

Beyond Voting

Increasing Women's Participation in Nigeria's Political Process

Edited by

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Acknowledgment

World over, the participation of women in politics and administration have been of no significant value and Nigeria is not an exception. This has been due to the menfolk's attitude towards women, based on religious placement of women as men's companion and not as figure heads, women are therefore regarded as 'Weaker Vessels'. For this reason, some duties which hitherto concern development, achievements, decision-making, etc are left for men to handle, while supposedly lesser jobs like cooking, taking care of the family, typing and teaching are given to women. But recently, development has made it possible for women to participate in those activities reserved for the men. And considerable attention have been focused on making women more prominent in terms of contributing to the economy and development of their countries, hence their participation in politics has been viewed to be of a major purpose-nation building.

The Rule of Law and Empowerment Initiative also known as Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN) with support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), as part of achieving its mission statement which is enhancing citizens' participation and improving security governance in Nigeria and West Africa, thought it necessary to conduct a mapping across the six geo-political zones to ascertain the push and pull factors that limit women's participation in the political process.

The research and reports were made possible by teams of academics researchers, working in collaboration with PWAN. They include Dr Freedom Onuoha, Dr Maurice Ogbonaya, Ms Dudu Manuga, Dr Suleiman Kura, Mr Omodele Asiwaju, and Ms. Marsha Nwanne Ugochi. We also like to appreciate Dr Chris Kwaja, who provided the expertise

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Foreword

All over the world, the role of women as nation builders and custodians of social sanity has become a generally accepted position. However, the dynamics of gender-power relations is so structured that, as a norm, women are side-lined (consciously and unconsciously) from political and institutional leadership opportunities, and the few who have made it to the pinnacle of leadership in various spheres have often swum against the tides to get there, and usually at a comparatively unfair cost.

According to the United Nations¹, only 22.8 per cent of all national parliamentarians were women as of June 2016, a slow increase from 11.3 per cent in 1995; As of October 2017, 11 women are serving as Head of State and 12 are serving as Head of Government; Rwanda had the highest number of women parliamentarians worldwide. Women in Rwanda have won 63.8 per cent of seats in the lower house, and globally, there are 38 countries in which women account for less than 10 per cent of parliamentarians in single or lower houses, as of June 2016, including 4 chambers with no women at all.

The World Economic Forum's 2017 global gender gap report² estimates that the political dimension currently holds the widest gender gap and is also the one exhibiting the most progress, despite a slowdown in progress this year. It could be closed within 99 years". This feat is only possible if the present momentum is sustained by all who desire a

¹ <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures>

² <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2017/key-findings/>

better world and ultimately the women who are at the receiving end of this prejudice.

Personally, facilitating this research work which identified the factors that limit women's participation in the political space and the solutions today is an effort to sustain and increase the pace at which we attain political gender parity in Nigeria and the world at large. It is for me a grandiose opportunity to join the league of great women who have and are still championing the cause of women and girls across the globe.

At this pace, we are certain that political gender parity can be attained sooner than expected.

Kamissa Camara

Foreign Minister of Mali

Voices from Below and Above: The Dynamics of Women's Participation in the Political Process in Nigeria

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Background

Poor participation of women in politics, governance and administration of state has been a major concern at the global level. In developing countries of the world, it appears that the situation is more worrisome and deserving serious attention. Though one of the hallmarks of democracy is the participation of people, systemic inequalities, with specific reference to gender differentials, constitute a major obstacle to political participation in Nigeria. Despite their numeric strength as key determinants of electoral outcomes, women are less represented in

governance both in elective and appointive positions³. Notwithstanding the fact that women have a significant voting population in Nigeria, they are faced with huge challenges that hinder their progress politically. They are not able to take active part in the management of the economy, coupled with lack of economic opportunity, shrinking space for social mobility, cases of domestic and sexual violence, as well as other culture-related hindrances.

In the context of the experiences of women, the return to democracy in 1999 was expected to rekindle their hope and expectations around greater participation in politics and governance. Unfortunately, despite continued efforts on their part, a significant proportion of them still confront huge barriers that are defined along political, economic, social, cultural and institutional factors across the country. The dominant view and understanding about women participation in politics is often one that focuses on their ability to present themselves for election or appointed. There is a second layer of participation that describes participation in relation to having interest in voting for the right people. In the words of a respondent:

The fact that I do not seek for election or get appointed does not mean I am not interested in what happens in the political environment. Since the politicians take decisions that affect me directly, I have to be interested in who gets elected. For me, this kind of participation is really important since we cannot all be elected or appointed⁴.

³ Centre for Democracy and Development – CDD (2018), Women in elective offices in Nigerian politics: Fact Sheet June 2018”, Abuja: CDD.

⁴ Interview with a Senior Public Servant in Abuja, 28th July 2018.

In a sense, the ratification of major international instruments and protocols relating to women by Nigeria, such as the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820, the Gender and Equal Opportunities Law among others, were supposed to place the issue of women as a priority for policy makers in the country. This was also followed by country-level policies such as the national and state level action plans that targeted women involvement in all aspects of governance. Despite the existence of these policies, Nigeria is far from the realisation of the goal of 35% affirmative action for women. Although, over the years, the increase in women participation in politics, governance and administration in Nigeria has been remarkable, yet there is an observed extensive discrimination against women and their under-representation in politics compared to their male counterpart. Meanwhile, women's involvement in politics and administration portends good for the society at large. Apart from their numeric strength, women have been known to be industrious, enterprising, good managers and are less corrupt compared to their menfolk; they can perform as much as, if not better than their menfolk. This paper interrogates the dynamics of women involvement in politics in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

Some terms in the topic of this discourse need to be adequately clarified. These terms are: politics and political participation.

Politics

Politics is a very difficult word to define. As a result, scholars have offered many definitions of the term. The first major definition to be reviewed is the one arising from the origin of the word. The word

“politics” originated from the Greek word “polis” which means “city-state”. In the ancient Greek period, the city-state is the basic unit of human organisation similar to the contemporary state. Everybody living within the city-state was expected to participate in the administration of their city-state directly. This is why Aristotle, in his seminal work titled *Politics* referred to every human being as political animal. From the word “polis”, “polities” came out which means “citizens” and the word “politikos”, an adjective that designates something pertaining to the city-state, citizen or citizenship. From the word “politikos” is derived the word “politics”.

Harold Dwight Lasswell, one of the leading American political scientists and communication theorists, famously defined politics as the determination of “who get what, when and how”⁵. Another respected political scientist that defines politics is David Easton. In his famous book titled *A System Analysis of Political Life* published in 1965, he defined politics as the “authoritative allocation of values”⁶. These two classical definitions of politics are outstanding. They centre more on how resources of the state are allocated. They conceive politics from the standpoint of how people in power at a particular time determine how the power, resources and values of the state are appropriated and distributed. However, these definitions are limited in the sense that they do not conceptualise politics as activities that also involves how people get to power especially in a democratic settings.

⁵ Harold Lasswell (1936) *Politics: Who Gets What, When and How?* New York: Mc-Graw-Hill Book.

⁶ Easton David (1965) *A System Analysis of Political Life*. New York: John Wiley. Pg. 50.

George Kousolas, in his book- *On Government and Politics*. According to him, politics are “those activities that are closely related to the state and its structure of government”⁷. This definition essentially limits politics to governance of the state. It is limited to the state and its instrument of governance, which is also limited. To have a robust definition of politics, all these definitions can be put together as the attempt to control the minds and resources of all men and nations.

Every aspect of human life is not immune to politics. Politics determine the whole aspect of human life. This is why Robert Dahl opined that “politics is one of the unavoidable facts of human existence and if politics is inescapable, so are the consequences of politics”⁸. What this mean quotation above explains is that since politics is the concern of everybody, no one should ever not be interested in politics and nobody should be deliberately or unintentionally excluded.

Political Participation

Political participation refers to a wide range of activities through which people seek to influence the decision-making process that shape their life. To use the world of Lawrence Scaff, which is an adaptation of David Easton’s definition of politics, political participation has to do with “who takes what, when and how”⁹. This could include involvement in politics such as voting in elections and informal activities such as activism, protest, among others. Political participation can exist on two different

⁷ Kousolas, George (1975) cited in Olu-Adeyemi Olanrewaju (2013) Brief on Political Analysis. Available at <http://lanreoluadeyemi.blogspot.com/2013/07/brief-on-political-analysis.html>.

⁸ Robert Dahl (1990) cited in Olu-Adeyemi Olanrewaju (2013) *ibid*.

⁹ Scaff L.A. (1975). Two Concepts of Political Participation. *Political Research Quarterly*, 28 (3). 447-462.

levels. These are active level political participation and passive level political participation. Active level political participation involves gladiatorial involvement in which one actively participates in political activities of the state. Forms of political participation that fall under active political participation include contesting for political posts, supporting the formation of political parties and also being a member of political party. On the other hand, forms of political participation that fall under passive political participation include supporting a political party, joining campaigns and rallies of a political party or a candidate, voting in an election, among others. The opposite of political participation is political apathy, which is lack of interest in political activities.

Women's Participation in Political in Nigeria before Independence

In the pre-colonial period before the arrival of the British colonial masters into Nigeria, women, in the different empires and kingdoms that fall within the territory of what is today known as Nigeria participated actively in the traditional political activities of their respective kingdoms. For instance, among the Kanuri, women played a significant role in the administration of the Kanem Bornu Empire. *Mogaram* (known as the sister of the *mai*, the king) as well as the *magira* (the mother of the *mai* the king) assisted the king in the administration of the empire. Also, in the ancient Zaria, women played a significant role. The city itself was founded by a woman called Queen Bakwa Turuku. Her daughter called Queen Amina later succeeded her as the queen of the city to protect the city from foreign invasion. In Southern Nigeria, the role of women in the pre-colonial period was not lacking. Among the Yoruba people, the Alaafin ruled Oyo with the assistance of a number of women traditional chiefs. These people consisted of high-ranking titled women. In Ife, the political role played

by Moremi cannot be forgotten as she displayed bravery in the politics of old Ife kingdom. So also were Emotan of Benin and Omu Okwei of Ossomari.

From the time Britain took over the administration of the Nigerian state, women's rights and participation in politics began to dwindle. British colonial government in Nigeria, like other colonised states, superimposed English culture and tradition on the Nigerian state. The British culture and Nigerian traditional culture with regards to the place and role of women in the society differed greatly. While the British Victorian concept of the place and role of women in the society was a single-sex political system, the Nigerian traditional political culture was dual-sex¹⁰. As a result, the two were mutually opposing. The British policy was hostile to women's rights and participation in politics. For instance, the education programme of the colonial masters did not give room for the status of women until the reform of King George VI in 1936 which gave women full citizenship and equal rights with men, women could not involve in certain male-oriented professions such as law, medicine, engineering, among others. Similarly, it was not until 1950s that women could be allowed to cast their votes and be voted for in Southern Nigeria. This was carried out through the effort of market women in Southern Nigeria. The Nigerian women were united in agitating for the same enfranchisement for the Northern Nigeria women.

¹⁰ Olugbemi, K.V. (2011) Women and Political Development in Nigeria Since 1960" in A.A. Agagu and R.F. Ola (ed) Development Agenda of the Nigerian State. Akure: Lord Keynes Publishing Company.

However, in spite of the colonial government's opposition, Nigerian women did not relent in their efforts to be actively involved in politics and administration of the Nigerian state like their male counterparts. They formed the women wing of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon which later become National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC). Mrs Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, in a bid to regain and restore the lost political power of Nigerian women, contested as an independent candidate when the NCNC refused to adopt her. Unfortunately, she lost. Her failure did not deter other women from participating in politics. Another woman, called Adunni Oluwole, from Ibadan took a bolder step than others by forming her own party – Nigerian Commoners Party, at Mushin in 1954 (Arifalo in Olugbemi, 2011). One Mrs G. Olateju, a pensioner and a cocoa farmer, also formed the 'Nigeria Liberal Party' in the same year. She merged her party with that of Adunni Oluwole to become Nigerian Commoners Liberal Party and they were affiliated with NCNC. Adunni also contested elections into the House of Representatives in 1956 but lost¹¹.

In spite of the influence of Islamic religion in the Northern Nigeria, women also confronted British draconian policies against women involvement in politics. The role played by Hajiya Gambo Sawaba was not small in the liberation of women from the colonial government and the domination of men in politics during the colonial government in Nigeria.

From the foregoing, Nigerian women struggled and did not relent under the repression of British colonial rule. Despite opposition from the British colonial government, it is noteworthy that Nigerian women

¹¹ Onabamiro, S (1983) *Glimpse into Nigeria*. Ibadan: Macmillan.

contributed a lot to nationalism and the attainment of independence. In fact, in the words of “what is known is that it is the riot organised by women that shattered the complacent British belief that their rule was welcomed by an overwhelming majority of Nigerians”¹². Again, Nigerian women, however, were less influenced by the Western world in their agitation for political participation and rights until the end of British rule in Nigeria. As a result of their doggedness, women were not only allowed to vote and be voted in Southern Nigeria, but three women from the south were appointed into the House of Chiefs, namely: Chief (Mrs) Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti (appointed into the Western Nigeria House of Chiefs); Chiefs (Mrs) Margaret Ekpo and Janet Mokelu (both appointed into the Eastern Nigeria House of Chiefs)¹³.

Women Involvement in Politics in Nigeria After Independence: 1960-1999

The transfer of power to the hands of the indigenous people of Nigeria gave women the opportunity to participate in the political activities of their land. Women were members of political parties and even played a significant role as members of these political parties. During this period, Nigerian women began to play very active roles. In 1960, Mrs Wuraola Esan from Western Nigeria became the first female member of the Federal Parliament. In 1961, Chief (Mrs) Margaret Ekpo contested and won the election, becoming a member of the Eastern Nigeria House of

¹² Afigbo, A.G. (1980) *The Eastern Provinces Under Colonial Rule* in Obaro Ikime (ed) *Groundwork on Nigerian History*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Limited.

¹³ Kolawole, O.T., Adeigbe, K., Adebayo, A.A., & Abubakar M.B. (2013). Women participation in the political process in Nigeria. *Centrepont Journal (Humanities Edition)*, 2(15). 87-102

Assembly till 1966, Mrs Janet N. Mokelu and Miss Ekpo A. Young also contested elections and won. They became members of the Eastern House of Assembly. In Northern Nigeria, however, women were still denied the franchise even after independence until 1979, when Nigeria returned to civilian government. As a result of this denial, prominent female politicians like Hajiya Gambo Sawaba could not vote nor be voted for. However, the First Republic was truncated by military incursion into politics but global action by the United Nations and other international bodies calling for improved representation of women in political activities began and intensified during this period. One of those was the United Nations Declaration of 1967 which called for appropriate measures to address the idea of inferiority of women. The intensification of this campaign obvious has significant impact in Nigeria. By the time Nigeria transited to democracy in 1979, women involvement was strengthened. All forms of obstacle preventing women from participating in political activities in the country were removed. One of the obstacles removed was the right of women in Northern Nigeria to vote and be vote for.

Therefore, Second Republic (1979-1983), saw a little more participation of women in politics. A few Nigerian women won elections into the House of Representatives at the national level and also few women won elections into the State Houses of Assembly. However, during the same period, only two women were appointed Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. They were Chief (Mrs) Janet Akinrinade as Minister for Internal Affairs and Mrs Adenike Egun Oyagbola as Minister for National Planning respectively. Mrs Francesca Yetunde Emmanuel was the only female Permanent Secretary (first in the Federal Ministry of Establishment and later Federal Ministry of Health). A number of women were appointed Commissioners in the states also. In 1983, Ms

Franca Afegbua became the only woman to be elected into the Senate. Also, very few women contested and won elections into the Local Government Councils during this period. Unfortunately, again, the Second Republic was called quits by military incursion into politics. General Buhari who took over power introduced formal quota system with regards to the appointment of women into government. He directed that at least one woman must be appointed as a member of the executive council at every state. This also made some women play some significant role during the regime.

The 1990 transition elections into local governments heralding the Third Republic saw few women emerge as councillors and only one woman emerged as Chairperson of a Local Government Council in the Western part of the country. During the gubernatorial elections, no female governor emerged in any of the states. Only two female Deputy Governors emerged, namely: Alhaja Sinatu Ojikutu of Lagos State and Mrs Cecilia Ekpenyong of Cross River State. In the Senatorial election held in 1992, Mrs Kofo Bucknor Akerele was the only woman who won a seat in the Senate. Very few women won election into the House of Representatives. One of these few was Chief (Mrs) Florence Ita Giwa who won in the Calabar Constituency. President Babangida's Transitional Council appointed two women in January 1993, namely Mrs Emily Aik-Imhokuede and Mrs Laraba Dagash. In the Interim National Government of Chief Ernest Shonekan, two female ministers were appointed into the cabinet. General Abacha administration also had a number of female ministers at various times in his cabinet, including Chief (Mrs) Onikepo Akande and Ambassador Judith Attah. During the military regime of General Abdulsalami Abubakar (June 9, 1998 - May 29, 1999), there were two women in the Federal Executive

Council: Chief (Mrs) Onikepo Akande (Minister for Commerce) and Dr Laraba Gambo Abdullahi (Minister of Women Affairs)¹⁴.

Women Participation in Political Activities in the Fourth Republic

Military government of General Abdusalam Abubakar handed over power the democratic government headed by President Olusegun Obasanjo in May 29, 1999. From then till now, power has changed hand from one president to another and from one party to another. There have been five administrations between 1999 and 2015. President Obasanjo occupied the office of president between 1999 and 2007, President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (2007-2010), President Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2011; 2011-2015) and President Muhammadu Buhari. The position of Vice President in Nigeria followed the same trend as that of the president. All the four Vice Presidents have been men. Since 1992, one woman Mrs Sarah Jibril, has continued to defy the norm by contesting for the highest office in the land, the position of President; however, she is overpowered with the emergence of other male candidates who were declared winners in the primaries of the various political parties. In 2011 she contested alongside the then President-Goodluck Jonathan and lost out. Another female candidate-Prof. Comfort Sonaiya- who emerged as a candidate for a newly formed political party KOWA became the only female candidate in the 2015 presidential election. Prof. Sonaiya came 12th out of the 14 presidential nominees. This was a wakeup call for more women representation. In the 2019 elections, the number of women who emerged as candidates

¹⁴ Ibid.

for their various political parties has rose to two (5) for the presidency as the highest in Nigeria's electoral process in a single election.

S/N	Names of Candidates	Name of Political Parties
1	Dr. Oby Ezekwesili	Allied Congress Party of Nigeria (ACPN)
2	Prof Mercy Funmilayo Adesanya-Davis	Mass Action Joint Alliance (MAJA)
3	Eunice Atuejide	National Interest Party (NIP)
4	Angela Johnson	Alliance for United Nigeria (AUN)
5	Dr Rabia Cengiz	The National Action Council (NAC)

Source: Data from PWAN's Compilation

Similarly, since 1999 till date, Nigeria has conducted five elections into the Senate. All these periods, the Senate has been dominated by men. As statistics have shown, the Constitution of Nigeria says three (3) Senators shall represent one state and one from the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Multiplying 3 by 36 plus one gives 109. Therefore, the total number of members of the Senate is 109. In 1999, the total number of women elected to the House of Senate was 3. This increased to 4 in the 2003 elections. By 2007, it was 8 but reduced to 7 members in 2011 before it later increased to 8 in 2015. The implication is that Nigeria has never produced a double-digit number of female in the House of Senate since 1999. Table 1 below shows the composition and percentage of women members of House to Senate to men between 1999 to 2015.

Table I: Female Composition of Nigeria's Senate in the Fourth Republic

S/N	Election Year	No of Seats	No of Men	% of no. of men	No. of women	% of no. of women
1	1999	109	106	97.2	3	2.8
2	2003	109	105	96.3	4	3.7
3	2007	109	101	92.7	8	7.3
4	2011	109	102	93.6	7	6.4
5	2015	109	101	92.7	8	7.3

Source: Data obtained from INEC Website.

The composition of the House of Representatives which is the second house of the National Assembly is not too different. The House is composed of 360 members drawn from all the states of Nigeria and FCT. Elections to the house were held in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015. In 1999, the total number of women elected into the House was 12. In 2003, the number increased to 21. It was 23 in 2007. The highest so far was recorded in 2011 with 26 members. However, in 2015, it reduces to 19. Table below indicates the statistics presented above.

Table II: Female Composition of Nigeria's House of Representatives in the Fourth Republic

S/N	Election Year	No of Seats	No of Men	% of no. of men	No. of women	% of no. of women
1	1999	360	348	96.7	12	3.3
2	2003	360	339	94.2	21	5.8
3	2007	360	337	93.6	23	6.4
4	2011	360	334	92.8	26	7.2
5	2015	360	341	94.7	19	5.3

Source: Data obtained from INEC Website.

Other elective posts at the federal, state and local government have also been very stiff for women to occupy. For instance, no woman has been President or Vice President since independence. No woman has also been elected to be Vice President. No woman has been elected governor, although a woman became a stand-in governor in Anambra State. This is not to rule out on the fact that women have tried contesting as governors such as Senator Joy Emodi of Anambra State, Pauline Tallen of Plateau State and Senator Aisha Alhassan of Taraba State but have suffered defeat at the elections. However, more women have been Deputy Governors. The highest was in 2007 when six (6) women were Deputy Governors. In the last elections we have five (5) female Deputy Governors covering Lagos, Ogun, Osun, Enugu and Rivers State. In the 2019 governorship election, the present governor of Kaduna State has picked a woman-Dr. Hadiza Abubakar Balarabe- as his running mate, a first for the state and the second ever Deputy Governor from Northern Nigeria from a major political party after Pauline Tallen who was Deputy Governor from 2007 – 2011.

Women have also not been adequately represented at the states' Houses of Assembly, States' House Committees, Local Government Chairperson and Councillors.

Table III: Composition of Women in All the Elective Posts in Nigeria, 2011-2015

Office	1999		2003		2007		2011		2015	
	Available Seats	Seats taken by women	Available Seats	Seats taken by women	Available Seats	Seats taken by women	Available Seats	Seats taken by women	Available Seats	Seats taken by women
President	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
V. President	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
Senate	109	3 (2.8%)	109	4 (3.7%)	109	8 (7.3%)	109	7 (6.4%)	109	8 (6.4%)
House of Rep	360	12 (3.3%)	360	21 (5.8%)	360	23 (6.4%)	360	26 (7.2%)	360	19 (5.3%)
Governor	36	0	36	0	36	0	36	0	36	0
D. Governor	36	1 (2.8%)	36	2 (5.5%)	36	6 (16.7%)	36	3 (8.3%)	36	4 (21.2%)
State Houses of Assembly	990	12 (1.2%)	990	38 (3.8%)	990	52 (5.3%)	990	62 (6.3)	-	-
SHA Committee Chairpersons	829	18 (2.2%)	881	32 (3.6%)	887	52 (5.9%)	887	-	-	-
LGA Chairpersons	710	9 (1.2%)	774	15 (1.9%)	740	27 (3.6%)	740	-	-	-
Councillors	8,810	143 (0.02%)	6368	267 (4.2%)	6364	235 (3.7%)	6368	-	-	-
Minister	42	8	42	8	42	7	42	13	42	5

Source: Data adapted from Hundred Years of Nigerian Woman, Nigeria Centenary Country Report on Women, December, 2013.

Key Challenges regarding Women and Political Participation in Nigeria

No doubt, Nigerian women operate in an environment that is highly masculinised in ways that place them at a difficult position in terms of their bargaining power in the political space. On the basis of this logic, this research identified key findings regarding their participation in the political space.

Beliefs and Culture

Historically, belief and culture have played key roles in defining and determining roles for men and women in Nigeria. Such role differentiation does not exclude the political space. The women are mostly confined to handling or adopting domestic responsibilities, as well as total submissiveness to the men. They are often forbidden from speaking in the presence of men, no matter how valued such contributions could be. As pointed by a civil society activist:

This is a major challenge we confronted at the initial stage of one of our programmes on improving the capacity of women in the electoral process. They viewed those of us that are involved in such programmes as trying to undermine the African culture. For them, women are supposed to be obedient to the men and have no business coming close to politics since the men are supposed to take of them. It took time before we were able to change their mindset¹⁵.

A female politician who gave insight into how she got involved in politics and the challenges she confronted, also underscored the above point. She said, “When I got interested in politics and started

¹⁵ Interview with a female civil society activist in Abuja, 12th July 2018.

participating in political activities, I was seen as someone that was out to challenge the authority of the men”¹⁶. Her perseverance in the face of this criticism and the support she got from her husband, made the difference in terms of her ability to gain in road in an enterprise that is regarded as male-dominated activity¹⁷.

Weak Economic Base

Under a condition of what has been referred to as the feminisation of poverty amongst in Nigeria, the majority of the women in the country live on less than a dollar per day. This precarious situation becomes a major hindrance to their participation in the political process. The strong view about this situation is such that poverty exposes women to varying degrees of vulnerabilities as a result of their inability to access the basic needs of live. During elections, they become so vulnerable that their interests are easily undermined, which leaves them more disempowered material needs.¹⁸

Paying Lip-Service to the Implementation of Women Related Laws and Policies

Nigeria has ratified numerous international laws, instruments and conventions such as the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820, the

¹⁶ Interview with a female politician in Abuja, 12th July 2018.

¹⁷ <https://medium.com/@AdesolaAdeyemo/why-women-dont-participate-in-politics-in-nigeria-7cb34dba650>

¹⁸ interview with a female politician in Abuja, 16th July 2018.

Gender and Equal Opportunities Law among others. The implementation of these laws, conventions and policies has been a challenge. The country has not been able to achieve the 35% affirmative action for women at both the local, state and federal levels. At every election year, the rhetorics of having women constitute cabinets of government never succeeds, despite the support given to men from the women wing of their political parties and across the country.

Education and Literacy

Although Nigeria has made some progress in education since independence, as evident in the expansion of the education system and sector, there are still issues that are yet to be addressed in relation to women. Across the country, particularly in the North, girl child enrolment and completion is low, which increases the level of illiteracy and vulnerabilities, thereby making the prospect for achieving gender parity in education bleak in the short and medium term. Despite their numbers during voting, women have not been able to transform these numbers into concrete benefits in terms of their participation in the electoral and political process. The fact that they do not have such access makes it difficult for them to effectively compete with their male counterparts. Cultural or religious practices practice that denies women access to education and other platforms for literacy represents major contributors to their low literacy level.

Discrimination and Lack of Support for Women in Politics

Discrimination against women in voting, allocation or distribution of political and selective positions for them is another major challenge. This discrimination does not only come from men to women but also

come from women to women. Most men, informed by their cultural or religious milieus, simply perceive it as an anathema for men to be publicly controlled by women or to be under the control of a woman in an office. Women themselves also preferred to be under the control of men than their fellow women probably due to envy and jealousy. This obviously contributes to the inability of women to attain elective positions despite their numerical strengths. The story of Sarah Jubril who contested against President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan and Alhaji Atiku Abubakar to be the presidential candidate of Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) in 2011 is a case in point. In spite of many women who were part of the delegates to the primary from many states of the Nigerian federation, she only got one vote; the vote she cast for herself alone.

Lack of Mentorship and Internal Political Parties

The lack of mentorship by women who have succeeded in politics either at the local, state or federal level have not been able to mentor young girls or women in learning the ropes to succeeding in politics. Women who succeed often see it as a reward for their hardship as such replicating themselves or success might feel like losing relevance in key decision making as well as influence in the political arena. Also most women often prefer to support or sponsor male candidates as they are certain of their loyalties compared to their female counterparts. Closely related to this is the need to review the internal political structures of Nigerian parties. This is often the place where discrimination, decisions and negotiation take place. The major parties who have the ability to create reforms that are more inclusiveness ignore the importance of

having women as part of the decision makers but rather see them as a means to end.

Recommendations

- (i) **Checkmate Beliefs and Cultures that Hamper Women:** Beliefs and cultures that hamper women participation in politics should be reviewed and checkmated. The fact that they are forbidden from active participation in the political process weakens their voice and bargaining power, which should be addressed. Such efforts would require more sensitisation on the part of civil society and development partners.
- (ii) **Economic Empowerment of Women:** Deliberate strategies should be put in place by both state and non-state actors, towards the economic empowerment of women. In view of the strong link between access to resources and participation in the political process, government policies and programmes should be designed in such a way that creates opportunities for the mobility of women economically. Through such efforts, they would be able to withstand the challenges of exclusion since they have a sound economic base.
- (iii) **Implementation of Women Related Laws and Policies:** In line with the principles of the UNCSR 1325, some traditional leaders appointed women to serve as members of the traditional council in some communities such as Plateau, Adamawa and Gombe. These are key models that should be supported, as well as expanded to cover other areas of human endeavor, particularly politics. In this light, all laws and policies that supports and empowers women to participate in the political process should be implemented at all levels of the society.

- (iv) **Support Education and Literacy Programme on Women:** Access to education and literacy should not be restricted to a few opportune sets of women. The low level of education and literacy of women should be given top priority in the context of donor support on strategies for women empowerment. In view of the strategic role that education plays in the polity, it should form part of the programme for guaranteeing the effective participation of women in the political system.

Conclusion

Despite the challenges faced by women as it relates to their participation in Nigeria, there is cause for optimism in the light of some of the feats covered. Many of them have demonstrated resilience in the face of some of the exclusionary policies and attitudes that favour patriarchy. While not set on that path of competition with their male counterparts, they represent partners in progress that should be engaged for the good of the society. This would require more deliberate and sustained efforts to achieve, in view of the long years of marginalisation that defines their minimalist involvement in the political process. In this sense, their involvement in decision making processes would enhance their decision-making power in ways that enhances their access and competitiveness in the political process. It is important that there is continuous sensitization from primary schools to universities to begin the process of reorientation and catching them young. Women must begin early in making demands and lifting those who have succeeded in the political process.

Women in North Central Nigeria: From Voters to Electorates and Contestants

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Introduction

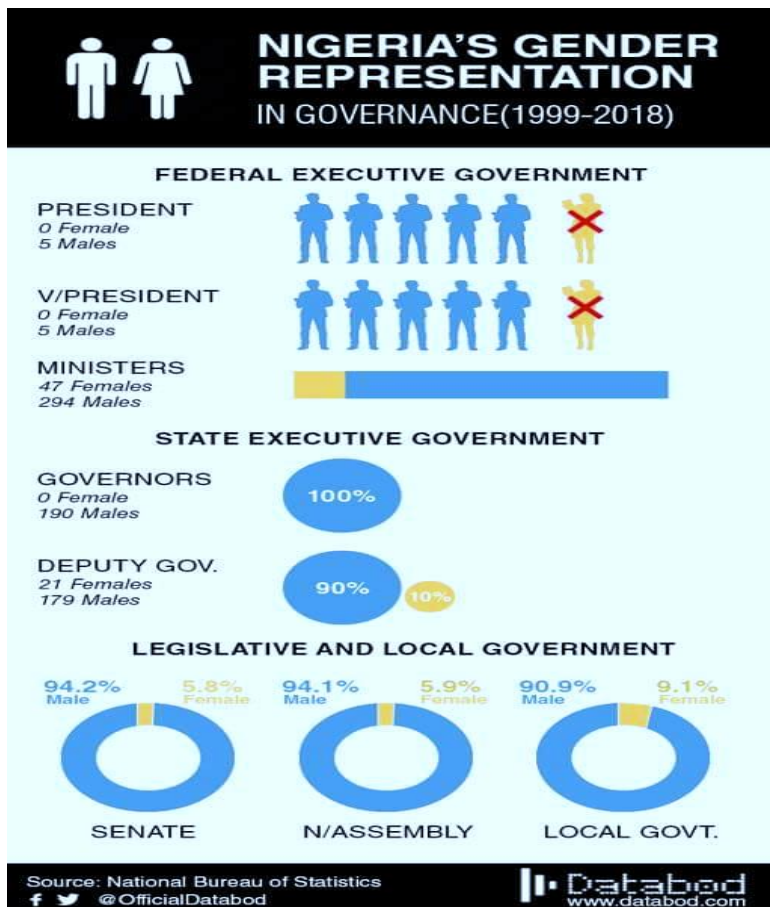
The Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, otherwise called the Beijing Conference, convened by the United Nations in September 1995 in Beijing, China, culminated in the adoption, on September 15, 1995 of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (UN, 1995). The Declaration, which promulgated a set of principles concerning the equality of men and women, set the tone for the increasing agitation for the expansion of the political space to include the full participation of women in politics beyond voting. Relying on the clarity of the goals of the Declaration that development, equality and peace cannot be achieved without meaningful participation of women and the incorporation of their perspectives at all levels of decision-making, the UN Women, among other international governance bodies, have sustained the pursuit for the ratification and domestication of the Declaration by national governments.

Twenty years after the Conference, a review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action showed that in Africa, the implementation has witnessed the attainment of several milestones such as the election of 3 female Heads of State; Ellen Sirleaf Johnson (Liberia), Catherine Samba-Panza (Central African Republic) and Joyce Banda (Malawi) (ECA, 2014). According to the Report, these successes

have largely been as a result of a combination of strategies including affirmative action through designated quotas; review of legal frameworks governing elections and political party representations among others (ECA, 2014: 27). For instance, countries like Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Gabon, The Gambia, Mauritius, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, have enacted laws and amended electoral processes to advance women's participation in politics and decision-making. Similarly, quotas for local governance positions have been emplaced in Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Gabon, The Gambia, Kenya, Mauritius, and Uganda. Political party regulations have been reviewed in Algeria, Cape Verde and Sudan, while financing for political parties according to the number of elected women is underway in the DRC and Morocco.

However, despite the development of the 2006 National Gender Policy and the National Gender Policy Strategic Framework (Implementation Plan) 2008-2013, the percentage of women who participate in politics beyond voting at the national and states levels in Nigeria has not recorded any significant increase both in the Executive and Legislative arms of government (see Figure 1).

For instance, since 1999, the percentage of women elected into the National Assembly has been on the decline. According to the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC), Nigeria achieved the highest percentage (7.0 per cent) of women's representation in the lower parliament (the House of Representatives) in 2007 after the dismal record of 3.4 per cent and 4.9 per cent in 1999 and 2003, respectively. However, the figures declined to 6.8 per cent and 5.6 per cent in 2011 and 2015.



Following the conclusion of some election petition cases by 2017, the figure went up to 6% (22 in the House of Representatives and 7 in the Senate) (PLAC, 2018). This is far below the Global Average of 22.5 per cent, Africa Regional Average of 23.4 per cent and West African sub-regional average of 15 per cent.

In the North Central geopolitical zone, the situation has remained largely the same. The low level of women participation in politics beyond voting and their general exclusion in the political space are evident. Using Plateau as the focal State, this study conducted a mapping and comparative analysis of factors that impede the increasing participation of women in politics beyond voting across the North Central geopolitical zone.

Zonal and State Context

By a political arrangement, the contemporary Nigerian state is divided into six geopolitical zones: North Central, North East, North West, South East, South West and South South. The North Central zone, otherwise called the Middle-Belt, consists of six States; Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, and Plateau including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. Geographically, it spans from the west, around the confluence of the River Niger and River Benue. Politically, the zone is divided into three main blocs, the Plateau-Benue Bloc that presently comprises Benue, Nasarawa and Plateau States; the Kwara Bloc that includes Kogi and Kwara States; and the Niger Bloc made up of Niger State and the FCT. Among other major peculiarities of the zone, it straddles the southern part of the North and the northern part of the South, which makes it a very strategic and import zone in Nigeria's political equation.

In terms of religious and ethnic identity, the zone not only maintains a balance between Christianity and Islam; the two most dominant religio-political platforms in Nigeria, it also serves as a melting point for both major and minor ethnic nationalities in Nigeria – Fulani, Hausa, Berom, Tiv, Idoma, Ebira, Igala, among others. However, the extent to which

religious and ethnic identity and platforms have contributed to the participation of women in politics beyond voting in the zone in particular and northern Nigeria, in general, has remained an unsettled debate in Nigeria's political discourses (Kuka, 1993). This is because whether in core Muslim States of Nasarawa, Niger, Kogi and Kwara or in the core Christian States of Benue and Plateau, the percentage of women who hold or have held elected and appointed political offices have not been significant compared to their male counterparts. As some analysts have noted, in Christendom where women enjoy some freedom of association, they are yet to be permitted to serve in certain capacities, especially in the Protestant Churches (Olasupo, 2016). In Islam, women are permanently conditioned to play a second-fiddle role and live a segregated life from their male counterparts. This is the situation that made an influential Islamic Cleric in Nigeria, Alhaji Abubakar Gummi, to say that "he did not hope to see a woman leader emerge in his lifetime" (Kukah, 1993:240).

Analysis

The participation of women in politics in Plateau State and the North Central Zone has been predominantly at the level of what is termed "voters rather than electorates and contestants."¹⁹ This assertion is

¹⁹ Telephone interview with Dr. Chris Kwaja a former Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Matters, Plateau State and currently, Senior Lecturer, Centre for Peace and Security Studies, Moddibo Adama University of Technology (MAUTECH), Yola on Thursday 12th July, 2018.

supported by some others, who asserted that during elections, “women are only mobilised for voting rather than for being voted for.”²⁰ Thus, compared to their male counterparts, the percentage of women participating in politics beyond voting has been very low. For instance, since 1999, no State in the zone has been able to achieve 35 per cent affirmative action of the 2006 National Gender Policy in both elective and appointed political positions.

The low level of women participation in politics in the zone is evident by the fact that as at 2018 no woman in the region is either an Executive Governor or a Deputy Governor. There is also no woman from the zone that is elected a Senator. Only three women from the zone are elected as Members of the House of Representatives and 8 women are elected into the six State Houses of Assembly (see Table 1). For political appointments at the federal level, only three women have been appointed as Ministers and one as Special Adviser to the President since 1999 (see Table 2). However, between 2007 and 2011, a woman, Dame Pauline Kedem Tallen, OFR, was elected as the Deputy Governor of Plateau State while Chief (Mrs.) Margaret Icheen was elected Speaker, Benue State House of Assembly between 31st May, 1999-13th March, 2002.

Table 1: Elected Women Political Office Holders in North Central Political Zone as at 2018

S/No	Name	State	Position
National Assembly			

²⁰ Julya Wuyep a Politician and Women Leader, Bwarat District, Langtang North Local Government during a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) held at Langtang North LGA Secretariat, Plateau State, 14th July 2018.

1.	Dorathy Mato	Benue	Member, House of Representatives
2.	Princess Olufunke Adedoyin	Kwara	Member, House of Representatives
3.	Beni Butmak Lar	Plateau	Member, House of Representatives

State House of Assembly

1.	Ngunan Addingi	Benue	Member, State House of Assembly
2.	NgoHEMA Utsaha Agaibe	Benue	Member, State House of Assembly
3.	Felicia Ebun Owolabi	Kwara	Member, State House of Assembly
4.	Bunmi Afolayan	Kwara	Member, State House of Assembly
5.	Sikira Anako	Kwara	Member, State House of Assembly
6.	Princess Segilola Abdulkadir	Kwara	Member, State House of Assembly
7.	Aishat Ibrahim	Kwara	Member, State House of Assembly
8.	Alice Dumlong Asaije	Plateau	Member, State House of Assembly

Source: Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) (2018). Women in Elective Offices in Nigeria Politics: Fact Sheet, June

Table 2: Federally Appointed Women Political Office Holders in North Central Zone: 1999-2018

S/No	Name	Office Held	State of Origin
1999-2007			
1.	Dame Pauline Kedem Tallen, OFR	Minister of State, Science and Technology	Plateau
2007-2015			
2.	Sarah Ochekepe	Minister of Water Resources	Plateau
3.	Patricia Naomi Akwashiki,	Minister of Information	Nasarawa
4.	Sarah Jibril	Special Adviser to President Goodluck Jonathan on Ethics and Moral Values	Kwara

Source: Author's Compilation from field Survey, 2018

Comparatively, however, Plateau State appears to be on the lead in terms of the percentage of women participation in politics beyond voting (see Tables 3 and 4). Among other things, it is the only State in the zone that has produced a female Deputy Governor and two female Ministers at the Federal level. It is also the only State that between 1999 and 2015, came close to meeting the 35 per cent affirmative action of the 2006 National Gender Policy in both elective and appointed political

positions.²¹ However, this development has since 2015 been on the downward trend. For instance, between 1999 and 2015, the State consistently elected two female members in a 24-member State House of Assembly between 1999 and 2011, three between 2011 and 2015 but in 2015 it dropped to only one female Member.

Furthermore, Plateau is the only State in the zone where female politicians have had the opportunity of being elected more than once into political offices. For instance, Hon. Beni Lar has been elected thrice (2007 to date) to the House of Representatives; Hon. Dina Lar was elected twice (2003-2011) to the State House of Assembly, first as a member of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and second as a member of the opposition party, Alliance for Democracy (AD).²² Plateau is one of the States in the zone with a high percentage of women mobilisation, especially at the grassroots, which has occasioned the emergence of grassroots women politicians such as Mrs Esther Wazhi, who was elected as Local Government Chairperson and also appointed a Commissioner very early in the Fourth Republic. Beside her, there are others such as Rachael Danji, who was elected Chairperson, Bokkos Local Government between 1999 and 2003, Manji Danfa, elected Deputy Chairman, Langtang South LGA, 2014-2016, among several female Councillors in different political wards in the State. Finally, Plateau State is the only State in the zone that has domesticated the 2006 National Gender Policy and promulgated a Law to Make Provision

²¹ Telephone interview with Dr Chris Kwaja, on Thursday 12th July, 2018.

²² Interview with Hon. Dina Lar, two-term Member of the Plateau State House of Assembly (2003-2011) and currently, Commissioner, Plateau State House of Assembly Service Commission on July 13, 2018 in her office in Jos.

for the Establishment of a Gender and Equal Opportunities Commission and for Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination and Other Matters Connected.²³

Table 3: Women Elected into Political Offices in and from Plateau State: 1999-2018

S/No	Name	Office Held	Period
1.	Dame Pauline Kedem Tallen, OFR	Deputy Governor/ Commissioner for Education	2007-2011
2.	Josephine Pio	Member, House of Assembly	1999-2003
3.	Rahila Beleri	Member, House of Assembly	1999-2007
4.	Dina Lar	Member, House of Assembly	2003-2011
5.	Joyce Ramnap	Member, House of Assembly	2007-2015
6.	Kanneng Fulani	Member, House of Assembly	2011-2015
7.	Zainab Dogo	Member, House of Assembly	2011-2015
8.	Barr. Alice Demlong Asaije	Member, House of Assembly	2015-Date
9.	Martha Boderin	House of Representatives	2003-2007
10.	Beni Butmak Lar	House of Representatives	2007-Date

Source: Author's compilation from field survey, 2018.

Table 4: Women Appointed into Political Offices in and from Plateau State: 1999-2018

S/No	Name	Office Held
1999-2007		
1.	Dame Pauline Kedem Tallen, OFR	Minister of State, Science and Technology
2.	Esther Wazhi	Commissioner for Education
2007-2015		
3.	Sarah Ochekepe	Minister of Water Resources

²³ The Gender and Equal Opportunities Law was assented to by Dr. Jonah David Jang, Executive Governor of Plateau State on 26th May, 2015 and gazetted by the Plateau State Government on 27th June, 2018.

4.	Comfort N. Piwuna	Commissioner for Commerce and Industry/ Science and Technology
5.	Hellen Miner	Commissioner for Commerce and Industry
6.	Sarah Simi Yusuf	Commissioner for Housing and Environment/Women Affairs
7.	Rifkatu Durfa	Commissioner for Science and Technology
8.	Prof. Angela Miri	Commissioner for Health/ Education
9.	Clara Gang	Commissioner for Finance
10.	Olivia Dazam	Commissioner for Information and Communication

2015-Date

11.	Lynda Barau	Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources
12.	Rofina Gurumyen	Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development
13.	Regina Soemlat	Commissioner for Finance
14.	Anna Talatu Izang	Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development
15.	Tamwakat Weli	Commissioner for Tourism and Culture
16.	Elizabeth Wapmuk	Commissioner for Higher Education

Source: Author's compilation from field survey, 2018.

This lead by Plateau State has been traced to several factors. First is the metropolitan nature of the state, which has had a positive impact on women empowerment. According to Rev. Samuel Goro, "The average Plateau woman is enlightened and exposed."²⁴ On the other hand, the metropolitan nature of the state is traceable to early contact with European missionaries which resulted in early exposure of the Plateau woman to western education. This, according to Dr Plangsats Dayil Bitrus, "significantly created a positive attitude, disposition, perception and worldview, especially in political leadership and decision-making for

²⁴ Interview with Rev. Sam Goro, Executive Director, Centre for Peace Advancement in Nigeria (CEPAN), Jos on July 13, 2018 in his office. This position was corroborated by Hon. Zainab Dogo, former Member of the Plateau State House of Assembly in an interview on July 16, 2018.

the Plateau woman.”²⁵ The resultant effect of this is the early emergence of female politicians in the state since the First Republic, namely, Mrs Hannatu Chollom, a woman mobiliser and political leader; Hon. Manwor Ayuba, Member, House of Representatives in the Second Republic; Mrs Sarah Dokotori, Member, Plateau State House of Assembly in the Second Republic; and Mrs Naomi Jogu, described as “woman political activist and mobiliser”; Catherine Homkuwoop, Commissioner for Health in the Second Republic; Pauline Tallen, a former Deputy Governor, among others.²⁶ In the Fourth Republic, the state has also seen the rise of several female politicians such as Sarah Ochekepe, former Minister of the Federal Republic, Hon. Beni Lar, Member House of Representatives, and the late Mrs Zainab Shehu, a Senatorial aspirant before her death. However, while some have argued that the enlightenment of the average Plateau woman has not translated to access to the right political information that can stimulate increased women participation in politics beyond voting,²⁷ others asserted that the contemporary Plateau society has witnessed a decline in the education of women, resulting in the loss of human development that can sustain the tempo of women in power politics in the State.²⁸

²⁵ Interview with Dr. Plangsat Dayil Bitrus, Senior Lecture, Department of Political Science, University of Jos and currently of the Centre for Gender Studies, University of Jos, Plateau State on July 15, 2018 in her house.

²⁶ Interview with Hon. Dina Lar on July 13, 2018 in her office in Jos.

²⁷ Gwamkat L. Gwamzhi, broadcast journalist with Radio Nigeria/FRCN, Jos station and Treasurer, NAWOJ, Jos Chapter

²⁸ Interview with Hon. Dina Lar on July 13, 2018 in her office in Jos.

Beside Plateau, this level of women participation in politics at that early stage of political development in Nigeria was rare in other states in the zone, except in Kwara State where Sarah Jibril, Nigeria's first female presidential candidate, has since 1983 when she contested for Senatorial seat in Kwara State remained consistent in electoral politics. In the Fourth Republic, however, there has been in Benue State, an appreciable level of women participation in politics beyond voting that resulted in the emergence of the first and only female Speaker of the State House of Assembly, Chief (Mrs) Margaret Icheen in the zone since 1999 (see Table 5), including a robust representation of women as political appointees in the State Executive Council (see Table 6) as well as the election and appointments of women into the Local Government Councils (see Table 7).

Table 5: Elected Female Members of Benue State House of Assembly: 1999-2018

S/N	Name of Holder	Constituency	Portfolio	Duration
4th Assembly 1999-2003				
1	Chief (Mrs.) Margaret Icheen	Kwande-East State Constituency	Speaker (31 st May, 1999-13 th March, 2002) Member , Benue State House of Assembly	1999-2003
2	Hon. (Mrs.) Maria Aikolola	Okpokwu State Constituency	Member , Benue State House of Assembly	1999-2003
5th Assembly 2003-2007				
3	Hon. (Mrs.) Maria Aikolola	Okpokwu State Constituency	Member , Benue State House of Assembly	2003-2007
4	Hon. (Mrs.) Christy Adokwu	Ohimini State Constituency	Member , Benue State House of Assembly	2003-2007

5	Hon. (Mrs.) Theresa C. N. Dewua	Gwer-West State Constituency	Member , Benue State House of Assembly	2003-2007
6	Hon. (Mrs.) Elizabeth F. Mishi	Gwer-East State Constituency	Member , Benue State House of Assembly	2003-2007
7	Hon. (Miss) Aondona Dabo Adzuana	Vandeikya/Konshisha Federal Constituency	Member , House of Representative	2003-2007
6th Assembly 2007-2011				
8	Hon. (Mrs.) Hembadon Amena	Katsina-Ala West State Constituency	Member , Benue State House of Assembly	2007-2011
7th Assembly 2011-2015				
9	Hon. (Mrs.) Hembadon Amena	Katsina-Ala West State Constituency	Member , Benue State House of Assembly	2011-2015
10	Hon. (Mrs.) Ngunan Addingi	Buruku State Constituency	Member , Benue State House of Assembly	1 February, 2014-2015
11	Hon. (Mrs.) Dorathy Mato	Vandeikya-Kyan State Constituency	Member , Benue State House of Assembly	2011-2015
12	Hon. (Mrs.) Theresa Ujege	Konshisha State Constituency	Member , Benue State House of Assembly	2011-2015
8th Assembly 2015-Date				
13	Hon. (Mrs.) Ngunan Addingi	Buruku State Constituency	Member , Benue State House of Assembly	2015-Date
14	Hon. (Mrs.) Agaigbe Utsaha	Gboko-East State Constituency	Member , Benue State House of Assembly	2015-Date
15	Hon. (Mrs.) Dorathy Mato	Vandeikya/Konshisha Federal Constituency	Member , House of Representative	4 th October, 2017-Date

Source: Author's compilation from field work, 2018

Table 6: Appointed Female Members of Benue State Executive Council: 1999-2018

S/N	Name of Holder	Portfolio	Date of Appointment
1	Chief (Mrs.) Elizabeth Shuluwa	Commissioner	17 th July, 1999
2	Chief (Mrs.) Rebecca Apedzan	Commissioner	17 th July, 1999
3	Chief (Mrs.) Margaret Iyorembor	Commissioner	17 th July, 1999

4	Mrs. Hannatu Ullam	Commissioner	28 th Sept., 2001
5	Chief (Mrs.) Elizabeth Shuluwa	Commissioner	16 th August, 2003
6	Chief (Mrs.) Rebecca Apedzan	Commissioner	16 th August, 2003
7	Mrs. Esther Nguamo Adagi	Commissioner	16 th August, 2003
8	Mrs. Hannatu Ullam	Special Adviser	16 th August, 2003
9	Princess Awuese Nancy Torhee	Commissioner	14 th July, 2005
10	Mrs. Maria Enuwa Idu	Commissioner	14 th July, 2005
11	Engr. (Mrs.) Mnena Shija	Commissioner	2 nd July, 2007
12	Chief (Mrs.) Ntol Unongo	Commissioner	2 nd July, 2007
13	Mrs. Diana Agbenu Ochoga	Commissioner	2 nd July, 2007
14	Mrs. Veronica Saleem Kwaghir	Special Adviser	6 th July, 2007
15	Chief (Mrs.) Comfort Ajene	Commissioner	18 th July, 2011
16	Dr. Elizabeth Ugo	Commissioner	18 th July, 2011
17	Mrs. Margaret Ladi Ugye	Special Adviser	29 th March, 2011
18	Chief (Mrs.) Comfort Ajene	Commissioner	3 rd May, 2013
19	Mrs. Elizabeth Allagh	Commissioner	3 rd May, 2013
20	Hon. (Mrs.) Esther Dzungwe	Commissioner	2 nd May, 2014
21	Barr. (Mrs.) Patricia Ori Kupchi	Special Adviser	6 th July, 2015
22	Dr. (Mrs.) Magdalene Dura	Special Adviser	6 th July, 2015
23	Dr. (Mrs.) Cecilia Ojubo	Commissioner	21 st July, 2015
24	Barr. (Mrs.) Mwuese Mnyim	Commissioner	21 st July 2015
25	Lady Kate Ojobi	Commissioner	29 th March 2016
26	Mrs Isegbe Ajene Ladi	Commissioner	28th March 2017

Source: Benue State Ministry of Information, 2018

Table 7: Female Local Government Council Chairpersons: 1999-Date

S/N	Name of Holder	Portfolio	Local Govt Area	Time Elected/ Appointment
1	Mrs. Lydia Ikuma Nyor	Chairman	Gboko	29 th May, 1999
2	Mrs Victoria Fatima Enyi	Interim Administrator	Ado	23 rd February 2004
3	Mrs Alicia Udum Eru	Caretaker Chairman	Oju	8 th February 2007

4	Mrs Priscilla Gondoaluor	Caretaker Chairman	Logo	13 th July 2007
5	Mrs Onma Ogenyi	Caretaker Chairman		13 th July 2007
6	Mrs Becky Iwar	Chairman	Logo	16 th March 2010
7	Mrs. Mary Kar	Chairman	Makurdi	16 th March, 2010
8	Mrs Victoria Abeda	Chairman	Otukpo	16 th March 2010
9	Mrs Agnes I. Woko	Chairman	Ado	16 th March 2010
10	Mrs Mary Korinjo	Chairman	Ushongo	16 th March 2010
11	Mrs Victoria T. Ajoh	Caretaker Chairman	Vandeikya	25 th May 2012
12	Chief (Mrs.) Joy O. Agi	Caretaker Chairman	Apa	25 th May 2012
13	Mrs Bridget Ikon	Caretaker Chairman	Guma	25 th May 2012
14	Mrs Eunice Mbajwa	Caretaker Chairman	Gwer-West	27 th November 2012
15	Mrs Phoebe N. Akoom	Caretaker Chairman	Tarka	6 th July 2015
16	Mrs Helen Ikpambese	Caretaker Chairman	Kwande	6 th July 2015
17	Mrs Phoebe N. Akoom	Caretaker Chairman	Tarka	13 th January 2016
18	Mrs Helen Ikpambese	Caretaker Chairman	Kwande	13 th January 2016
19	Mrs Catherine Egba	Caretaker Chairman	Apa	13 th January 2016
20	Mrs Becky Orpin	Sole Administrator	Gboko	11 th October 2016
21	Mrs Justine Y. Sorkaa	Sole Administrator	Buruku	11 th October 2016
22	Mrs Dooshima A. Tsumba	Sole Administrator	Buruku	13 th April 2017
23	Mrs Blessing Unogwu	Chairman	Ado	12 th June 2017
24	Mrs Echoda C. Alhassan	Chairman	Agatu	12 th June 2017
25	Mrs Becky Orpin	Chairman	Gboko	12 th June 2017
26	Mrs. Virginia Kpindi	Chairman	Katsina-Ala	12 th June, 2017
27	Mrs Justina Ubebe	Chairman	Konshisha	12 th June 2017
28	Mrs. Juliana Audu	Chairman	Makurdi	12 th June, 2017

Source: Benue State Ministry of Information, 2018

In Nasarawa State, female politicians that have emerged include Hon. Mary Emmanuel, Minority Leader, Nasarawa State House of Assembly; Dinatu Jerry Iwala, appointed Commissioner for Commerce and Industry in 2003; Mrs Mary Enwongulu, APC aspirant for Akwanga/Nasarawa Eggon/Wamba Federal Constituency at the 2015 general elections; and Patricia Naomi Akwashiki, elected Senator in 2007 and appointed Minister of Information in 2015 and currently a Gubernatorial aspirant in the 2019 election, Habiba Balarabe Suleiman, House of Representatives aspirant. Similarly, the FCT saw the emergence of the likes of Mrs Esther John Audu, elected Chairman of Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) in 2002, and appointed Nigerian High Commissioner to The Gambia in 2008, among others; Hajiya Zainab Abdulkadir Kure, who was elected Senator for the Niger South Senatorial district in 2007; Princess Olufunke Adedoyin, elected Member, House of Representative in 2015 from Kwara State

This general low level of women participation in politics beyond voting in the zone has been attributed to economic, political, legal, cultural, and religious factors, among others. Economically, women in the zone are not empowered and given that Nigeria's politics is capital intensive, it becomes difficult for women to mobilise enough financial resources to contest elections. Participants at the two different FGDs linked this lack of economic empowerment of women in the zone to traditional practices. According to them, in Plateau State, women neither own landed property nor are they allowed to inherit property. This, therefore, makes it difficult for women to have the kind of money that men have to contest elections. Mrs Naomi Pam, for instance, dropped

out of Riyom LGA Chairmanship election under APC because she had no money to compete with her male rivals.²⁹

Culture is another factor that accounts for the low level of women participation in politics beyond voting. A gender expert provided a detailed account of how cultural practices have conditioned women in the zone to see politics as the exclusive preserve of the men and a patriarchal affair. According to her, from birth, women are taught to see themselves as homemakers and their male counterparts are leaders. Thus, they not only grow up believing that it is unculturable for women to contest for political offices but also stigmatise other women who either contest or seek to contest.³⁰ This position is supported by Nweze and Takaya (2001) and especially Ahmed (2015:1) who argued that cultural practices across the entire northern Nigeria have made it difficult to “identify women leaders in men dominated environment.” Within this context also, some others have described culture as “a creation of man which breeds oppression against the woman.”³¹ This has created a situation in which someone described “women as a class in itself”, a group of people conditioned by culture just for mere

²⁹ Interview with Ladi Emmanuel, National Association of Women Journalist (NAWOJ), Plateau State Chapter, at the NUJ Secretariat, Jos, Monday 16th July, 2018.

³⁰ Interview with Prof. O.J. Para-Mallam, mni on July 11, 2018 at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru, Plateau State.

³¹ Interview with Most Rev. Benjamin Argak Kwashi, Archbishop, Anglican Diocese of Jos on Tuesday 7th August, 2018.

existence and “would neither encourage themselves nor support other women who intend to run for political office.”³²

Religion is another factor that was identified to have impeded women participation in politics in the zone. While some analysts argued that religion has been used to create a submissive worldview and disposition for the woman, which makes her see herself as a follower rather than a leader (Para-Mallam, et al., 2011), others such as Most Rev. Kwashi and Zainab Adamu argued that religion has contributed in liberating women from the negative influence of culture and resultant political dominance. In fact, it was noted that Islam, for instance, encourages women to participate in politics and leadership position because it “understands the significance of political empowerment of all humans including women.”³³

The absence of pro-women policies and incentives by political parties to encourage women participation in politics beyond voting was also identified as an impediment. However, some participants in a Focused Group Discussion³⁴ informed that their parties, APC and PDP, have respectively created incentives to encourage women participation in politics, such as free nomination tickets for women, although Hon.

³² Interview with Hon. Joyce Ramnap, politician and former Member, Plateau State House of Assembly, on Monday 16 July, 2018.

³³ Zainab Adamu, civil servant and Muslim Women Leader, Kuffen District, during FGD held at Langtan North LGA Secretariat, Plateau State, 14th July 2018.

³⁴ Hon. Dambong Nambol, politician and Secretary, All Progressive Congress (APC), Langtan North LGA and Hon. Tanypen George, politician and Secretary, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Langtan North LGA and an aspirant, Plateau State House of Assembly, Langtan North Constituency were participants at the FGD held at Langtan North LGA Secretariat, Plateau State, 14th July 2018.

Zainab Dogo argued that giving women free nomination tickets does not in any way reduce the enormous financial cost of electioneering campaigns in Nigeria.³⁵

The protracted military incursion into politics in Nigeria was also identified as a key factor that has contributed to a low level of women participation in politics. According to Most Rev. Kwashi, the First Republic saw a number of women actively engaged in politics beyond voting. But after the long years of military rule, Nigeria's electoral democracy in the Second and Third Republics became characterised by violence and indecency with meetings holding at odd hours of the night.³⁶ This development had two negative implications for women participation in politics. First, the First Republic women politicians, with the exception of Sarah Jibril, could not consolidate politically nor could they groom followers and successors. Secondly, the long stay of the military in politics enabled them to acquire so much wealth that they began to play the role of political godfathers and kingmakers to the exclusion of women. This scenario, which has continued even in the Fourth Republic has tended to impede women from participation in politics beyond voting.

Finally, and most fundamentally, the global campaign for increased women participation in politics beyond voting by some international governance bodies such as the UN Women, has been without any

³⁵ Interview with Hon. Zainab Dogo, former Member of the Plateau State House of Assembly on July 16, 2018.

³⁶ Interview with Most Rev. Kwashi, on Tuesday 7th August, 2018.

political incentives for national and state governments that meet the 35 per cent affirmative action. According to Hon. Joyce Ramnap, the non-attachment of incentives to the campaign has made it difficult for both national and state governments in affected countries, to commit to the campaign.³⁷

Key Findings

From the interactions held with different respondents during the study, the following findings were made:

- i. In the North Central zone, there has been, since the First Republic, an appreciable level of women participation in politics beyond voting, especially in Plateau State, which is evidently better placed among the other states in terms of the number and quality of women who participate in politics. For instance, Plateau is the only state in the zone that has produced a female Deputy Governor, one out of the two States with female Federal Ministers (the other is Nasarawa State), and a motley of women politicians who have held both elected and appointive political positions since the First Republic. It is also the only state in the zone that has domesticated the 2006 National Gender Policy and promulgated the Gender and Equal Opportunities Law to increase woman participation in politics beyond voting.
- ii. Compared to their male counterparts, however, the percentage of women participation in politics in the zone has remained very

³⁷ Interview with Hon. Joyce Ramnap, on Monday 16 July, 2018.

low. Till date, no state in the zone has been able to meet 35 per cent affirmative action in elective and appointive political positions for women. With the exception of Plateau State, which has signed into law and gazetted the Gender and Equal Opportunities Law, there appears to be an evident lack of political will by State Governments in the zone to put legal, institutional or policy frameworks in place to encourage increased women participation in politics beyond voting. The lack of political will may be due to the absence of political and economic incentives attached to the global campaign for increased women participation in politics by the UN Women, which can motivate States and national Governments to commit to achieving the goal.

- iii. Beside the lack of political will, another key factor that has impeded women participation in politics in the zone is “the absence or lack of political mentorship among women politicians.”³⁸ For instance, successful women politicians in the zone like the late Hannatu Chollum, Pauline Talen, Sarah Ochekepe, Sarah Jibril, Zainab Kure, Zainab Shehu, Hajia Ladi Nimplan, Sarah Dokotori, Naomi Jogu, Senator Patricia Naomi

³⁸ Dr. Sumaye Hamza, Public Servant and Special Assistant to Plateau State Governor/Focal Person, Social Investment Programme, Zonal Coordinator in Charge of FOMWAN (Benue and Plateau States) and National PRO, FOMWAN, during FGD held at the Political Parties Leadership and Policy Development Centre (PPLPDC), Directorate of Research, National Institute (NIPSS), Kuru, 19th July 2018

Akwashiki, Beni Lar, Esther Audu, Margret Icheen, and Ameana Mbodo, among others, have not been successful in mentoring and mobilising other women after them. This has created the possibility of the absence of successors and continuity in terms of the level of women participation in politics in the zone.

- iv. Political parties have not developed deliberate legal, institutional and policy frameworks that are geared towards encouraging increasing participation of women in politics beyond voting. For instance, while some degree of tokenism such as free nomination of tickets for women exist, the financial cost of electioneering campaign is beyond the capacity of the average woman in the zone to foot, nor have political parties made any provisions in their constitutions that specifically seek to address the disadvantageous positions of women in the political process.
- v. There is evidence of active and sustained campaign by women organisations such as Nigerian Council of Women Society (NCWS), International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), National Association of Women Journalist (NAWOJ), Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN), the National Coalition on Affirmative Action (NCAA),³⁹ among others, for increased women participation in politics. However, their activities have been limited only in the urban and semi-

³⁹ The Plateau State Chapter of these organisations played prominent role in the passage and gazetting of the Gender and Equal Opportunities Law in the State

urban areas to the exclusion of the rural areas and the grassroots. The consequence of this has been the absence of proper lack of access to adequate information by the women at the grassroots level on their participation in the political process beyond voting. The implication of this is that largely women in the zone “are yet to be transformed from being voters to being electorates and contestants.” As some respondents noted, while voters only assume and maintain passive attitude to the political process, electorates and contestants maintain active and critical position, challenging and questioning the process and defining expectations from both the process and institutional and human actors in the process.⁴⁰

- vi. The violence and brigandage that has characterised politics in since the Fourth Republic has also contributed to impeding the participation of women in politics beyond voting. According to some respondents, politics in the North Central zone in particular and Nigeria, in general, has been “highly unpredictable, violent and indecent with critical meetings holding very late at night.”⁴¹ This has tended to keep women away from participation beyond voting.

Recommendations

⁴⁰ Telephone interview with Dr. Chris Kwaja, on Thursday 12th July, 2018.

⁴¹ Interview with Prof. O.J. Para-Mallam, mni on July 11, 2018 at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, kuru, plateau State.

From the foregoing discussions, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa and Niger States should domesticate and promulgate laws to provide legal backing for gender-based policies such as the National Gender Policy 2006 and National Gender Policy Strategic Framework 2008 and legalise the enforcement of 35 per cent Affirmative Action and gender parity in elective and appointive positions in the zone.
- ii. Religious organisations, pro-women groups and gender-based organisations in the zone such as NCWS, FOMWAN, NCAA, among others, should mount sustained public enlightenment campaigns through education and sensitisation in urban, semi-urban and rural centres, for a significant alteration of cultural practices that “see politics as men’s profession impede women participation” and “increase societal consciousness on the critical need for women’s participation” in politics beyond voting.
- iii. States in the North Central should formulate deliberate state policies that will provide free and unhindered access to education at all levels, particularly for the women. This will build the “capacity of women and girls towards becoming a voice and agent of change in their community, Local Government and State” (CWEEN, 2018).
- iv. Political parties should make deliberate policies to ensure “alternative representation”, i.e., for every political office that

has a deputy position, one out of the two must be reserved for a woman, while making deliberate efforts to reserve a certain number of elective and appointive positions for women.

- v. To ensure increased women participation in politics beyond voting, international governance agencies such as the UN Women should tie economic and political incentives to states and countries meeting 35 per cent Affirmative Action.

Conclusion

As this chapter has demonstrated, several factors including economic, political, cultural, and legal, constitute hinderances to women participation in politics in the Plateau State and the North Central Zone. This has occasioned a very low percentage of women participation in politics compared to men in the zone. However, the degree of impediment caused of these factors varies from one State to another. This may well explain why despite the existence of same factors in Plateau, the State has comparatively faired far better than others in the zone in terms of the number and quality of women who participate in politics beyond voting.

Secondly, the degree of impediment has also varied from one political dispensation to another. For instance, while the First and Second Republics saw the participation of a very few and insignificant number of women in elective and appointed political positions across the zone, there has been a significant increase in the Fourth Republic. This increase in the Fourth Republic notwithstanding, the number of women

in elective and appointive position in the zone is comparatively less than their men counterpart.

Consequently, increasing women participation in politics beyond voting in the region would require deliberate, concerted and systematic efforts by the government, political parties, gender-based and religious organisations and international governance bodies to, among other things:

- i. Significantly alter cultural practices that condition women to a second-fiddle position in society and in politics in the zone;
- ii. Create enabling legal frameworks that will legalise and ensure the enforcement of pro-women policies such as the 35 per cent affirmative action in the zone while attaching economic incentives for states in the zone that meet 35 per cent affirmative action;
- iii. Reservation of a certain number of elective and appointive positions for women by political parties while making deliberate policies to ensure “alternative representation” in which every political office that has a deputy position alternates between women and men.

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Destabilising ‘The Natural Order’: Women’s Numerical Strength, Political Life and Decision-Making

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Responsible Citizenship and Human Development Initiative
Gombe

Introduction

Democratic practices underscore the fact that both men and women deserve not only to be treated equally, but to also have equal opportunities as they aspire for political offices. Despite all the international legal instruments that Nigeria has signed, the gender policy that has been put in place and above all Chapter II Section 17, Subsection 2 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which states that, “Every citizen shall have equal rights, obligations and opportunities before the law,” women have been marginalized in the political arena to culture, religion, political practices and environment.⁴² Although there is an increase in the involvement of women in the political process, it is believed that the increase should have been much better than what obtains. The increase obtained has been mainly in the quality of women appointed into offices. In other instance, especially the State Houses of Assembly there has been either no increase or even a decrease. This report examines the involvement of women in politics in the North East geopolitical zone. For example, Gombe State, which is

⁴² Oby Nwankwo, *Gender Inequality and Political Rights*

the focus of this study, has gone from having two women at the House at one time, to having none as at today.⁴³

The present-day North East geo-political zone used to be known as North Eastern State, until 1976 when it was split up and three states were carved out of it, namely: Borno, Gongola and Bauchi. Today, the zone been further split up and comprises six states: Adamawa and Taraba, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, and Yobe States.

According to the 2006 national population figures, the North East zone had a total of 18,984,299 which comprised 9,222,212 females and 9,761,097males⁴⁴. The break down per state is given in the table below.

Table 1: 2006 Population Census Figures of the North East

S/N	STATE	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
1	Adamawa	1,607,270	1,570,680	3,178,950
2	Bauchi	2,369,266	2,283,800	4,653,066
3	Borno	2,163,358	2,007,746	4,171,104
4	Gombe	1,244,228	1,120,812	2,365,040
5	Taraba	1,171,931	1,122,869	2,294,800
6	Yobe	1,205,034	1,116,305	2,321,339
7	Total	9,761,087	9,222,212	18,984,299

Source: 2006 Population and Housing Census, National Population Commission

From the table above, Bauchi State had the highest population figure with Taraba State having the least. The table also shows that females make up a large per cent of the population, at almost 50%.

⁴³ Honourable Keftin Amuga, Politician and National Chairman, Northern Nigeria Christian Politicians.

⁴⁴ National Population Commission

The North East is a heterogeneous place with all the States in the zone having many tribes. For example, Adamawa State has 59 languages,⁴⁵ Bauchi State has 55 tribal groups⁴⁶ and Borno State has 30 indigenous languages.⁴⁷ However, the dominant religions are Christianity and Islam with some traditional religion adherents.

Figure 1: Map of Nigeria showing all the geo-political zones

⁴⁵ www.adamwastate.yolasite.com/languages.php

⁴⁶ www.bauchistate.gov.ng/features/the-people/

⁴⁷ www.thecaliberassociates.com/borneo/page-2/people-culture/ethnic-groups-languages/



The zone borders Niger and Chad Republics to the North and Cameroon to the East. It also shares borders with Kano, Jigawa and Kaduna States in North West, as well as Plateau, Nasarawa and Benue States in North Central. As at end of January 2018, the total number of registered voters in the North East was 9,929,015⁴⁸. The breakdown per State is given in the table as follows:

Table2: Statistics of registered voters in the North East region of Nigeria

S/N	State	2015	2018
1	Adamawa	1,559,012	1,741,427
2	Bauchi	2,054,125	2,197,154

⁴⁸ www.punchng.com/registered-voters-nwest-swest-lead/ of 16th February 2018

3	Borno	1,934,079	2,080,632
4	Gombe	1,120,023	1,189,446
5	Taraba	1,340,652	1,505,902
6	Yobe	1,099,970	1,214,454

Source: Punch online publication

Economically, States of the North East rank among the lowest on the development index, with high poverty rates. The poverty rate of the zone is 76.8, while Lagos State had 8.5% poverty rate in 2017, the best in the North East was Adamawa with 59.0%, Borno with 70.1. The next was Gombe with 76.9, Taraba 77.7, Bauchi 86.6 and Yobe was the worst having 90.2.⁴⁹ The zone also has the highest maternal mortality rate of 1,549/100,000 live births, as well as the highest neonatal and under-five mortality rates.⁵⁰ The geopolitical zone is also one that has been riddled with security challenges of Boko Haram and herdsmen attacks that have made thousands displaced. Thus, women in those challenging places are more concerned with survival than political participation.

Background to Gombe State

Gombe State shares borders with all the states that make up the North East region, as it is located in the middle of the region. The State was created out from Bauchi State on the 1st October, 1996 by late General Sani Abacha, and occupies a total land area of about 20,265sqkm. It has eleven Local Government Areas namely: Akko, Balanga, Billiri, Dukku,

⁴⁹ S. Olawale, *Poverty Statistics and Poverty Rates in Nigeria*, <https://naijaquest.com/nigeria-poverty-statistics/> February 5, 2018.

⁵⁰ UNICEF Advocacy Brochure, *Mother, Newborn and Child Health and Mortality Status in Northern Nigeria*. https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/nq_publications_advocacybrochure.pdf

Funakaye, Gombe, Kaltungo, Kwami, Nafada, Shongom and Yamaltu/Deba.

Historically, Gombe State is a fusion of two distinct groups of people, comprising the Emirate of Gombe North and the ethnic groupings of Gombe South (known as Tangale-Waja). Bubayero established the Emirate during the jihad period of 1800. It emerged as part of a larger state-building force of 19th century Sokoto jihad. The Emirate government, which had its Headquarters in Gombe Abba, was formed to effectively control what constitutes a larger part of the Gombe State, until the advent of the British in the early 20th century.

Under the British, the area was administered through the mechanism of two administrative units, i.e. Gombe Native Authority and Tangale-Waja Native Authority. The two Authorities constituted Gombe Division during the colonial era. However, with independence in 1960 and the subsequent military administration, many changes occurred which led to the emergence of local government authorities. Thus, between 1976 and the present, the then two authorities had metamorphosed into the present 11 local governments.⁵¹

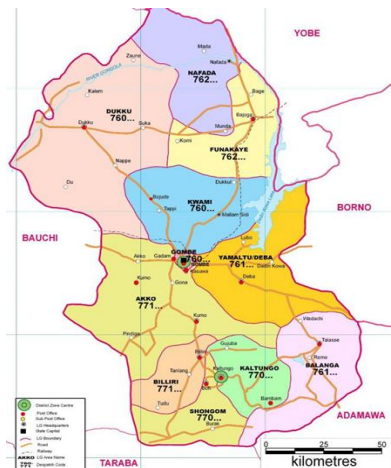
Figure 2: Position Gombe State in Relation to other States in Nigeria

⁵¹ <http://gombestate.gov.ng/history-2/>



Source: Gombe State Government Official website

Figure 3: Administrative Map of Gombe State showing the Local Government Areas



Source: Gombe State Government Official website

Due to the differences in culture, early exposure of the people to western education, cultural preferences and religious inclinations, the participation of women in the political process in Gombe State (or the lack thereof) varies from one tribe or Local Government Area to the other. Gombe South senatorial zone is predominantly Christian, comprises of many smaller tribes whose women are known historically to take the lead in farming their husbands' farms or going out work or trade. Many of these tribes also had early exposure to western education as early Christian missionaries settled amongst them and established schools. Education has increased the capacity of many of the women, not only through the things they learnt but also through associating with people from different backgrounds and acquiring intercultural, negotiation and other life skills. Being predominantly Christian, the women of Gombe south and some parts of Gombe Central zones, have for long become accustomed to organising themselves in groups of women fellowships (*zumuntan mata*).

Situational Analysis

The participation of Gombe State women in the political process dates back to years before the creation of the Gombe State, when it was part of Bauchi State. Not only did they register as voters and also voted in the elections, few of them got appointments both during the civilian administration and the military administrations that came thereafter. In 1979, late Mama Hannatu Ibrahim was appointed the first female commissioner during the administration of the first civilian governor, late Alhaji Tatars Ali (1979-1983). With the coming in of the military after that civilian era, other women from Gombe were among others appointed to key positions as Commissioners (e.g Hajiya Patel Buba

Bajoga), Local Government administrators (e.g Hajiya Lami Buba and Hajiya Zainab Ibrahim).

When the country returned to civilian rule in 1999, Gombe State was three years old and late Alhaji Abubakar Hashidu became its first civilian governor. Women's participation in politics at this time was minimal and only few women got political appointments. There was only 1 female commissioner, Two (2) Special Advisers and three (3) Special Assistants (see Table below). From 2003, when the Alhaji Danjuma Goje of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and later Ibrahim Hassan Dankwambo (2011 – date), the number of political appointments for women increased.

Table 3: Female Political Appointees in Gombe State from 1999 – 2017

Office	1999-2003		2003-2007		2007-2011		2011 - 2015		2015 - 2017	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Governor	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1
Deputy Governor	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1
Sec. to State Government	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	1
Commissioners	1	16	2	15	2	18	5	19	5	21
Special Advisers	2	12	1	21	1	20	3	35	3	40
Snr Special Assistants	-	-	-	10	-	12	13	132	10	109
Special Assistants	3	29	30	142	42	305	86	768	32	343
Board Chairmen									-	5
Chairmen of Commissions									-	7
Executive Secretaries										4
Members of									4	49

Commissions										
Board Members									7	55
Personal Assistants									16	26 1

Source: Office of the Secretary to the Gombe State Government

Out of the 22 commissioners appointed by the Adamawa State Governor in 2015, 4 were women. When the Bauchi State Governor reshuffled his cabinet in February 2018, only 3 women were appointed out of 20. Taraba State has 2 female commissioners, Borno State has 3 and Yobe State has 2. This is an improvement from what obtained in the past when a state or two had men as Commissioners at the Ministry of Women Affairs.⁵² Although no woman has ever been voted in as Local Government Chairman in Gombe State a few have been Caretaker Committee Chairman in the past. Presently there is only one female Deputy Chairman in Gombe State.

At the national level, Zone has produced female ministers of Women Affairs, Environment, and Ministers of State (Education and presently Foreign Affairs); Special Adviser to President Goodluck Jonathan (Special Duties), as well as Senior Special Assistant to the President (MDGs). Hajiya Amina former Minister of Environment, was appointed Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations and is from Gombe State. The zone also had Hajiya Lami Buba as one-time Commissioner at the Federal Civil Service Commission, and Dr Habiba Muda Lawal, who was a Federal Permanent Secretary was made Acting Secretary to the Government of the Federation when Babachir was removed.

⁵² Field reports from the research

The appointment of women to various positions in the zone also shows that it has become pertinent that women need to be included not only on campaign grounds, but also in decision making. According to a respondent, the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective in all levels of decision-making will help towards achieving the goals of equality, development and peace.⁵³

Out of the total 156 available seats available in the State Houses of Assembly across the North East, women occupy only 3 - Adamawa and Bauchi states. Similarly, women occupy only 4 of the 48 seats for the North East in the House of Representatives (Adamawa, Borno and Gombe). At the Senate only one woman, Senator Binta Garba Massi (Adamawa) made it together with 17 men from across the zone.⁵⁴

Across the North East geo-political zone, there is no woman as State Chairman or secretary of any of the major political parties. Most only have women in the executive position of Woman Leader (at Ward, LGA and State levels). Thus, when party executives sit down to take decisions, there is usually one lone female voice (out of 17 voices for the PDP). Again, all those who fall into the category of party elders are men, excluding women in the entire "elders" category. Very few women are ever invited to stakeholder meetings of political parties.

⁵³ Ibrahim Suleiman, *The Role of Women towards Political Participation in Nigeria*. American Economic and Social Review Vol 1 No1, 2017, p.16

⁵⁴ Centre for Democracy and Development (2018), *Women in Elective Offices in Nigeria Politics*, Abuja, Nigeria.

Gombe State PDP, however, has since a few years back, added the position of State organising secretary to women. The position of Women Leader for the major political parties of PDP and APC both come from Gombe south senatorial zone (PDP has Mole Bennet from Kaltungo LGA and APC has Alhamis Maigida). At the national level, the Zone has produced the national woman Leader of the PDP (Hajiya Inna Chiroma).

Challenges to Women's Participation in Politics

During the fieldwork, respondents highlighted many challenges that women face in relation to their participation in politics. These hindrances range from tradition/culture, religion, stigmatisation, lack skills, lack of mentors, etc. Not all the hindrances are found in the same settings, depending at the political dynamics at play from ward to State level. At the same time, some of these hindrances come from within the individual woman, while some come from without.

Earlier in describing the context of this research, we pointed out that all the States are heterogeneous in nature. While some of the cultures encourage women to be go-getters, others relegate them to the background where they are preferred to be seen and not heard (and in some cases, not even seen). Politics on the other hand is not a place for inaction. Rather, it is a hyperactive sphere that demands that those who participate should not only be seen clearly but also be heard loudly.

The patriarchal tendencies prevalent in the zone mean that men take the lead in all things: from family life to the society. The male is considered a born leader with the female expected to be a passive

follower. The men as the dominant class oppress women and exploit them economically and politically.⁵⁵

Some cultures frown on women mixing freely with men in the name of politics. They prefer that the lines of demarcation should not be crossed as doing so, especially by women would mean disrespect or even rebellion.

There is also the cultural and even religious belief that women are inferior to men. In a discussion, a man asked why “all these elitist gender activists are trying to destabilise the natural order of things in the society by pushing out all these women issues to the fore.” In his opinion, women are ordained to be in the background. Religion has also put it in people that women are not supposed to be leaders. During the FGD, a participant said a woman can only be part of leadership and not be the head. Women who go into politics are therefore seen as out to usurp roles “not assigned to them by God.”

Despite this, however, one finds women in the North East in roles that have always been considered no-go for them. For example, there are female hunters within the male-dominated field of hunters. In Adamawa State, a female leads a group of hunters in Gombi village: Aisha Bakari Gombi, also known as the Queen Hunter. She has successfully hunted down Boko Haram terrorists and together with others, repelled their attack on her village of Gombi (Rosie Collyer,

⁵⁵ Yusuf Hauwa’u Evelyn and Yusufu Adefarakan Adedayo, *Entrenched Patriarchy, Women Social Movement and Women Participation in Politics*. American International Journal of Contemporary Research, Vol 4, No 7; July 2014. P. 156.

Aljazeera). Aisha is a Muslim and yet men willingly submit to her leadership, a clean break from religion and culture.⁵⁶ There is also a well-known female hunter, Hauwa in Billiri LGA of Gombe State.

Women's encroachment into politics, which was once seen as an exclusively male domain, came with stigmatisation and marginalisation as society viewed them as women of very easy virtue, whose main reason for being part of the campaign trail was to satisfy the sexual needs of the male politicians. Educated women preferred to stay away rather than be termed as such, while married women would not go against their husbands' wishes and join politics. Thus, when married and "polished" educated women began to make inroads into the political arena, they faced the same stereotypes, which have still not been completely removed from the people's minds.

Certain skills/abilities will always give a male politician an edge. These include communication skills, the ability to not only know what the issues are but also be able to analyse them, negotiation skills, etc. Due to the fact that many women who go into politics were not properly exposed or educated enough, they felt limited and therefore preferred to stay away from participating. Some are too shy to engage the media, others are not comfortable facing a large crowd to address them, while others lack the confidence to articulate issues.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Rosie Collyer, *Boko Haram Huntress*, Aljazeera. www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/boko-haram-huntress-180410112841843.html

⁵⁷ This came out strongly in interviews and focus group discussion conducted in the course of the research.

The late musician Alhaji Mamman Shata Katsina sang a song to the effect that a fearful person could never achieve anything no matter who he is or whoever is his father.⁵⁸ Women allow fear to keep them from participating in politics. According to Hon. Keftin Amuga, a male politician, very few women are bold enough to look at the political arena in the face and step in as they feel intimidated by all that politics entails in Nigeria. Due to the fact that it is not a terrain they are familiar with, they tend to fear the rigours involved and prefer not to make a move, than start and fail. Again, the Nigerian political terrain has been marked with violence over the years. This has further kept women away as most are not ready sponsor or partake in violence in order to achieve political expectations.⁵⁹

According to a District head who was interviewed, politics is synonymous with godfatherism. Greenhorn politicians all need to have godfathers who will mentor them, stand by them, sponsor them (if need be), speak for them, recommend them and defend their interest at meetings where the new entrants may not ordinarily be able to access. This applies to both male and female politicians. Because women have not been in politics for long, or those who joined politics long ago were not able to rise to great political heights of impact, there are no political godmothers to stand and speak of new female politicians.

⁵⁸ Alhaji Mamman Shata Katsina, *Bakandamiya*.

⁵⁹ Hon. Keftin Amuga, politician and Chairman of Northern Christians in Politics

Some women who desire to participate in politics do not have godfathers, while some find themselves with the “wrong” godfathers (wrong in the sense that the fathers they look up to may not have the clout to give them the help they require). As a result, therefore, those who find themselves in such situations may get frustrated and easily give up when they are not able to break through the ranks to actualise their ambition.

It has become very unfortunate that politics in Nigeria is a capital-intensive venture, especially when one is vying for an office, at whatever level. From visiting key stakeholders to Party executives from Ward to LGA and State level, as well as interacting with party faithful/delegates, campaign offices, logistics for campaign team, posters, etc...a woman vying for office is faced with overwhelming financial demands. For the average grassroots person, one’s viability for an office is not always looked at from the level of intellectual or other capacities. What she “drops” for many is an indication that she will take care of her constituents when elected into office.⁶⁰

Although some parties give women free nomination forms, other fees are charged such as fees for expression of interest and fees for the State party office. During the screening of candidates, they are also asked to a lot of money. Most Nigerian women who seek these positions could not afford meeting the financial obligations therein, despite the wavers giving to women aspirants by some of the political

⁶⁰ Ward Chairman of a political party who was interviewed.

parties. And so, they could do little or nothing to outweigh their male counterparts.⁶¹

The display of impunity in the wanton imposition of candidates, dishonesty and corruption, have continued to be a hindrance to women.⁶² Although there have been instances where these impositions have favoured women in the past, the widespread cultural and traditional preferences for men in leadership positions have resulted in leaving behind women who would have been better representatives. Instead, godsons of the political gatekeepers have found their way into offices where some made no meaningful impact for four or more years.

Women who desire to go into politics are unknown in their wards or Local Government Areas. The people, traditional rulers and party do not know them because they always lived outside the State or at the capital, and hardly ever go down to their base. According to Sebastina, the leader of Kalpaka Women's Group in Lapan, Shongom LGA,⁶³ some have made no meaningful input into the lives of the members of their local communities, nor assisted the local party office in any way (such as furniture, equipment). When they step into the political arena, therefore, there is nothing to look back on as a reference to what they can do when elected into office, and no one can vouch for them at the community level. There is the common saying that, "Zumunci a kafa

⁶¹ Mrs. Oloyede Oluyemi, *Monitoring Participation of Women in Politics in Nigeria*

⁶² Joy Emordi, *Gender Inequality and Political Rights: Proceedings of a National Tribunal on the Violation of Political Rights of Women in Nigeria*. Civil Resource Development and Documentation Centre (CIRDDOC). 2005.

⁶³ Sebastina Kalawa Hassan, Kalpaka Women's Group Shongom LGA of Gombe State.

yake,” meaning, the fellowship is in the feet. For the local people, interacting with them at their own level is important to them.

The present party structure where there are very few women amongst party executives at all levels makes it more difficult for women to come and make meaningful contributions. These are the people who most times sit and discuss issues relating to suitability of candidates and make necessary recommendations for appointments. No matter how tough a woman leader is, there is a limit to how much her lone voice can achieve.

At the same time, when political parties call for stakeholder meetings, most times only the woman leader or those holding appointments are invited to the meetings. The efforts of a lot of women who work hard at community mobilisation and campaigns are not recognised. It is however sad that Political Parties seem to be content with letting women bear such titles as "Women Leader", "Deputy Women Leader", "Chief Women Organiser" etc, without really affording them a real opportunity of contributing politically to the development of this country.⁶⁴ They are forgotten until elections come close when they will be called on to go and work for the parties. It is not so with the men, they are invited for meetings and their views are sought and incorporated into decisions and actions taken. This point came out strongly at a recent meeting of the Gombe State chapter of Women for Women, during which a charter of demands was drawn up for Gombe State women. The women from across the State unanimously cried out

⁶⁴ Afe Babalola, *Nigeria: The Importance of Women in Politics*. <https://allafrica.com/stories/201805090841.html> (Vanguard, 9 May 2018).

against being marginalised, despite their well-known massive contributions to the party.

Women are stepping into a domain that is traditionally seen as the exclusive right of men, thus they need to be able to bring in more than what the men bring to the capacity table, and make extra effort to prove that they can also be good players. Table 2 shows very few women make it to positions that require intellectual capacity. However, more women are found as Special Assistants and Personal Assistants. This is because those who occupy these posts are not necessarily expected to perform duties that demand special skills or that make intellectual demands, and for many women, they are contented at being on this rung.

These days, however, as a male politician and a gatekeeper in his community said, they are tired of sending people who never sponsor bills or motions on the floor of the House, nor contribute to any ongoing debate.⁶⁵ They are tired of their representatives making them the butt of jokes. He said people want to see their representatives on TV making valid points and proffering solutions, or making a case on the concerns of the people in the constituency. Thus, capacity is of utmost importance.

There is need for well-educated, skilled and charismatic women who can be good representatives, and also match the men qualification for

⁶⁵ A gatekeeper/godfather interviewed in Kaltungo LGA of Gombe State.

qualification, skill for skill, charisma for charisma, oratory for oratory. Today, Amina Ibrahim from Gombe State who was not even a politician became a Senior Special Assistant to President Obasanjo (PDP), Minister in Buhari's cabinet (APC), and currently Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations. In the same way, Senator Grace Folashade Bent originally a Yoruba from Ilesha in Osun State, married Jackson Bent of Adamawa and was accepted and supported to represent Adamawa South senatorial zone in 2007-2011.

Key Findings of the Research

Women as Voters Rather than Active Participants in the Electoral Process:

Although women are not where they would want to be in terms of participation in politics in the North East, the zone has made gains not only in their participation, but also their inclusion in government in elective and appointive positions. Despite the gains, their numerical strength in the population is not reflected in the political life and decision-making processes and structures. The involvement of women in politics in years past was mainly as voters and also part of the campaign crowd, making campaigns more interesting with their ululations and colourful attires as they sang the praises of their favourite candidates and parties. According to Rita K. Gonyok,⁶⁶ women are now participating more actively in political issues than ever before as a result of political re-awakening and awareness. There are many NGOs as well as international organisations that have taken it upon

⁶⁶ Rita K. Gonyok, *The Critical Role of Women in Nigerian Politics*. <http://www.gamji.com/article8000/NEWS8313.htm>

themselves to work towards encouraging women to participate in politics. The government has also been playing a strong role in encouraging women's participation in the political process through the Ministries of Women Affairs at the State and Federal levels.

More Women in the Political Scene Due to Sensitisation: With the encouragement they were getting, a woman aspired to pick the CPC senatorial ticket for Gombe South in 2007, two others aspired to pick senatorial tickets for Gombe South and Gombe North in the 2014 PDP primaries, with one of them actually making it to the primaries but lost to the incumbent senator. A woman also contested and narrowly missed becoming the governor of Taraba State in 2015. The North East Women's Political Empowerment office in Gombe had a list of almost 60 women who showed interest in different positions ranging from councillor to senator, across different political parties, in 2014.⁶⁷ In Bauchi State, a woman contested in the August 11 senatorial by-elections for Bauchi South senatorial zone. Maryam Bagel contested on the platform of the SDP.⁶⁸ While some States like Gombe, Adamawa, Taraba, Bauchi are seeing many women desiring to contest elections a State like Yobe still lags behind, partly due to the present security challenges. Presently, four out of the six female commissioners in Gombe State have resigned their appointments to run for elective offices of State House of Assembly and House of Representatives.

⁶⁷ Erisa Danladi, Coordinator of North East Women's Political Empowerment office, Gombe.

⁶⁸ Ahmad Mohammed, *Six candidates emerge for Bauchi South Senate bye election*. <http://www.peoplesdailyng.com/six-candidates-emerge-for-bauchi-south-senate-bye-election/>

Political Appointments as Rewards for Women Participation in the Electoral Process: Most times, people get appointed into offices as a form of reward for their active participation in campaigns, or for demonstrable efforts in building their political parties at different levels. Some of the people we interviewed were of the opinion that most women who get these appointments got them not only because they were seen to have worked hard, but also because they are affiliated to people who have worked hard to build the ruling party, or campaigned for it during the last elections. It is certain that there is an increase in the number of women getting appointive positions than in Gombe State. Coming from a low position of only one female commissioner, Gombe State now has the highest number of female commissioners in the North East. There is also an increase in the number of women appointed to other positions in government.⁶⁹ All these, however, are really low when compared to the long queues of women on elections days, as well as their vigorous and committed election efforts (especially at the grassroots), as they move from house to house campaigning for their candidates and political parties.

Religious and Cultural Practices: Religious and cultural practices constitute one of the biggest hindrances to women participation in politics in Gombe State and the North East region in general. This practice places women as inferior to the men. In most instances, women are viewed as people that should operate at the background, rather than be at the forefront of issues relating to politics and governance in general.

⁶⁹ Table 3

Recommendations

Increasing women's participation in the political process is not a matter that can be tackled from one single entry point. The following are some recommendations that if implemented can improve on the present situation.

Increased Awareness on the Benefits of Women Participation in Politics:

There is need to increase awareness on the important contributions women in leadership positions bring to the table. More women's voices means better solutions; women are better negotiators/bargainers, they are trusted, more collaborative, make great mentors, better financial managers⁷⁰. Women have also proved to be able to make better policies for the betterment of everyone (for example Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala who ensured that 60% of Nigeria's debt was cancelled by the Paris Club; Dr Oby Ezekwesili, who brought reforms to public procurement process; as well as late Prof. Dora Akunyili who transformed NAFDAC as part of the fight against dealers/manufacturers of fake drugs).

Intensive and Sustained Advocacy / Sensitisation on Strong Male Support:

Beyond this, there should be targeted advocacy to men in leadership in government, communities, political parties and the organised private sector. The main thrust of this advocacy will be to seek support for the candidature and appointment of more women and also open up more

⁷⁰ Julia Novakovich, The Importance of Women in Leadership Positions. <https://www.equities.com/news/the-importance-of-women-in-leadership-positions> November 2017.

spaces for them, especially within the party structure. All political parties within a state should be called upon to recognise and collectively agree and set aside seats exclusively for women, rotating such seats from one constituency to the other. Male politicians and strong opinion leaders should be identified across the zone, states, and local governments/communities. They should be convinced to see the need to not only give silent support but rather speak out boldly, calling on other men to give their support to women. These men are leaders whose words in some cases are the final authority in their LGAs or communities. With their buy-in and consistent speaking out, there will be headway for women.

Amplify the Voice of the North East Women Political Empowerment Office

The North East Women Political Empowerment Office (NEWPEO) was set up to amongst other things, empower, encourage and mobilise women so that they can participate actively and effectively in the political process. Unfortunately, the office has been bedevilled with so many challenges that have made it be of no effect. Since the 2015 general elections, nothing has been heard or seen of the office till date. As party primaries were approaching this office did not have a comprehensive data of women vying for different positions across the geo-political zone. There has been no help to the women in terms of building their capacity through skills or even encouraging them to network with and support each other. The work of NEWPEO needs to be sustained and all efforts should be put in place by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs to ensure that this office is able to carry out its functions.

At the same time, state governments and the organised private sector within the zone should be encouraged to fund this office and make

contributions such that it will have special funds to assist women. The funds could be channelled to helping women pay for declaration of interest, or contributing to their campaign finances after they have picked their party tickets and are properly in the race. The NEWPO should be supported to come up with a *“North East Women Agenda on Political Participation”* with call on all stakeholders to rally round and support the agenda.

Leveraging on Existing Gains by Supporting the He4She Campaign:

These include the He4She campaign of UN-Women and the attaining of inclusion of women in traditional councils in Adamawa and Gombe States, as part of its programme of Promoting Women’s Engagement in Peace and Security in Northern Nigeria.⁷¹ In the same light, there are female hunters, some even leading the group, which shows that women are capable of making headway in roles that were traditionally for men. The case of the female hunters who have successfully helped security agencies in repelling Boko Haram insurgents is a strong reference point in this regard.

The launch of the Women4Women & He4She campaign earlier in 2018 with 10 action points should be used as a strong advocacy tool as it comprises among other things, demands of women with regards to such issues as that affect them as:

- Discrimination against women
- Violence against women

⁷¹ Promoting Women’s Engagement in Peace and Security in Northern Nigeria, Newsletter Issue 6. October – December 2017.pp 12, 18

- Literacy among girls and women
- Effective, affordable and accessible health services
- Barriers to economic resources and power
- Political underrepresentation and exclusion
- Environmental sustainability
- Confronting all social issues of impediment
- Promoting peace, security and safety and,
- Making ICT affordable, accessible and available.⁷²

Conclusion

Finding ways and means of increasing the participation of women of the North East geopolitical zone of Nigeria in the political process is not a new issue. Although there has been increase in this regard in both elective and appointive positions, more can still be done to improve on the current gains, as identified hindrances continue to frustrate efforts being made. This improvement, however, needs the support and cooperation of all stakeholders, speaking and working together towards attaining this goal.

⁷² Women4Women Charter: Ten Action Points

Symbolic Involvements: Structure, Culture and Women's Participation in Political Process in Sokoto State, Northwest Geopolitical Zone

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Introduction

The history and journey of women's political participation in Nigeria like that of its colonial master, has been slow and difficult. Little progress has been made. Today, it is more comfortable by scholars and political practitioners in Nigeria to talk of challenges and problems often truncating women participation in the political process than the so-called progress and achievement. The story is even more disturbing in northwestern Nigeria than anywhere else in the country.

It is in appreciation of this challenge that this study seeks to examine the extent to which women in the Northwest zone are involved in politics; identify factors that hinder women political participation; and suggest pathways to enhancing women participation in Northwest geopolitical zone. It is rather saying the obvious that historically, socio-economically, culturally and to a great extent geopolitically, states in the Northwest zone of Nigeria share similar or common characteristics and indices. For this reason, the study is narrowed down to Sokoto State, as being in all ramifications of traditionalism the representative of others in Northwest Nigeria.

The popularity of democracy as the best system of governance underscored by its representativeness, empowerment, voice, freedom and liberty, inclusively, the rule of law and deliberation seems to be negated by commission and/or omission of the plight of women involvement in political decision-making processes. In simple language, the popularity of democratic governance has often been punctuated by its seeming under-representation of women in the political process. Indeed, since 1918 when women in Britain began to champion their right of inclusion and involvement in the political process to date varying degrees of progress has been achieved, especially in advanced democratic societies (Clark, Ramsey and Adler, 1991⁷³; Jacobs, 1996⁷⁴; Paxton and Kunovich, 2003).⁷⁵

These disappointing scenarios of women involvement in the political process did not in any way dislodge women's vitality in strengthening democratic processes. At this juncture, the question that begs for interrogation is that: what relevant vitality would women bring to political processes? The seemingly simplest answer to this is that female representatives and politicians are obviously best suited to advance women course in governance and political discourse (Phillips, 1995). This is beyond common sense! In this context, Sani (2011:) argues that women's vitality in the political process is underlined by their:

⁷³ Clark, R, Thomas W. Ramsbey, and Emily S. A. 1991. "Culture, Gender, and Labour Force Participation: A Cross-National Study." *Gender and Society* 5:47-66.

⁷⁴ Jacobs, J. A. 1996. "Gender Inequality and Higher Education." *Annual Review of Sociology* 22:153-85.

⁷⁵ Paxton, P. and Kunovich, S. (2003) "Women's Political Representation: The Importance of Ideology." *Social Forces*, 82(1): 87-113.

[...] reproductive role which is made up of such duties as those of motherhood, and the productive role, which is economic, mainly trading and farming. A major part is domestic, which is the internal training and education of children, a core part of the children-rearing practices of societies. They also source for and prepare food for the home. Caring for their husbands, which includes the emotional and sexual satisfaction of husbands, constitutes part and parcel of women's roles.⁷⁶

Thus, if not women, who is best placed and suited to address policy issues related to these issues. Ironically' empirical research generally only revealed the increasing marginalization and outright under-representations of women in national legislation and local council (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2013).⁷⁷ Given this picture of women involvement in political processes it's not surprising to find that great majority of scholarly literature on the issues is inclined towards explaining reasons, causes and challenges undermining women's participation in governance and political processes. These scholarly studies broadly speaking provide the theoretical framework and empirical research on women political representation and participation in governance and political processes. And, this will be the most appropriate theoretical approach adopted in the conduct of this study in Sokoto State.

⁷⁶ Sani, H. (2001) *Women and Development: The Way Forward*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.

⁷⁷ Wängnerud L (2009). Women in parliaments: Descriptive and substantive representation. *Annual Review of Political Science* 12: 51–69.

All factors accounting for poor women political participation could be grouped into social-structural, political and ideological. Social-structural explanations mainly focused on the pool of available women, political issues concerned with openness of political system, and ideological explanations focused on the general impression of women in politics and the extent to which women are viable candidates and leaders. In differentiated terms, other explanations for women under-representation and non-political participation include aspects of political parties, such as quotas, electoral systems, and socio-economic variables, such as economic development participation of women in workforce.

While viewing women political participation from the terms African affairs, Olatunden (1999)⁷⁸, Afolabi (2009)⁷⁹ and Yusuf (1985)⁸⁰ identified factors inhibiting such undertakings to include socio-cultural factors, predating political space, and lack of finance. In summary, articulating these various views concerning issues challenging women involvement in political processes one can easily, following Paxton and Kunovich (2003)⁸¹ schema, re-conceptualised them into socio-cultural, ideological, political-organisational, structural, and institutional and bio-idiosyncrasies. This conceptual schema is employed here as the most suitable for understanding and explaining the pull and push factors for women participation in governance and political processes in Sokoto. Further explanations and theoretical conceptualisation of the issues

⁷⁸ Olatunden (1999).

⁷⁹ Afolabi (2009).

⁸⁰ Yusuf (1985).

⁸¹ Paxton P, Kunovich S and Hughes MM (2007) Gender in politics. *Annual Review of Sociology* 33: 263–284.

though expected here, but for easily articulation is integrated into the empirical explanations of the case study—Sokoto.

Nigeria's Political Scenario: The Journey So Far

The story of women engagement in political processes and decision-making is a mixture of retrogression and progress, sorrow, anguish and achievements. Indeed, the political scenario of women participation is conflicting and contradictory. The story started in pre-colonial Nigeria, when historically women occupied strategic political positions and in many societies served as heads of chiefdoms, empires and kingdoms. Illustratively, mentioned is always made of Queen Amina of Zaria, Moremi of Ife, Emotan of Benin, Omu Okwe of Ossomari in Delta State. Others are Eye-Moi of Akure, Queen Kanbasa of Bony and so on. The list could be endless. The colonial period saw women rising in defence of their rights and plight and of confronting colonial exploitations and dominance. In this period, mentioned could be made of famous Aba Women Riot, and the most prominent women politicians who were appointed into the House of Chiefs, namely, Olu-Fumilayo Ransom Kuti, Margret Ekpo, and Jaanet Moleku (see Kolawale et al 2003⁸²; Oluyemi, 2018⁸³; Omochia, 2013; Quadri, 2018⁸⁴; Ochanja and Torwase 2013⁸⁵).

⁸² Kolawole, O.T., Adeigbe, K., Adebayo, A.A., & Abubakar M.B. (2013). "Women Participation in the Political Process in Nigeria." *Centrepont Journal* (Humanities Edition), 2(15).

⁸³ Oluyemi, O. (2018) Monitoring Participation of Women in Politics in Nigeria. available at: https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/Finland_Oct2016/Documents/Nigeria_paper.pdf

⁸⁴ Quadri, M. O. Women and Political Participation in the 2015 General Elections: Fault Lines and Mainstreaming Exclusion. Paper presented at INEC Conference on the Conduct of 2015 Elections, organised by Electoral Institute, Abuja.

⁸⁵ Ochanja, N. C. and Terwase, A. A. (2013) Women in Politics and Decision-Making in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects. *European Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, 2(8): 47-58.

Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, few women were seen contesting and winning elections. Again, Margret Ekpo, Janet N. Moleku, Ekpo A. Young all contested and won elections into Eastern Regional House of Assembly. It is very clear from the foregoing that women political participation started in southern Nigeria. In Northern Nigeria, women were still, for socio-religious and cultural reasons, not allowed to even vote, and let alone contest elections until in 1979. In the Second and aborted Third Republics, more progress were recorded on women political participation with several of them contesting and winning elections but all these advancements had not in any way proved too significant. Women were still dominated and marginalised. They could not engage in actual decision-making processes, especially on matters that peculiarly affect them. The long period of military interregnum arguably retrogressed that seeming progress. The political space was constricted by military dictatorship and political high-handedness. This situation further *pushes* women to the brink and edges of political decision-making and governance.

Based on the 2006 population census of Nigeria, women generally have about 49%, which is too significant to be relegated to the background of geometrically continues to increase. As of 2018, the estimated population of the country is over 195.88 million. Nigeria is ranked the 7th most populous country in the world and the 1st in Africa.⁸⁶ With an approximate 923,768 square kilometres, Nigeria's population density is about 212.04 individual per sq. Km. of this women constitute 49.5%,

⁸⁶ See World Populations Review (2018) "Nigeria Population 2018" available at: <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/nigeria-population/>

while male constitutions 50.5%.⁸⁷ However, in political representation and governance not only are women sidelined, but the figure is also grossly negligible.

Historically, the political environment under women are expected to participate increasingly became complex as many political activists including women were brutally murdered. The return of democracy in 1999 open a new chapter in the political history of Nigeria, as it widened the margins of women political participation. Though, still men dominated the political space, however, there is marked improvement in women involvement in political processes. For example, Oluyemi (2018)⁸⁸ reports periodic improvement in women political representation (Olufemi 2018,⁸⁹ CDD;⁹⁰ Ford Foundation, 2018.⁹¹

Table 1: Women and geopolitical zone representation in the Senate and House of Representatives

Zones	No. of available Seats	No of seats occupied by women	% in proportion to allocated	No of available Seats	Number of seats occupied by women	% in Proportion to allocated
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⁸⁷ National Bureau of Statistics (2016) *2015 Statistical Report on Women and Women in Nigeria*. Abuja: NBS

⁸⁸ Oluyemi (2018).

⁸⁹ Olufemi (2018).

⁹⁰ Centre for Democracy and Development (2018) *Women in Elective Offices in Nigerian Politics: Fact Sheet*. Available: <https://www.africaportal.org/publications/women-elective-offices-nigeria/>

⁹¹ Ford Foundation (2018) *Women's Political Representation In Nigeria: Why Progress is slow and What can be done to Fast-track it*. Nigeria: Ford Foundation.

			seats			ed seats
	SENATE			HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES		
Northern Region						
Northern	58	1	1.7%	191	6	3.1%
North Central	19	0	0%	51	2	3.9%
North West	21	0	0%	92	0	0%
North East	18	1	5.6%	48	4	8.3%
Southern Region						
Southern	51	6	11.8%	169	16	9.5%
South-South	18	1	5.6%	55	8	14.5%
South West	18	4	22.2%	71	3	4.2%
South East	15	1	6.7%	43	5	11.6%
TOTAL	109	7	6.4%	360	22	6.1%

Source: CDD 2018, pages 3-4.

Table 2: Women Representation in the Senate and House of Representatives (1999-2015)

Year	Women representation in Senate					Women Representation if House of Reps.				
	No of Male	No of Female	Total	Male (%)	Female (%)	No of Male	No of Female	TOTAL	Male (%)	Female (%)
1999	106	3	109	97.2	2.8	348	12	360	96.67	3.33
2003	105	4	109	96.3	3.7	339	21	360	94.17	5.83
2007	100	9	109	91.7	8.3	335	25	360	93.06	6.94
2011	102	7	109	93.6	6.4	334	26	360	92.78	7.22
2015	102	7	109	93.6	6.4	338	22	360	93.89	6.11

Source: CDD 2018, pages 3-4.

Table 3: Women Representation in State House of Assemblies across Geopolitical Zones

Zones	Number of available seats	No of seats occupied by women	Percentage of Women
Northern Region			
Northern	525	12	2.3%
North Central	153	9	5.9%
North West	216	0	0%
North-East	156	3	1.9%
Southern Region			
Southern	465	39	8.4%
South-South	160	15	7.4%
South-West	179	11	6.1%
South-East	129	13	10.1%
TOTAL	990	51	5.2%

Source: CDD 2018

Tables 1, 2 and 3 above provide statistical distributions of available elective seats/offices in Nigeria. This includes Senate, House of Representatives and State Houses of Assemblies. While there seems to be progress, however, the little achievement has been surreptitiously consumed by the increasing population of the country. Accordingly, the northwest picture is radically gloomy and ugly. At the State House of Assemblies, there never been any single woman elected. The same story is also recorded at Senate and House of Representatives. This is not even talking of the governorship and presidential seats. This is worrisome! This directly points to the ugly kind of political narratives expected from the Sokoto Case Study, which is actually the *historical hub* of the Northwest.

Despite this terrible situation of women in elective seats, nevertheless, they have continued to show up in appointive positions, such as ministers, commissioners, heads of agencies and parastatals including the judiciary. This progress was dramatically influenced by international pressure as well as domestic institutional reforms. For example, the establishment of Women Political Empowerment Office, Nigeria Women Trust Fund, and Women Lobby Group, etc have contributed significantly in expanding women political representation. Similarly, INEC's gender policy, the National Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue, the Affirmative Action and various interventions to implement it, Nigeria Women Strategy Conference, the activities of National Centre for Women Development and so on have remarkably contributed to the current arguably appreciable achievement. CDD (2018), Ford Foundation (2018) Oluyemi (2018) provide statistical justification of such progress. Despite this symbolising achievement, the "progress is slow" (Ford Foundations, 2018). Factors accounting for such slow

progress include patriarchy, violence, religious stereotypes and financial constraints. These constraints are further explored empirically in the Sokoto case study. The idea is that factors hindering women political involvement are generic and could, therefore, be differentiated, contextualised and disaggregated according to different societies and regions. The case of Sokoto State explained below provides an illustrative example of this theoretical proposition.

The Sokoto Case Study in the Northwest Geopolitical Zone

Geographically, Sokoto State is one of the states of the Northwest zone of Nigeria and is located near the confluence of the Sokoto River and Rima River. It has a population of 3,696,999 according to 2006 estimates. See Table 4 below. But despite this huge population, no single woman has ever been elected into a representative position since 1999.

Table 4: Population State in Northwest Geopolitical Zone

State	Male	Female	Both Sex
Sokoto	1,863,713	1,838,963	3,702,676
Kebbi	1,631,629	1,624,912	3,256,541
Zamfara	1,641,623	1,637,250	3,278,873
Katsina	2,948,279	2,853,305	5,801,584
Jigawa	2,198,076	2,162,926	4,361,002
Kano	4,947,952	4,453,336	9,401,288
Kaduna	3,090,438	3,023,065	6,113,503
Total	18,321,710	17,593,757	35,915,467

Source: NBS, Abuja.

It is popularly called the *Seat of the Caliphate* being the epicentre of the famous 1804 Shehu Danfodiyo jihad movement, which culminated in the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate in the vast territories extending to present day Niger Republic, Cameroon, Chad and Benin. The Islamic caliphate lasted for over one hundred years until the British colonial conquest in 1904.

The successful establishment of the Sokoto caliphate would have implication on the understanding of women political participation not only in modern Sokoto State but also to a large extent in Northwest zone and Northern Nigeria generally. Sokoto state is mainly populated by Hausa-Fulani, and the residents are mainly Muslims (Nigeria Galleria, 2018). The Sultan of Sokoto, who is the political head of Muslims in Nigeria, is a great-grandson of Shehu Danfodiyo. He is also the President of the Supreme Council of Islamic affairs and the political head of all the emirs and traditional chiefs of all Muslims dominated societies and states in Nigeria.

By historic-political and cultural character, Sokoto State and many others, except perhaps, Kaduna and Kano metropolitan areas are culturally traditional and are, therefore, likely to be culturally dogmatic and sensitive to change. In view of this, as explained below changes in gender roles in terms of participation in politics and governance would not only be at snail-slow but would be resisted vehemently. Accordingly, this section analyses empirical data collected through the instrumentality of focus group discussions (FGD) and key informant interviews (KIIs). The data helps to explain the extent of women involvement in political process empirically, factors constraining such involvement and provides policy recommendations to help “fast track” progress.

(a) Extent of Involvement: Still Symbolic

Using the 2015 General Elections as yardstick, the extent of women involvement in the political process, especially on issues of representation is still illustratively symbolic. Women are yet to cross the schism and political rituals of voter registration and voting. For example, in the 2015 gubernatorial candidates cleared by INEC to contest, none was actually female. This also applies to House of Assembly, and National Assembly (Senate and House of Representatives) elections. In terms of actual women representations, one can arguably submit that the political score is *zero*! This is even though there are quite scores of women political activists. According to a respondent, in Sokoto, there had always been women activists, who participated in political party activities, such as during the period of NRC, SDP, ANPP, PDP, etc. Some women even hold party offices such as PRO. Indeed, according to her, Hajiya Inno Attahiru of PDP contested House of Assembly election to represent Rabah and Wurno LGAs, but was forced to accept defeat even when it was very clear she won (Interview, June, 2018)⁹². Beyond this, there has never been any woman elected into any position of representation. This increasingly makes it difficult for women to champion their course in policy making and implementation. Thus, the very reasons of idiosyncrasy, psychological and biological factors, which would have *pulled* into the political process as desirable and necessary would have been thrown to the dogs. The concluding argument in this scenario is the maintenance of the *status quo* of traditionalism and dogmatism. It also shows that

⁹² Interview, June, 2018

the Sokoto state government did not implement the 35% affirmative action reforms.⁹³

(b) Constraints to Involvement: The Same Old Story of Traditions and Culture

Those who engaged are called names: *Yar Iska*, Prostitute, harlot, weird, way-ward, etc. Politics is not a determinant of morality (Interview, 2018).⁹⁴

(i) Traditions and Culture: As indicated above the extent of women political involvement is too limited and largely remains too symbolic for any meaningful gender development in the state. Numerous factors account for this political “retardation.” While theoretical literature suggests the influence of such factors as social, cultural and religious factors as explanatory variables, it is vital to note that further empirical differentiations reveal that the dominance of Islam and values of Hausa-Fulani culture significantly affects women political participation in Sokoto. As a traditional hub of Islam in Northern Nigeria and historically the ‘Seat of the Caliphate’ women are not exposed politically. The general view in the focus group discussion was that: “Women in Sokoto state find it difficult to even respond to mere greetings from their male counterparts.”⁹⁵

⁹³ Interview, June, 2018

⁹⁴ Interview, 2018

⁹⁵ FGD 2018.

Women and generally people in the State are too attached to the Islamic religion and their socio-cultural values. From the view of focus group discussants, in Islam “the voice of woman is *haram* (forbidden) in public” (FGD, 2018)⁹⁶ and this is because according to a respondent “some women have a musical voice and therefore too attractive to men and are suppose not to open their body and face to male. This is how women are brought up in the typical Hausa community and therefore are secluded after marriage.”⁹⁷ Broadly, speaking, “in Islam a woman is supposed not to be a leader because of her unique nature. She should not be exposed outside her marital home. According to a prophetic tradition, and our Mallam any society lead by a woman is doomed. Naturally, a woman is weak, fragile, and too emotional and she cannot withstand the rigour of leadership responsibilities.”⁹⁸ With this orientation women in Sokoto would find it difficult to get involved in political representation and governance.

In contrast to the above popular views, a prominent woman activist argued that “some Mallams told us that women can participate in politics to help their religion.”⁹⁹ This is a minority view. The general common climate of opinion is that Islam has forbidden women in participating in the political process. The consequences of this are too damning for any woman. Thus, few among them that engaged are literally condemned by the society. In many cases, all members of a woman’s family are affected. In summary, few of those women that

⁹⁶ FGD 2018

⁹⁷ Interview, 1, 2018.

⁹⁸ Interviews 1, 2018.

⁹⁹ Interview, 4, 2018.

engaged in political activities are “stigmatised.” For fear of societal rejection, stigmatisation being out-casted women, including a few educated ones, stay away from political activities. The reintroduction of Shariah in 2000 in many northern states, including Sokoto, has further consolidated these views. Shariah has re-introduced more barriers to women political participation in Sokoto to the extent the little progress has retrogressed. These views had further reaffirmed the theoretical explanations concerning the challenges of Islamic orientation and socio-cultural values in women political participation (see Paxton and Kunovich, 2003; Oluyemi, 2018; Olatunde, 1999; Ford Foundation, 2018).

(ii) *Women Factor*: This, according to respondents, manifests in different perspectives. The first perspective is that of the sociological and idiosyncrasies of a woman. The belief is that by their biological nature women must remain on the side-line of political activities and consequently must remain at home taking care of domestic chores, including their children and husbands. In traditional Muslim Sokoto State, this belief has been radically reinforced by Islamic traditions and principles. A respondent rhetorically asked, “If women are involved in political matters, who will take care of the children and conduct other domestic work? I have seen cases where those women who delve into politics, they lost their children to area boys and their husband end up marrying more wives.”¹⁰⁰

Furthermore, biologically, a woman, according to another respondent, “is naturally fragile, emotionally too unstable and psychologically easily

¹⁰⁰ Interview, 6, 2018.

upset to be able to participate in the political process.”¹⁰¹ Any woman seen in political activities is socially designated to have abandoned her biological duties including reproduction in favour of political activities. The FGD discussions argued that such women are socially out-casted. Accordingly, women in Sokoto are brought up only to prioritise marriage over any other social activity in their lives. This meant to imply that “the life of a woman begins and ends with marriage.”¹⁰² This perhaps explains why the majority of women political activists are either divorcee or yet to marry. Such women are labelled shameless and promiscuous in that they interact and intermingle with men. In dismissing such allegations, a woman political activist noted that:

Politics is not a determinant of morality. Any woman who wants to be promiscuous could still do so even if not engage in political activities. Mere seeing a woman, I can tell if she is promiscuous or not.¹⁰³

The point being made here is that women socio-culturally must get married and remain secluded in their marital homes taking care of the children and their husbands. This is the dominant belief and increasingly being reinforced and re-affirmed by Islamic scholars and teachers in various Qur’anic and Islamiyya schools. Reaffirming this view, Chizea and Njoku (1991) argued that in Nigeria every culture defines the role of women in line with traditional norms, beliefs and expectations and it is often a huge challenge to break away from this logjam. The second perspective to *women factor* is as one respondent

¹⁰¹ Interview, 6, 2018.

¹⁰² FGD, interview, 7,4,1, 2018.

¹⁰³ Interview, 4, 2018.

puts it “women are their own enemies.”¹⁰⁴ Women do not support their female counterparts in either breaking away from the yolk of subjugation or in political activities. According to a respondent:

Often women are their worst enemies as many of them fight to uphold these social and cultural values. Some regard those who attempt to engage in political activities as societal “rebels” and openly reject them and socially disassociate from even contact and interaction. The worst is even where women would rather support a man than their fellow woman and can conspire with men to “pull them down” in at all cost syndrome. This is where women themselves bring about the failure of their fellow women by not supporting and believing in their abilities and capabilities to politically represent them.¹⁰⁵

Accordingly, as women form a larger part of the population, supporting their female counterpart would strengthen their participation in the political process. However, this can be linked to social traditions and culture. Women are not only custodians of traditions and social norms they also train their children on same values. Thus, it is not surprising that in Sokoto State women would prepare to support their male counterpart than female. Women are oriented towards being providing support to male and their husband and so much believed the abilities of male than female. This orientation creates a psychological inferiority complex in them. Similarly, another line of this explanation, according to a respondent is that “women are not supported by other women because of jealousy.”¹⁰⁶ What is more critical is the issue of perceived

¹⁰⁴ Interview, 4, 2018.

¹⁰⁵ Interview 4, 2018.

¹⁰⁶ Interview, 7, 2018.

marginalisation of illiterate women by elite women. According to woman political activist, “there was no cooperation between elite and non-elite women on political matters. On their part, the non-elite, non-political women, get married and abused others.”¹⁰⁷ Rhetorically she asked “how can there be cooperation and support?”¹⁰⁸ The underlining issue here is that women generally tend to politically support their male counterpart at the detriment of women political plight. This is similar to arguments advanced by Afolabi (2009), Oluyemi (2018), Paxton and Kunovich (2003), Dantake (2011)¹⁰⁹, Sundstrom and Stockemer (2015).

(iii) *Male-Dominance or Patriarchy*: A combination of general factors helped to reinforce this challenge in Sokoto. Apart from viewing political activities as exclusive male gender role and work, women in Sokoto have been oriented socially to be subservient to male and to accept male dominance. Most of the respondents in FGD argued that “politics is the exclusive preserve of male.”¹¹⁰ This belief has been, unlike in other societies, reinforced by Hausa-Fulani culture and the teachings and principles of Islam. There are various Prophetic Hadiths and *Qur’anic* verses that attest to this logic of male dominance. A Respondent noted that “culturally, social gender roles in Sokoto had been disaggregated according to those of female and male. Women are socially not allowed to engage in politics because it is seen as exclusive

¹⁰⁷ Interview, 2, 2018.

¹⁰⁸ Interview, 2, 2018.

¹⁰⁹ Dantake, H. M. (2011) Engendering Political Process: Women and Political Parties in Nigeria in I. S. Ogundiya (eds). *Political Parties and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Codat Publications.

¹¹⁰ FGD 2018.

preserve for men.”¹¹¹ Any attempt to change this will mean upsetting the status-quo, which attracts social stigmatisation and condemnation against any woman.

Men too had been oriented to adopt and adapt to this patriarchy. The worst aspect of it is the societal acceptance of this as a norm. A respondent stressed that “no rational man will allow or permit his wife to engage in active politics” and “I don’t *believe* in women participation in politics.”¹¹² This is a big challenge that constraint women to participate in activities that socially and religiously are believed to be “gendered roles for men” (see Dantake, 2011).¹¹³

(iv) *Political Structure and Political Space*: This factor has featured significantly in the fieldwork and interactions with stakeholders. While the political structure in terms of political party activities, such as regular, longer and often late-night meetings are biased toward male (and sometimes no provision for female participation to take care of her special needs), the political space is predatory and violence-prone. From the side of parties, a Respondent noted that “many parties provide expression of interest forms and nomination forms free to women, but no woman has demonstrated her willingness to participate.”¹¹⁴

Political activities in the state have always been marred by brigandage and thuggery. Indeed, various camps within and outside party organisations conducted their activities with the support of thugs. This

¹¹¹ Interview, 4, 2018.

¹¹² Interview, 9, 2018.

¹¹³ Dantake (2011).

¹¹⁴ Interview, 4, 2018.

problem always *pushes* women to the political edge. According to a Respondent, “the second most important factor affecting women political participation in Sokoto is the crude nature of politics... What this means is that for anyone to go into politics one must get involved in *fetish* activities and women are too soft to sacrifice human beings in the process or to get a position of leadership. This is not hearsay; it is the reality.”¹¹⁵ The general view of focus group discussants is that no woman in Sokoto can withstand the rancorous and conflict-ridden of nature of politics in Nigeria and Sokoto in particular. A Respondent elaborates that “the violent nature of political activities easily intimidates women. Political candidates hire and recruit thugs. Women cannot withstand a scenario where people are killed. In extreme cases, few women that engage in the political process are sexually harassed, raped and threatened. No woman in Sokoto can face this traumatic situation.”¹¹⁶ Related to other factors explained above, women in Sokoto are not even trained to withstand the rigours of political activities. And worst still no a man will allow his wife to attend party meetings let alone stay away late in the night to attend party meetings and other political party functions.

(v) *Godfather syndrome and Funding*: these are twin factors constraining women from partaking in the political process. Political activities and processes in Nigeria are generally capital intensive, and already women in Sokoto are economically disadvantaged and educationally backward. The implication of this would be any woman

¹¹⁵ Interview, 3, 2018.

¹¹⁶ Interview, 8, 2018.

interested in political representation to require funding and support from a godfather. A Respondent stressed that “most candidates have godfathers sponsoring their political activities. This is very difficult for women as none will accept having a godfather, as this can be seen as a ticket to prostitution and other allegations.”¹¹⁷ Socio-culturally this is an abomination. It is simply unthinkable. Various theoretical and empirical researches have attested to this fact of violence and low level of education in Sokoto. In particular, Omodia *et al* (2013),¹¹⁸ Quadri, (2018)¹¹⁹ Odanja and Terwase (2013), Samuel and Segun (2012),¹²⁰ Ajogbeje (2016),¹²¹ Ogwu (2015)¹²² have variously attested to the violent nature of political activities, which characteristically *push* women away from the political scene.

Other factors shackling women participation in political processes, and which in one’s view are linked to the overall socio-cultural terrain of Sokoto are: (vi) *women low level of education and poverty*. Various studies have explained the low level of women education and poverty in Sokoto. In fact, in the national index and other statistical measures, Sokoto is ranked among other states with a low level of education and a higher level of poverty, especially among women. Historically, women

¹¹⁷ Interview, 9, 2018.

¹¹⁸ Omodia, S. M., Esidene, E. C. and Abdul, S. U. (2013). The Role of Women in Nigerian Politics: Conceptual and Theoretical Issues for an Enhanced Participation in the Fourth Republic. *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences*, 5(1): 88-105.

¹¹⁹ Quadri, (2018)

¹²⁰ Samuel, O. and Segun, J. (2012) Gender Relations in Nigeria’s Democratic Governance. *Journal of Politics and Governance*, 1(2-3): 4-15.

¹²¹ Ajogbeje (2016).

¹²² Ogwu, J. U. (2015) Women Participation in the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria. *IJASOS International E-Journal of Advances in Social Science*, 1(3): 395-403.

are disempowered. While, the general conclusion from the FGDs argued for lack of adequate education, especially western education, Respondents argued that “to date people in Sokoto give priority to male children than female.

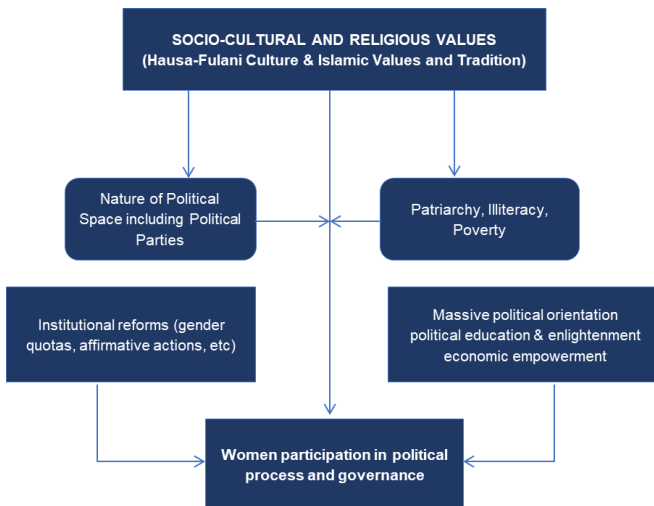
Consequently, women are married at an early age at the detriment of sending them to school. For lack of education, women are not exposed to political education to enable them to appreciate their rights and engage therein.”¹²³ Sokoto state has notoriously seen persistently among the top few states with low literacy level and especially girl-child education. The socio-cultural orientation has been apprehension and disdain towards western education. Correspondingly, this also affects women economic wellbeing and livelihoods. According to Respondent, “women in Sokoto are not given opportunities to engage in economic activities to empower them.”¹²⁴ Hardly one finds a woman in Sokoto that is financially buoyant to support her political activities. She has to rely on someone to support her, which again is “socially unacceptable.” For these reasons, no matter the extent to which a woman wants to participate in the political process, the capital-intensive nature of politicking *pushes* them away. In fact, money is required to do fetish things and buy votes and engage in media mobilisation. Women do not have such large amounts of money because they lack at least formal credit facilities due to lack of education and cultural security.”¹²⁵ The complex network of factors hindering women political participation is symbolically presented in Figure 1 below.

¹²³ Interview, 8, 3, 2018.

¹²⁴ Interview, 8, 2018.

¹²⁵ Interview, 4, 2018.

Figure 1: Relevant Factors in Women Political Participation



The preceding discussion provides an empirical analysis of women political participation in Sokoto. The general impression from the data is a picture that is too complex to designate and understand.

Nevertheless, though the study arguably supports researches conducted in similar societies with similar characteristics, however, when these factors and the picture they paint are disaggregated and differentiated as done here with various empirical illustrations and “real-time” examples, the Sokoto case is remarkably different. The factors are boxed in *glass ceiling*, transparently easy and clear to see, understand and analyse but difficult to break! Breaking traditions of over two hundred years require patience, steadfastness, commitment and resources. But progress would be and found out in this research, symbolically slow.

(c) Recommendations

From the above analytical findings, it must be appreciated that the extent of women political participation in Sokoto is largely symbolic and 99% voting. Thus the factors accounting for this disappointing perspective are largely and primarily socio-cultural, ideological, predatory political structure and political space and low level of education, poverty and male-female social disparities and historical antecedents. To, therefore, change this situation it is important to note the following policy measures:

- i. **Massive Social and political orientation:** Breaking centuries’ old traditions and beliefs would require extensive and intensive social and political orientation concerning the importance of women political participation. The target of such programmes should be parents, Islamic Scholars, traditional rulers, women, husband, etc. and other custodians of traditions and culture;

- ii. **Institutional Reforms:** All the institutional reforms introduced to improve women political participation such as affirmative action, gender Quotas, must be effectively implemented;
- iii. **Economic Empowerment:** Economic empowerment programmes should be broadened to enable women to be economically empowered. This will help them to break the cycle of dependence on male and therefore take important personal decisions that often affect their lives, including political decisions;
- iv. **The political Structures and Political Space:** effort must by all relevant stakeholders, such as key politicians, political parties, INEC, traditional rulers, community-based organisation (CBOs), nongovernmental organisation (NGOs), security agencies and government to liberate the political space from the scourge of violence and conflict of all nature. This will *pull* women to partake in the political process; and
- v. **Girl-child Education and Gender Equality:** the on-going campaign on the promotion of Girl-child education and gender equality must be intensified and all resources required for its success should be provided. This, in the long run, will help to educate women and liberate them from the shackles of predatory traditions and cultural values that *push* them away from the political space and decisions making processes.

Concluding Remarks

Women constitute more than half of the population of any modern society. And when added with their children, they represent nearly 70% of any population. Thus, when women are excluded from political representation and governance, as is the case in many societies in

Nigeria, the consequences are destructive to inclusive growth and development. However, while institutional reforms are introduced and national and international campaigns are being intensified to increase women's involvement in the political process, there is no promise that progress will be rapid and effective. The effort requires consistency, diligence, resources, and political will, but it worth the gamble.

Beyond Voting: Increasing Women's Participation in The Political Process in Anambra State, South East Zone

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Introduction

After decades of military rule, Nigeria's return to democracy in May 1999 rekindled hopes of having an inclusive political space for all citizens to realise their legitimate aspirations, irrespective of religion, age, ethnicity and gender. In particular, the new democratic space boosted hopes on the prospects of greater participation of marginalised groups in politics, particularly women.¹²⁶ Nigeria has had five elected democratic governments from 1999 to 2018 and hopefully, the sixth one in 2019. The attainment of nearly two decades of uninterrupted democratic rule offers a contextual background for examining the extent to which the democratic space has enabled women to insert and assert themselves meaningfully in politics and governance.

It is pertinent to note that before and since the return to democracy, Nigeria has made several efforts to ensure the rights and full participation of women in politics and decision-making structures.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Nwauzor, Adaku (2016). "Women Participation in Nigerian Politics from 1999 to 2015", *International Journal of Research in Art and Social Sciences*, 9(1):263-275.

¹²⁷ These include, but are not limited to, Section 40 of the 1999 Constitution, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 1987, the African

Despite the existence of these instruments, women participation in politics over the past decade remains abysmally low. Statistics show that women have not reached 15 per cent representation in elective positions in Nigeria since 1999. Out of the 109 Senate seats, women occupied three in 1999, four in 2003, nine in 2007, and seven in 2011 and 2015. Out of the 360 seats in the House of Representatives, women had 12 in 1999, 21 in 2003, 25 in 2007, 26 in 2011 and 22 in 2015.¹²⁸ Overall, the national average of women's political participation in Nigeria has remained 6.7 per cent in elective and appointive positions, which is far below the Global Average of 22.5 per cent, Africa regional average of 23.4 per cent and West African sub-regional average of 15 per cent.¹²⁹

Democratic politics in Nigeria thus suffers from inclusivity deficit. For example, in the 2015 general election, 45,888,984 registered voters were women, while 22,944,984 were men. Despite constituting the larger block of the electorate, "women occupy less than 7 per cent of positions in elective and appointive positions in the country".¹³⁰ Thus, a crucial challenge in the practice of democracy in Nigeria remains how to

Union's Protocol on the Rights of Women 2003, the National Policy on Women 2000, and the National Gender Policy 2006

¹²⁸ Centre for Democracy and Development – CDD (2018), *Women in Elective Offices in Nigerian Politics: Fact Sheet June 2018*, Abuja: CDD, p.3

¹²⁹ Duru, Blessing. (2014). "Women inclusion in politics panacea to Nigeria's ailing economy", *The Nigerian Women's Trust Fund*, <http://nigerianwomentrustfund.org/women-inclusion-in-politics-panacea-to-nigerias-ailing-economy/>

¹³⁰ Oduah, Stella. (2018), "Youth and Women Empowerment Essential", *247ureports.com*, 9 July, <http://247ureports.com/youth-and-women-empowerment-essential-stella-oduah/>

translate women's numerical and voting strengths into opportunities for them to occupy more elective and appointive positions.

Therefore, this report examines women participation in politics in the South East geopolitical zone, with a particular focus on Anambra state. As enthused by one commentator, "Anambra state has been leading the pack of women in politics; they have shown out amazons who have contributed immensely to the strengthening of our democracy and nation building".¹³¹ To what extent are women involved in politics in the South East zone generally and Anambra state more specifically? What factors have impacted on women participation in politics in the state? And what measures could be adopted to enhance women participation in politics in the state? These and other related concerns are what this report addresses.

Other parts of the report are organised as follows. Section 2 provides an overview of the South East zone with emphasis on the historical, economic, demographic and political background of Anambra state. Section 3 provides a situation analysis of women in politics in Anambra state. Section 4 discusses some of the factors that impact on women participation in politics in the state. While section 5 highlights some prospects of increasing women participation in politics, section 6 provides some suggestion on how to enhance women participation in politics in the state. Section 7 contains the concluding reflections.

¹³¹ Lionduke, (2015). *Anambra Women in Politics 1999 – 2015*, *Nairaland*, July 19, <http://www.nairaland.com/2462594/anambra-women-politics-1999-2015>

Context of The Study: The South East Zone

The South-East geopolitical zone is one of the six geo-political zones created in 1996 by the military government of General Ibrahim Babangida, to reflect geographic units that share similar cultures, history, background and close territories. The zone is made up of five states - Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. Based on 2006 national census, the zone has a population of 16,395,555 people, comprising 8,184,951 male and 8,210,604 female.

Table 1: 2006 Census Data of the Five States in the South East Zone

State	1991 Census	2006 Census					
		Male	Female	Both Sexes	Land Size km ²	Inter-Census Growth Rates	Population Density
Abia	1,913,917	1,430,298	1,415,082	2,845,380	4,902.24	2.77	580.4
Anambra	2,796,475	2,117,984	2,059,844	4,177,828	4,816.21	2.80	867.5
Ebonyi	1,453,882	1,064,156	1,112,791	2,176,947	6,421.23	2.82	339.0
Enugu	2,125,068	1,596,042	1,671,795	3,267,837	7,660.17	3.00	426.6
Imo	2,485,635	1,976,471	1,951,092	3,927,563	5,182.82	3.19	757.8
Total	10,774,977	8,184,951	8,210,604	16,395,555	28,982.67	14.58	2971.3

Source: 2006 Population and Housing Census, National Population Commission

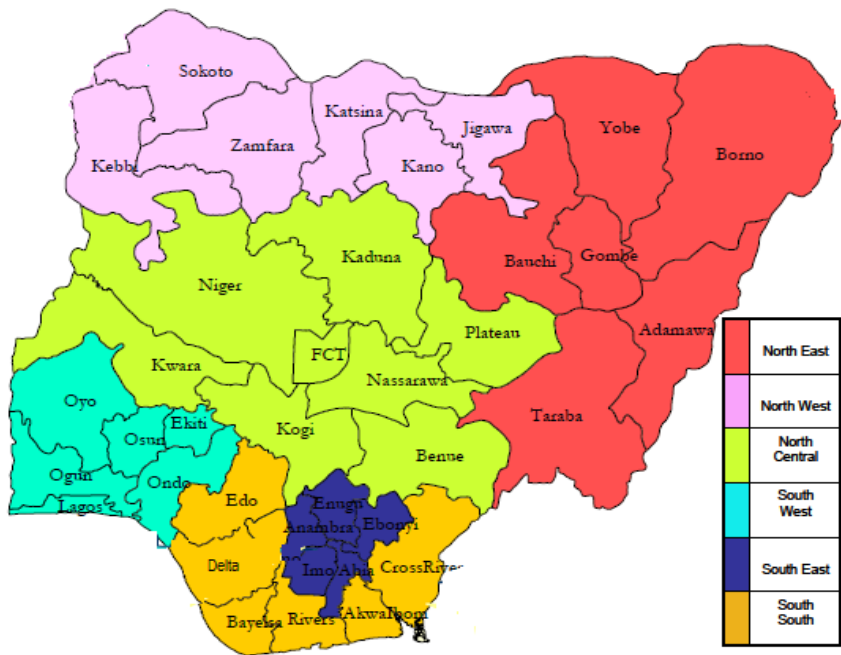
The 2006 Census figures revealed that while Enugu state is the largest state in terms of landmass, Anambra state is the most populated. It is estimated that the population of the zone has increased from 16,395,555 people in 2006 to an estimated 21,954,814 people in

2016.¹³² The South East zone is located in the lower Niger (see figure 1). In comparison to other geopolitical zones, it is the smallest both in terms of landmass and a number of states. The zone is bounded in the north by Kogi and Benue states; in the south by Bayelsa, Rivers and Akwa Ibom states; in the east by Cross River State and to the west by Edo and Delta states. It is predominantly occupied by the Igbo tribe known for its entrepreneurship in commerce, manufacturing, industrialisation and agriculture. The inhabitants are predominantly Christians.¹³³

Figure 1: Map of Nigeria showing the Six Geopolitical Zones

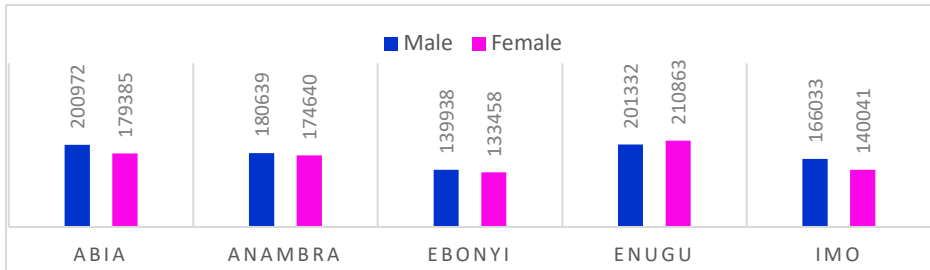
¹³² National Population Commission; 2012-2016, National Bureau of Statistics 2017 Demographic Statistics Bulletin

¹³³ Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, 2016 Strategic Conflict Assessment of Nigeria: Consolidated and Zonal Reports (Abuja: IPCR, 2017), p. 298



As at June 29 June 2018, the total number of registered voters in Nigeria stood at 9,922,619. Out of this figure, the South East zone has 1,727,301, comprising 888,914 male (51%) and 838,387 female (49%). A further breakdown of the figure shows that Enugu state has the highest number of registered voters while Ebonyi has the least number of registered voters (see table3).

Figure 2: Registered Voters in the South East Zone by Gender and State (June 2018)



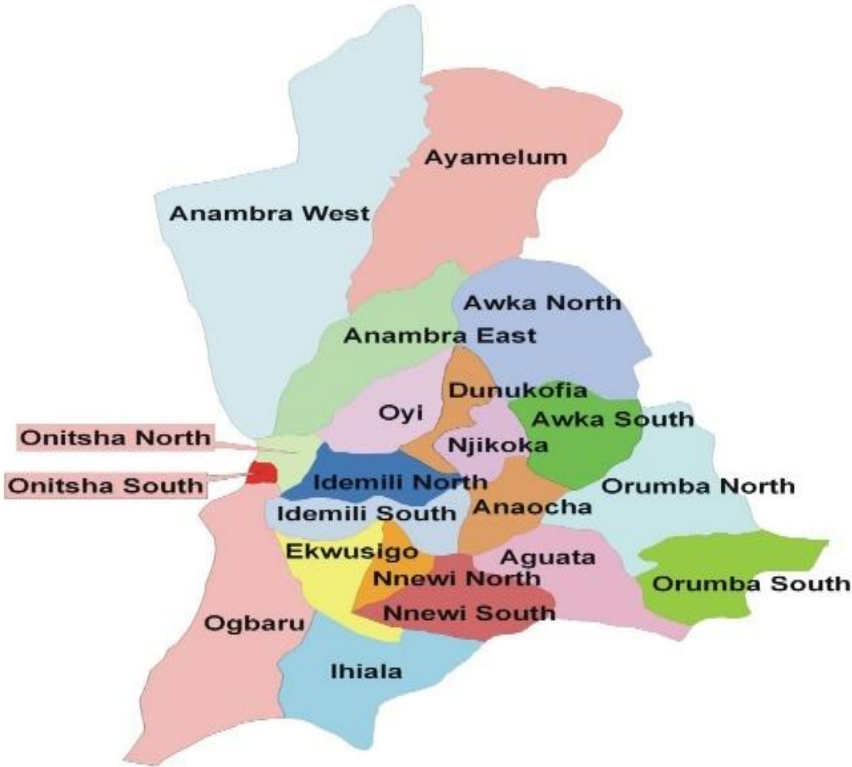
Adapted from INEC (2018), 2nd 2018 Continuous Voter Registration Update 29th June

Profile of Anambra State

Anambra State boasts of considerable cultural, geo-strategic, economic and political significance to the Igbo ethnic nationality. Its history stretches back to the 9th century AD, as revealed by archaeological excavations at Igbo-Ukwu and Ezira. The state derives its name from the Anambra River (Omambala), which is a tributary of the River Niger. Old Anambra State was created in 1976 from part of East Central State, and its capital was Enugu. A further re-organisation in 1991 divided Anambra into two states, Anambra and Enugu.

Anambra State consists of twenty-one Local Government Areas (LGAs), as depicted in figure 3. The capital of Anambra is Awka. The capital and seat of government is Awka. The 21 LGAs are headed by Local Government Chairmen who are the Chief Executive Officers of the LGAs. Although these Chairmen are supposed to emerge through local government elections conducted by the State Independent Electoral Commission (SIEC), the positions are currently being administered by Caretaker Chairperson appointed by the incumbent governor. In addition, the government of Anambra state recognises the powers of elected community executives headed by Presidents General (PGs) as the traditional system of governance.

Figure 3: Map of Anambra State showing the Local Government Areas¹³⁴

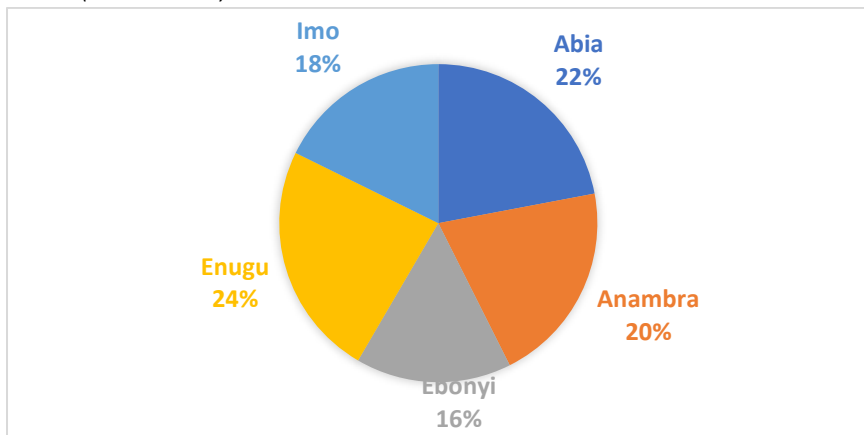


Delta and Edo States bound the state to the west, Imo and Rivers States to the south, Enugu State to the east and Kogi State to the north.

¹³⁴ National Population Commission, (2010), Population Distribution by Sex, State, LGA and Senatorial District, Abuja, NPC, p. 52.

According to the 2006 Census figures, Anambra state had a total population of 4, 177, 828, comprising 2,117,984 male and 2,059,844 female. It is the eighth most populated state in Nigeria. It is also the highest and most densely populated state in the South East zone. Over 60 per cent of its residents live in urban areas making it one of the most urbanized places in Nigeria.¹³⁵ Of the 1, 727,301 registered votes in the South East zone as at June 2018, Anambra state with 355,279 registrants accounts for 20 per cent voters (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Distribution of Registered Voters in the South East Zone by State (June 2018)



Adapted from INEC (2018), *2nd 2018 Continuous Voter Registration Update 29th June*

The major commercial centres in the state are Onitsha, Nnewi, Ekwulobia and Awka. Anambra is rich in natural gas, crude oil, bauxite, ceramics and almost 100 per cent arable soil. Most of its natural

¹³⁵ Anambra State Government, (2017). History of Anambra, <http://www.anambrastate.gov.ng/history>

resources remain largely untapped. The people are very industrious, and most of the industrial base of the state is private sector driven, spanning from agro-allied, automobile and manufacturing situated mostly in the Nnewi industrial belt.

The state's recent political history can at best be described as troubled. On May 29, 1999, Chinwoke Mbadinuju was sworn in as civilian governor of Anambra state, with several political and governance crisis marring his administration. Most notably was the ten-months government secondary schools teachers strike over non-payment of their salaries. Many people attribute Mbadinuju's failure to political godfathers, a debacle that also trailed his successor.¹³⁶ On May 26, 2003, Chris Ngige was sworn in as the governor of the state, but he was removed in March 2006 when Peter Obi of All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) challenged his election on grounds of electoral malpractice. The Court of Appeal in Enugu asserted that his election victory in 2003 was fraudulent and ordered him to leave the seat.

Peter Obi was in turn ousted by a faction of the Anambra State House of Assembly on November 2, 2006 and replaced by Mrs Virginia Etiaba, his deputy. On February 9, 2007 Mrs. Etiaba handed power back to Obi after the Court of Appeal had nullified Obi's removal. On April 14, 2007, Andy Uba of PDP was "elected" the new governor of the state and was sworn in as the new governor on May 29, 2007. The election was

¹³⁶ Centre for Democracy and Development - CDD (2017). One Elections, One Godfather: Background Paper on the Anambra 18th November 2017 Governorship Elections. Abuja: CDD

reported to be massively rigged.¹³⁷ On June 14, 2007 the Supreme Court of Nigeria removed Andy Uba from office and replaced him with his predecessor Peter Obi, on the ground that Peter Obi's tenure had not ended, therefore there was no vacancy in the governorship. Peter Obi was re-elected governor for a second term of four years on February 6, 2010, in an election that he contested with twenty-five other contestants, including Chris Ngige, Charles Soludo, Andy Uba, Mrs Uche Ekwunife, and Prince Nicholas Ukachukwu, among others.¹³⁸ On March, 17th 2014, Mr Willie Obiano was sworn in as governor after the expiration of the second term of Peter Obi. He was subsequently re-elected for four-year tenure on 18 November 2017.

Situational Analysis of Women Participation In Politics In Anambra State

Participation in politics can assume and be analysed from different forms, contexts and units of analysis. Women participation in politics includes their active engagement as party members, voters, elected officials, and political appointees. Assessed on these bases, women have been participating in politics in the South East zone in general and Anambra state in particular. However, what remains a subject of concern is the extent of their participation.

Women in Anambra state participates in politics as party members and mobilisers. As a result of their demographic size, political parties in the zone have recognised them as such, and have women leaders as members of their executives at all levels. As noted by Obaze, "to meet

¹³⁷ Anambra State Government, (2017). Op cit.

¹³⁸ Ibid

the requirement of gender balancing and mainstreaming, each party tends to have a woman leader at the state, local, and ward levels”.¹³⁹ Data in table 2 contains details of the current women leaders of the top five political parties in Anambra state. Although women account for a significant number in party membership in the state, the author was unable to obtain the total number of members of the major parties and the share percentage that are women.

Table 2: Women Representation in the Top Five Political Parties in Anambra State

S/No	Party	State Leader	Women
1	All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA)	Chinyere Ibenta	
2	All Progressives Congress (APC)	Calista Nwachukwu	
3	People Democratic Party (PDP)	Edith Nwokedi	
4	United Progressive Party (UPP)	NIL*	
5	The Progressive Peoples Alliance (PPA)	Tina Onuzulike	

*Unoccupied because the party is currently undergoing re-organisation

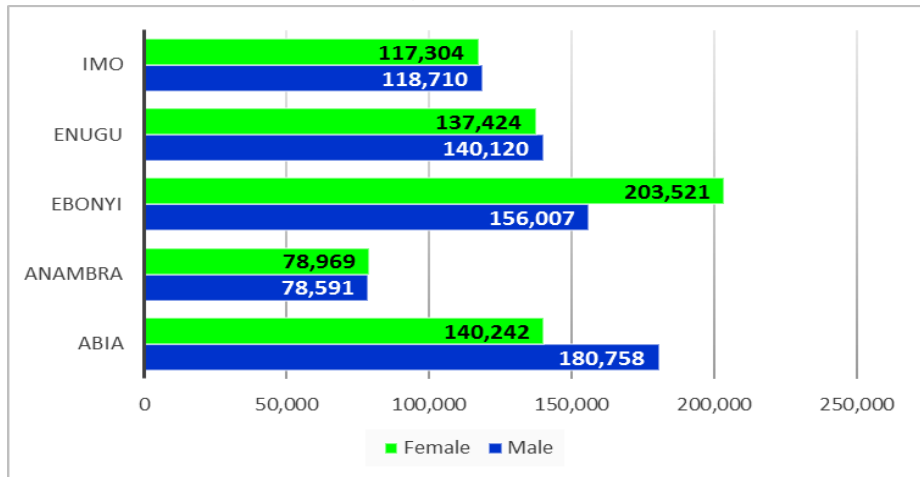
Source: Researcher’s compilation from fieldwork, July-August 2018.

Political participation through the right to vote is one of the means through which eligible citizens influence the political process. To this end, women have been visibly active as voters in the zone. Data in figure 5 show that out of 1,351,646 people that voted during the 2015 Presidential and National Assembly Elections in the zone, 677,460 were female and 674,186 were male. Although there were variations across

¹³⁹ Obaze, Oseloka. (2018), a People’s Democratic Party governorship aspirant in the November 18, 2017 governorship election in Anambra State, interviewed by the author on 12 July, Abuja.

the state, the data indicate that slightly more women than men voted in the zone. In the case of Anambra, more women (79, 969) than men (78, 381) voted during the general elections. For too long the women in the zone have been left at the margins of the political process as voters.

Figure 5: Gender Distribution of Voting in the South East Zone during the 2015 Presidential and National Assembly Elections.



Source: Adapted from INEC, (2016) Smart Card Reader Accreditation Backend Transmission System, 2015 Presidential & National Assembly Elections

Despite the fact that women represent a significant proportion of the voting population of the zone, they have been very negligible in terms of filling important elective and appointive positions. Since the return to democracy in 1999, the five states in the zone, including Anambra has been administered by elected executive governors with their deputies. No woman has ever been *elected* governor of any of the states in the zone. In Anambra state where Dame Virginia Etiaba became the first female governor in Nigeria's history from November 2006 to February

2007, she did not win the seat at the polls. She assumed the position after the previous governor, Peter Obi, was impeached by the state legislature for alleged gross misconduct.¹⁴⁰ Statistics in table 3 indicate the low representation of women in key political elective and appointive positions in the zone. Out of the five governorship seats, none is occupied by a woman. Only one out of the four seats for deputy governor is occupied by a woman. Few women have been elected into the states houses of assembly in the current dispensation, much as few have been (s)elected as local government chairperson.

Table 3: Women Representation in key Political Elective and Appointive Positions in the South East Zone, July 2018

S/No	State	Governors		Deputy Governor		SEC		Senate		HoR		SHoA		LGC	
		NoS	NoW	NoS	NoW	NoS	NoW	NoS	NoW	NoS	NoW	NoS	NoW	NoS	NoW
1	Abia	1	0	1	0	29	3	3	0	8	2	24	1	17	1
2	Anambra	1	0	1	0	23	4	3	1	11	5	30	4	21	0
3	Ebonyi	1	0	1	0	21	3	3	0	6	0	24	2	13	3
4	Enugu	1	0	1	1	36	2	3	0	8	1	24	3	24	0
5	Imo	1	0	1	0	31	4	3	0	10	0	27	3	27	3
Total	Five	5	0	5	1	140	16	15	1	43	8	129	14	102	7

Key

- NoS = Number of Seat
 NoW = Number of Women
 SEC = State Executive Council
 HoR = House of Representative
 SHoA = State House of Assembly
 LGC = Local Government Chairperson

Source: Researcher's compilation from fieldwork, July-August 2018.

It is pertinent to note that of the 37 political candidates during the last governorship elections in Anambra on 18 November 2017, just 5

¹⁴⁰ BBC News, (2006). First Female Governor in Nigeria, 3 November, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6112950.stm>

women contested for governorship. The number of those that vied for the office of Deputy Governor was eight. Of the three senatorial positions in the state, one is occupied by a woman. 5 women are elected members of the House of Representatives out of 11 positions for the state. In the Anambra State House of Assembly (ANSHA), 4 out of the 30 elected representatives are women. It is pertinent to note however that women have dominated the position of the Speaker of the ANSA since the return to democracy. Honourable Rita Mmaduagwu, who represents Nnewi South II constituency is the current Speaker of the Sixth Assembly. She is the third female Speaker to be produced by the House, as the immediate past Speaker, Honourable Chinwe Nwaebili was the second. The first female speaker was Mrs. Eucharia Azodo, who was elected in 2003 but was impeached a month later for her alleged role in the illegal removal of Dr Chris Ngige as then Anambra State Governor.¹⁴¹ In the current state executive council, four women were appointed into cabinet positions as commissioners while about three serves as special assistants to the governor. In the list of the 21 Transition Committee Chairmen confirmed by Anambra state house of Assembly in April 2018, none is a woman.¹⁴²

The foregoing no doubt depicts a low representation of women in elective positions in the state. Notwithstanding, many women politicians from Anambra have made it to the national level of elective positions over the years. With the return to democracy in 1999, Hon

¹⁴¹ *Nigerian Best Forum* (2011) "Anambra house of assembly elect female speaker", 13 June, <http://www.nigerianbestforum.com/index.php?topic=123060.0>

¹⁴² Onuebgu, Okechukwu (2018). ANSHA confirms 21 TC Chairmen, 326 members, *Orient Daily*, <https://orientdailynews.com.ng/news/ansha-confirms-chairmen-members/>

Lynda Chuba-Ikpeazu was the first elected female politician, representing Onitsha South federal constituency from 1999-2003. Mrs Joy Emordi of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) was elected as the Senator representing Anambra North Senatorial zone during the April 2003 election. She got re-elected in the 2007 general elections but was sacked in 2010 following an appeal by Alphonsus Igbeke. In 2007, Iyom Uche Ekwunife was elected into the Federal House of Representatives and was re-elected in 2011. She ran for the Governorship seat of Anambra State in 2010 and 2013, although she lost narrowly at both times. Hon. Eucharika Azodo was elected in 2011 to represent Aguata Federal Constituency in the National Assembly and was re-elected in April 2015 for another four-year term in the House of Representatives. Similarly, Mrs. Margery Chibuogu Chuba-Okadigbo was in July 2012 sworn in as the Senator representing Anambra North Senatorial District in the Senate of the Seventh National Assembly. Also notable at the national level is Princess Stella Oduah who was in April 2015 elected as Senator to represent Anambra Central in the eighth National Assembly.

Furthermore, some Anambra women have also made their marks in appointive positions, especially at the national level. For instance, the late Prof Dora Akunyili was the Director General of National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) of Nigeria and Nigerian Minister of Information and Communications from 2008 to 2010. Similarly, Iyom Josephine Anenih was a Special Adviser on Women Affairs to President Obasanjo until 2006. She was appointed Nigerian minister of Women Affairs on 6 April 2010, by then Acting President Goodluck Jonathan. Also, President Jonathan also appointed Princess Stella Oduah-Ogiemwonyi and Mrs Joy Emordi as the Minister

of Aviation as well as Special Adviser on National Assembly Matters respectively. Princess Oduah was later elected as Senator to representing Anambra Central in the eight National Assembly.

Challenges to Effective Women Political Participation in Anambra State

There are several factors that inhibit effective women participation in politics in the South East zone. Insights from fieldwork conducted in August 2017 in Anambra state show that these factors are many and varied. A major factor is the highly monetised and violent character of Nigerian politics. The insignificant presence of women in political leadership is not unconnected with the notoriously monetised or commoditised nature of Nigerian politics; which starts with the party primaries, where participation is often dependent on the ability to mobilise fees and to win support through financial favours.¹⁴³

As Obaze noted, “The highly monetised nature of electoral process from the party formation, party primaries, intra-party and general public campaigns to the election proper, all put women at a disadvantage than men”.¹⁴⁴ And Obodozie queried: “How many women out of the very few political aspirants will be able to bring out ₦10m to obtain a form for the presidential election, or ₦5m to obtain a form for the governorship election?”.¹⁴⁵ The cost has even increased ahead of

¹⁴³ Emereonye, Livy-Elcon (2017) “The Role of the Youth in Credible Elections”, *Elombahnews*, 19 June, <https://elombah.com/index.php/politics/the-role-of-the-youth-in-credible-elections/>

¹⁴⁴ Obaze, Oseloka. (2018), Op. Cit.

¹⁴⁵ Obodozie, Oby. (2018). President National Council for Women Society, Anambra State,

the 2019 general elections. Data in table 4 clearly reveal the exorbitant nature of the expression of interest and party nomination forms for the 2019 elections fixed by the two major parties in Nigeria.

Table 4: Cost of Expression of Interest and Party Nomination Forms for the 2019 Elections

S/No	Elective Position	Amount fixed by the Party	
		APC	PDP
1	President	₦45,000,000.00	₦12,000,000.00
2	Governor	₦22,500,000.00	₦6,000,000.00
3	Senate	₦7,000,000.00	₦3,500,000.00
4	House of Representative	₦3,850,000.00	₦1,500,000.00
5	State House of Assembly	₦850,000.00	₦600,000.00

Source: _____ Compiled _____ from

<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/282541-2019-apc-releases-timetable-presidential-aspirants-to-pay-n45m-governorship-n22-5m.html>, _____ and <http://peoplesdemocraticparty.com.ng/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/sale-of-forms-for-the-2019-general-elections-2.pdf>

The extremely prohibitive financial cost of such forms further discourages most women from engaging in partisan politics. Most importantly, Ehiaturike noted that “even when parties wave fees for

interviewed on 1 August, Awka, Anambra State.

expression of interest forms, huge amount money is still required for a vibrant electioneering campaign and mobilisation which most women cannot afford".¹⁴⁶ Much more is even needed for security purposes as well as media coverage during electioneering.¹⁴⁷ Such amount of money is usually not readily available to female candidates.

The above challenge brings to the fore the second factor: economic marginalisation of women. Women play key role in the Nigerian economy, accounting for about 70 per cent of agricultural labour, 50 per cent of animal husbandry-related activities and 60 per cent of food processing activities.¹⁴⁸ Though many women are involved in subsistence agriculture and off-farm activities, men are five times more likely than women to own land. For example, women own just over 10 per cent of land in the in the South-East.¹⁴⁹ In Nigeria, women account for only 8 per cent of the labour force in the formal sector – occupying fewer and the lower cadre positions in the formal sector and consistently earning less income than their male counterparts. As of 2010, statistics on the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector in southern Nigeria shows that the South-East was the lowest (7.4%), compared to South-South (7.7%) and South-West

¹⁴⁶ Ehiaturuik, Ugochi (2018), Programme Officer, Justice Development and Peace Caritas (JDPC), interviewed at Nnewi, Anambra state, 2 August 2018.

¹⁴⁷ Ify Unachukwu, Chief Producer /On Air Personality, Anambra Broadcasting Services, interviewed on 2 August, Awka, Anambra State.

¹⁴⁸ Pogson, A. Irene (2008). "Women and Development in Nigeria". A lecture presented at the National Defence College, Abuja, 8 October.

¹⁴⁹ British Council Nigeria, (2012), Gender in Nigeria Report 2012: Improving the lives of girls and women in Nigeria, Abuja, British Council, p.20

(16%).¹⁵⁰ Thus, women economic marginalisation has led to huge income disparity and feminisation of poverty.¹⁵¹ As noted by most participants in a focus group discussion, poverty which have remained high among women in Anambra State particularly in rural communities, deprive most women the financial base to make any meaningful inroad into the political arena.¹⁵²

A third obstacle is the existence of powerful political godfathers, who are averse to sponsoring women candidates in elections. These godfathers or gatekeepers are not mere financiers of political campaigns, they are also individuals whose power derives not just from wealth but from their ability to use violence and corruption to manipulate electoral or party politics in support of their politically 'ordained' candidates. According to Nwoye, "women politicians seeking the highest office in the state have always been challenged by the seeming reluctance of men who hold dominion in the state to give heed to a female chief executive of the state".¹⁵³ Obiorah posits that "these godfathers who finance or invest heavily in this enterprise prefer male candidates and want them to win at all cost in order to make returns. Only those who are ready to win at all cost get party tickets at all cost

¹⁵⁰ The Nation, (2017), "Excerpts from the 2016 UNDP Report", 9 April, <http://thenationonline.ng.net/excerpts-2016-undp-report/>

¹⁵¹ Eboiyehi, F.A., Bankole, A. O. and Eromonsele, A. (2006) "Work, women employment and feminization of poverty in Nigeria", *Gender and Behaviour*, 4(1): 642-658.

¹⁵² Focus group discussion at Awka, Anambra State, 1 August 2018.

¹⁵³ Nwoye, Ifeanyi (2017), "Anambra 2017: Why are the women taking the back seat?", *Daily Trust*, 15 August, <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/opinion/anambra-2017-why-are-the-women-taking-the-back-seat/210131.html>

too, leading politicians to approach elections as do-or-die contest”.¹⁵⁴ Herein lies not only the real challenge for women, but also the mutually reinforcing connection between huge deployment of money and mobilisation of violence that are characteristic of electoral politics in Nigeria.¹⁵⁵

Accordingly, the threat of violence is a related factor that have hampered women participation in politics. Although Anambra state has not experienced the level of electoral violence comparable to other parts of Nigeria, participants in focus group discussion re-echoed that the violent brand of politics in Nigeria seldom accommodates the participation of women since they can neither provide the huge amount of money nor mobilise the level of violence needed to win elections.¹⁵⁶ The fifth factor that contributes to low women participation in politics in Anambra state is societal prejudices. Two of such notable and interrelated prejudices are the idea of politics as a ‘dirty’ game, and more importantly peddling of stories or images of female politician as ‘prostitutes’. The first derives partly from the violent nature of Nigerian politics while the second partly emanates from the predominantly nocturnal nature of political meetings. Given this situation, Akanife contends that “women who venture into politics are usually viewed as

¹⁵⁴ Obiorah Chidozie (2018) Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, interviewed at Awka, Anambra state, 2 August 2018.

¹⁵⁵ Onuoha, Freedom (2009). “Yet Unanswered? The Youth and Gender Questions in a Decade of Democratic Governance in Nigeria”, in O. S. Ilufeye, O. A. Olutayo and Amzat, J. (eds.) *A Decade of Redemocratization in Nigeria: 1999-2009*. Ibadan: Department of Political science, p.184.

¹⁵⁶ Focus group discussion at Awka, Anambra State, 1 August 2018.

dirty and prostitutes in the society”.¹⁵⁷ Anagbogu corroborated this point, when she opined that:

The women are not yet free, in the sense that they need the support of their husband. From all the researches we have carried out, we discovered that if your husband does not support you, you will be called *Ashawo*, *Akwuna-Awkuna*, that is prostitute. Even fellow women call them [female candidates] these names, not only the men.¹⁵⁸

During a focus group discussion, participants stated that such biases discourage credible women from participating in politics, describing it as a political strategy of giving a dog a bad name in order to hang it.¹⁵⁹ As a result of these negative stereotypes, some “women of integrity who have leadership qualities have avoided active participation in politics in their communities to preserve their ‘reputation’ or ‘homes’”.¹⁶⁰

Finally, broader institutional factor due to the nature of Nigeria’s electoral system also limit opportunities for women in politics. Nigeria operates the first-past-the post plurality system. This factor constrains women participation in politics, not just in Anambra state but in Nigeria generally. Some countries have crafted some institutional provisions to

¹⁵⁷ Akanife, Eucharika (2018), former councillor, Ward 3, Ezinifite, interviewed at Ezinifite, Anambra state, 2 August.

¹⁵⁸ Anagbogu, Mercy (2018), Director, Women Actions Committee, interviewed at Awka, Anambra state, 1 August.

¹⁵⁹ Focus group discussion at Awka, Anambra State, 1 August 2018.

¹⁶⁰ Nnalue, Theresa (2018), First Vice President of National Council for Women Society, Anambra state, interviewed at Awka, Anambra state, 1 August.

enhance the prospects of women participation in politics and governance. A good example is Uganda, where seats are reserved for women, youth and other marginalised groups in the society such as the disabled. Section 78(1) of Ugandan Constitution provides that the parliament shall consist of one-woman representative for every district, and such numbers of representatives of the army, youth workers with disabilities and other groups as Parliament may determine.¹⁶¹

Prospects of Improving Women Political Representation in Anambra State

Despite the existence of factors constraining women participation in politics in the state, there are several prospects that could be leveraged on, in relation to expanding women engagement in politics. One of such prospects is the He-For-She Campaign, which was initiated by the United Nations Women Fund (UN Women), as a global solidarity movement to support the idea of gender equality and ending discrimination against women. In May 2017, the Nigerian government formally launched the campaign to strategically engage men and boys as agents of change in promoting gender equality. As noted by Obodozie, “the campaign is already proving as a strong advocacy slogan used by Anambra women in getting the male folks to support their wives, sisters and daughters in pursuing their political aspiration”.¹⁶² If escalated and sustained, the campaign has the potentials to boost women participations in politics in the South East zone, by erasing some patriarchal vestiges that undermine women involvement in politics.

¹⁶¹ Onuoha, Freedom (2009). Op. cit.

¹⁶² Obodozie, Oby (2018) Op. cit.

Closely related to this is the UN Women's Funds for Gender Equality (FGE) which was launched in 2009 to directly support women's organisations to establish programs that increase women's leadership and political participation and achieve gender equality.¹⁶³ The FGE could be tapped into by women-led civil society groups in the South East zone to support the economic and political empowerment of women to boost their prospects in political engagements.

Another prospect lies in the activities of *Idikacho* – Women in Governance (I-WIG), which is a women movement with zonal coverage and penetrative reach in rural communities in the South East zone.¹⁶⁴ Since its launch in November 2013, the I-WIG has been working actively to empower women to aspire and acquire elective and appointed positions “through educating the women, public enlightenment campaign and advocacy in the Southeast geopolitical zone”.¹⁶⁵ The WIG in Anambra state has more than 9000 women members from 181 communities who have been identified as having leadership skills and with aspirations to participate in governance and decision making.¹⁶⁶ The sustainment of the activities of I-WIG and other women groups in

¹⁶³ Since its launch in 2009, the Fund has delivered grants of USD 64 million to 120 grantee programmes in 80 countries, touching the lives of more than 10 million direct beneficiaries. For details of the FGE's grant-making cycle and thematic focus, visit <http://www.unwomen.org/en/trust-funds/fund-for-gender-equality>

¹⁶⁴ Anagbogu, Mercy (2018), Op Cit.

¹⁶⁵ Onuegbu, Okechukwu. (2018) “2019: INEC, traditional rulers call for greater women participation in governance”, *Orient Daily*, 17 June, p.35.

¹⁶⁶ Ehiahuruike, Ugochi (2018), Op cit.

the zone could pressure political parties and other stakeholders to commit to their promises to involve women in partisan politics and governance.

Gradual inclusion of women in traditional institutions of governance in Anambra state is another prospect for increasing women active participation in politics. For instance, the traditional ruler of Nawgu, Dunukofia Local Government Area of Anambra State, Igwe George Okaa- Onwuogu, is among the few monarchs who have included women in their traditional rulership cabinet. Success stories such as this should be amplified to encourage replication by in other communities and states across the zone. If opportunities such as this is expanded for women to occupy more positions in community structures in the states, it could serve as a springboard for many women to gain skills and resources relevant to gaining political leadership positions in other tiers of government.

Summary of Key Findings

From the interactions held with different respondents during the study, the following findings were made:

- i. Women represent a significant proportion of the voting population of the zone, however they have been very negligible in terms of occupying elective and appointive positions.
- ii. Women have dominated the position of the Speakers of the Anambra State House of Assembly since the return to democracy in May 1999.

- iii. Political, economic, social, cultural and institutional factors are some of the major constraints holding women back in politics in the state
- iv. Some women politicians from Anambra have made it to the national level of elective and appointive positions over the years.
- v. The existence of He-For-She campaign, UN Women's Funds for Gender Equality, *Idikacho* – Women in Governance (I-WIG), and gradual inclusion of women in cabinet positions of some traditional rulers offer prospects for increasing women participation in politics in the state.

Recommendations

In order to enhance women participation in politics in the South East zone in general, and Anambra state in particular, the following recommendations are proffered

- ➡ **Political Reforms:** There is the need citizen-led pressure groups to sustain pressure on the National Assembly to carry out political and constitutional reforms to sanitise and *demonetise* Nigerian politics so that more women will have a chance to prove their mettle in politics. The reform should focus on cutting down on the high emoluments and privileges attached to public officials, reducing the cost of electoral financing, making some political offices a part-time job, and enacting laws to provide for proportional representation system at the state and local

government levels to gradually expand opportunities for greater women participation in politics.

- ➡ **Re-orientation campaign.** Civil society groups should partner with the media to escalate enlightenment campaign to change people's perception of women who join partisan politics. Such reorientation and enlightenment programmes will leverage broadcast, print and social media platforms as well as Women August meeting in South East, religious outfits, town hall and community-based structures to gain penetrative, extensive and impactful reach.
- ➡ **Women for Women (W4W) Mobilisation:** There is the need for a peer-support strategy where women in positions of corporate and political influence would synergise with women-led organisations to produce a more unified and influential 'critical mass' of women movement to support female candidates contesting or aspiring for elective and appointive positions in the zone.
- ➡ **From Bedroom to Boardroom:** There is the need for state governors to evolve a corporate policy to empower women by including more women in the board of management of key state corporations, agencies and organisations. The policy will help align women economic empowerment strategy within the framework of a broader political strategy in order to have greater effect.
- ➡ **Provision of Matching Fund:** Gender-based CSOs should partner with international organisations, donor agencies and charity organisations to evolve a robust marching fund as facilitative

funding mechanism for supporting women contesting for positions. Such initiative could explore opportunities of tapping from the UN Women's FGE.

- ➡ **Affirmative Action:** Women group in the zone should mount pressure on political parties in the zone to adopt a party-based gender policy that prescribes for quota system and twining mechanism. This will ensure that in any elective position that allows for a substantive head and deputy, if a man is being presented as the substantive candidate, a woman will be his deputy and vice versa.
- ➡ **Mentorship Platform:** A platform for mentorship, coaching and talent management, particularly targeting young girls in schools, colleges and universities, as well as the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) needs to be created. This platform will leverage the experiences and achievements of women icons to positively influence women and young girls into active participation in politics.
- ➡ **Empowerment Programmes:** There is the need for the states government to initiate and partner with the private sector to implement empowerment programmes for enhancing girlchild education and reducing poverty among women.

Conclusion

This study examined the issue of women participation in Anambra state against the background of nearly two decades of democratic rule in Nigeria. It has been noted that despite constituting a significant segment of the population and contributing substantially in the

economic and political process, women remained disadvantaged socially, economically, politically and materially in scheme of things in Anambra State. Women remain largely under-represented in the elective and appointive posts although they actively participate in party mobilisation and voting during elections. The low representation of women in the political and decision-making structures of the state is a huge democratic deficit that calls for concerted measures to address. There is the need for more concerted efforts to address the political, economic, social, cultural and institutional factors that hinder effective women participation in politics in the zone.

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Women's Participation in Electoral Process in Rivers State

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Introduction

Nigeria is currently operating a democratic system of government, after going through several military dictatorships. It is general knowledge that the practical observation of democracy is yet to be perfected in the country. Freedom of expression; opinion of the generality of the people; fairness and equal treatment to everyone irrespective of race, gender and intelligence; and the rights to take part in electoral process and decision making are key tenets of democracy.

This research identified and analysed the nature, extent and challenges of women's political participation in Rivers State, Nigeria. Before going into details of the subject matter, it would be an anomaly if the journey of women's emancipation in Nigeria is not mentioned. In the recent past, women did not exist as individuals with their own personalities to defend. They existed as dependent women who did not have voice to articulate their dilemma and their point of view. It therefore became the norm to accept their fate without resisting.¹⁶⁷ The factors affecting participation include traditional and cultural hindrances, lack of education, lack of resources and lack of opportunities. Even though

¹⁶⁷ Arowolo, D. (2010). Women and Political Participation in Nigeria, 14(4), 581–593.

these factors affecting participation apply to both sexes, in Nigeria, a review of women's participation in party politics reveals that the females seem to be most affected. Nigerian women have not been very active, especially, in the core activities of politics. The issue of patriarchy and inequality has deprived women of having the opportunity to contribute their quota to the society at large besides sedentary activities.¹⁷⁸

Through focus group discussions and key informant interviews, the research highlighted recommendations, which are imperative for a more active participation of women in politics. The aim of the project is to see the possibility of, and increased participation of women in electoral process, from voting to contesting and winning key positions in power. These, are possible to achieve if women are motivated and convinced to vie for political positions. For this to be realised, the alliance between males and females in politics will have to be strengthened. Also, factors such as violence against women will have to be thoroughly checked to dispel related fears.

Review of Women Participation in Nigeria

The discrimination and gender inequality in Nigeria politics has been challenged in many platforms. It is sad that although women make up a higher number of registered voters and campaigners in elections, they are yet to be fully represented in key political positions. Prior to the 2011 election, gender mainstreaming approach was applied, such as: National Gender Policy of August 2008 which gave the promise of 35% affirmative action, giving the chance for women to compete fairly with the men; the Nigerian women trust fund of 2011 which offered 100

million naira to offset campaign cost of about 230 female candidate irrespective of their political parties; and Women for change Initiative which aimed at encouraging and endorsing the political ambition of Nigerian women.

These actions encouraged a lot of women to vie for political positions but amidst all the promises, the result of the 2011 election was poor in women representation¹⁶⁸. The political participation and performance of Nigerian women since 1999 to 2015 was summarised by Akpan¹⁶⁹. In her compilation, for the seat of the presidency, out of 2 positions, no woman contested between 1999 to 2015. Out of 109 seats in the Senate, 3, 4, 8, 7 and 8 women contested in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015 respectively. Out of 360 seats in the House of representative, 12, 23, 26, 26 and 24 women contested in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015 respectively. Out of 36 seats for Governorship, no woman contested between 1999 to 2015. For the position of the deputy governor, out of 36 seats, 1, 2, 6, 3 and 4 women contested in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015, respectively. To represent the 36 States in the house of assembly, out of 990 seats, 12, 38, 54, 62 and 0 women contested in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015 respectively.

The record above reveals that the participation of women in politics is deteriorating. A lot of factors can be connected to this low performance. In Nigeria, political violence which includes and not

¹⁶⁸ Okoronkwo-chukwu, U. (2013). Female Representation In Nigeria : The Case Of The 2011 General Elections And The Fallacy Of 35 % Affirmative Action ., 3(2), 39–47

¹⁶⁹ Akpan, N. E. (Federal U. W. (2015). Men without women: An analysis of the 2015 general elections in Nigeria, 2015, 1–28.

limited to bombing, assassinations, ballots snatching and stuffing, thuggery, rioting, destruction of properties is prevalent before and after the elections. An example is the 2015 polls in Rivers State which was marred by violence and disruption with over 470,000 registered voters denied the chance to vote due to official cancellations. Many more stayed away from the polls due to well justified fears of violence that caused the death of hundreds of persons in 2015.¹⁷⁰ These put women at a disadvantage as they would not be able to match their male counterparts in such activities.

Also, scarcely will women take such risk for the fear of their lives and family members. The high cost of election for the women is a factor, as the minimum cost of a gubernatorial election is about 200 million naira. Compared to their male counterparts who have political godfathers that buy votes and finance their elections, the women are yet to have political godmothers that will sponsor their political career and rarely do men mobilise such amount for them, they are left with no choice than to back out.¹⁶⁸

Moreover, the Nigerian culture is infused with patriarchy, whereby, a woman participating in politics is seen to be immoral and not submissive in the home, and it is inappropriate for women to be in public for political campaigns and rallies. Moreover, the brave women that partake in the political meetings held at late nights are tagged shameless women and accused of having affairs with political

¹⁷⁰ Of, E. (2011). *World report / 2011*.

stalwarts¹⁶⁷. The only female 2011 presidential candidate, Sarah Jubril got just one vote and presently, there are only 14 females out of 360 lawmakers in the House of representative which reaffirms the patriarchal situation of the Nigerian political system¹⁷¹.

Furthermore, the fear of raising ill-mannered children, having broken homes and the need to perform domestic activities has confined an average woman to be subservient and encourage male dominance.

Again, indigeneity factor is another barrier that hinders women from active participation because women who contest in their marriage constituencies are considered non-indigenes and a married woman contesting in her constituency of birth but married to another tribe is tagged as over ambitious and hence, dissuaded¹⁷²¹⁶⁷. The notion of dishonesty and corrupt practices of politicians has made most women see politics as a dirty trade reserved for people of questionable character. Therefore, women in politics are seen to be corrupt or abettors to corrupt practices. Other factors could be lack of confidence, illiteracy and low-level education, and marginalisation of women in political party leadership.

With the increased awareness of democracy, advocacies and revision of laws that are of the interest of women, discrimination against women is gradually fading. The role of national and international agencies has

¹⁷¹ Ogala Emmanuel. (2015). LIST - New House of Reps Members for Nigeria's 8th National Assembly - Premium Times Nigeria.

¹⁷² Ochanja, C., Assembly, N., Terwase, A., & State, T. (2013). Women in politics and decision-making in Nigeria: challenges and prospects, 2(8), 47–58.

further propelled this awareness which has yielded positive results. However, it is sadly not enough as this awareness is open to a specific class of women- some exposed and educated women.

Context of The Study: The South-South Zone

The South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria is said to be located strategically at the point where the Y tail of the Niger River joins the Atlantic Ocean through the Gulf of Guinea¹⁷³ It comprises of six states which are Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers State with a total population of 21,014,655 people. The zone is rich in agricultural resources, tourism and crude oil. The South-South region controls the economic mainstay of the economy: oil. Although, African religion is practiced in some parts, Christianity is the predominant religion in the zone.

In Jan 2018, INEC recorded a total of 73,995,765 registered voters for the 2019 elections in Nigeria. The South-South region recorded 11,101,093 out of the total number with Bayelsa as the least registered voters in the Federation. The chart below shows the percentage of participation in the South-South through voter's registration for the upcoming election.

¹⁷³ <https://www.myguidenigeria.com/regionalinfo/south-west-region>

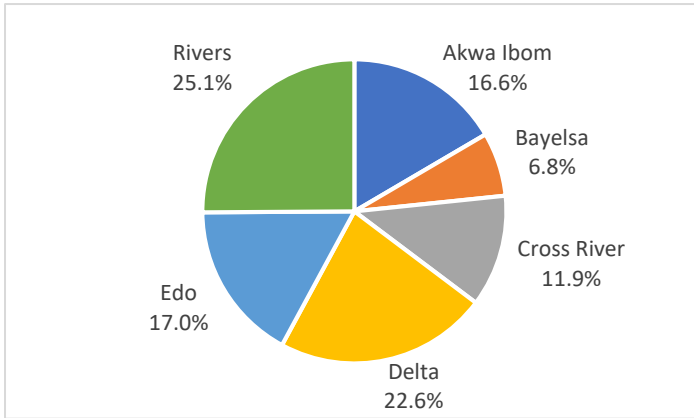


Fig. 1: *Distribution of registered voters in the South-South Zone by States. INEC, Updated Jan 2018*

Profile of Rivers State

Rivers State with its capital situated at Port Harcourt is one of the 36 States of Nigeria. It is identified as a State in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. It covers an area of 11,077km², with a population of 6,689,079m¹⁷⁴ Rivers State is made up of different linguistic groups such as Ikwerre, Kalabari, Ogoni, Okrika, Ekpeye, etc. Politically, it is divided into three Senatorial Districts: Rivers East, Rivers West and Rivers South. These districts share the 23 Local Government Areas in the state which shall be discussed in a table individually. Many of the rural women in the various communities that make up the LGAs are mostly farmers, fishers and petty traders.

¹⁷⁴ National Population Commission of Nigeria. (2006). Rivers (State, Nigeria) - Population Statistics, Charts, Map and Location. Retrieved from <https://www.citypopulation.de/php/nigeria-admin.php?adm1id=NGA031>

The LGAs include Abua/Odual, Ahoada East, Ahoada West, Akuku Toru, Andoni, Asari-Toru, Bonny, Degema, Emohua, Eleme, Etche, Gokana, Ikwerre, Khana, Obia/Akpor, Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni, Ogu/Bolo, Okrika, Omumma, Opobo/Nkoro, Oyigbo, Port-Harcourt, Tai¹⁷⁵. The Local governments have government councils in charge of public administration. The council is led by a chairman who is the executive head of the local government with councillors representing each ward of the local government area.

Table 1: 2006 Census Data of the 23 LGAs in Rivers State

LGAs	Headquarter	2006 Census				
		Male	Female	Both Sexes	Land Size (km ²)	Number of wards
Ahoada East (or Ehuda East)	Ahoada	85,467	80,857	166,324	341	13
Abua/Odual	Abua	145,243	137,167	282,410	704	11
Ahoada West	Akinima.	127,906	121,326	249,232	403	12
Akuku Toru	Abonnema.	82,949	78,154	161,103	1,443	17
Andoni	Ngo. Andoni	111,946	105,978	217,924	233	11
Asari Toru	Buguma	112,283	107,504	219,787	113	13
Bonny	Bonny	116,340	98,643	214,983	642	12
Degema	Degema	128,041	121,426	249,467	1,011	17
Emohua	Emohua	102,634	98,423	201,057	831	14
Eleme	Ogale	98,345	91,849	190,194	138	10
Etche	Okehi.	127,869	122,070	249,939	805	19
Gokana	Kpor	118,222	115,591	233,813	126	17
Ikwerre	Isiokpo.	97,575	91,355	188,930	655	13
Khana	Bori	147,315	145,609	292,924	560	19

¹⁷⁵ Rivers State Government. (2016). Local Government Areas – Government of Rivers State, Nigeria.

Obio/Akpor	Rumuodoma a.	238,951	223,399	462,350,	260	17
Ogba/Egbema/ Ndoni	Omoku.	145,326	137,968	283,294,	969	17
Ogu/Bolo	Ogu	38,552	36,730	75,282	89	12
Okrika	Okrika	113,962	108,323	222,285	222	12
Omuma	Eberi	50,853	49,535	100,388,	170	10
Opobo/Nkoro	Opobo	77,556	75,277	152,833	130	11
Oyigbo,	Obigbo	63,434	61,897	125,331	248	10
Port Harcourt	Port Harcourt	280,703	257,855	538,558	109	20
Tai	Sakpenwa	61,554	58,754	120,308	159	10

Source: Researcher's compilation with data collection from Rivers State Government website¹⁷⁵

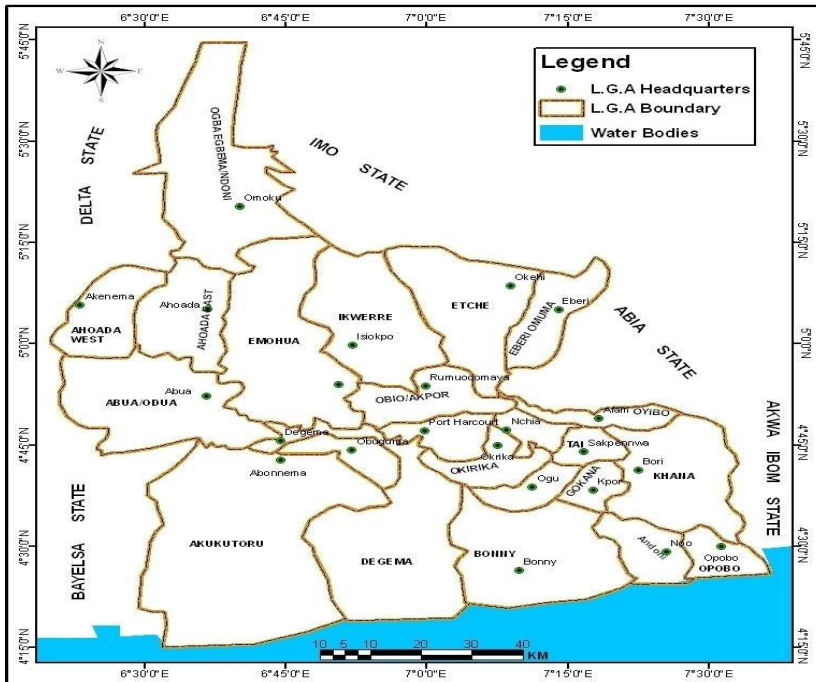


Fig 2: Map of Rivers State showing the Local Government Areas¹⁷⁶

Rivers State is bounded to the south by the Atlantic Ocean, to the north by Imo, Abia and Anambra States, to the east by Akwa Ibom State and to the west by Bayelsa and Delta States. The inland parts consist of tropical rain forest towards the coast, the typical Niger Delta environment features of mainly mangrove swamps.

The history of political participation in the state since the beginning of civilian rule is recorded to be low. The death of the military Head of State Sani Abacha, led to the end of military dictatorship in Nigeria and paved way for civilian democracy. Elections were held in 1998 and Nigeria returned to civil democracy on May 29th, 1999¹⁷⁷. In the civilian government of 1999- 2003, women held less than three per cent of elective position.¹⁷² Rivers State records show that in 1999, only 2 women were elected into the Federal House. The entire South-South geopolitical zone had no woman who won elections into the State House of Assemblies. In 2003, there was only one woman elected in the State House of Assembly, late Mrs Anthonia Membere, who represented Akuku-Toru 1 Constituency of Rivers State.¹⁷⁸ In 2007, four women were elected in the Rivers State House of Assembly. They are Hon. Linda Somiare Stewart, Antonia Membere, Felicia Barizasi Tane and

¹⁷⁶https://www.researchgate.net/Map-of-rivers-state-showing-the-local-government-areas_fig1_321187711

¹⁷⁷ Koehn, P. (1989). Competitive Transition to Civilian Rule: Nigeria's First and Second Experiments. The Journal of Modern African Studies. <http://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X0002036X>

¹⁷⁸ Participation, A., & Women, N. (2017). Active participation of nigerian women in the politics and governance: a reality or mirage? *, 70–71.

Irene Inimgba. There was an obvious reduction in women's political participation in the Rivers State House of Assembly in 2011. Only one woman, Victoria Nyeche was elected.¹⁷⁹

Situation Analysis of Women Participation in Rivers State

Women play important roles in every society. In Rivers State, the few women in its political scheme have made lasting impacts¹⁸⁰ reveals that in Rivers State, there is a significant relationship between the activities of women in politics and democratic stability. Below are a list of women and the impacts they made. Dr Harry Ipalibo Banigo became the first female Deputy Governor in the history of Rivers State.¹⁸¹ Ipalibo Banigo was elected in 2015 and she attained many positions such as that of the Acting Commissioner for health and social welfare, Director-General and Permanent Secretary at the same ministry, Secretary to the Rivers State Government and Head of Service of Rivers State. She has played a supportive role to the governor and represents the interests of Rivers State. She has also served as the voice for the Rivers State women. Her key areas of interests are medicine, education and, women rights and emancipation.

¹⁷⁹ Nigeria, N. A. | F. R. of. (2011). 7th National Assembly. Retrieved from <http://nass.gov.ng/news/item/199>

¹⁸⁰ Joyce, O., & Ph, G. (2013). Women and Democratic Stability in Rivers State , Nigeria, 4(16), 186–191.

¹⁸¹ Thurston, A. (2015). Background to Nigeria's 2015 Elections. *A January Report of the CSIS Africa*, (January), 1–30. Retrieved from http://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/publication/150126_Thurston_NigeriaElections_Web.pdf

Some women held key positions as Commissioners in the State Ministry. Examples of such women are Felicity Okpete Oyai who has held several positions of responsibility in Rivers State. From 2003 to 2006, she served as the first female Commissioner of Works in the Executive Council of Rivers State. In that position, she supervised several road construction projects in the State including work on the road connecting Ogoni, Andoni and Opobo-Nkoro. In 2006 she was cleared by the PDP to participate in its Rivers West Senatorial primary election and in 2016, she was appointed a member of the Rivers State Roads Maintenance and Rehabilitation Agency¹⁷⁸.

Also, Mrs Toru Ofili served as a Commissioner of Women Affairs in 2003. Before this time, she oversaw Social Services and served as Senior Special Assistant (Special Duties). In her line of duty, she received several awards such as the Distinguished Leadership Award for Women Empowerment, Nigeria's Excellence Award in Environmental Development, African Human Development Achievers Award, etc.

Ms Gloria Fiofori also served as a Commissioner for Women and Youth Affairs. She is an active women leader, who excelled in her service. In her regime as Director, National Agency (NOA), Agbani Darego, a Rivers indigene won the Miss World crown. She was also the General Manager of both Rivers State Broadcasting Corporation and Rivers State Television (RSBC) and (RSTV). Dr Ngozi N. Odu, served as commissioner of Education in 2007. Her tenure experienced pursuit of practical and progressive educational policies. She was devoted to working in the civil service and attained the position of Permanent Secretary and State

president of the National Council of Women Societies (NCWS). Peter Odili's administration appointed professor Mildred Amakiri as the Commissioner for Higher Education. She is a member of 10 national and international professional bodies. As an academia and administrator, she brought her expertise into the educational sector.

Professor Roseline Konya is committed and dedicated to serving as the current Commissioner for Environment. She was the first to occupy the seat of Chairman, Civil Service Commission where she instated 200 civil servants who were wrongly terminated by the military. She received an award from Tell Magazine as one of the Country's best Commissioners in 2006. Ms Emily Solomon also served as the Commissioner for Special Duties in Governor Peter Odili's administration. Dame Aleruchi Cookey-Gam was the first female Commissioner for Justice and Attorney-General. She also served as Secretary to State Government under Governor Odili. In 2011, she served as the Sole Administrator of Greater Port Harcourt Development Authority. Other Commissioners include Dame Alice Lawrence Nemi of the Education Ministry, Mrs Joeba West as Commissioner for Women Affairs, Patricia Simeon Hart as Commissioner for Water Resources, Mrs Ibim Semenitari as Commissioner for Information and Communication and currently the Acting Managing Director of Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and Mrs Emmanuela George Izunwa. These women performed notably well in their duties.¹⁸²

In the State House of Assembly, we had Mrs Linda Somiari Stewart, who was a celebrated journalist; Hon. Barizasi Tane Felicia and Hon. Irene M.

¹⁸² National Network for Perfect Truth. (2017). Rivers New Commissioners And Their Portfolios.

Inimgba who were elected into the Rivers State House of Assembly. Also, Anthonia Membere, who was elected in 2003 but later died. Before her demise, she was a very outspoken and vibrant member of the House¹⁶⁷

In the House of Representatives and State House of Assembly, a few women also made an impact. They include Hon. Blessing Ibiba Nsiegbe who is currently the only Rivers woman in the Federal House of Representative representing the Port Harcourt II Federal constituency of Rivers State under the People's Democratic Party (PDP). In 2011, she contested and was elected into the Federal House of Representative. In 2015, she contested again and won the position. Prior to that, she served as an administrative officer with the Rivers State Civil Service¹⁸³. Hon. Mrs Betty Joce Iyne Apiafi was elected in 2007 as the first female member of the House of Representative from Rivers State. She represents Abua-Odual/Ahoada East Federal Constituency and is still a member¹⁸⁴.

Generally, in the South-South region, the participation of women in key political positions have been very low. The chart below shows the ratio of men to women in the occupying key political positions in the South-South Zone. Akwa Ibom has only two women in the State House of Assembly one of which is the Deputy Speaker of the House. Bayelsa, Delta and Edo have only one woman each in the House of Representatives. For the Local Government chairperson, Cross River

¹⁸³ Innocent, O. (2015). An analysis of Nigerian women's score card in 2015 polls, 4(4), 17–29.

¹⁸⁴ Jimoh, A. (2015). Women of the 8th National Assembly.

State Local Government Area has not been constituted. Hence, no Local Government Chairmen or Deputy but there are appointed Heads of Administration. Out of these are appointed heads of the 18 local government areas, there are only four women.

Table 2: Women's Representation in key Political Elective and Appointive Positions in the South-south Zone, 2018

S/No	State	Governor		Deputy Governor		Senate		HoR		SHoA		LGC	
		NoS	NoW	NoS	NoW	NoS	NoW	NoS	NoW	NoS	NoW	NoS	NoW
1	Akwa Ibom	1	0	1	0	3	0	10	0	26	2	31	2
2	Bayelsa	1	0	1	0	3	0	5	1	23	3	8	1
3	Cross River	1	0	1	0	3	1	8	0	25	4	18	7
4	Delta	1	0	1	0	3	0	10	1	29	4	25	0
5	Edo	1	0	1	0	3	0	9	1	24	1	18	1
6	Rivers	1	0	1	1	3	0	13	0	32	1	23	0
Total	Six	6	0	6	1	18	1	55	3	159	15	123	11

Keys

NoS = Number of seats

NoW = Number of women

HoR = House of Representative

SHoA = State House of Assembly

LGC = Local Government Chairperson

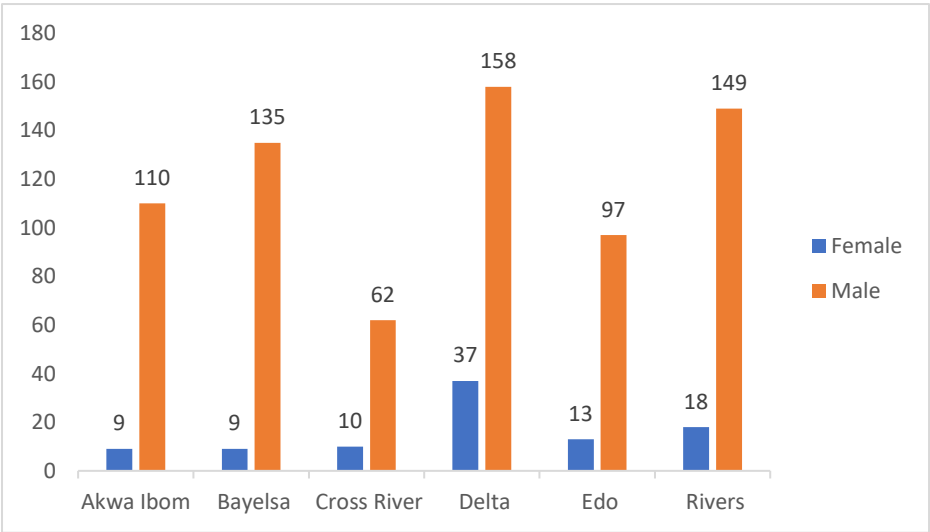


Fig. 3 Gender distribution of candidates cleared by INEC in the South-South Zone for 2015 House of Assembly elections, INEC 2016

The figure above shows that the women in the South-South were just about 13% of the candidates cleared for the 2015 House of Assembly elections.

Challenges to Women Effective Political Participation in Rivers State

The researcher carried out a lengthy focus group discussion with some members of ‘Initiative for Amity and Great leadership’, a non-governmental organisation where political structures are created and strengthened to support chosen leaders. The group interviewed were made up of Mrs Rose Okuba (woman leader of non-indigenes), Mrs Georgina Tenalo (Legal practitioner and Queen of Ogoni land), Mrs Anicheme Nnenna (Politician), Mrs Edith Awuzie (mobilising officer for

Wike Solidarity Movement), Chief Honourable G.N Akpo (oldest politician and Civil War veteran) and Chief Ascot Pa Joe (paramount ruler of Ojeh, Abua LGA). When asked what they felt hindered the active participation of women in Rivers State politics, the group listed Patriarchal Party leadership, Gender bias mentality from the cradle, Violence, Poor women support network, Godfatherism, High cost of elections, lack of social capital and political capabilities, Issues of Indigeneity and undemocratic political parties.

Patriarchal Party Leadership: Many party leaders are men and believe women belong anywhere below the men. Bearing this in mind, they find it difficult to put women in any leadership role within the party. Mrs Rose Okuba said the mindset of the men are already biased. Some believe it is a sign of weakness for men in the party to take orders from any woman, even if she had been duly elected for a party leadership position.

Violence: Women are most vulnerable to election violence. Many of them would rather not be part of politics unless they are sure that their security is guaranteed.

Poor Women Support Network: Women do not have enough support system from their fellow women compared to the male folks. It is even common to find other women who have been grossly socialized by men, accepting that women are not good enough to vie for political positions. Some women take it as far as being sponsored by men to compete against fellow women, so their votes could be split. According to Mrs Georgina Tenalo, the men pitch women against women to

achieve disunity. This is the easiest strategy to employ when a woman has a strong chance of winning.

Gender Bias from the cradle: There is little or no gender equality education in homes, schools and religious institutions. Many youngsters grow up thinking that the male folks are superior to the female folks. It is still very common to find mixed sex schools, where the senior prefect reserved for the males while the deputy can be a female. This stereotyping is responsible for the gender bias that is happening in the adult arena. “Whatever belief that is fed a child is usually what he grows up believing. This is the true meaning of value” said chief Ascot, the paramount ruler of Abua LGA.

Godfatherism: This is a system where older politicians or prominent persons with financial powers back up younger politicians. In fact, they call the shots. The younger politician is almost like a stooge after he wins because his god father will assume indirect power and even choose his cabinet. This puts the woman vying for political posts at a huge disadvantage. Women rarely enjoy the benefits of having godfathers.

Lack of social capital and political capabilities: There are very few women who are formal leaders in their communities. This situation makes it incredibly hard for women to gain the support of community leaders. Necessary politicking skills and manoeuvring becomes an advantage of the male folks that will shoo away female politicians. “As a woman, when you contest elections in the past, you found it a lot easier than it is today. The traditional elders pressed on whoever the winner is, to

encourage and elevate the woman who has been beaten. This was exactly how I was made the executive secretary to Gokana LGA. I found the elders very supportive. There are times I would not make it for party meetings but will be nominated in absentia. I joined PDP and supported Dr Peter Odili. Thereafter, I became a Commissioner,” said Mrs Georgina Tenalo.

High cost of Elections: It is a known fact that few women have funding powers. The ones that have the money might be sceptical about risking it for elections. Many male politicians buy off their contenders to lessen competition. The money politics hardly ever sit well with women.

Issues around Indigeneity: A woman is generally accepted as being an indigene of her state of origin. Most times, the contention arises when she wants to vie for a political post in her husband’s state. She could be declared to be a non-indigene.

Socio-cultural factors: Uncomfortable timed activities such as impromptu midnight meetings, caucus meetings, travelling and networking will naturally not be easy for a woman to meet. Many women are mothers and wives with domestic responsibilities. Women are often choked up with time when it comes to the demanding processes of politicking. Inherent cultures make it harder by promoting castigation of female politicians. This has succeeded in reducing the number of interested candidates, aspirants and politicians. Name calling, tagging, mud flinging and so on. The queen of Ogoni land narrated how she was ordered not to let her staff touch the ground of a community. The queen educated the males on the importance of respecting a traditional ruler as a person and not as a male or female.

She also said that in those days, if you were an unmarried woman who is interested in politics, your chances were considered very slim.

Prospects of Improving Women Political Representation in Rivers State

For improved political participation of women in Rivers State and the South-South region in general, some recommendations were made below:

- ➡ **Sensitisation and Education on Gender Equality:** Governments at all levels, as well as civil society, should undertake awareness-raising and education-related programmes that target gender equality. Such programmes should not be restricted to educational institutions alone. Religious institutions and other social platforms should be used as vehicles for the design and implementation of such programmes. The focus should be on the negative impact of gender-based stereotypes that are hindrances to the realisation of the goal of gender equality in our society.
- ➡ **Prioritise Women related Programmes:** As a matter of priority, programmes that target women groups should be designed and implemented at all levels of society. This is one of the most potent ways of addressing issues around discrimination, in line with the principles of the CEDAW and Beijing Platform of Action on women.
- ➡ **Women Support Networks:** Efforts should be made by government and civil society to support women related networks, as a way of encouraging their participation in politics. This would also serve as an important avenue and platform for mentoring younger women who seek to join politics.

- ➡ **Public Awareness:** It is important to organise public opinion through symposiums and debates on women's political involvement before and after elections. Through such mediums, many of the women as well as platforms that targets women would be better equipped to pursue women related issues as advocates.
- ➡ **Financial Empowerment:** The fact that women constitute one of the most economically disempowered groups of society makes it difficult for them to participate in politics actively. In the light of the preceding, governmental and non-governmental actors should provide financial support that can serve as enablers for women in their pursuit of inclusion in the political system.
- ➡ **Promoting Inclusivity in the Political Parties:** Political parties should promote inclusivity in ways that create an enabling environment for women to participate in the electoral and political process. This is one of the most important ways that they can integrate and implement gender-sensitive policies that would enhance the inclusion of women at both the level of the political parties and the public space.

Conclusion

The fight for gender equality has not been an easy one. Women must come out and make plans on how they can be more relevant politically. This study assessed the growth of women's participation in politics in Rivers state. It also investigated factors that militate against the growth of women's political career. Several of these factors were discussed and the recommendations above for better women political setting.

Flashes in the Pan and Peripheral Participation of Women In The Political Process In South West Geopolitical Zone, Using Ogun State As A Case Study

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Transborder Resources Development Consortium (TRDC),
Abeokuta, Ogun State

Introduction

The Ogun State Speaker of the House of Assembly, Rt. Hon Surajulshola Adekunbi agrees to the important role women play in development, particularly at the political party level. He was of the view that the participation of women in the political process is essential in achieving national development.¹⁸⁵ In the context of the foregoing, there is a sense in which the role of women cannot be downplayed in the development of the nation in general. The current population of Nigeria has been put at 197, 384, 614, according to the National Population Commission (NPC), with women accounting for 97,433,472 that is 49.4 % of the adult population (UN, Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Population Division 2018).¹⁸⁶

Women involvement in politics since the return of democracy in 1999, compared to the men, is low. According to the Independent National Electoral Commission statistic of women involved in politics, from

¹⁸⁵*Women are essential in politics - Ogun Speaker - The Nation Nigeria.* (2017), The Nation Nigeria, Retrieved 17 September 2018, from <http://thenationonline.net/women-essential-politics-ogun-speaker>

¹⁸⁶*World Population Prospects - Population Division - United Nations.* (2018), *Population.un.org.* Retrieved 17 September 2018, from <https://population.un.org/wpp>

1999-2011 general elections in Nigeria, no woman was elected into the office of the Governor in any of the 36 states and that of the President of the Federation. Moreover, out of 109 Senators, there were only 3 women (2.8%) in 1999; which increased to 4 (3.7%) in 2003; a further increase to 9 (8.3%) in 2007; and a slight decline to 7 (6.4%) in 2011. Also, out of 360 House of Representative members, there were only 12 women (3.3%) in 1999; which increased to 21 (5.8%) in 2003; a further increase to 25 (6.9%) in 2007; and a slight increase to 26 (7.2%) in 2011. In addition, out of 990 State House of Assembly members, there were only 24 women (2.4%) in 1999; which increased to 40 (3.9%) in 2003; a further increase to 57 (5.8%), 68 (6.9%) in 2007, 2011 and 2015, respectively.

In 2011, there was no woman out of the 887 State House of Assembly Committee members. Considering the office of the Local Government Area Chairperson, there were only 13 (1.8%), 15 (1.9%) and 27 (3.6%) women in 1999, 2003 and 2007 respectively, while in 2011, no woman was elected to the office of Local Government Area Chairperson.

Finally, out of 6368 Councillors, they were only 69 (1.1%) women, which increased to 267 (4.2%) in 2003 and reduced to 235 (3.7%) in 2007. While in 2011 and 2015, no woman was elected Councillor. The number of women elected as Deputy Governors for 1999, 2003, 2007, and 2011 was 1, 2, 6, and 1, respectively. The total number of Deputy Governors was 36 for 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011. In 1999, according

to Luka (2012)¹⁸⁷, there was an improvement on women political participation with the appointment of 4 out of the 29 senior Ministers representing 13.7% and 3 out of the 18 junior Ministers representing 16.6%; 2 women Advisors and two Senior Special Assistants and 6 Special Assistants and 1 Special Assistant to the Vice President as well as 8 Permanent Secretaries. Women were also appointed as Commissioners and therefore members of the Executive Councils in all the States (Kolawole, Abubakar, Owonibi, and Adebayo, 2012)¹⁸⁸.

Table 1: Female representation during the 1999-2015 General Elections

	1999		2003		2007		2011		2015	
Office	Seat Available	Women	Seat Available	Women	Seat Available	Women	Seat Available	Women	Seat Available	Women
President	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
Vice President	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
Senate	109	3(2.8)	4(3.7)	109	1	8 (7.3)	109	7(6.4)	109	8(6.4)
House of Reps	360	12(3.3)	360	21 (5.8)	360	25 (6.9)	360	26 (7.2)	360	19(5.3)
Governor	36	0	36	0	36	0	36	0	36	0
Deputy Governor	36	1 (2.8)	36	2 (5.5)	36	6 (16.7)	36	3 (8.3)	36	4
State House of Assembly	990	24 (2.4)	990	40 (3.9)	990	57(5.8)	990	68 (6.9)	990	
SHA										
SHA Committee	829	18 (2.2)	881	32(3.6)	887	52(5.9)	887	-		

¹⁸⁷ Luka, R. C. (2011) "Women and Political Participation in Nigeria: The Imperatives of Empowerment" *Journal of Social Sciences and Public Policy* Vol. 3: 24-37.

¹⁸⁸ Kolawale, T. O., Abubakar, M. B., Owonibi, E. and Adebayo, A. A. (2012). "Gender and Party Politics in Africa with Reference to Nigeria" *Online Journal of Education Research* Vol. 1(7): 132-144

Chairperson										
LGA										
Chairperson	710	13(1.8)	774	15(1.9)	740	27(3.6)	740	-		
Councillors	8810	143(0.02)	6368	267(4.2)	6368	235(3.7)	6368	-		

Table 2: Gender statistics in The Presidency

S/N	OFFICE	MALE	FEMALE
1	President	1	0
2	Vice President	1	0
3	Senior Ministers	24	4
4	Junior Ministers	15	3
5	Head of Service	1	0
6	Secretary of the Government of the Federation (SFG)	1	0
7	Chief of Staff of the President	1	0
8	Special Advisers	14	2
9	Deputy Chief of Staff	1	0
10	Permanent Secretaries	40	8
11	Directors General	1	0
12	Senior Special Assistant	11	2
13	Chief of Protocol	1	0
14	Deputy Chief of Staff to the VP	1	0
15	Deputy Chief Press Sec. to VP	1	0
16	Personal Assistant to the President	1	0
17	Principal Secretary to the President	1	0
18	Special Assistants to the President	20	6
19	Special Assistants to the Vice President	4	1
20	Accountant General of the Federation	1	0
21	Auditor General of the Federation	1	0

With the birth of the Fourth Republic in 1999, women involvement in politics has taken several dimensions, ranging from being founding members of political parties to vying for elective positions both at the

Executive and the Legislative levels. It is against this background the research looks at women involvement in politics beyond voting getting them to participate in the political process.

Context / Background: South West Geopolitical Zone, (Ogun State As A Case Study)

All the states in Nigeria are grouped into regions or geopolitical zones based on geographical, cultural, ethnic, and historical similarities. Nigeria has six regions or geopolitical zones, namely: North Central, North West, North East, South South, South West, South East. Our focus in this work was the in the southwest states comprising Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo.

Ogun, known as the Gateway State, was founded in 1976, and as such is also one of the oldest states in Nigeria. With its capital in Abeokuta, Ogun State is divided into twenty Local Government Areas and shares an international boundary with the Republic of Benin.

Women in Ogun State have always been involved in politics as far back as the 20th century when Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti helped organise the Abeokuta Ladies Club (ALC). The ALC began as a civic and charitable group of mostly Western-educated Christian women but grew more political and feminist, and in 1944 it formally admitted market women (women vendors in Abeokuta's open-air markets), who were generally impoverished, illiterate, and exploited by colonial authorities. In 1946 the ALC changed its name to the Abeokuta Women's Union (AWU) and opened its membership to all women in Abeokuta. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti became the first president of the AWU (1946) and headed its successor organisations until her death. She made the AWU a national organisation, renamed the Nigerian Women's Union (NWU) in

1949 and the Federation of Nigerian Women's Societies (FNWS) in 1953.

The AWU initially campaigned against price controls, which drastically limited the incomes of market women and for fair treatment of market women by the government. It also protested a special tax on women imposed by the local ruler. From 1947 the organisation led large demonstrations against the government. The AWU had broad goals that included increasing educational opportunities for women and girls, the enforcement of sanitary regulations, and the provision of health care and other social services for women.

With these initiatives, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti intended to raise living standards for women and ultimately eliminating the causes of poverty. After serving several terms on the local council of Abeokuta between 1949 and 1960, in 1951 she ran unsuccessfully for a seat in the regional assembly as the candidate of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), which she had helped found in 1944.

In 1953 the FNWS became affiliated with the Women's International Democratic Federation, and Ransome-Kuti was elected as the vice president of the organisation. She subsequently lectured in several countries on the conditions of Nigerian women. After the NCNC rejected her bid for a second candidacy for the assembly in 1959, she ran as an independent candidate, which split the NCNC vote and ensured the opposing party's victory.

She was subsequently expelled from the NCNC and formed her own party, the Commoners' People's Party (CPP), which was disbanded one

year later. By this time her political influence in Nigeria and her following among women in Abeokuta had declined significantly.¹⁸⁹ The experience of Mrs. Ransome-Kuti experience was no different from many women of her time, women like Mrs Margaret Ekpo, who had commenced an independent resistance to colonial policies in eastern Nigeria.¹⁹⁰

Women Representation

In Ogun politics today, women representation is still low, giving the high presence at political parties and campaign grounds. Women turn out in their numbers, but in actual factor they are not adequately represented. In a THIS DAY newspaper publication of May 20, 2017¹⁹¹ interview of a one-time Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Welfare 2005-2007 in Ogun State and Nigeria's former Ambassador to Malawi and Zambia, 2008-2012, a lawyer, politician and an entrepreneur, Folake Marcus-Bello, she said when you compare representation of women to campaign and voting patterns, women are more than the men. She further said there is nowhere in the world even in the most advanced countries, that you will not require a lot of money for political ambition, and the women generally lack the economic muscle (finance) needed to run for political office and the few women

¹⁸⁹Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti | Nigerian feminist and political leader

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Funmilayo-Ransome-Kuti>

¹⁹⁰Mba, N. E., (1982). *Nigerian Women Mobilized: Women's Political Activity in Southern Nigeria, 1900-1965*. Berkley: Institutes of International Studies

¹⁹¹ Marcus-Bello: When You Look at Voting Patterns, Women Vote More than Men, THIS DAY Newspaper Publication of May, 2017

that do have the money to finance their political ambition are far and in between.

With the return of democracy in 1999, the position of women in Ogun state did not improve, despite their active participation in the political parties. They only served in the lower cadres of social welfare and supporters for the male to acquire the political positions. The State did not appoint any female commissioners out of the 14-member State Executive Council throughout the first four-year term of the fourth republic (1999-2003) and had no woman representation in the 26-member State House of Assembly during this period. No woman representation out of the 20 local Government Chairmen, only six women out of the 236 councillors in the State.

History was made in 2003 when Alhaja Salmot Makanjuola Badru and Mrs. Titi Oseni became the first female Deputy-Governor and Speaker of the State House of Assembly respectively. Mrs. Titi Oseni's emergence as the Speaker of the state house of assembly was the first in the political history of the South West and only the female Speaker in the whole of the country. Mrs. Titi Oseni was the only female out of the 26 members of Ogun State House of Assembly.

The local government elections that held in 2004 did not record any significant improvement as there was only one female out of the 20 local government chairpersons and 15 out of the 236 councillors in the state. In 2007, Mrs. Titi Oseni was re-elected as the speaker of the State House of Assembly. She and Mrs. Tunrayo A. Adeleye-Oladapo were the only 2 females out of the 26-members of the State House of Assembly.

Alhaja Salmot Makanjuola Badruwas re-elected the Deputy Governor of the State. The State Ministry of Health and Women Affairs and Social Welfare have women as their commissioners. That brings the number of women to 3 out of the 19-member State Executive Council and 1 woman among the 20 special advisers. Women representation at the local government did not take any different dimension from the previous tenure, as there was only 1 woman out of the 20 local government chairmen and 18 councillors out of the 236 wards in the State. Despite the improvement in the level of women's involvement in the state's politics, women participation in politics of Ogun State remains majorly at the peripheral level¹⁹².

The present administration of Senator Ibikunle Amosun's first term 2011-2015, State Exco (also known as Council of State) which is the highest decision making body headed by the Governor of the State and the Deputy Governor, 3 women, 15 men, special advisers, 7 women, 9 men, the National Assembly and Senate - no woman, 3 men, Reps: no woman, 9 men, Ogun State House of Assembly: 2 women. The present Executive Council of the State (the second term 2015-2019), the Deputy Governor the second time in the history of the Ogun State, Chief (Mrs) Yetunde Onanuga, was elected during the re-election of the Amosun Administration with 24 members, 19 commissioners of which only 6 are female, the Ogun State House of Assembly has 26 members of which there are 2 women members. Of the current 24 special

¹⁹²Determinants of Political Participation Among Women in Ogun State of Nigeria / ONI Samuel / Profiles / Home - Covenant University <http://m.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/Profiles/ONI-Samuel/Determinants-of-Political-Participation-Among-Women-in-Ogun-State-of-Nigeria>

advisers in the state 8 are women, 32 permanent secretaries 10 women, with the present structure on ground, there are 20 Local Government Areas (LGAs) 1 chairperson, 349 Councillors, 48 females and 37 Local Council Development Authority (LCDAs) 4 females Chairpersons. Even in the face of high women presence and involvement in party politics at the local, state and national levels and advocacy by many groups and the fact that Nigeria is a signatory to the Convention On Elimination of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women of 1979 (CEDAW), which states was focused on:

- i. Incorporating the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system, abolish all discriminatory laws and adopt appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women;
- ii. Establish tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination; and
- iii. Ensuring the elimination of all acts of discrimination against women by persons, organisations or enterprises.

Despite all these, women are still generally underrepresented and discriminated against within the political space.

Table 3: Distribution of the total number of female appointees against the number of male. 2011-2015

S/N	Office	No. of Female Candidates	No. of male Candidates
1.	Governor	0	1
2.	Deputy Governor	0	1
3.	Secretary of Government	0	1
4.	Commissioners	3	15
5.	Special Advisers	7	9
6.	OG State House of Assembly	2	24
	National Assembly		
7.	Reps	0	9
8.	Senate	0	3
9.	Chair of LGA	1	19
10	Councillors	48	301

Table 4: Distribution of the total number of female appointees against the number of male. 2015-2019

S/N	Office	No. of Female Candidates	No. of male Candidates
1.	Governor	0	1
2.	Deputy Governor	0	1
3.	Secretary to Government	0	1
4.	Commissioners	6	13
5.	Special Advisers	8	16
6	Permanent Secretaries	10	22
7.	OG State House of Assembly	2	24
	National Assembly		

8.	Reps	0	9
9.	Senate	0	3
9.	Chairs of LGA	1	19
10	Councillors	48	301
11	LCDAs	4	33

KEY / MAJOR FINDINGS

- i. **Participation:** Women participate more in politics than men in Ogun State and in the southwest of Nigeria. While they are mostly used for campaign activities, they are sidelined in terms of political and party appointments,
- ii. **Economic:** Money has a lot to do with the way politics is practised in the South West region, and many women are not economically empowered like their male counterparts that feel the game of politics is an exclusive reserve of men.
- iii. **Home Front:** Most people including women still believe in and see the woman as inferior to men, second-class citizens, weaker sex, and child bearers/ primary caregivers to be seen and not to be heard.
- iv. **Time Factor:** Many women were not encouraged to join political activities because, their husbands would not give the necessary support, because of the long hours from home. Most times, political party meetings run into odd hours of the day.
- v. **Social Acceptability:** Many believe women in politics are irresponsible and wayward, and also view them from the traditional and religious perspective, their place being in the kitchen.
- vi. **Inability to Lobby:** Many women don't venture into politics because of their inability to lobby for positions at local, state and national levels.
- vii. **Party Politics:** In terms of party membership women are more at the grassroots and the women are usually used for social engagements (singing and dancing) during campaign. Men are privileged members of the EXCOs, often with only

one (1) the position of woman leader reserved for the woman.

- viii. **Nature of Politics:** Since the return of democracy Nigerian has witnessed series of violence, particularly during elections or in the aftermath of elections. Such violence continues to affect their participation in the political process.

Case Studies:

1. People's Democratic Party (PDP) members, Abeokuta South

Party Involvement: Women are involved in politics. They are more in number than the men at the party level, involved in mobilising the people for campaigning. It is the women the politicians use mainly because of their engaged disposition before and during elections. But are 'dumped' after the elections. For women to be successful in politics, respondents in this study believe they must have husbands who are understanding, mature and are supportive of their wives. A female respondent reported that there have been instances where some women have been found wanting, which reinforce the perceptions among men that every woman in politics is loose. She contends that this is not true, as electoral victory is not guaranteed by giving oneself to a man. Politics is hard work, she concluded.

Chauvinism: Some respondents averred that in Africa the average man will not want to receive instructions from a woman. They believe that the society still considers women inferior to men and they are perceived to be weaker than the men.

Financing: Vying for political positions requires a huge financial outlay. Most Nigerian women who seek these positions cannot afford meeting the financial obligations, despite the waivers given to women aspirants by some of the political parties. They can do little or nothing to outweigh their male counterparts.

Lack of Support for One Another: Some respondents held the view that women find it difficult to support another woman vying for electoral office. This is the general mindset, they argued, adding that it is not good for the women's political representation.

WAY FORWARD

They all agreed that for women to make an impact in politics, they must speak in one voice and support themselves and be educated and economically empowered.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. There is a sense in which a healthy environment for the women to take their active place in party and political stage need to be pursued. The implementation of the Convention On Elimination of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women of 1979 (CEDAW) that Nigeria is a signatory to is an important vehicle for it. Civil society should design and implement programmes that target this issue.
- ii. The Stakeholders, (the Political Parties) should look into the issue of high cost of nomination fees, with a view to ensuring

waivers are granted to women, as a basis for ensuring their participation in the electoral process.

- iii. The mindset of people must shift from cultural and religious beliefs and support our women instead of just being used for political jamborees, but by giving them a place of relevance to contribute their quota to the development of the society by empowering them educationally and economically.
- iv. Beyond giving waivers for women, political parties should also support women seeking elective office at whatever level, since politics requires a lot of money.

CONCLUSION

Ogun State has been one of the most politically vibrant and enlightened states in Nigeria. Women's political representation in the state's politics still remains at a low level. Socioeconomic factors, political structures, customs, and beliefs have alienated women from active participation in politics. The women in Ogun State, who constitute 51% of the population, should find prominence by taking an active part in the development of the state since democracy is only achievable by the participation of every citizen. It is, therefore, the assumption of this paper that any corrective measure adopted to address the low participation of women in politics will only be superficial unless the socioeconomic, cultural and political factors that limit their empowerment are addressed.

Appendix I

List of Respondents Interviewed

S/No	Name of Respondent	Position/Organisation	Stakeholder	Date of Interview
1.	Prof. O.J. Para-Mallam, mni	Executive Director, Christian Women for Excellence and Empowerment in Nigerian Society (CWEENS), Jos	FBO	11/07/2018
2.	Dr. Chris Kwaja	Former Commissioner for Local Government, Plateau State, and Senior Lecturer, Centre for Security and Conflict Studies, Moddibo Adama University of Technology (MAUTECH), Yola	Academic	12/07/2018
3.	Rev. Sam Goro	Executive Director, Centre for Peace Advancement in Nigeria (CEPAN), Jos	CBO	13/07/2018
4.	Hon. Dina Lar	Former Member, Plateau State House of Assembly, and Commissioner, Plateau State Legislative Service Commission, Jos	Politician	13/07/2018
5.	Dr Plangsat D. Bitrus	Senior Lecturer, Centre for Gender Studies, University of Jos, Plateau State	Academic	15/07/2018
6.	Barr. Clara Wuyep	Secretary, International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Plateau State Chapter, Jos	CSO	15/07/2018

7.	Hon. Zainab Dogo	Former Member, Plateau State House of Assembly	Politician	16/07/2018
8.	Ladi Emmanuel	National Association of Women Journalist (NAWOJ), Plateau State Chapter	Media	16/07/2018
9.	Hon. Joyce Ramnap	Former Member, Plateau State House of Assembly	Politician	16/07/2018
10.	Barr. Mary Abba Izam	President, International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDAS), Plateau State Chapter	CSO	17/07/2018
11.	Most Rev. Benjamin Argak Kwashi	Archbishop, Anglican Diocese of Jos	Religious Leader	07/08/2018

Appendix II

List of Participants in the 1st Focus Group Discussion (FGD) held at Langtang North LGA Secretariat, Plateau State, 14th July 2018

S/No	Name of Respondent	Position/Community/Organisation	Profession	Contact
1.	Felicia Finbowg	Women Leader, Kuffen District	Civil Servant	
2.	Tancit Friday	Women Leader, Pil Gani District	Farmer	07036575483
3.	Tani Vongkur	Women Leader, Gazum District	Politician	08039690991
4.	Julya Wuyep	Women Leader, Bwarat District	Politician	07030088187
5.	Zainab Adamu	Muslim Women Leader, Kuffen District	Civil Servant	
6.	Hon. Dambong N. Nambol	Secretary, All Progressive Congress (APC), Langtang North LGA	Politician	07038629478
7.	Hon Cepphas Zwalkur. Nimmel	Former Plateau State Organising Secretary, Social Democratic Party (SDP), and Member, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Plateau State Chapter	Civil Servant	08108666672
8.	Mrs. Nanna L. Nanfa	Leader, Market Women Association, Langtang North LGA	Marketing	08100560201
9.	Tanypen George	Secretary, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Langtang North LGA and Aspirant, Plateau State House of Assembly, Langtang North Constituency	Politician	08039656512

Appendix III

List of Participants in the 2nd Focus Group Discussion (FGD) held at the Political Parties Leadership and Policy Development Centre (PPLPDC), Directorate of Research, National Institute (NIPSS), Kuru, 19th July 2018

S/No	Name of Respondent	Position/Organisation	Profession	Contact
1.	Dr. Sumaye Hamza	Special Assistant to Plateau State Governor/Focal Person, Social Investment Programme, Zonal Coordinator in Charge of FOMWAN (Benue and Plateau States) and National PRO, FOMWAN	Public Servant	08039612233
2.	Gwamkat L. Gwamzhi	Radio Nigeria/FRCN, Jos Station and Treasurer, NAWOJ, Jos Chapter	Broadcast Journalist	08039256728
3.	Martina Kure	Executive Director, Interfaith Mediation Centre, Jos and Member National Council for Women Societies (NCWS), Plateau State Chapter	Politician	09029863268
4.	Barr. Naankus N. Fyaktu	Member, Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Jos Chapter	Politician	08038468940
5.	Tanko Ahmed, fwc	Senior Fellow, National Institute for Police and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru	Academic	08037031744

Appendix IV



Researcher (Centre) with participants at a focus group discussion (FGD) held at Langtang North LGA Secretariat, Plateau State, 14th July 2018





Researcher (Centre) with participants during focus group discussion (FGD) held at the Political Parties Leadership and Policy Development Centre (PPLPDC), Directorate of Research, National Institute (NIPSS), Kuru, 19th July 2018

Appendix V

WOMEN IN POLITICS 2019			
S/N	NAME	POLITICAL PARTY	STATE
DEPUTY GOVERNORSHIP SEAT			
1	EZEILO CECILIA OBIOMA	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	ENUGU STATE
2	HADIZA SABUWA BALARABE	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	KADUNA STATE
3	SALAKO-OYEDELE NOIMOT OLUROTIMI	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	OGUN STATE
4	DR. IPALIBO HARRY BANIGO	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	RIVERS STATE
SENATORIAL SEAT			
1	DAHIRU AISHATU AHMED	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	ADAMAWA STATE
2	ODUAH STELLA ADAEZE PRINCESS	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	ANAMBRA STATE
3	UCHE LILIAN EKWUNIFE	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	ANAMBRA STATE
4	OLUREMI TINUBU SHADE	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	LAGOS STATE
5	OKO ROSE OKOJI	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC	CROSS RIVER STATE

		PARTY (PDP)	
6	AKON EYAKENYI	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	AKWA IBOM STATE
7	APIAFI BETTY JOCELYN OKAGUA	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	RIVERS STATE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES			
1	MRS. AISHATU JIBRIL DUKKU	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	GOMBE STATE
2	HON. BENI BUTMAK LAR	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	PLATEAU STATE
3	LYNDA CHUBA IKPEAZU	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	ANAMBRA STATE
4	KHADIJA BUKAR ABBA IBRAHIIM	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	YOBE STATE
5	LADY BLESSING ONYECHE ONUH	ALL PROGRESSIVE GRAND ALLIANCE (APGA)	BENUE STATE
6	HON. OMOWUNMI OGUNLOLA	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	EKITI STATE

7	TOLULOPE TIWALOLA AKANDE-SADIPE	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	OYO STATE
8	HON. LADY NKEIRUKA. C. ONYEJEocha	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	ABIA STATE
9	TAIWO OLUKEMI OLUGA	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	OSUN STATE
10	ZAINAB GIMBA	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	BORNO STATE
11	ONANUGA ADEWUNMI ORIYOMI	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	OGUN STATE
12	BOMA GOODHEAD	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	RIVERS STATE
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY			
1	RAYMOND KATE M.	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	ADAMAWA STATE
2	PRINCESS FELICIA BASSEY	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	AKWA IBOM STATE
3	CHARITY FRIDAY IDO	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	AKWA IBOM STATE

4	BEVERLY IFEANYICHUKWU NKEMDICHE	ALL PROGRESSIVE GRAND ALLIANCE (APGA)	ANAMBRA STATE
5	OGOLI NAOMI	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	BAYELSA STATE
6	KOKU OBIYAI	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	BAYELSA STATE
7	AGNES ULOKO	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	BENUE STATE
8	AGAIBE N.	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	BENUE STATE
9	ELIZABETH EDEM IRONBAR	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	CROSS RIVER STATE
10	ITAM V. ABANG	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	CROSS RIVER STATE
11	REGINA ANYOGO	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	CROSS RIVER STATE
12	NKASI E. CYNTHIA	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	CROSS RIVER STATE

13	IBORI ERHIATAKE	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	DELTA STATE
14	PRINCESS AJUDUA P.	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	DELTA STATE
15	OKPO FRANCA C.	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	EBONYI STATE
16	EZIULOH NGOZI LILIAN	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	EBONYI STATE
17	NWACHUKWU CHINWE LILIAN	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	EBONYI STATE
18	BALOGUN ADEKEMI ADEBAMBI	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	EKITI STATE
19	OKUYIGA EYITAYO ADETEJU	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	EKITI STATE
20	AYOKUNLE YEMISI	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	EKITI STATE
21	OLUBUNMI RACHAEL ADELUGBA	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	EKITI STATE

22	ENEH JANE	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	ENUGU STATE
23	UGWU ONYINYE	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	ENUGU STATE
24	UGWUANYI ETHEL O.	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	ENUGU STATE
25	DANIEL RABI	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	GOMBE STATE
26	ASMA'U IGANUS	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	GOMBE STATE
27	OBIEFULE NGOZI SYLVIA	ACTION ALLIANCE (AA)	IMO STATE
28	AMWE COMFORT	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	KADUNA STATE
29	MERANDA MOJISOLA LASBAT	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	LAGOS STATE
30	ALLI-MACAULAY MOJISOLA KEHINDE	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	LAGOS STATE

31	SANGODARA MOSUNMOLA	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	LAGOS STATE
32	BINTA MAMMAN	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	NIGER STATE
33	BELLO ATINUKE	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	OGUN STATE
34	MUJOTA M. ONIKEPO	ALLIED PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT (APM)	OGUN STATE
35	TOMOMEWO FAVOUR SEMILORE	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	ONDO STATE
36	JIMOH MULIKAT ABIOLA	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	OSUN STATE
37	ABIOYE ADENIKE ELIZABETH	ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)	OSUN STATE
38	OLADEJI BIMBO OLAWUNMI	ACTION DEMOCRATIC PARTY (ADP)	OYO STATE
39	DUSU ESTHER SIMI	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	PLATEAU STATE
40	STEWART LINDA S.	PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)	RIVERS STATE

