning and already we have few numbers. Even if we look at the world's oldest democracies, their parliament is not boomed with female representation. So I think it's a good start for Bhutan."⁷ In the first national parliament election, we have had few women candidates but in the second election we even had women coming forward as a party leader, which is an indication that we are starting to have women in politics and the representations may increase as the time goes by. "Party led by a woman is new in the history of Bhutan. Since people were constantly watching the old parties playing their roles, women leaders had hard time making themselves known to the public and inform about their manifestos and leadership capabilities."⁸ Almost all my interviewees agreed that gender may not have entirely been the factor for those women party leaders losing the election. "They might have lost the election, but the fact is their leadership has been accepted. In order to encourage women, that acceptance of woman as a leader has to be more important consideration."⁹ It is a question of who has better ability, which did people trust more, and voters in general look at them as potential representative of their constituency in the highest level of governance. One of the ex-

⁶Minister in Bhutanese term.

⁷ Interview, Minister Dorji Choden, Ministry of Work and Human Settlement, Thimphu

⁸ Interview. Phuntsho Wangmo, CEO, Bhutan Observer (Independent bilingual Newspaper), Thimphu

⁹ Interview. Dasho Dr. Sonam Kinga, member of parliament, National Council.

members of the parliament who contested in the second term but did not get elected said, “Voters don’t look at candidate through gender lens, women parties were new whereas parties led by men were the one who contested for the first term, were old and already established parties.”¹⁰”

However, very few interviewees said that it might be because voters did not understand the importance of women’s representation in the parliament because they are blurred by the gender stereotypes and ended up voting for someone they know and have seen them in the leadership positions.

Equal numbers of men and women interviewees shared the concern of women unable to meet the criteria to join politics. In Bhutan, the entry requirement to be eligible to contest in election is undergraduate degree. Nation Speaker of the parliament of Bhutan goes back to the history of education of Bhutan. “When we started our education, not a single girl was in the school. Girls were held back at home and parents preferred to send only boys because of the geographical terrain of Bhutan and also the fact that it is girl’s responsibility to run the household chores.”¹¹ Caring and loving a girl child too much had put women in disadvantaged place. When boy child had earlier access to education and other opportunities, the traditional ideology of men’s leadership was born and women were associated with homemakers and this is still hampering much of the challenges women face today. “Because of our parents’ preferences of educating boy child, not many women of our age meet the criteria requirement to participate in politics. On the other hand, those girls with degree qualification are all young and fresh graduates with no experience.”¹²” When men had earlier access to education, with education came exposure and with exposure came all these social development and women were bit late in

¹⁰Interview. Pema Lhamo (ex-member of parliament), Executive Director of Bhutan Transparency Initiative (BTI), Thimphu.

¹¹Interview. *Lyenpo* Jigme Zango, National Speaker of the Parliament of Bhutan, Thimphu.

¹²Interview. *Lyenpo* Jigme Zango, National Speaker of the Parliament of Bhutan, Thimphu.

entering into these areas. Therefore, we don't have enough women who have the requirement to join politics to contest for the seat like men. Therefore, all NOGs, civil society and government should work hand in hand to train our young graduates. "We can ask our young graduates to go to the grassroots level and few years down the road, they can come in national election with acquired experiences."¹³

Additionally, it is seen that a handful of senior women with the required qualification are not coming forward into politics because of the risk factor involved in it. "To participate in politics, you have to give up your already secured job. It's risky because women who do fairly well in civil service may not get elected, but more men compared to women dare to take that challenge."¹⁴ This risk factor put Bhutanese women behind because politics may not be worth sacrificing your secured job.

Recently there has been a lot of discussion on the issue of implementing quota reservation for Bhutanese women in the parliament, however, the constitution of Bhutan did not finalized the decision right now. On asking my interviewees on their take on women quota system, more women than men interviewees are for the quota reservation for Bhutanese women, given that it is time bound. Men's responses differ slightly from that of women because men's stand is either for or against, but women tend to stand in between both for and against. If we look at just the number, then quota could be one good option to seep up the women representation. "We need it at least for couple of years to bring to the level where we feel comfortable and situation stabilizes at some point."¹⁵ Those who need quota, their idea behind is by using quota doesn't mean that other qualifying factors do not apply; everything should apply should it be a

¹³Interview. *Lyenpo* Jigme Zanpo, National Speaker of the Parliament of Bhutan, Thimphu.

¹⁴Interview. *Dasho* Ugyen Wangdi, Member of the Parliament, Thimphu.

¹⁵Interview. Ms. Namgay Zam, Independent Journalist, Thimphu.

position where we have both men and women qualifies. Chairperson of Anti-Corruption Commission of Bhutan shared how her egoist view of having a special preference for women has changed. She said, “Quota needs to be time bound and discipline must be there in terms of implementation. There should be criteria; the same qualities that you look for men should be there in women, competence and credibility.¹⁶” If it is not about compromising the quality and increasing the number, then most women interviewees said it’s not too bad and Bhutan could consider it. One of the women members of parliament suggested that, “We must make people aware that it is time bound and would be good idea to try it at the local level first. If everything goes well then we can bring it at the national level.¹⁷” If we consider the importance of women’s representation in politics, quota could be a good instrument to use initially in order for more women to come up. However, all of them highlighted that it should be time bound until we are able to do away with the actual barriers that prevent women from getting into politics.

On the other hand, those who does not support quota believed that this measure is demeaning to the pride of Bhutanese women and will only bring the quality down. Aum Deki Pema, Election Commissioner of Election Commission of Bhutan, said that when the trend is positive, the situation would be ideal if we can get there without quota. “Even those women who deserved it will be ‘she’s a woman without capabilities’ and that can in fact set us behind for all the progress we have made.¹⁸” Quota, if introduced will definitely increase the numerical representation of women, but their concern is does an increase in numerical representation necessarily translate to equal articulation of issues and setting up agendas? “If we look at the Bhutanese society, at least we are not in desperate situation like neighboring countries where

¹⁶Interview. Dasho Neten Zam, Chairperson, Anti-Corruption Commission of Bhutan (ACC), Thimphu.

¹⁷Interview. Dasho Karma Nidup, Member of Parliament at National Council, Thimphu.

¹⁸Interview. Aum Deki Pema, Election Commissioner, Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB), Thimphu.

women discrimination is so explicit. In a country where equal opportunities are given, quota is not the right solution.¹⁹” they also agreed that percentage of women needs to be increased drastically, but suggested that we need to come up with different idea and quota is not the answer. There’s also a choice for women, one of the male members of the parliament mentioned. “Whether you want to get into politics because of quota or you want to get into politics because you are capable.²⁰” Some recommendations they put forward are, those capable and qualified women must come forward, and make people see you beyond your gender. Moreover, women already in the system can showcase their potential that women can equally perform in the field of politics as men which would inspire younger generations.

V. RESEARCH DESIGN

I have identified a gender stereotype as the main driver for the women’s underrepresentation in politics, however, a stereotype is a result of conscious, thoughts and beliefs, and it cannot be measured with numerical data. Therefore, I have looked into other variables that would help explain the broader concept of a stereotype. To test my hypotheses, I have collected data for proportion of seat held by women in national parliaments, fertility rate, women labor force participation, types of quota and election year between the time span of 1997-2012 (16 years). Due to data constraints and missing data, I decided not to go back too far although the use of data for longer time span would certainly provide a more complete picture of my study. I collected all the required data from The World Bank, The International Statistical Institute (ISI), quotaProject, and Center for Systemic Peace. I have included only developing states for my analysis considering the fact that the structure of women representation in politics

¹⁹Interview. Dasho Tashi Wangmo, member of parliament of National Council, Thimphu.

²⁰Interview. Dasho Nima, member of parliament National of Council, Thimphu.

will be different in developing states and in developed states. The list of developing states I have used is adhered by the International Statistical Institute (ISI), effective from 1 January till 31st December 2015. Developing states are defined according to their Gross National Income (GNI) per capita year. According to World Bank, 2013, countries with a GNI of US\$ 11,905 and less are defined as developing. The unit of analysis is the election year and I used ordinary least square (OLS) regression to test my hypotheses.

The dependent variable for this model is number of women parliamentarians. In order to operationalize this variable, I looked at the proportion of seats held by women in national parliament (%). Women in parliaments are the percentage of parliamentary seats in a single or lower chamber held by women. I collected this data from The World Bank for the period of 1997-2013. This dependent variable is measured at time (t).

My primary independent variables are political freedom, quota system, fertility rate and women labor force and all these variables are measured at time (t-1). Political freedom is measured by the political rights which enable people to participate freely in the political process, including the right to vote freely, compete for public office and join any political parties or organizations. Data on political freedom are taken from Center for Systemic Peace. The Polity IV dataset monitors regime changes in all major countries and provides annual assessments of regime authority characteristics, changes and data updates. The Polity data include information only on the institutions of the central government and on political groups acting, or reacting, within the scope of that authority. Therefore, we can find out how these changes in the institutionalized qualities of governing authority affect women's participation in the parliament. Polity IV has managed the scale of 10 to -10, on which 10 implies the most politically free state and -10 being the least politically free state.

I also included fertility rate and women labor force as these factors are likely to affect the participation of women in politics. Both the data are taken from the World Bank for a time span of 1997-2012. I operationalize fertility rate by taking total fertility rate (births per woman). Total fertility rate represents the number of children that would be born to a woman if she were to live to the end of her childbearing years and bear children in accordance with current age-specific fertility rates. A woman in labor force is indication of women empowerment and is more likely to influence women's participation in politics. For the women labor force participation rate, I looked at the percentage of female population of 15 years and above because ages 15 below are not included in the labor force market. Labor force participation rate is the proportion of the population ages 15 and older that is economically active: all people who supply labor for the production of goods and services during a specific period.

I also included the quota to see how it affects women representation in politics. Given the slow speed by which the number of women in politics is growing, quotas present one efficient mechanism to recruit women into political positions. Therefore, I looked at the types of quota used in politics, reserved seats and legal candidate quotas (legislative) in particular. Then I created two sets of dummy variables for the quota types. The first one is for reserved seats and I represented with a single dummy variable coded "1" if reserved seats and "0" if not reserved. I repeated the same procedure for the legislated candidate quota coding "1" if legislated candidate quota and "0" if not legislated candidate quota. These data are taken from quotaProject, the Database which provides information on the various types of quotas in existence today, detailing the percentages and targets in countries where they are applicable.

I have mentioned in the theory about how qualification criteria to join politics affects women's representation in the parliament. Although qualification criteria to join politics would

likely be a better indicator, data on qualification criteria is unable considering the fact that some countries does not have educational qualification requirement to join politics. For example, a country like India, even illiterate citizens are eligible to contest. Then I looked into the voter turnout database which contains a wide array of statistic regarding voter turnout all over the world. It examines the trend in voter turnout since 1945, and I have particularly looked into number of voter turnout in each election and see how that influences women's representation in politics. I have taken the data from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA).

VI. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

In this section, I will present my regression results of how the independent variables affect dependent variables through individual analyses of p-value and co-efficient. I will test my hypotheses based on the p-value and co-efficient given in Table 1.

Table 1: Proportion of Seat held by Women in the National Parliament

Variables	Coefficient	p-value
Fertility Rate	0.569	0.193
Women Labor Force	0.087	0.023
Voter Turnout (vt)	0.086	0.024
Reserved Seats (res_seats)	1.864	0.339
Legislated Candidate Quota(LCQ)	5.822	0.000
Polity2 (political freedom)	0.211	0.098

Significance level: *p<0.05

n=313

R-squared=0.1064

Fertility rate is surprisingly insignificant with positive correlation with proportion of seat held by women in the parliament. It has a p-value of 0.193 ($p > 0.05$) with positive correlation. With 1 unit increase in fertility rate, there is increase of 0.569 units in women's seat in the national parliament. This might be probably due to poor measurement because it doesn't make sense to have more women in the parliament when fertility rate increases. Thus, it rejects my first hypothesis which is

H1: Decrease in fertility rate leads to an increase in women representation in politics.

We can see a significant effect of women labor force on the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament p-value 0.023 ($p < 0.05$). There is also a positive correlation between women labor force and seat held by women in the national parliament. 1 unit increase in women labor force results in increase in proportion of seat held by women in national parliament by 0.087 units. Therefore, it supports my second hypothesis which is:

H2: An increase in of women in the labor force leads to an increase in women representation in the national parliament.

Due to the data constrain on qualification criteria to join politics, I could not test my third hypothesis:

H3: Countries with set qualification requirement to be eligible to join politics are less likely to have more female politician than those countries with no such requirement.

Therefore, I looked into voter turnout to see if it has an effect on number of seat held by women in the national parliament. Voter turnout came out to be statistically significant with a p-

value of 0.024 ($p < 0.05$) with positive correlation. With 1 unit increase in voter turnout, there is increase of 0.086 units in women's seat in the national parliament. Even though I have not included voter turnout in hypothesis, it has a positive effect on the proportion of seat women hold in the national parliament. It is interesting that more women get elected when more voters go to vote because historically women won't vote for women due to all culture and social norms, especially in the developing states.

To see how a quota has an effect on number of seats held by women in national parliament, I have looked into types of quota used in politics. The first type of quota is reserved seats for women in the national parliament. This came out to be statistically insignificant with a p-value of 0.339 ($p > 0.05$). This again might be due to data limitations, or perhaps the effects were simply not as strong for this particular variable because there are only some countries who implemented quota system while a lot of countries are still having controversy over the implementation of reserved seats for women. Therefore, more work must be done to in the future in order to determine their true effect on the proportion of seat held by women in the national parliament. However, reserved seat is in the expected direction with greater number of reserved seat, there is increase in proportion of seat held by women in national parliament (by 1.864 units).

The second type of quota is legislated candidate quota. It has a statistically significant effect of legislated candidate quota on proportion of seat held by women in national parliament. It has a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) and it has a positive correlation. With 1 unit increase in legislated candidate quota, there is increase of 5.822 units in women's seat in the national parliament.

I have also looked into political freedom of a country to see if it has an impact on the proportion of seat held by women in the national parliament. In order to measure the political freedom of a country, I have looked at polity IV dataset which monitors regime changes in all major countries and provides annual assessments of regime authority characteristics. I got an insignificant effect of political freedom on the proportion of seat held by women in national parliament with a p-value of 0.098 ($p < 0.05$), but has a positive correlation. With 1 unit increase in political freedom results in 0.211 units increase in seat held by women in national parliament. Thus it does not support my final hypothesis:

H4: Countries with a higher rate of political freedom tend to have more women in politics compared to those countries with lower rate of political freedom.

VII. CONCLUSION AND STRENGTH/WEAKNESS

The main aim of this paper was to study why women representation in politics is low in some developing countries. I attempted to analyze gender stereotype, which has constantly been regarded as one of the most innate hypothesis of many scholars in political science. I began this study by drawing on different theoretical components which helped me understand the concept of stereotype following some of the previous researches done on similar topic by different scholars. Through my case study on Bhutan, I intended to examine gender stereotypes that would explain underrepresentation of women in the national parliament in the developing countries. Women representation in politics is basically a number of women holding seats in the parliament. Therefore, I tested if variables like fertility rate, women labor force, voter turnout, political freedom of a country and types of quota like reserved seat for women and legislated

candidate quota have an effect on proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament by gathering data from different sources and running ordinary least square (OLS) regression.

My key findings were: voter turnout, legislated candidate quota and women labor force are statistically significant and have positive effect on proportion of seat held by women in the national parliament. In other word, with increase in voter turnout during the election, any developing country with legislated candidate quota and higher women labor force participation, the proportion of seat held by women in the national parliament will be high. Thus, it will lead to higher number of women representation in politics. Nevertheless, through the case study, underrepresentation of women in politics due to the prevalence of gender stereotype was very common and consistent explanation given by almost all people I interviewed.

Without any doubt my research paper is not without limitations. The very first thing is since my research is based on the notion of gender stereotype which deals with beliefs and ideology, stereotype is difficult to quantify and I had to look for other theoretical components which can at least help me understand the theory of stereotype. Having a measurable data on stereotype would gain a better picture of how it has an effect on representation of women in politics and other researchers could use better variables in future research. Second, due to data constraints, I had to limit the time frame of dependent variable (1997-2012), although use of data for longer time frame would certainly provide a more complete picture of the study. Other thing future researchers could consider is to look into both the developing states and developed states to see the difference between them. Comparing between developing and developed countries would help us better understand what factor has better influence on women's representation in politics. My current analysis includes only developing states due to its fewer women representation in the parliament than that of developed states.

However, limitations come along with some good qualities too. I am proud to say that for this paper, I have put in a great deal of hard work, going through number of previous research done by different scholars. Therefore, I had a broader understanding of women and politics and I did pretty well in my literature review and theory section. Additionally, even though much research has been done on this subject matter, not much has been done, particularly in the Bhutanese context. This is preferably the first case study based in Bhutan, bringing in different opinions and perspectives of different individuals on Bhutanese women parliamentarians. Therefore, I hope this case study will be helpful references for other Bhutanese people who wish to conduct such research in Bhutan. Moreover, I am hopeful that this research would be helpful to my other Bhutanese friends to get a broader ideas and understanding of challenges our Bhutanese women parliamentarians face. Furthermore, this research also helped me get a better idea of framing a better research paper in the future, considering all the limitations I incurred in the current research paper.

Overall, the implications for underrepresentation of women in politics in developing countries seem clear. It appears that gender stereotype play a vital role in deciding or choosing the workplace. When women believe themselves that they are incapable and incompetent to shoulder any responsibilities of being a leader, women are discouraged in coming forward as men do. This was further supported by voter turnout, legislated candidate quota and women labor force of a country that would help rise women's representation in the politics. Thus, my research recommends the national policy makers in considering better policies for encouraging more women participation and creating a better working environment for women, so that we have equal representative of both men and women in the decision making body.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Why do you think women's participation to Bhutanese politics is so small in comparison to men's?
2. What do you think can be done to increase women's participation to politics?
3. What do you think differentiates men from women candidates?
4. Why do you think the few Bhutanese women who stood for election lose to men?
5. What qualities do you have that distinguish you from other women?
6. What do voters expect in women as decision makers? Why do you think so?
7. What challenges do you face in campaigning as a woman that might cost you votes? Why?
8. Do you think patriarchy plays a role in the gender gap in Bhutan? Why?
9. Recently there had been a lot of controversy on the issues of implementing Bhutanese women quota system. Do you think Bhutanese women need quota reservation, and will that help increase women's participation rate in the politics?
10. Under the supreme law of the country, Bhutanese women have full equality as men in all sorts of opportunities. Is it true that women's care giving and self-sacrificing nature restrict from outside works?
11. Do you think motherhood is an obstacle to women's participation in the public sphere? Why?
12. How important are good public speaking skills for candidates in general and for female candidates in particular?
13. Some people argue that there is a need to educate rural voters on the value of having women representatives in the decision making body. What can be done to motive future generations of women to participate in politics as men does?

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