



Politics and Governance in the Lens of Women Leaders

Izza Roselle Sibal¹, Eden Grace Palattao², Darin Jan Tindowen³

^{1,2,3}*School of Education, Arts and Sciences, University of Saint Louis, Tuguegarao City, Philippines*

Email: ¹sibalizza@gmail.com, ²Edengracepalattao@gmail.com, ³Djtindowen2015@gmail.com

Received: 25 June 2021

Accepted: 20 September 2021

Published: 27 October 2021

***Abstract:** This study aimed to explore the experiences of women leaders in politics and government, to identify their reasons for entering the political arena, to ascertain the factors/motivations that drive them to run and continue to be a public servant, and finally, to better understand how women's empowerment helps in shaping women's lives and how it helped in overcoming the barriers that came along their way as they entered politics. The researchers conducted an in-depth interview to gather the information needed for the study. Moreover, the data gathered from the interview was analyzed using narration and a thematic approach. Thus, the results of the study showed that there are qualities that a lady politician should possess: will, determination and love for service. A lady politician must have respect for constituents and colleagues, sincerity, dedication, and commitment to work, and also be a good follower. Being empowered made these women leaders carry out their duties well. However, they still encountered issues while in politics, like: crab mentality, passing of legislation, blame games, and little knowledge about something. Through the qualities that the female leaders possessed, they managed to overcome these issues.*

***Keywords:** Political Participation and Representation of Women, Politics & Government, Women Empowerment, Women Leaders*

1. INTRODUCTION

Participation of women in politics is an emerging phenomenon across the globe. In fact, in 2014, 22% of the total number of legislators in the world were women (United Nations Women, 2014). The improvement of women's participation in politics led to empowerment. Empowerment gives a better view to women who are in public office. Women can take actions without being asked for. Through empowerment, change is inevitable, especially in policy-making. A leader who embodies such qualities can provide significant support to their government (Mishra, 2017). Empowerment made these women leaders determined to do what they do. Moreover, the courage they have in order to carry out their duties as leaders of their community (Dandona, 2015).



Meanwhile, the Philippines is one of the countries in the world that has a high percentage of women in political participation. Women took 25% of the seats in the Senate, 27% of the seats in the House of Representatives, and about 20% of the seats for municipal mayors between 2013 and 2016 (Labonne, Parsa & Querubin, 2015). This means that there is an increasing trend in the participation of women in politics. However, it still shows that women are underrepresented because of the issues that they encounter.

On the other hand, male dominance in a community results in the difficulty of women's leaders striving in politics. Thus, the participation of women seems to be low. Another issue is that the use of quotas in politics makes no distinction. Although quotas promote women's political participation, the effects are not that evident (Arawolo & Aluko, 2010; Chaney, 2014). Furthermore, unlike men, some female leaders do not hold significant positions in their organizations (Ibrahim, 2014; Olufuunke, 2014). While there is a great decrease of partiality against women leaders, some still favor men leaders. Consequently, women leaders experience more problems because of other prejudices. This can result in a mixture of distrust of female leaders which can affect their responsibility (Eagly, 2007). That is why it is better to look into their profiles and experience. A solid understanding of women leaders can be aided by a solid background in their leadership (Watson, Jencik, & Selzer, 2013). There are cases wherein women who were elected in office were just there to replace their relatives and in turn do not promote policies about women's interests. This means that the leadership of women is not directed toward the end-goals of their visions (Labonne, Parsa & Querubin, 2015). The existence of problems and challenges did not inhibit their commitment to public service. In addition, the means applied to extend help and to meet both ends in order to make progress in the community (Bentillo, Cortes, Gabor & Inocian, 2016). Participation of women in politics can improve the understanding of the role of women. In return, it seeks to resolve problems regarding women's leaders and their situation (Bano, 2009). However, women's participation in politics seemed to be the same. Women leaders continue to face a variety of challenges. It is believed that women's issues should be addressed well, in order to fully take part in politics (Alvarez, 2013). Thus, this study aims to explore the experiences of women leaders in their participation in politics and government.

2. METHOD

This study utilized qualitative research methods, utilizing the case-study method. This study's informants were three selected female leaders from the Northern Philippines. Informants were chosen based on their uninterrupted term of service and tenure of at least seven (7) years with a reputable background. This served as the sole ground for choosing the informants.

An in-depth interview was used as the main instrument in gathering the information needed for the study. The informants' views were held first hand through a one-on-one talk. The interview guide included the female leaders' reasons and motivations for entering politics. Moreover, the manner in which women leaders cope in the political arena is noteworthy. The researchers integrated the use of a recorder for audio-recording of the interview and a camera for documenting. Furthermore, the researchers wrote down the important clues which were helpful to the study. Lastly, the researchers underwent probing in obtaining full-understanding of the manifestations of the informants.



The researchers integrated the use of a recorder for audio-recording of the interview and a camera for documenting. Furthermore, the researchers wrote down the important clues which were helpful to the study. In addition, the researchers underwent probing in obtaining full-understanding of the manifestations of the informants. Finally, the data was analyzed using narrative and thematic analysis.

3. RESULTS

Case 1: The Will and the Heart of Lady T

When asked about the qualities that a leader should possess, she highlighted three major qualities: will, determination, and the love of service. First, Lady T narrated,

"That's what I'm saying, the mind and heart are there. For me, before entering politics, I knew and felt that this is what I wanted, the one thing that I wanted to render to my fellowmen, and no one can take that away from you. You will not be prized."

She then added,

"O Lady T, how much do you need in order for you not to run? No, This is priceless. This is for my fellowmen. I am willing to do everything because it comes out naturally. I volunteer myself to be of service to other people and that's it. The number one thing there is the will and determination, the love."

Meanwhile, her views on empowerment are best suited for women. Further, empowered women give the best results because they put their hearts and minds into it.

"Even though others are saying that in the world of politics, you do not have a permanent friend, for me, you're a person you develop a relationship with, you develop camaraderie. For me, I never sacrificed my position as a public servant for the sake of friendship. The opportunity that comes along your way is not every day that you develop and establish your relationship with other people. That's the best thing to do. So if you are empowered, the most efficient and effective way to translate your empowerment is to be able to transfer it. If you are empowered, try to empower everyone, try to share what you have, try to, there's a term for it, sharing. "

Empowerment is achieved if you are going to reach out to the people and share what you have. Acquiring something doesn't make sense if you are not going to share it. Moreover, through empowerment, opportunities arise together with the connections to other institutions. This is evident to what Lady T stated,

"As I previously stated, the opportunities to interact with higher-ranking officials, i.e. those in positions of national power, are dwindling. You get to create the connection, and when I say connection, I mean to say, the opportunities that are at the national level, you get to download them at the local level. While we take advantage of our opportunity to have a



relationship there upstairs, I make sure that that relationship will go down until our jurisdiction where we are serving."

Building connections and relations with those at the national level was one of the things that empowered her, especially in making projects and programs that were beneficial to the local community and in making them feel the presence of the national government. Furthermore, she even talked about the great impact of women's empowerment on one's success.

"It is the way I deal with people, my outlook, if how do I serve; it's not that, the determination on what I have is what I can do. It's neither what property nor money I have. I am not like that."

She even added that she does not earn respect through money or fame, because it's not her cup of tea. More so, having been empowered as a woman led her to success. On the other hand, being empowered also helped her to overcome the barriers in her life. She then narrated,

"Yes, I think that is now the key, the key for us to be able to help the national government, the local government. We need to empower each and every member of the community. We start from the lowest unit of our society so that if you empower the grassroots, if you empower the local government, then we become a collective effort, we put our acts together in order to achieve a better Cagayan, because I am talking as a board member, we want to have our own contribution, little as it may be, for as long as it is beneficial or geared towards progress."

Lady T expounded that in order to achieve the goals of their community, we should empower each and every one. By doing that, people can understand their role better. In addition, Lady T said that women's empowerment helped a lot in shaping her life, especially as a leader.

"Yes, it did help a lot. It created the biggest impact because, being empowered as a woman leader, I became the voice, I became the representative of the people, and when I say representative, Lady T does not only think of what is good, I always make sure that the voice is coming from the grassroots."

Growing up in this kind of community, Lady T seems to develop human relations. She related that since she was a child, she went around and tended to develop good relationships with her fellowmen, and that became her strength. She then stated,

"I know how to mingle with people and I grew up having that in mind. Aside from the fact that my parents taught me good manners and right conduct, how to interact properly with people, little did I know that it was the most important thing in politics. Because never in my life did I think of being a politician when I grew up. Because for me, I do it naturally. Maybe people based it on my personality because they are the ones who encouraged me to run."

However, she doesn't categorize this as her motivation but rather her strength. On the other hand, when asked about what motivated her to enter politics, she pointed out one factor mainly, the quality service that she can give to the people.



"As I was telling you, naturally, with or without position, political position, I can do service. So to answer the question you are asking me, my motivation is that it feels good to do service and it feels good to give service to other people. My greatest motivation is this: the greatest gift that you can give to God is to be able to serve your fellowmen. It has fulfillment in myself and that sums up my personality."

Furthermore, despite the fact that politics is a male-dominated field, she was able to achieve success by giving her entire self to service.

"Okay, for me, "what you see is what you get". I always say that I can never pretend to be someone that I am not, meaning to say I am offering myself as a whole. It's how people perceive me to be. It's who I am. As I previously stated, it is extremely difficult to act in a way that is pleasing to others. For them to elect you in the next elections to come, you tend to give them something in return and need to do something. As I told you, my reaction towards public service is natural. You can never force me to do things that are not in accord with what I truly desire just to impress someone. I do not do things that please a person. I am there to lend a helping hand for those who are in need."

Lady T survived the political arena by making a concerted effort to remain true to her work, the people, and, most importantly, shaping her capacity as a public servant and attempting to compromise with all the demands placed on her. For Lady T, when it comes to adjustments, in terms of giving out service, little adjustments only.

"And that's it, but the adjustments you are talking about, in terms of giving out service little adjustment, why? I have seen something. The tendency is when you are a politician and not a politician. For me, the common denominator is giving service but not being a politician. When you are a politician, chances are there are people who are going to look at you in a certain way and they see you readily as having an obligation to give service, but when you are not a politician, it seems natural. Simple adjustment. When you are there in the office already, chances are people take advantage of you because they are locked up and you can no longer say no. You can no longer say no because they have this thing that "You see, we will no longer vote you", but I am not like that. I do not do things like that."

She has this idea that when you are a politician, you are obliged to give service to the people. However, Lady T has this idea that she is not trying to please everyone because she is not used to promises. When asked about the opportunities that had paved the way for her entry into politics, Lady T said that there were a wide range of opportunities.

"What I'm trying to say is that, as a councilor, I have been a national officer in the entire Philippines, considering the fact that I do not even belong to a highly urbanized city. But I am recognized in the entire Philippines because of the 17, 000 councilors. I was elected and, of course, both of you are politicians if they put trust in you, so you better do your best. For that reason, for my three terms as a national officer, I was awarded by the Local Government Unit, the Department of Interior and Local Government, and the Philippine Councilor's League as the highest-serving leadership award. It's only rare because we are only two awardees in the entire Philippines."



In her passion to serve her people, she was being recognized as one of the highest servant leader in the national level. It was an overwhelming feeling for Lady T to be part of that prestigious award. Lady T always sees herself as a public servant with or without position because her commitment is serving others. Her direction towards the right path and will always does things that are good for the community. She said that,

“I always see myself as a public servant with or without position because if the motivation that is instilled upon me is only the position then I would say that I am serving myself. My commitment is serving others, that is why I feel, we would not know what we are 10 years from now but the constant thing there is, I would want still to be a public servant. Yes, when you say vision of course you would want a peaceful community, you would want a loving community, and you would want a community that is productive in everything.”

Each and every person should work with the leaders in order to achieve the goals of the community, that’s how Lady T imagines it to be. The small thing that you do can contribute a lot. As a legislator, Lady T can share her time, talent and wisdom for the improvement of the lives of the people.

When asked about the issues and challenges that Lady T encountered as a leader she started answering by saying that a leader cannot do away with difficulties because one cannot please everybody. She then pointed out that her biggest hurdle is the politicians and public servants who are of the same level. She then reasoned it out with the following statement.

“Why? Because tendencies are if they cannot go at par of what you do, you know, crab mentality still, they are trying to pull you down because they cannot imitate what you have done, so the chances are, that is the trend in politics. As they say, in politics you should be strong willed but for me, I always see to it that I am a better person even if I am a politician. Better person meaning to say I know what is right and what are wrong even if the opportunities comes knocking at your door.”

In addressing on the problem of crab mentality, Lady T tends not to mind them instead he continued working for the people. She even added that not like any other politician, she is satisfied just by serving the people right.

Case 2: The three T’s of Lady M

Lady M gave her view about what should a leader possess in order to survive the political arena then she said,

“Of course, respect. You should respect anyone else, even those who are coming to you for, perhaps, solicitation. Do not just say, you entertain, respect anybody. Share your 3T's. Your 3 T's: time, treasure, and talent. When we talk of treasure, it doesn't mean that you empty yourself. There are many kinds of treasure. You might have unused clothes that are a treasure. Instead of just putting them in your cabinet, why don't you share them?”



According to Lady M, in order to survive in the world of politics, one must possess respect for every person, and having respect goes hand in hand with listening to their needs. Sincerity in what you are doing is a must. The dedication and commitment to one's work must be visible. She also then shared her principle, which she called the 3T's: time, treasure, and talent. Furthermore, she narrated,

"That is how I do it my dear children, the ones that I am no longer using; I give it to those who are in need. It will just be damaged if it will just stay there, you better share, and that's treasure. When we talk of treasure, it is not only in the form of money, it is not only measured through money. For instance if you have food, of course you should share it to those who are in need than letting it be spoiled. If your neighbor asked you to give him something to be cooked, even if the container is full of rice here you are immediately telling, eh, no, no, no, rice, you should buy your own, what are you doing instead, you are just gambling? So no, you share, better not give any more if you tell many things yet."

Sharing the 3T's for her is very essential in one's leadership. This is not only to show her respect to the people, but also to create a good relationship between her and her constituents.

That's how Lady M views empowerment. In addition, Lady M believed that when someone is empowered, she can do things more than what she can imagine and in a good way.

"Empowerment, you are empowered to do it, you are given the opportunity to do it and how everything I always ask, Lord empower me, give me the wisdom to do these things, to carry it out very successfully. Carrying out things, empowered, you are empowered to do it. In particular, I feel very happy if the highest authority gives me the authority to do things. "

In addition, the environment of politics empowered Lady M to legislate resolutions or ordinances that would help her community. Another thing is that Lady M is the chairman of the Committee on Education, considering the fact that she is an educator.

"In fact, there is a resolution that I sponsored, addressed to all barangay captains. It is already in the MUSANG Code, but it is not carried out very seriously. It was already approved during the first assembly meeting. In fact, that might be the reason I see people cleaning along the roadside. I have a resolution addressed to the Barangay ABC President requesting all barangay captains to have a one-day clean-up drive in their respective barangays. That will be Saturday. "When we say clean-up drive, even the innermost, you have to clean that, even the corner of the barangay, especially if there are no people residing in that vacant area or if there is a house erected there but there is no person residing there."

It is not only that, Lady M also joins other committees in which she can share her ideas, like social affairs, health, and sanitation. Women's empowerment has really had a great impact on Lady M, because women can do better.

It has a great impact, as I have said right at the very start. Even if you are a lady legislator or a lady politician, it depends on your sincerity to serve the people. It depends on how



committed you are, it depends on how serviceable you are, and it depends on how you think about the situations and concerns of others that need to be addressed. "

It is very important as a leader to be committed and true to your work. Further, in terms of service, women can surpass men. On the other hand, being empowered helped Lady M overcome the barriers along her way.

"We do not only deal with one person or between two people. We even go step by step, whole, we go to assemblies, and we go to meetings, teachers, and zone and so forth because we are empowered. We overcome the difficulty by advocating. We are empowered to advocate for what the municipality wants in order to have a progressive municipality.

Being empowered, Lady M found it very smoothly to address the concerns which at the very start seemed to be difficult. Lady M, together with other politicians, works hand in hand in order to achieve her goals. Lady M said that empowerment helped in shaping her life because she was able to give her best: her level best. She narrated that,

"Being empowered to deal with children, being empowered as an administrator to deal with the subordinates, to deal with subordinates in a very little school, you are empowered to be head teacher, you are dealing with subordinates with few teachers and then later on as a district supervisor you are empowered to deal with more people and now after retiring I am with LGU, I am empowered to serve people. I'm very much fulfilled and I am overwhelmed with joy because I was able to give my best, or for me, my level best, I should say. I was able to give my level best to people whom I have been serving and to people whom I have been rubbing elbows with because of the empowerment of the Lord giving me the wisdom, empowering me to do things for people."

Given the empowerment that she had, she was able to give service to her fellowmen. Thus, she achieved all the goals for her people because she dealt with them in the most possible way.

Lady M was motivated to enter politics because of a childhood dream that she wanted to fulfill. Not only that, but also the love of serving the people. She then said,

"One reason is not only because of a childhood dream, but I want to show people that what a man can do can be done by us women, and even more than that, it's just a matter of commitment. I was telling myself that many men, not only here in our municipality, would like to be elected and I kept on telling myself that everybody has the right to run for any elective position, but the first thing I always put in mind and that will always brainstorm me every time is: "Behind your right, everybody has the right, but behind your right, you should remember that behind it is a great responsibility." So, as I was telling myself a while back, I would like to show the people, and I also like to show As a woman politician, there are two major reasons why I aspired to the position. One is to satisfy my childhood dream, and number two, I want to show people that women can do even surpass what men can do, if only the woman is committed, dedicated, and truly true to her constituents."



Lady M is more strengthened than motivated as a female leader. She embodies the definition of a dream chaser. This opportunity to enter politics paved the way for her to not only fulfill a long-time dream but, at the same time, give back to the people what they truly deserve and stand as the person that would voice out the concerns of the people. She also stated that she was giving her best in terms of service. Similarly, Lady M had to make some adjustments, particularly to her council colleagues. Another point is that when it comes to legislation, Lady M made no adjustments because the first thing she did was learn about people's personalities..

"I went over the pages of that book already and so with regard to adjustment, perhaps a little adjustment to my companions who have been there sitting for 2 terms and their last term, but in terms of work, I faced it already. I'm ready to interact with them. In fact, sometimes during my first term, I was the presiding officer. "

It is a good thing as a leader to be prepared for anything that you do. Moreover, in a new environment, you should get to know your colleagues well in order to adapt well. The factors that could have placed Lady M in the position are the trust, the confidence, and the love of people that have placed her in the position. She said that,

"There are people who may destroy you; there are people who fabricate things just to destroy you. Even if you did not do it just to pull you down, you know a good man is never pulled down. "God is there and He will never allow a good man to be pulled down."

When asked about her vision of her community, Lady M wished to bring back the identity of her very own barangay. Another thing is that she makes people happy by sharing their 3T's, which are: Treasure, Time, and Talent. The love that Lady M has and her dedication towards service led her to aspirationally do more for her community.

Lady M's experience as an educator helped her not to hurdle so much as she entered politics. One of the reasons is that she had worked with people. Nevertheless, she finds difficulty and she too was challenged when they implemented legislation which is very different from what they are accustomed to. She then narrated,

"Are you aware of the MUSANG code wherein gambling is prohibited? Of course, it is a great challenge on our part as a leader, and you must have heard that I was placed in the front line to explain. We met a group of teachers and during the assembly meeting; we discussed the great issue that we have to hurdle. To make it, to implement it, to carry it out very successfully, until now, the MUSANG code. What part of the MUSANG code is gambling? Because people can never accept not gambling, especially during the wake of the dead. But you see, the vice mayor and the legislators who are sponsors of the MUSANG code are very correct. At the very beginning, it's very difficult to convince people. At the very start, it is very difficult, but once it becomes a hobby, a habit."

Lady M's view on this situation needs cooperation between the constituents and the leaders. Working hand in hand is the best remedy that they can resort to. She also said that she struggles with how people perceive her as a politician because they put the blame on her for every little thing that has been done. She related that she isn't rejoicing because it's her last



term and yet people see them as the one at fault. Lady M addressed this dilemma by doing her best together with her colleagues to be able to come up with a good resolution and by getting it near to the provincial level. Nonetheless, she took this issue as a challenge for her and the others to continually follow up on the resolution being made. In fact, they are working on something that would be beneficial to the community.

Case 3: The Vision and Passion of Lady V

Lady V, when asked about the qualities that a leader should possess, she eagerly answered that one must have a good attitude towards her constituents and her work. She also believed that a good leader is a good follower, not only of the orders of the higher ups, but also of what her constituents wanted to convey. You must actively participate in the activities of the barangay and even in the municipality. She even narrated that a leader must also be dedicated as a leader and a servant. She further said,

"You know if you are not dedicated and you just tend to wait for your salary, you have no vision in life. As a barangay captain, your potential is your leadership."

The inculcation of dedication towards your work is very vital, especially when it comes to public service. Do not just do something for your own satisfaction, but do something purely for the service of the people. The way you lead your constituents is your edge in carrying out service.

When asked about what empowerment is, Lady V answered that it is the people that first come to her mind. Moreover, they do their work and follow what is being told to them.

"It doesn't mean that these people who come from higher up, we always follow them, but it does mean that they do not overpower us because we do our work on our own."

It is a good thing to listen to the orders of the higher ups, but it does not necessarily mean that you are less empowered. The environment of politics empowered Lady V by becoming a follower. If you are a good follower, you will be able to carry out your duties well. The impact of women's empowerment on one's success depends upon a person. Although a woman had a great impact, that's the idea of Lady V. She said that,

"That's why I, as a woman, as a political leader, have a great impact as men do, because I do not have any work. I always go to my barangay every day, even at night, to visit my companions who are officers of the day during that time of day."

Having time for your work is a good thing, especially as a leader in order to guide the constituents. That's why she became successful.

"The solution is that I always ask for help from those who are knowledgeable. That's why I am successful. What will I do? I will call my ABC President and ask him what he will do. We have a council to solve that, the barangay council, those who are knowledgeable like graduates of political science."



Women's empowerment shaped the life of Lady V because she was able to help her community by improving the chapel. She also made sure that the surroundings of the barangay were clean and green.

So what shaped my life? I was accustomed to the Clean and Green contest and I was already 8 years in the service when I entered politics. I really enjoyed the shaping of my life with the help of this politics. "It changed", yes"

Being in politics made Lady V gained her confidence which is of great help especially as a barangay captain. Lady V's motivation in entering politics is her desire to change and improve her barangay. Her willingness to lend her helping hand to the people is a great manifestation of her passion to be a public servant.

"Because I have an ambition to improve the community and you know, I am sports-minded. And when I saw the basketball courts, which were not good, that's why I entered politics; this is the thing that I want to improve sports, specifically the basketball courts, covered courts, and everything else. That's why I have a covered court already."

She mustered all the courage just to enter politics because even though she is kind of shy, she needs to be courageous enough for her dream for her community and for her passion to serve. She even said that at first she didn't want to enter politics, but her desire for improvement told her not to do so. Nonetheless, she also wants to prove the misconception of their work. She even related statements from the people:

"Just like what people say that we are only servants, the barangay captain will do that for us. It's all up to the barangay officials already; you make them do it because they are being compensated for that work."

Lady V argued that it is true that they are servants of the people, for they are in public service, but her contention is that she is doing it for the fulfillment of her dream for her community. When Lady V was elected, she had many questions in mind for her community. In addition, Lady V came out with a good structure for her first term in public service because she thought of the issues of her barangay. It shows how encouraged she is by tackling the needs of the people. For Lady V, now that she has become a politician, she is no longer shy because she has adjusted herself to the environment of politics.

"I too, when I entered politics I was very shy, I couldn't even talk. Now this is my last term, because I have one term more as a barangay captain, so I was adjusted. And of course, being a politician, you should adjust yourself to the community, to the higher ups, to the politicians, and, of course, to the higher ups, even the DepEd. They ask me to become their resource speaker."

Lady V has many visions for life if she is elected next year, especially for the cleanliness of her barangay. It is a dream for her to be included as one of the cleanest barangays at the provincial level. As a leader, one should take into consideration the concerns of their



community for their betterment. The strong will that Lady V has in order for her to finish the projects of the barangay is a good thing.

When asked about the problems she encountered in her barangay during her term, she cites one major concern: settling land disputes. First Lady V narrated,

“But when it comes to land, I’m not aware of that. There was a case where I signed a certification that I was one of the witnesses of the controversy of two people regarding the land and so, I was once a witness.”

She admitted that she only knew a little about land. She then resorted to asking for help from those who were knowledgeable about the cases that involved land disputes. Aside from this, she also said that she is not having difficulty with cases of criminality because she has got a helping hand from the policemen and other agents of police.

4. DISCUSSION

Qualities of a Good Leader

The study revealed that there are qualities that a female leader should possess in order to survive in the political arena. These are dedication, commitment, and love of service. Moreover, giving service to the people is natural and priceless. Consequently, that makes a female politician a unique one. The commitment of women to public office made them stay longer (Bentillo et. al., 2016). This is because female leaders work not for their own benefit, but for the benefit of the people. Further, these qualities of women are directed toward listening to their needs. By listening to the people, there is a chance that they will trust them, especially if these women leaders accommodate their needs well. Thus, they can easily think of ways to help the community (Bentillo, et. al., 2016). It is critical that female leaders are sincere in their efforts. Eventually, this will reflect on the kind of leaders they are.

The achievements of leaders are in line with what the people are concerned with. As a result, the improvement they sought was not realized (Reingold, 2008). A lady leader must have a good attitude towards her work and the people. In addition, they give their time and share their ideas with their colleagues in order to have a better output. Another is that women leaders must be good at handling their tasks well and, in a similar manner, respect the people around them. In return, they will have a good interaction with one another and achieve the goals that they want to pursue.

Moreover, the way women should act in their jobs as leaders is to fully handle the work with regard to the attributes of women as leaders (Marvin, 2015). Female leaders must lead their constituents in the best possible way. The inculcation of dedication towards their work is very vital, especially when it comes to public service. With the qualities that these women leaders have, they are able to perform their work. Lastly, they survive being in politics because of the qualities that they possess.

Women's Empowerment

The study showed that empowerment best depicts women. Empowerment is significant for women in politics. Thus, being empowered as a woman leads to the best results and things



that are more than what was imagined, and in a good way because they put their hearts and minds into it. Women can take necessary actions without waiting for a go-signal. Women's empowerment tends to give women the opportunity to do and carry out things. Thus, empowerment made women alter their ways of participating in policy-making (Bai, 2017). There is a link between empowerment and women, which could give rise to the best results. In return, female leaders initiate legislation for their community. Female leaders also sponsor other projects where they can share their ideas. Nonetheless, following the orders of the higher ups does not mean that women are less empowered. Women leaders wanted to be role models for good followers as well as leaders.

Meanwhile, empowerment is attained if women leaders influence the people and share what they have. Citizens participate actively in society. Female leaders give preference to what the community needs (Tolentino, 2016). As a legislator, one must be there to stand for the people and think of what is best for them, even those in the grassroots. Furthermore, women leaders aided in the improvement of their communities and the maintenance of order. Women leaders should empower one another so that people can better understand their roles. People can help these women leaders achieve the community's goals by doing the smallest thing possible.

Moreover, through empowerment, opportunities arise together with the connections to other institutions and with the connections that she has, she was able to do something for the betterment of the community. One must have the proper orientation of what should be done, what's the nature of your work and the like because they need to be ready to carry out things and do it right. As a result, it can be used to advance society (Levitt, 2010). Women leaders tend to be empowered by the environment of politics to enable them to act on their own, legislate or even implement laws that would be of great help to the community. Empowerment made these women leaders determined to do what they do. Moreover, the courage they have in order to carry out their duties as leaders of their community. Evidently, empowerment includes cognitive and psychological elements, such as a woman's understanding of her condition of subordination and the causes of such conditions (Dandona, 2015). Women leaders are more likely to become good followers, because being a good follower means being able to carry out your responsibilities well.

Political Participation and Representation of Women in Politics

Women leaders work hard to maintain their integrity and be true to their work. This is through the service that they wanted to give to the people. Women should also be responsible enough in their role as leaders (Alvarez, 2013). They should be prepared for whatever tasks they are handling, particularly with regard to the opportunities that they have encountered while in the political arena. Moreover, female leaders should know their strengths and weaknesses in order to have an understanding of how they will lead. Thus, they are guided enough to be the voice and representative of the people.

Another, women as representatives, focus more on basic politics, especially in building trust to strengthen ties as leaders. Moreover, as representatives, it is important to honor equal opportunity (Devlin & Elgie, 2008). It is important to develop a good relationship with the people in the community. This is a foundation towards achieving the goals that these women leaders have in mind. Women leaders give their best in the aspect of public service, but they



do not want to compare what they have done with what they want to do, although they are recognized because of their utmost performance in the community. They believed that they could do what men could do. Consequently, women who are elected strive hard to show that they deserve to be in such a position. Women must have knowledge about the duties to be performed. Active participation of women can be done by way of implementing measures (Sahu, 2015). Women leaders do things that they genuinely want to do and that will benefit their community. Moreover, women leaders must actively participate in the activities of the community. It is instilled in these female leaders that they play an important role in developing their community. Thus, these female leaders are driven enough to show the people what they are capable of.

Nevertheless, a woman will always give a helping hand to those who are in need (Zarkov, 2017). Her willingness to lend her helping hand to the people is a great manifestation of her passion to be a public servant. In fact, it is a good practice to start with because they have that mind-set. Women leaders are encouraged to do more of their work, even if they are sometimes destroyed by others. However, they are trying their best to be leaders of good will (Curtin, 2008). In order to do so, they should be responsible enough to face any circumstances.

Issues and Challenges for Female Leaders

Women struggle to utilize and exercise their rights to participate as political candidates and even in exercising their suffrage. However, with the underlying principle of gender equality, women tend to increase their participation and representation through empowering their rights, not only by casting a vote but by full political participation. The future predicts and looks forward to their participation and involvement in politics (Ibrahim, 2014). Nowadays, it is evident that this issue is about to come to an end. With the passage of time, it was found that there is an increment of awareness with regard to the emergence of a gender-balanced society for addressing the issues of the status of women, which can only be upheld by encouraging heightened participation of women in decision and policy-making institutions, including politics and the legislature (Bano, 2009). Women are now seen in the political arena, holding significant positions, be it in the executive or even in the legislature. But this doesn't change the fact that they still struggle on certain matters.

One of the challenges that female leaders face is the concept of crab mentality. This is a big challenge, but the remedy that should address this is not to mind them, instead one should continue working for the people. Though women are confronted with different challenges as leaders, they don't hinder them; rather, they motivate them to work hard and also reflect on the things that they have experienced in life that have defined them. Thus, women have struggled to become better leaders in society (Watson, Jencik & Selzer, 2013). Consequently, women leaders experience more problems because of other prejudices. This can result in a mixture of distrust of female leaders which can affect their responsibility (Eagly, 2007). That is why it is better to look into their profiles and experience. A solid understanding of women leaders can be aided by a solid background in their leadership (Watson, Jencik, & Selzer, 2013). In spite of the fact that there are prejudices thrown at women, the experience and good background of the three informants helped a lot to gain the trust of the people and constituents. The way women perform their duties as leaders have a distinct effect on the



people. It is better than how men perform their specific role. Although there are still questions that women face regarding the leadership they have, especially since there are instances where women are not accustomed to being in their community (Eagly, 2007). Lady M finds difficulty and she too was challenged when they implemented legislation which is very different from what they are accustomed to. She struggled too much because she was placed in a situation where people did not understand the situation. But instead of feeling discouraged, she took it as a challenge and motivated herself to do something for the betterment of the community. Manifestly, the existence of problems and challenges did not inhibit their commitment to public service. In addition, the means applied to extend help and to meet both ends in order to make progress in the community (Bentillo, Cortes, Gabor & Inocian, 2016). Thus, participation of women in politics can improve the understanding of the role of women. In return, it seeks to resolve problems regarding women's leaders and their situation (Bano, 2009).

5. CONCLUSION

The women leaders in this study have dreamt of serving the people, and now they are fulfilling that dream. Their experiences as they entered the political arena empowered them as women. In spite of the fact that they are already empowered as leaders, they still encounter issues along the way. But these hurdles helped them to become more efficient in public service. Nonetheless, the existence of these issues and challenges is inevitable, especially in the world of politics. They still manage to succeed through their innate qualities.

6. REFERENCES

1. Alvarez, Michelle Lopez. "From unheard screams to powerful voices: A case study of women's political empowerment in the philippines." In 12th National Convention on Statistics, pp. 1-73. 2013.
2. Arowolo, Dare, and Folorunso S. Aluko. "Women and political participation in Nigeria." *European Journal of social sciences* 14, no. 4 (2010): 581-593.
3. Mishra, Garima. "Women in Decentralized Governance in India." *International Journal of Science & Engineering Development Research* 2, no. 6 (2017).
4. Bano, Saira. "Women in parliament in Pakistan: Problems and potential solutions." *Women's Studies Journal* 23, no. 1 (2009): 19.
5. Bentillo, Maribeth P., J. Y. Gabor, E. A. Cortes, F. C. Navarrete, and R. B. Inocian. "A Life Dedicated to Public Service: The Lady L Story." *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 4, no. 2 (2016): 37-43.
6. Curtin, Jennifer. "Women, political leadership and substantive representation: The case of New Zealand." *Parliamentary Affairs* 61, no. 3 (2008): 490-504.
7. Dandona, Anu. "Empowerment of women: A conceptual framework." *The International Journal of Indian Psychology* 2, no. 3 (2015): 35-45.
8. Devlin, Claire, and Robert Elgie. "The effect of increased women's representation in parliament: The case of Rwanda." *Parliamentary Affairs* 61, no. 2 (2008): 237-254.
9. Chaney, Elsa M. *Supermadre: women in politics in Latin America*. Vol. 50. University of Texas Press, 2014.



10. Ibrahim, Muhammad, and Razia Mussarat. "Women Participation in Politics: A Case Study of Afghan Women." *Journal of Public Administration and Governance* 4, no. 3 (2014): 433-446.
11. Labonne, Julien, Sahar Parsa, and Pablo Querubin. Political dynasties, term limits and female political empowerment: Evidence from the Philippines. No. w26431. National Bureau of Economic Research, 2019.
12. Levitt, Dana Heller. "Women and leadership: a developmental paradox?." *Adultspan Journal* 9, no. 2 (2010): 66-75.
13. Mavin, Sharon. "Women performing as leaders: Gendered bodies and appearance." In Working Paper, University Forum for Human Resource Development Conference. Ireland: University College Cork, 2015.
14. Reingold, Beth. "Women as office holders: Linking descriptive and substantive representation." *Political women and American democracy* 9 (2008): 128-47.
15. Sahu, Asima. "Diffusion of Power: Gender as a factor for women leaders at the Grassroots Democratic Institutions of Rural India: A Study from an Indian State." *International Research Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* 1, no. 4 (2015).
16. Tolentino, Charis Mae A. "Women and political influence: evidence from local elections in the Philippines." PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2016.
17. Watson, Robert P., Alicia Jencik, and Judith A. Selzer. "Women world leaders: Comparative analysis and gender experiences." *Journal of international women's studies* 7, no. 2 (2005): 53-76.
18. Zarkov, Dubravka. "Women, feminism and politics." *European Journal of Women* 24, no. 1 (2017).
19. United Nations Women (2014) Retrieved on September 01, 2017 from <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2014/3/progress-for-women-in-politics-but-glass-ceiling-remains-firm>.