

# 15. The Ijivitari Open Electorate: Women's Participation as Candidates and Voters

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## Introduction

The general assumption is that women have always had a lower status than men in Papua New Guinea societies. This assumption is reflected in social indicators such as inadequate health services, resulting in extremely high maternal and infant mortality rates; low life expectancy; a high incidence of HIV/AIDS; vulnerability to abuse and violence; and low literacy rates.

The political sphere is no different, but low status is reinforced by the small numbers of women in high decision-making jobs in both public and private sectors, and more especially in political leadership roles.

While these indicators are common to most Third World countries, the dilemma of gender bias in political leadership can be traced back to the earliest form of democratic governance—Athenian democracy, in which women were not regarded as citizens and therefore excluded from the decision-making arena, as well as from holding public office.

Papua New Guinea has had extensive contact with Western liberal democratic countries since the 1880s, and adopted a liberal democratic system of government at independence, along with the structures and laws that are deemed to be gender non-discriminatory.

Although some may argue that traditionally women have always been subordinate to men in political decision-making and leadership roles in Papua New Guinea societies, this is not entirely true across all of Papua New Guinea. Modern politics and governance, however, has encouraged men, effectively segregating women from the political arena. For example, in matrilineal societies such as in parts of Milne Bay and some New Guinea Islands provinces, women were the custodians of land and therefore featured prominently in decision-making processes and leadership roles. But records show that colonial administrations never took time

to determine where power lay or to involve women in the administration of their colonies. Rather, they created governance structures that co-opted males, thus weakening female status within local societies.

Feminist theorists have been quick to point out misconceptions in regarding women as a homogeneous group in politics, given the many differences in social and cultural spheres such as equality, opportunity, standard of living, and education.

Non-gender-sensitive laws, governance structures and mechanisms, the emergence of the 'bigman' culture, alienation, and unbalanced growth in Papua New Guinea have all further led to the suppression of women's participation in 'high' politics.

Oro Province provides a typical example. However, in setting out to study how women fared in the 2007 general election, Oro was chosen for two main reasons. First, it has fielded a large number of candidates for the one provincial and two open seats for two consecutive elections. As a result, under first-past-the-post (FPTP) voting the winners won with very low proportions of the total number of votes. Secondly, of the total of 102 women contesting the 2007 election, Oro had the second largest number (10) of contestants; Eastern Highlands Province had the largest number (12). Given the rigid patriarchal society, with its male stereotype cultures, the sudden increase in female candidates was interesting, raising questions as to whether this represented a shift in social and cultural perceptions among voters, or whether it could be attributed to the new limited preferential voting (LPV) system. Of the two open electorates in Oro Province, Ijivitari was given special prominence in the study as it includes the township of Popondetta (the provincial capital) thus providing an insight into the dynamics of the cultural mix among the population of Popondetta township.

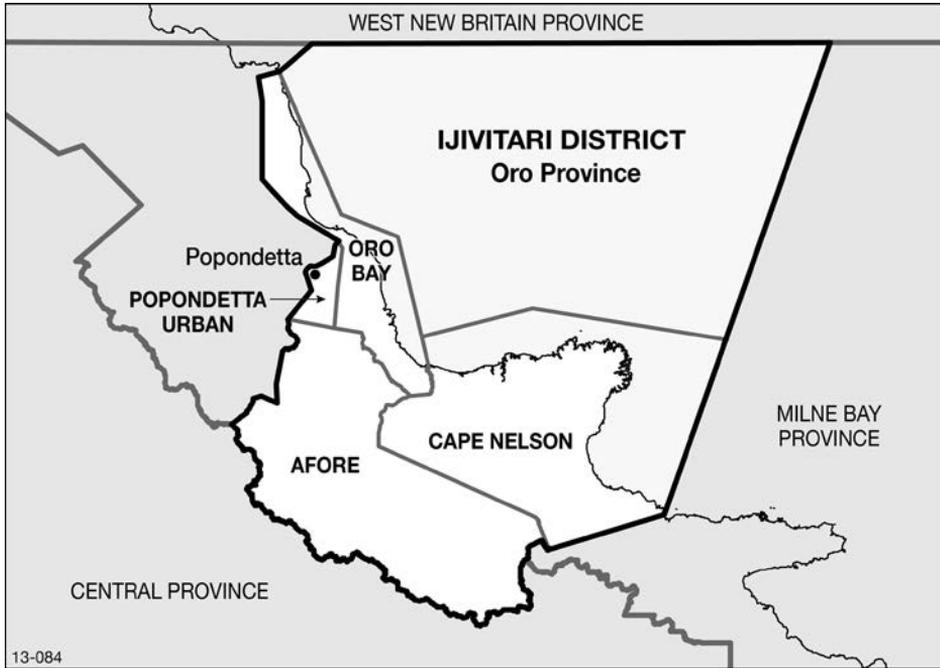
## General background

Oro Province is a coastal province situated to the north of the Owen Stanley Ranges and towards the eastern tip of the Papua New Guinea mainland, covering a total land area of 22,800 square kilometres. At the 2000 census Oro had a total population of 133,065, which represents a very sparse density of 5.8 persons per square kilometres. Some 81,367 people were registered on the electoral roll; however, this figure may be misleading as the common roll was not properly updated before the commencement of the election.<sup>1</sup>

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1 For more detail see my report in the 2007 Election Observation.

Of the two open electorates, Ijivitari is made up of four local-level government (LLG) areas (Figure 15.1) and 88 wards, with a total of 41,210 registered eligible voters; Sohe has four LLG areas and 74 wards, with 40,157 registered eligible voters.



**Figure 15.1: Ijivitari District**

Oro is one of the least developed provinces in the country, despite the fact that it has huge marine resource potential and vast arable lands, including rich volcanic soils as a result of the 1951 Mt Lamington eruptions. Successive governments have failed to turn this potential into tangible economic benefits for the people of Oro. Lack of skilled manpower, finance and infrastructure has produced a lacklustre provincial bureaucracy. The sorry situation of the province and its bureaucracy makes it susceptible to corruption, which, to quote Sir Mekere Morauta, is 'endemic'. Deteriorating infrastructure, lack of basic service delivery, and ineffective governance mechanisms as a result of misappropriation, corruption and discriminatory behaviour by successive members of parliament (MPs) and line managers, have all contributed to a stagnant provincial economy.

The only major economic activity in the province is the Higaturu oil palm industry. This is a very lucrative industry stretching from the Oro Bay LLG area to Kokoda and parts of Mamba. However, due to factors described above, the provincial government has not been able to participate meaningfully in the venture. Landowner participation is through smallholder schemes, while

outsiders (both from within the province and from other parts of the country) are being lured either to work in the plantations or to settle in Oro Province under 'oil palm settler' schemes. This has resulted in social and cultural problems associated with the growth of illegal settlements within and on the fringes of Popondetta township.

Tourism is a potential income earner for the province. The famous Kokoda Trail, the Buna landing site and other World War II sites and relics, the unique Tufi fjords and diving sites, and the Queen Alexandra birdwing butterfly (the biggest butterfly in the world) could attract tourist dollars to the province. However, to date tourism has contributed little to the provincial economy.

Over the past three decades, Oro has contributed to national leadership by having MPs with ministerial portfolios. But the benefits from this have not trickled down to the provincial and district levels.

## **The dynamics of electoral politics in Oro Province**

In the past two elections, the people of Oro have gone to the polls with mixed feelings. The varying sentiments expressed in the lead-up to this election can be categorized into four groups. First, there were those who expressed the desire to find a true and charismatic leader who would stand above the rest in resurrecting the province. They further believed that given the many social and cultural cleavages as well as endemic corruption, such a leader could come only from the churches. The different church groups were thus powerful political lobbyists in the electoral politics of Oro. This can be seen in the fact that the current governor of the province, Suckling Tamanabe, is a pastor of the Covenant Praise Ministries Church, a revival church group he founded, while his predecessor, the late Bani Hoivo, was a pastor of the Christian Revival Crusade church in Popondetta.

Secondly, there were those that felt that they had to elect one of their own kin if they were to benefit at all. The group based its sentiments on the fact that successive members have set a precedent of assisting only their own districts and areas where their vote-bases lay. This group (which had the largest following) had a profound impact on electoral politics in the province: it encouraged bloc voting, which resulted in a large number of contestants for the three seats in two consecutive elections. With a large number of candidates, all one had to do to have a good chance of winning, in the last two elections using FPTP voting, was to consolidate his/her own voter base while letting others split their vote. Hence

the winning vote for candidates in the two open seats in the last three elections has averaged between 3000 and 4000, representing only a small portion of the electorate.

The third sentiment expressed (which had a big following among the people of Oro in the 2007 election) was the fear of becoming bystanders in their own province should 'outsiders' be voted in as MPs representing Oro. Growing illegal squatter settlements on government and customary lands as a result of the influx of people from other provinces were already becoming a burden on the meagre resources of the provincial government and were causing social and cultural problems. The fear was that an outsider, if voted in, would not be sensitive to the needs, traditions and cultures of the Oro people but would concentrate on the outsiders at the expense of the traditional inhabitants of the province.

In 2002 and 2007 candidates of Morobe, Madang, Sepik, Highlands and Central origins contested the elections. The winner of the Sohe Open seat in the 2002 election (Peter Oresi) hails from the Highlands, while a former governor (Bani Hoivo) had mixed parentage. The 2002 election showed that the growing number of outsiders, when effectively mobilized, could determine the outcome of the election. The preferential treatment exercised by 'outsider' MPs during the 2002–2007 parliament reinforced the fear Oro people had of becoming bystanders in their own land. As a result, most candidates of Oro origins went to the 2007 election with extremist sentiments that were translated into slogans such as 'Oro for Oro'. This created tensions which thankfully did not escalate into violence, due to a heavy police presence.

Finally, there were those who had no interest in the proceedings as they had given up hope of any government support. Knowing that government service delivery correlated with the origins of MPs and that none of the contesting candidates was kin or from the same area—or even if they were did not command enough support to have any real chance of winning—this group simply gave up and had no desire to participate. Such sentiment was expressed mainly by people from outlying districts. Some even confided to me that, 'Services like education, which is ours by right, are below standard if they exist at all, so why bother sending children to school when in the end they have no hope of getting anywhere and will return home anyway? ... Government has forgotten us so why bother to participate in something that does not touch our lives'.<sup>2</sup> One effect of this attitude was that people were susceptible to 'gifting' and vote buying, as they were interested only in the tangible gains from the election process and not so much the outcome.

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2 From abstracts of interviews with people of Safia and Tufi LLGs.

In the past, elections have always been low key, and the cost to intending candidates minimal. When elections in Oro were contested by the people of Oro themselves, the principal modus operandi was rallies organized by candidates and their supporters in each village or at public venues where one or more candidates presented their campaign speeches; others preferred 'door-to-door' campaigning. The major costs were for the feasts organized by candidates and their supporters to lure more supporters to their camps and the logistic costs of moving around to campaign.

Things changed during the 2002 and 2007 elections, however, when people from other provinces residing in Oro decided to run for political office. With them came the 'high cost' campaign style which involved 'patron-client' relationships and the expectations that went along with that. Gifting was not only accepted, but became expected. One candidate who had contested the Ijivitari Open seat three times consecutively lamented, 'Gone are the days when candidates would travel with empty hands and campaign on empty stomachs and expect the villagers to feed them ... this may be the last time I will contest as I cannot keep up with the big spenders'.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, a candidate for the Oro Provincial seat boasted of spending close to K3 million for the 2007 election. When asked why, he replied that since he was not from the province, this was the only sure way of breaking through the strongholds of other candidates.

This may have been true for the 2002 election. However, the results of the 2007 election show otherwise: none of the big spenders in Oro was elected into parliament, showing that the sentiments on the ground had more influence on the outcome than voter inducement. Nevertheless, the political landscape has been changed with the entry of money politics in the two elections.

## Gender issues in Oro Province

Oro prides itself on being one province that closely observes and maintains its traditional customs and practices. Comprising patriarchal societies, Oro exhibits a clear demarcation between the roles and responsibilities of males and females in society, which are culturally entrenched. One such norm is the exclusion of women from the public realm which deals with 'high politics' (decision-making, chieftaincy, wars, and so on). Although Oro women have now broken some of these shackles, and some now hold down top jobs in both the public and private sectors, politics and political leadership are still seen as the male domain. This rigid male dominance of politics has resulted in a lack of women candidates in elections in the province prior to the 2007 election.

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with intending candidate. Examples of gifting during the 2007 election in Oro are documented in the Election Observation Report.

Many theories have been put forward to explain the recent surge in women aspiring for political office. Some say it is because women believe their chances of winning have increased (marginally) with the introduction of the LPV system, while others argue that there is need for alternative leadership—after all, more than three decades of male dominance of politics has left Oro Province no better off (and maybe worse off) than it was. The fact that 10 women stood as candidates in a male-dominated society is in itself worth noting.

## **The 2007 election: Women as candidates**

Although only one out of 102 female candidates contesting throughout Papua New Guinea was elected into parliament, women candidates in Oro Province did well, better indeed than a number of male candidates. Of the total allowable votes cast, women in Oro scored votes ranging from 0.2 percent to 12.7 percent (the lowest among male candidates for the three seats was 0.01 percent). However, this was not enough to see any of them win a seat. Apart from the obvious constraint of the rigid traditional mindset of the Oro people (including women voters), there were other impediments to their success.

### **Political party endorsement**

The record of political party endorsement of female candidacy was very poor. An interview with a party representative confirmed suspicions that parties were only interested in winning as many seats as possible in order to have the numbers necessary to form government. To be considered for endorsement, women candidates would have had to have been prominent people in their societies and electorates or prominent in either the public or private sectors, with high chances of winning. High officeholders would not only be appropriately educated, and therefore have been exercising leadership roles within their electorates, and thus have experience, status and respect, but would also have access to resources, public and private, to ensure their win. Given the shortage of women meeting these criteria, women candidates had difficulty securing party endorsement.

Political parties in Papua New Guinea are generally seen as either exclusive clubs or loose structures with no clear objectives other than to get as many MPs as possible in order to form government. Parties are removed from the masses, and do not have long-term member affiliations, nor are they vehicles for training and grooming future leaders. The great majority of the candidates seeking party endorsement are non-members looking for financial assistance to fund their campaigns. Women candidates had little chance of getting party support for their campaigns.

The laws governing political parties are not gender sensitive: there are no provisions obliging political parties to take on female candidates (though the *Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates* does include provision for compensating political parties for the campaign expenses of women gaining 10 percent or more of the total vote). Of the 102 female candidates only 37 were endorsed by political parties. In Oro, only four of the 10 were endorsed by parties. Even then, the support given to endorsed women candidates was minimal, typically covering a small cash donation for campaign expenses. There was no actual campaigning by party officials for women candidates in Oro Province.

## The absence of free and fair competition

The perception of the 'bigman' culture has taken on a new meaning in the Papua New Guinea political context, which encourages a 'patron-client' relationship between intending candidates and potential voters. This makes elections in Papua New Guinea a very expensive exercise, as it raises the expectations of voters about receiving money and goods in return for votes. Oro became part of this pattern during the 2002 election, as a result of outsiders' influence. Women candidates in Oro were seriously outdone in trying to keep up with the big spenders during the 2007 election, as none of them was financially well off.

'Money politics' also fosters corruption, bribery, inducement, intimidation and violence, the perpetrators of which are mostly men. Their control over public resources, including transportation and security, give them a head start over women candidates. Land and sea transport were either too expensive for women to utilize effectively to cover the length and breadth of their electorates, or were commandeered by male candidates and their supporters for the duration of the campaign period, using bribes, threats, and their positions in the public and private sectors.

The failure of relevant agencies to enforce electoral laws on bribery, gifting, and other forms of election-related corruption, as well as the traditionally rigid mindset of the people of Oro, creates a very uneven playing field for women contestants in the province.

## Campaign activities, strategies and issues

Most women candidates interviewed expressed the view that the eight-week campaign period was insufficient to cover their respective electorates. The high expenses involved as a result of 'money politics', as well as security considerations, were also cited as reasons for adopting certain campaign strategies.

Some arranged low-key gatherings (without the hype and the feasting) in villages to deliver their campaign speeches, others conducted door-to-door campaigns. In both cases, the area of the electorate covered was restricted, mainly to the town and its environs, and the immediate vicinity of the candidate's own village. Most villagers preferred to invite or accept requests for campaigns in their village by candidates who were willing to distribute gifts and fund feasts during their campaigns; one candidate was actually observed telling people to organize themselves and host rallies in their villages so he could go and donate goods and money as part of his campaign strategy.

In terms of security, there were areas where male candidates and their supporters went where female candidates could not go, such as the strongholds of rival candidates, settlement areas, mountainous and rugged terrain, and remote outlying districts. Some villages in the central Kaiva area were charging 'rent' for candidates wishing to campaign in their villages, as a result of the non-delivery on election promises of successive MPs. The threat of violence and intimidation made female candidates avoid those places. Candidates Rita Jonah (of Madang) and Josephine Abajiah (who was born in Oro but spent much of her early life in Milne Bay) had to contend additionally with the 'Oro for Oro' campaign by people of Oro descent, thus considerably hampering their campaign activities.

In response to a question I posed to a woman candidate in the Ijivitari electorate, on the kind of support she expected from female voters, I was told, 'Women will not vote for us women candidates unless we take our campaign right to their doorsteps'. Personal appeal through physical presence was seen as a sure way to break through the traditional, imposed stereotypical view that 'politics is no place for women' and that 'women cannot make good leaders. Further, attempt was made to appeal to the maternal instincts of women voters, on the basis that three decades of male dominance of politics in Papua New Guinea had not brought development for the Oro people and that it was time for women to set this right for the benefit of their children.

In terms of issues covered in campaigns, all the women candidates in Oro built in gender components to their speeches, appealing to voters to set aside their gender-stereotype mentality and opt for a change in leadership through women.

## **Voter support base**

With the exception of Maureen Ambo (a candidate for Ijivitari Open) women did poorly in the primary vote (all below 2.5 percent) and did not receive many preferences (though in Oro Provincial Claire Embahe's preferences were almost

three times the number of her meagre 44 first preferences, and in Ijivitari Deboa Emboge more than doubled her vote by the addition of preferences before her early exclusion).

Female candidates in Oro relied mainly on their kinship ties and voters in the immediate vicinity of their village as their support bases. The low number of preferential votes distributed to women suggests that female voters in Oro did not support female candidates. Possible reasons for this are discussed below.

## Campaign alliances

Women candidates contesting the 2007 elections in Oro generally did not form alliances for preference sharing or alliances of provincial and open candidates to share supporters. This may be because they lacked understanding of the LPV system and therefore did not strategize appropriately, or because other candidates were reluctant to form alliances with them, perhaps thinking that female candidates did not command enough support to make alliance useful.

## Maureen Ambo

Eliminated on the 35th count in a field of 38 candidates, the 6.2 percent of preference votes amassed by Maureen Ambo was one of the highest. This was a reflection of the 'voter sharing' alliance she formed with Suckling Tamanabe, the successful candidate in the provincial seat.

The alliance between Ambo and Tamanabe demonstrated the power wielded by church-based groups. Several combined churches crusades were organized at public venues in Popondetta, Oro Bay, and other parts of the province just before the writs were issued. The crusades preached the need for Oro Province to vote for 'Godly leaders'. At the forefront of these crusades were the Covenant Praise Ministries Church, led by its founder and pastor, Tamanabe, and the Fo-Gave church group (a 'cultist' group) led by former Anglican bishop, George Ambo, Maurine Ambo's father-in-law. Pledges were made by Maureen Ambo's supporters in the Ijivitari electorate to give all their votes for the provincial seat to Suckling Tamanabe, who reciprocated by urging all his followers to give their votes to Maureen Ambo in the Ijivitari seat.

The success of this alliance can be seen in the exceptional performances of the two first-time candidates, one of whom led all the way in the provincial count while the other came fourth in a field of 38 contestants.

## Women as voters

### The absence of free and fair competition

Decades of suppression and alienation from 'high politics' as a result of strict adherence to traditional norms and practices in a largely patriarchal society has made women in Oro passive participants in the electoral process. The concept of village-, clan- or tribal-based consensus—mainly male consensus—results in bloc voting, which women are obliged to follow. Intimidation and violence (or the threat of violence) involved in electoral politics does not give women voters the freedom to choose as they please. Several women voters interviewed expressed their support for the LPV system since, according to them, they could now use the first preference vote to satisfy their traditional obligations, voting for their husband's or clan's first choice, while reserving the second and third preferences for their own choices. However, these preferences were not reserved exclusively for female candidates, as the results show.

### Support for female candidates/gender appeal

With the exception of Maureen Ambo, women candidates in Oro Province did not command support from the wider society, including women voters. This can be seen from the distribution of preferences after the primary count for the three seats.

One of the main reasons for this lack of appeal was that inaction by successive governments over the years had resulted in low levels of development, which demanded strong and charismatic leaders, appropriately educated and knowledgeable in governance issues, who commanded respect from their electorates. Unfortunately, my interviews with women voters suggested that the women candidates were not seen as meeting the criteria and did not command respect through their personal charisma. Although some were activists on gender and social issues, such activities were mainly conducted in the town area and district headquarters and had little impact on the majority in the rural areas. As a result, they stood as effectively unknowns. As noted, Maureen Ambo rose above this by aligning herself with powerful church-based political lobbyists and exposing herself to the wider society through the strategically organized Christian crusades prior to the issue of writs.

## Campaign activities

The roles women play during campaigns, for example, preparing meals and organizing venues for males to sit and talk high politics, although important, are often seen as peripheral, thus further diminishing women candidates' appeal to women voters as alternative choices for political leadership.

For the first time in Oro, women candidates appointed other women as campaign managers in certain areas and encouraged women lobbyists to deliver campaign speeches in a bid to appeal to women voters. This was a break from the peripheral activities that gender-biased cultures have imposed on them. Women voters were also observed openly discussing candidates both within small groups and during political rallies.

The confidence, and in some instances daring, shown by women voters can perhaps be attributed to the fact that 10 of their own gender were openly challenging male dominance in political leadership roles. However, this was not widespread, being confined to the Popondetta town area and the female candidates' own bases. Women in other areas, especially outlying rural areas and male candidates' support base areas, did not take up the call to openly campaign for female candidates.

## General analysis and LPV assumptions in Oro

The change from FPTP voting to LPV was largely intended to encourage more free and fair elections in the country and encourage a less confrontational style of politics among MPs. In this, Oro Province had mixed results. While the election in general was a success and without major incidents, certain issues still need to be addressed. Major remaining issues of contention concerning the technicalities of the LPV system are listed below.

### Bloc voting

Bloc voting has always been a feature of the electoral system in Oro Province, especially in the last two elections. Given the large number of candidates and the relatively small population this practice has yielded winners with very low numbers of votes (averaging between 3000 and 3500—less than 10 percent of the total population of the respective electorates). The results of this have been a lack of serious commitment by MPs to the overall development of their electorates, a 'don't care' attitude to their duties, roles and responsibilities as

MPs, and their indulgence in corrupt practices. The view has been that as long as the small proportion of the population which made up their voter support base was satisfied, MPs were assured of retaining their seats.

The assumption of the shift to LPV was that having three preferences would encourage candidates to take a more holistic approach to elections, with greater awareness of the entire electorate, since support would be needed from the whole electorate to reach the absolute majority needed to win.

However, the 2007 election results for the three seats in Oro Province suggest that voters have not shifted far from the FPTP mentality. For example, after the first preference count, the eventual winner in Ijivitari Open, David Arore, was placed third, while Benson Garui from the Afore area—the same area as Arore, and a relative—was placed first. The preferential counts that followed saw Arore still hovering around third and fourth place while Garui fell to fourth and fifth place. The margin between the frontrunner and the third placed candidate was maintained at between 400 and 600 votes. This changed when Garui was eliminated at the thirty-fourth count: almost 90 percent of his preferential votes went to Arore, dramatically elevating him to first place with a lead of close to 1000 votes. This was maintained in the final two eliminations and Arore was declared elected.

On the other hand, Tufi District alone had seven candidates contesting. When boxes from the Tufi District were counted, almost 90 percent of the votes were distributed among these seven candidates.

## Exhausted votes and absolute majority

Of the total of 28,506 allowable ballot papers, 18,079 (63.4 percent) were exhausted before the final count. As the Tufi example shows, the large number of exhausted ballot papers may be attributed to the large number of candidates (38) vying for the votes of a relatively small electorate in Ijivitari. The large proportion of exhausted ballots may also have reflected the behaviour of voters with little interest in proceedings (see above), who gave all three preferences to candidates with little chance of winning.

It was popularly believed that LPV would ensure that winning candidates would have an 'absolute majority' (50 percent + 1 of the total votes), as opposed to FPTP, which gave victory on the basis of a 'simple majority'—the largest number of votes. This, of course, failed to account of exhausted ballots. In Ijivitari, with a total of 30,066 ballot papers issued, the absolute majority was 15,034. However, the high incidence of informal votes (1560), and the large number of ballot papers exhausted, resulted in the absolute majority at the first redistribution dropping to a low 5400. David Arore surpassed this figure with a

total of 5478 votes, to be declared the winner, but his winning vote represented only 18 percent of the total votes cast and therefore brings into question the whole concept of fair representation of the electorate.

## Conclusion

The Ijivitari case suggests that women candidates have a chance of winning elections in Papua New Guinea; however, the current status quo of electoral politics stacks the odds heavily against them.

Apart from going against a male-dominated society with all its rigid cultural and traditional forms, women candidates in Oro Province had to contend with structural inequalities in the system. The fact that 10 women candidates contested the 2007 elections and that, at least in some areas, women participated openly in politics where previously none dared to venture, provides evidence of a mellowing in cultural constraints placed on women, especially in the realm of 'high politics'.

Although this is encouraging, more participation alone is not enough. Structural issues in the system have to be addressed in order to bring about real opportunities for women contestants. Drawing on the Ijivitari experience, the following are some suggestions for removing obstacles to free, fair and equal participation of women in high politics.

## Awareness

There has to be a whole-of-government approach to gender awareness throughout Papua New Guinea not just in easily accessible urban areas, as was the case in Ijivitari. Both males and females should participate in these programs as advocates and recipients. Awareness programs should focus on women's rights, including the right to hold public office and participate in high politics. There is also a need to increase awareness about the LPV process, as the 2007 election in Oro displayed a lack of real understanding of the system by candidates and voters alike.

Civil society organizations and government agencies should be encouraged to establish networks reaching to the far and isolated corners of the country. Through these, information should be disseminated not only to make people aware, but to encourage their full participation in democratic processes and governance. In Oro Province, a thorough awareness program would probably contribute to lowering the numbers contesting elections.

## Election-related laws and policies

Election-related laws and policies need to be revisited in order to make them more gender sensitive, while laws relating to bribery, vote buying, gifting and other forms of inducement and corruption in the electoral process should be strictly enforced.

## Creation of seats exclusively for women

The above suggestions will take time to implement, given decades of inaction. An alternative would be for parliament to legislate for a seat reserved for women in each province. This seat could either be voted on by everyone or by women voters only. One suggestion under discussion is to replace provincial seats with a seat in each province reserved for women.

Such measures might assist in reducing non-democratic practices in Papua New Guinea's electoral system and enhancing women's participation.

## Appendix

**Table 15.1: Voting statistics for Ijivitari Open electorate, 2007 election**

Number of registered voters	41,826	
Total votes cast	30,065	
Informal votes	1,561	(5.2% of total votes cast)
Total allowable ballot papers	28,504	
Total ballot papers remaining in count	10,419	
Total votes distributed	23,727	
Exhausted ballot papers	18,085	(63.4% of total allowable ballots)
Absolute majority (50% + 1)	5,211	

Table 15.2: Ijivitari Open electorate results, 2007 election

Ballot order	Candidate	Sex	Political party	Primary vote		Position after primary vote	Preferential vote		Order of exclusion	Total votes	Total allowable ballots (%)	Ballots remaining in count (%)
				Number	%		Number	%				
36	David Arore	M	Independent	2474	8.7	3	3004	54.8		5478	19.2	52.6
41	John Warison	M	People's Party	2303	8.1	4	2638	53.4		4941	17.3	47.4
26	George King Baure	M	Independent	2483	8.7	2	1756	41.4	36	4239	14.9	
30	Maureen Ambo	F	National Alliance	1913	6.7	5	1706	47.1	35	3619	12.7	
10	Benson Kavia Garui	M	People's National Congress Party	2699	9.5	1	663	19.7	34	3362	11.8	
17	Nehemiah T. Iewa	M	PNG Party	1641	5.8	6	1428	46.5	33	3069	10.8	
16	Solomon Kimai	M	People's Action Party	1575	5.5	7	849	35.0	32	2424	8.5	
39	Cecil King Doruba	M	PANGU	1552	5.4	8	510	24.7	31	2062	7.2	
47	Andrew Borita	M	Independent	737	2.6	10	817	52.6	30	1554	5.5	
12	Hudson Arek	M	People's Progress Party	472	1.7	19	691	59.4	29	1163	4.1	
31	Fredrick Embi	M	Independent	683	2.4	11	444	39.4	28	1127	4.0	
20	John Taylor Sovera	M	Independent	630	2.2	14	407	39.2	27	1037	3.6	
28	Gilford Avenoma	M	People's Democratic Movement	766	2.7	9	167	17.9	26	933	3.3	
14	Reginald Seiyari	M	Independent	589	2.1	15	316	34.9	25	905	3.2	
35	Newby M. Cuthbert	M	Independent	443	1.6	20	401	47.5	24	844	3.0	
44	John Kova	M	Yumi Reform Party	671	2.4	12	154	18.7	23	825	2.9	
32	Karl Varika	M	Stars Alliance Party	557	2.0	16	184	24.8	22	741	2.6	
25	Bobby S. Samani	M	United Party	667	2.3	13	35	5.0	21	702	2.5	
38	Gerald Albert	M	Independent	533	1.9	17	144	21.3	20	677	2.4	

15. The Ijivitari Open Electorate: Women's Participation as Candidates and Voters

Ballot order	Candidate	Sex	Political party	Primary vote		Position after primary vote	Preferential vote		Order of exclusion	Total votes	Total allowable ballots (%)	Ballots remaining in count (%)
				Number	%		Number	%				
23	David Dandio	M	Independent	432	1.5	21	144	25.0	19	576	2.0	
22	Simon Sieveba Sipo	M	Melanesian Alliance	490	1.7	18	73	13.0	18	563	2.0	
27	Jaf Taua Durea	M	Independent	383	1.3	25	105	21.5	17	488	1.7	
21	Andrew B. Kaiai	M	Independent	389	1.4	23	80	17.1	16	469	1.6	
24	George Kasawa	M	Independent	380	1.3	26	70	15.6	15	450	1.6	
18	Micah Mas	M	Independent	431	1.5	22	14	3.1	14	445	1.6	
29	Wellington Geroro	M	Independent	384	1.3	24	29	7.0	13	413	1.4	
45	Beiden Sisino	M	Independent	318	1.1	27	30	8.6	12	348	1.2	
15	William Caxton Ajedo	M	Independent	277	1.0	28	45	14.0	11	322	1.1	
13	Henry A. V. Mamaie	M	PNG Conservative Party	263	0.9	29	23	8.0	10	286	1.0	
46	Wilfred E. Gabuba	M	People's Labour Party	260	0.9	30	16	5.8	9	276	1.0	
42	Joel Siembo	M	Independent	217	0.8	31	10	4.4	8	227	0.8	
19	Deborah E. Emboge	F	Independent	197	0.7	32	20	9.2	7	217	0.8	
37	Raymond Gill Joino	M	Independent	191	0.7	33	7	3.5	6	198	0.7	
33	Wellington Kaboro	M	Christian Democratic Party	145	0.5	34	2	1.4	5	147	0.5	
11	Bray Sisire	M	Papua New Guinea National Party	119	0.4	35	2	1.7	4	121	0.4	
40	David Beu	M	Independent	117	0.4	36	1	0.8	3	118	0.4	
43	Austin Tuwagera Edo	M	Independent	93	0.3	37	0	0.0	2	93	0.3	
34	David Andaripa	M	Independent	30	0.1	38	0	0.0	1	30	0.1	