



GENDER STRATEGY ADVANCEMENT
INTERNATIONAL



WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN NIGERIA

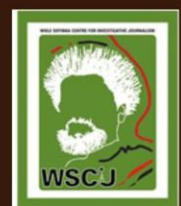
A Baseline Report

Gender Strategy Advancement
International (GSAI)

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PREFACE

Gender Strategy and Advancement International (GSAI) is a women-led, gender focused non-profit organization in Nigeria that occupies a unique position in providing both granular and birds eye view on the various social, political, and economic issues that affect women and girls. The data included in this compendium have been carefully and systematically collected, compiled, processed, and analyzed from a wide variety of primary and administrative data sources across different organizations, institutions and literatures and should serve as a useful resource for policy makers at all levels (national, state, & local), civil and private sector organizations, and the general public.

“The achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society in which they work in equality and complementarity, drawing mutual enrichment from their differences”.

-The Universal Declaration on Democracy adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in September 1997

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is Africa's most populous country with an estimated population of over 200 million people; 50.8% male and 49.2% female population. Population growth rate is estimated to be 3.2% while the sex ratio is 102 men per 100 women. (Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Nigeria is also unarguably Africa's largest democracy with over 84 million registered voters. Since the return of democracy to Nigeria in 1999, six election cycles has held. In all these elections, women have been largely marginalized at all levels within the political space with less than 7% of elected female candidates in each election cycle. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union 2019 rankings, Nigeria has one of the lowest rates of women's legislative representation in Africa, and 139th out of 156 countries in the list of countries with the largest gender gap.

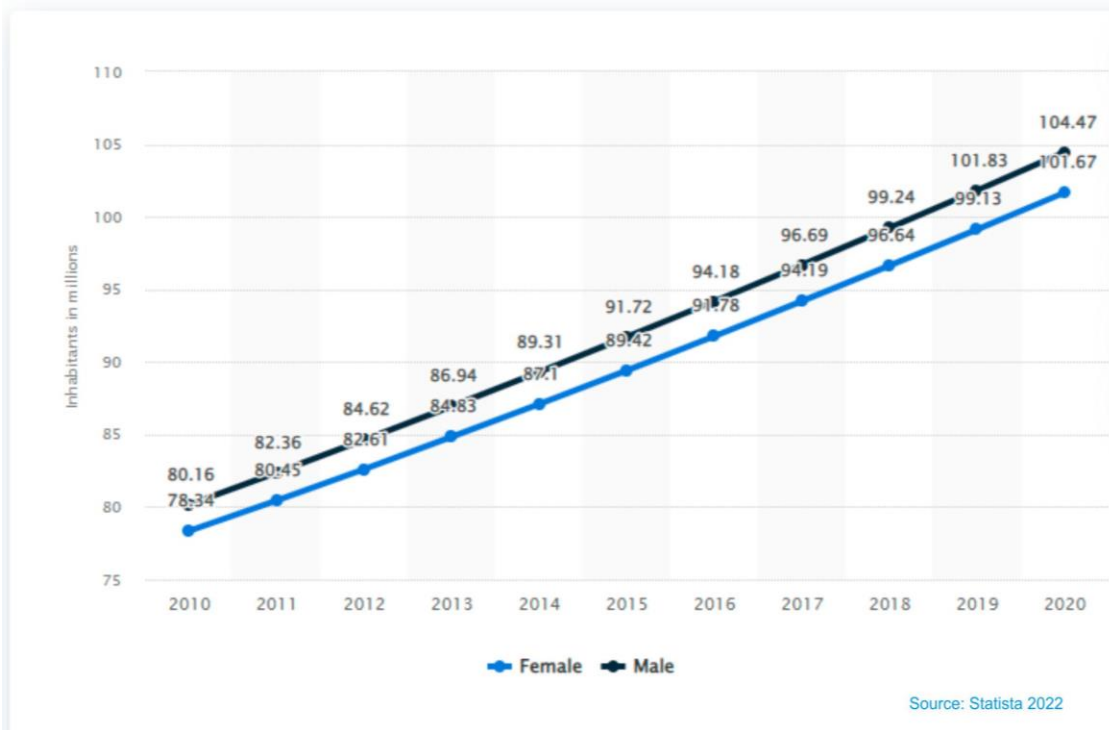
Figure 1.1: Nigeria Projected Population by Sex (2015 – 2017)



Source: National Bureau of Statistics, 2019

Figure 1.2: Nigeria's Population by Gender (2010 – 2020)

Total population in Nigeria from 2010 to 2020, by gender (in millions)



The above statistic shows the total population of Nigeria from 2010 to 2020 by gender. In 2020, Nigeria's female population amounted to approximately 101.67 million, while the male population amounted to approximately 104.47 million inhabitants.

The history of women's engagement in power and government in Nigeria reveal patterns of disadvantage in gaining access to both elective and appointive positions resulting from carefully orchestrated strategies of exclusion. There are historical evidences that supports the idea of male domination over female in many spheres of human endeavour.

The importance of women's participation in public decision-making cannot be overstressed. Apart from the fact that it is their right, their inclusion in leadership positions, whether in government, corporate bodies or the social sector, brings diversity of perspectives to the solution of societal problems. The annual Human Development Report by the United Nations Development Programme has consistently shown that countries which score high on gender equality and women empowerment also tend to achieve high performance on the Human Development Index. It is therefore not surprising that Nigeria with only 6% of women in the legislature ranked 157th in the 2018 ranking.

In her report on “Gender Analysis for Strategic Planning”, USAID/Nigeria stated that, “The Government of Nigeria (GON) recognizes that harnessing the potential of the entire citizenry is needed to achieve development goals and social harmony. The national strategy for promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment, as outlined in the Nigerian economic transformation blueprint, is ***systematic gender mainstreaming in all policies, programs and organizational cultures in Nigeria*** through the incorporation of the principles of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and other global and regional frameworks that support gender equality and women’s empowerment”.

The national strategy for promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment had, among other goals, to increase in the targeted proportion of women in executive positions to 35% by 2015. Part of the plan was also to continue to strengthen the national machinery and institutional capacity for the advancement of women, children and the physically challenged. Unfortunately, 7 years after, this beautiful and laudable national strategy is yet to be actualized.

The under representation of women in political participation gained root due to the patriarchal practice inherent in our society, much of which were obvious from pre-colonial era till date. Given the several talks, initiatives and policy directions of government, one would expect greater progress in Nigeria’s quest for increased women’s political participation. The national average of women’s political participation in Nigeria has remained 6.7% in elective and appointive positions, which is far below the Global Average of 22.5%, Africa Regional Average of 23.4% and West African Sub Regional Average of 15%.

Providing equal opportunities and social services for both females and males is key to advancing the economic and social development of the country and for the promotion of democratic values. Gender is an important cross-cutting theme that must be integrated within the strategic planning and programmatic design processes. Mainstreaming gender assists programs, projects, and activities to become more sustainable and aims for both males and females to benefit, (USAID/Nigeria, 2014). Nigeria as a nation must take the required steps and implement the necessary policies in narrowing its gender gaps across all areas such as education, health, political participation, and economic empowerment.



Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti
(1900-1978)

Women are grossly under-represented in decision-making over issues that affect their lives. Their voices are yet to be heard and are yet to take their rightful place in politics. It is undeniable that different factors have contributed to the relegation of women to the background in Nigerian politics. An historical review shows that women have been marginalized at all level of government and decision-making. However, women have, as in time past, continued to show competence and capacity in leadership.



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Throughout ages and virtually in all cultures, women were rarely considered equal to men. From the home as daughter, wife, and mother, through the school, office and church as student, employee and worshiper respectively, to the public sphere of life as in business and politics, women are known to have been discriminated, marginalized and dominated through the combination of gender-biased cultural norms and practices which were in favour of men.

African societies, including Nigeria are equally replete with several cultural practices which tend to promote male superiority over the female gender. In the case of Nigeria, according to Enemu (1999: 230) "Nigerian communities approve such practices as preference for male child, payment of bride price, female circumcision or female genital mutilation, FGM, negative attitude (to women) towards childlessness, force early child marriage, degrading widowhood practices and inheritance practices that discriminate against women."

Although, women were politically active and relatively less exclusive in decision-making process in many pre-colonial societies, the advent of colonial administration with its anti-women policies gradually transformed a hitherto politically gender-unbiased to a predominantly male dominated political scene. For instance, women were known to have occupied very influential political offices, including the highest political office (the King or the Oba) in the land. Female individuals such as the Iyalode of Ibadan, Efunsetan Aniwura, Moremi of Ile-Ife, Queen Amina of Zaria, etc. were powerful political forces who occupied very sensitive positions in the overall political hierarchy of their respective communities.

The table below shows the statistics of women traditional rulers in the Pre-colonial days in Nigeria.

S/N	Name	Town/Village	LGA	State	Type of Rule	Date
1.	Luwo Gbadiaya	Ife	Ife Central L.G.	Osun	Ooni of Ife	Pre-colonial days
2.	Iyayun	Oyo	Oyo L.G.	Oyo	Alaafin	Pre-colonial days
3.	Orompoto	Oyo	Oyo L.G.	Oyo	Alaafin	Pre-colonial days
4.	Jomijomi	Oyo	Oyo L.G.	Oyo	Alaafin	Pre-colonial days
5.	Jepojepo	Oyo	Oyo L.G.	Oyo	Alaafin	Pre-colonial days
6.	Queen Amina	Zauzau		Zaria	Emir	Pre-colonial days
7.	Daura	Daura	Daura Emirate	Katsina	Queen	Pre-colonial days
8.	Kofono	Daura	Daura Emirate	Katsina	Queen	Pre-colonial days
9.	Eye-moi	Akure	Akure	Ondo	Regent-Monarch	Pre-colonial days 1705-1735 AD
10.	Ayo-Ero	Akure	Akure	Ondo	Regent-Monarch	Pre-colonial days 1850-51 AD
11.	Gulfano	Daura	Daura Emirate	Katsina	Queen	Pre-colonial days
12.	Yawano	Daura	Daura Emirate	Katsina	Queen	Pre-colonial days
13.	Yakania	Daura	Daura Emirate	Katsina	Queen	Pre-colonial days
14.	Walsam	Daura	Daura Emirate	Katsina	Queen	Pre-colonial days
15.	Cadar	Daura	Daura Emirate	Katsina	Queen	Pre-colonial days
16.	Agagri	Daura	Daura Emirate	Katsina	Queen	Pre-colonial days
17.	Queen Kanbasa	Bony	Bony L.G.	Rivers	Queen	Pre-colonial days

Source. Ayabam, A. T. (2013)

Colonialism affected Nigerian women adversely as they were denied the franchise. It was also only in the 1950s that women in Southern Nigeria were given the franchise. Three women 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). The women's wings of political parties possessed very little functional relevance. (Kolawale et al, 2013). In northern Nigeria, however, women were still denied the franchise even after independence until 1979 that is, the return of civilian government. As a result of this denial, prominent female politicians like Hajia Gambo Sawaba in the North could not vote and be voted for. There was also no woman in General Murtala Mohammed and Obasanjo's 1975/76 Constitution Drafting Committee which was composed of what was then called the "49 wise men" by the media, much to the chagrin of women. The Constituent Assembly that finalized the document which became the 1979 Constitution had only 5 women out of 230 members. Apart from the granting of universal suffrage to every adult Nigerian, which constitutionally empowered women in Northern Nigeria to vote, it made no specific provisions recognizing or remedying women's political exclusion, (PLAC, 2022).



Source: Policy & Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC)

Between 1979 -1983, there was a little increase in women's participation in politics as we saw three women won elections into the Federal House of Representatives. These were Mrs. Justina C. Eze representing Uzo Uwani constituency in former Anambra State, Mrs. Veronica Nnaji representing Isu, Imo State and Mrs. Abiola Babatope representing Mushin Central II of Lagos State. Only two women got ministerial appointment during this period in persons of Mrs. Adenike Egun Oyagbola (Minister for National Planning) and Chief (Mrs.) Janet Akinrinade (Minister for Internal Affairs), while Mrs. Francesca Yetunde Emmanuel was the only female Permanent Secretary and Ms. Franca Afegbua became the only woman to be elected into the Senate in 1983. Though few women were appointed Commissioners in some states, the percentage was a far cry from what it should be.

In the early 1990s, two women were appointed Deputy Governors. These were Alhaja Latifat Okunu of Lagos State and Mrs. Pamela Sadauki of Kaduna State. There was, however, no female minister, as well as no female member of the defunct Supreme Military Council or the later Armed Forces Ruling Council, (Oloyede, 2016). In the 1990 transition elections few women emerge as councilors, one woman emerged as Chairperson of a Local Government Council, no female governor emerged in any of the states but two female Deputy Governors emerged (Alhaja Sinatu Ojikutu of Lagos State and Mrs. Cecilia Ekpenyong of Cross River State). In the 1992 senatorial election, Mrs. Kofo Bucknor-Akerele was the only woman who won a Senatorial seat, while Florence Ita-Giwa won the election into the House of Representatives.

President Babangida's Transitional Council appointed two women in January 1993, namely Mrs. Emily Aikimhokuede 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), (Kolawale et al, 2013).

History shows that the role of women in Nigeria's pre-independence agitations and post-independence politics has not been adequately recognized nor rewarded. Although women were politically active in terms of political parties' membership, campaigning and voting, they were never given equal opportunity to contest but were only allowed a supporting role to men. Despite massive support given to various political parties by female electorates, women organizations, market women movements etc., very few women benefited from their political patronage in terms of appointments and nominations, (PLAC, 2022). Despite the limited number of women participating in elective politics, Nigeria's history is filled with a rich repository of women activism and involvement not only in politics but in the promotion of human rights, security and peace.



CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Issues arising from gender relations have remained a vexed question from time immemorial. But renewed arguments, claims and counter-claims about gender have become more vigorous today than even before in the wake of the relentless clamour for women liberation and empowerment in the last quarter of the twentieth century. The controversies stemming from women struggle for emancipation have provoked divergent views by gender-minded scholars, especially in Africa where gender inequalities are firmly rooted in the belief system of the people, and re-enforced by the world-wide notion that women are by nature inferior to men (Okonkwo, 2009).

Amplifying the issues surrounding gender inequality, the United Nations posits that Nigeria is a highly patriarchal society, where men dominate all spheres of women's lives. Women are in a subordinate position (particularly at the community and household levels), and male children are preferred to their female counterparts. The influence of the mother and the father is particularly significant in shaping and perpetuating patriarchy. The mother provides the role model for daughters, while the father demonstrates to sons what it means to 'be a man' (United Nation, 1996). This inequality is reflected in the table below where there is a great deal of discrepancy in the number of women vis-à-vis their men counterpart in Nigeria.

World Ranking	House of Representatives				Senate			
	Elections	Seats	Women	%	Elections	Seats	Women	%
181	03.2015	360	20	5.6	03.2015	109	7	6.5
125	04.2011	360	24	6.8	04.2011	109	7	6.4
117	04.2007	360	25	7.0	04.2007	109	9	8.3
107	04.2003	360	17	4.9	04.2003	109	3	2.8
104	02.1999	360	12	3.4	02.1999	109	3	2.8

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, "Women in National Parliaments"

As in other male dominated societies, the social relations and activities of Nigerian women and men are governed by patriarchal systems of socialization and cultural practices which favour the interests of men above those of women. Consequently, a high percentage of women's employment is restricted to low income-generating activities, concentrated within the lower levels of the unregulated, informal sector, which are not adequately represented in the National Accounting Systems (NAS). By comparison, men employed within the informal sector are located in the upper levels and are predominantly engaged in higher income-generating activities. The need to support initiatives that ensure financial independence for women is a critical step for mainstreaming gender into governance, especially with respect to politics and public life in order to liberate Nigeria's human capital resource for active participation in the vision for a free market economy Faseke, M. (2004).

Socially and economically too, the Nigerian women appear sidelined from meaningful means of livelihood. Statistical data indicate that a sharp contrast between the income generating and livelihood opportunities of women and men persists across multiple sectors in Nigeria. For instance, women's participation in the industrial sector is 11% as compared with 30% for men. Women represent 87% of those employed in the service sector, which involves predominantly informal and unregulated forms of employment. Women's participation in income generating activities that are predominantly characterized by intense manual labour, such as mining and quarrying is virtually nonexistent largely due to gender-related perceptions regarding the social construction of labour and production related activities.

Additionally, in the Federal Civil Service, which is the largest single-entity employer in Nigeria, 76% of civil servants are men whereas 24% are women and women hold less than 14% of total management level positions. Women represent 17.5% and men 82.5% of those employed within the medical field, which generally involves highly skilled and relatively well-remunerated work (Arowolo, 2010).

Unarguably too, gender-based norms as against those of the men, also ascribe women the responsibility of carrying out tasks related to household management (i.e. domestic tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, caring for children and the elderly, etc.), which does not diminish when

women engage in paid employment. This dual burden prevents women from pursuing their careers as well as attaining management and decision making positions at the same pace and rate as their male colleagues in virtually all sectors and spheres.

Interestingly, as the social, legal, political, cultural and economic discrimination against women widen in Nigeria, most developing African and non-African nations are taking unperturbed cue from the United Nations 1995 Affirmative Action on women gender. The policy which sues for 35% inclusion of women in public service and governance has positively affected styles of leadership, public service and national development of some African countries.

While buttressing the above, Al-Fotih (2014) was of the opinion that there have been some truly ground-breaking results of parliamentary elections in countries such as Rwanda, Sweden, South Africa, Nicaragua, Timor-Leste, Liberia, and Nepal. Quotas are very effective in those countries. For example, Nepal has the highest level of women's participation in parliament in the Asia-Pacific region with women holding 33 percent of parliamentary seats. Women also hold leadership positions in countries throughout the world in key areas outside of parliament. Women's leadership positions in Uganda, including vice president and senior posts in the key ministries of finance and planning, health, and education, have had a positive impact on social attitudes regarding women's political participation in Uganda.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions will guide this study in understanding the gender gap in Nigeria.

1. What barriers prevent women from participating in politics?
2. What are the impediments to women's economic sustainability?
3. What are the efforts of the Nigerian state toward alleviating the gender gap in Nigeria?
4. What are the probable strategies for women's inclusion in Nigeria?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This baseline study intends to:

1. Assess the barriers that forestall women's participation in politics and governance
2. Ascertain the challenges women encounter in pursuit of economic viability
3. Study the efforts of the Nigerian state toward alleviating the gender gap in Nigeria?
4. Examine the prospects of women's inclusion in Nigeria?

METHOD

As a baseline study interested in underscoring the existing gaps in women political and economic participation in Nigeria, this work relies on both anecdotal sources and field survey. The data for this research work is sourced from; primary and secondary source. Oral interview was conducted to sample the opinion of 218 women and women occupying leadership positions in different sectors and at different levels, archival materials were also used. Also, books, journals, articles and other periodicals from scholars in fields relevant to this research were used to reinforce and amplify their opinion.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

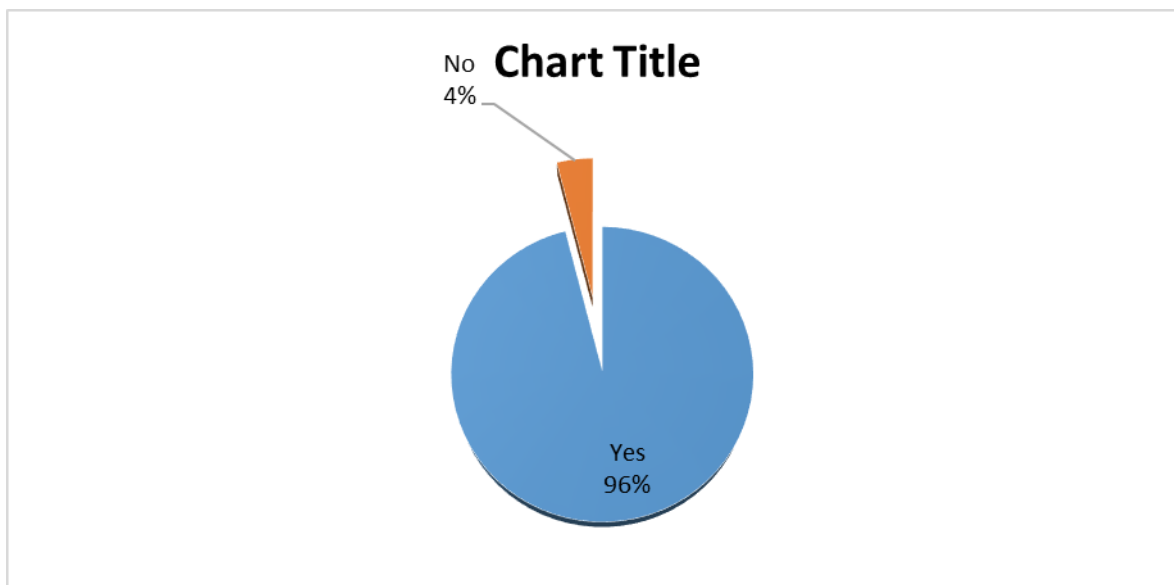
The following tables and charts reflect summaries of perception from the baseline survey conducted. They are presented according to the major variables raised in the research questions. The administration of instruments was done in at least one state of the six geopolitical zones of the country from 1st to 25th May, 2022. The administration was done in English, Igbo, Hausa, Pigin and Yoruba.

Table 3.1: Respondents Demography

variable name	Variable label	100
Age	18 to 35 years	50%
	35 to 60 years	50%
Educational Background	Completed Tertiary Education (OND, HND, Bachelor's Degree)	36%
	Completed Post Graduate Education (PGD, Masters, PhD)	64%
Urbanization	Urban	18%
	Rural	82%
Occupation	self-employment	23%
	Farming	5%
	public/civil service	18%
	Non-governmental organizations	27%
	Others	18%
State	Unemployed	9%
	Abia	4%
	Benue	18%
	Enugu	9%
	FCT Abuja	18%

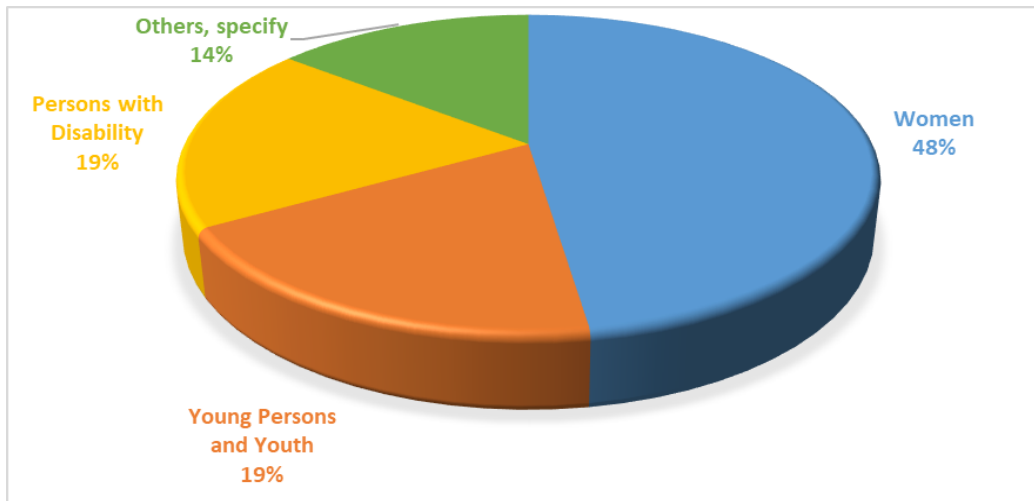
Imo	15%
Lagos	23%
Plateau	13%

Figure 3.1: Do you know what inclusion means at all?



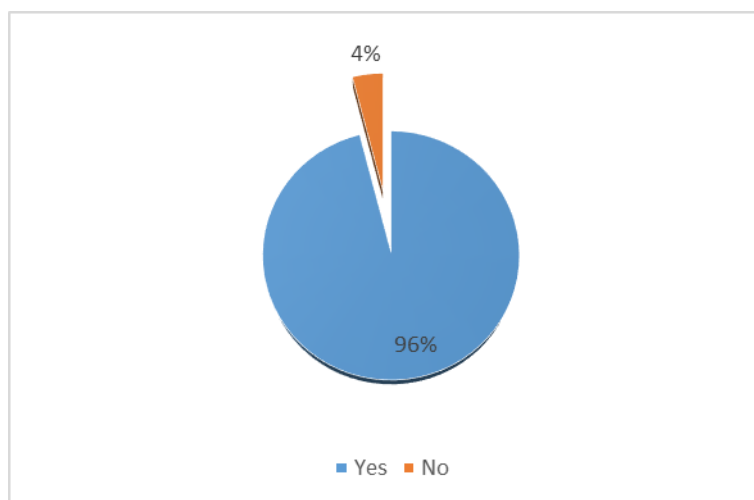
According to table 2 above, 96% of respondents believe they have a good understanding of the concept of inclusion. While only 4% of respondents are unfamiliar with the concept of inclusion. In credence to the above inclusive society has emerged as a critical issue in global developmental discourse. A careful reading of related documents reveals themes such as the recognition and affirmation of the human person, the rights and contributions of women in society, particularly women's equal opportunity and place in their community. Gender equality became a catchphrase for the proper and just way of understanding, appreciating, and promoting women's roles and rights in the face of a male-dominated society that has a tendency to discriminate and isolate women as the weaker sex (Stotsky, et al, 2016).

Figure 3.2: What scope does inclusion cover, in your opinion?



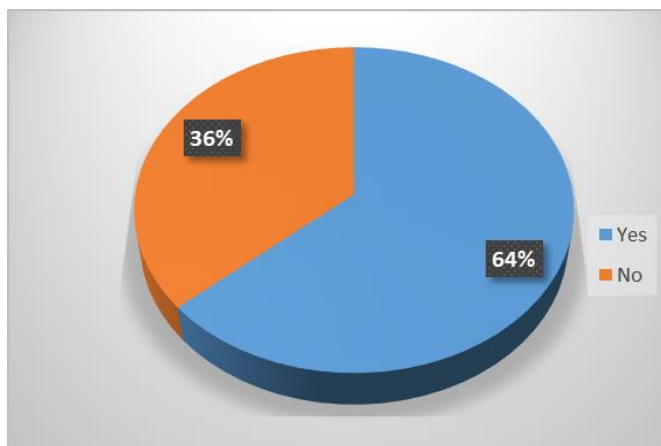
The perception of respondents in the above table 3 further indicates response from the respondent's knowledge of the concept of inclusion; 48% posited that women's issues primarily constitute the concept of inclusion. Some respondents stated that people with disabilities 19% are the primary focus of their understanding of inclusion, improving everyone's ability to participate regardless of ability. Another 19% believes that it is comparable to providing opportunities for young people and youth groups to participate in the process while respondent whose views are not captures are adequately captured recorded 14%. Every interpretation of the concept of inclusion adequately resonates with the principle of inclusion as a strand of democratic ideal and good governance. They all conform to the position of United Nations Women (UN-Women) that posited that inclusive elections, where all those eligible have the opportunity to vote to choose their elected representatives, are central to democracy. Ensuring that women and men can and do participate without unfair barriers is a core component of delivering an inclusive election.

Figure 3.3: Have you heard of Women Inclusion in Politics and the Economy?



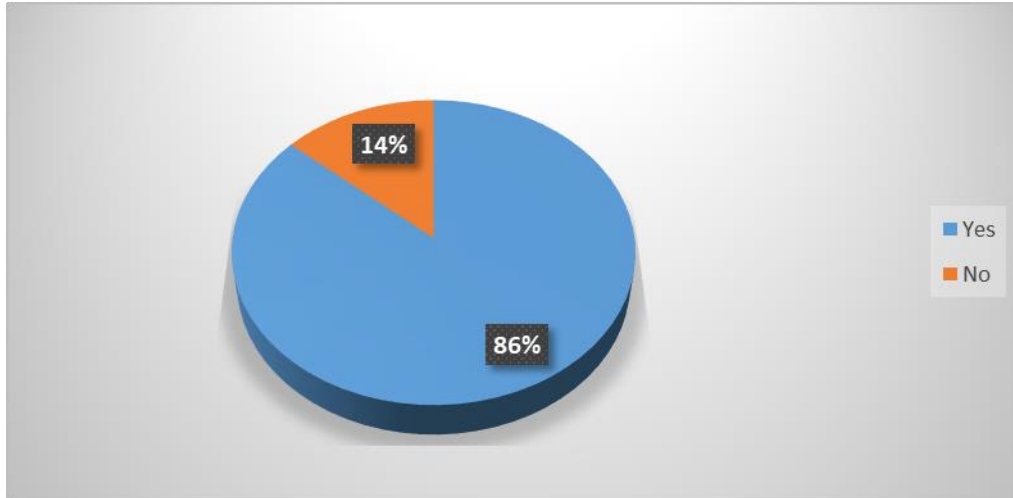
The respondents' perceptions in the above table 4 tested awareness on respondents' knowledge of women's inclusion in politics and the economy. The concept of women's inclusion in politics and the economy is familiar to the vast majority of respondents 96%, while only 4% of respondents are unfamiliar with the concept. Many early feminist scholars, such as Ferree and Martin (1995), treated women's movements as a major analytical focus or variable; they attempted to understand how changes in the nature of women's movements influenced policy outcomes and, in turn, how these activities affected the movements. Equal rights were not always the cause championed by women's movements in the past; rather, in traditional African societies, they sought to protect a woman's role of mothering and care-giving, a situation that (Gouws, 2015) pointed out was not always empowering. However, the failure of the patriarchal-dominated state to incorporate women's issues into governance has resulted in women's movements springing up around the world, particularly in Africa, since the 1990s. As a result of modernizing forces and processes of redefining the public (politics) and private spheres, women's movements have evolved over time (household), (Gouws, 2015).

Figure 3.4: Do you think that the Nigerian State has not been including women in political and economic affairs?



The perceptions of respondents in the preceding table 5 documented the state's performance on women's inclusion in politics and the economy. Accordingly, 64% validated the perception that the Nigerian government has not performed sufficiently to alleviate women's marginalization in politics and the economy. While 36% believe that government policies and activities on the subject are adequate. This viewpoint is consistent with the World Bank's recent demographic report, which revealed that gender disparity is suffocating the nation's economy. It claims that closing the gender wage disparity, particularly in critical industries where the disparity is clearly skewed against women, will boost the economy by between \$9.3 billion and \$22.9 billion. According to the report, addressing the gender wage disparity will ensure inclusive economic growth, whereas failing to do so will undermine women's economic empowerment.

Figure 3.5: Do you think that Q4 above amounts to gender imbalance in governance?



Bridging the gender gap in politics, governance, and the economy is a critical component of the SDGs. As a result, respondents were asked about their perceptions of the nature of gender imbalance in Nigerian government. Table 6 shows respondents' perceptions; 86% of respondents agreed that Nigerian governments' actions contribute to gender imbalance in governance while 14% disagree and argue that the scenario is not a case of gender imbalance. Acknowledging the respondents' point of view Oyagbola added, despite constituting half of Nigeria's population, Nigerian women are grossly underrepresented in government." This underrepresentation of women in political life contributes to the country's inequity. "It is quite alarming that the situation appears to be regressing, based on the last election in February, where only 62 women were elected to the legislature (Federal and States combined)- a mere 4.14 percent, a significant decrease from the 2015 election, when women comprised 5.65 percent of lawmakers.

Figure 3.6: Have you ever participated in national or local politics before now?

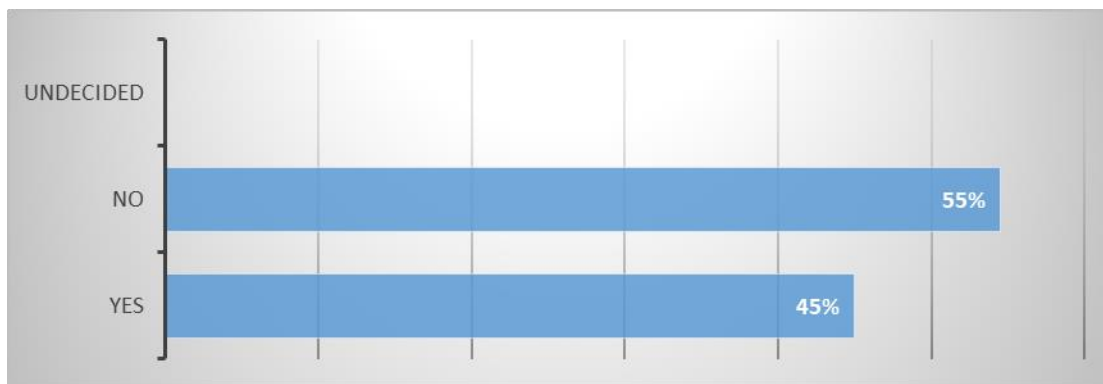
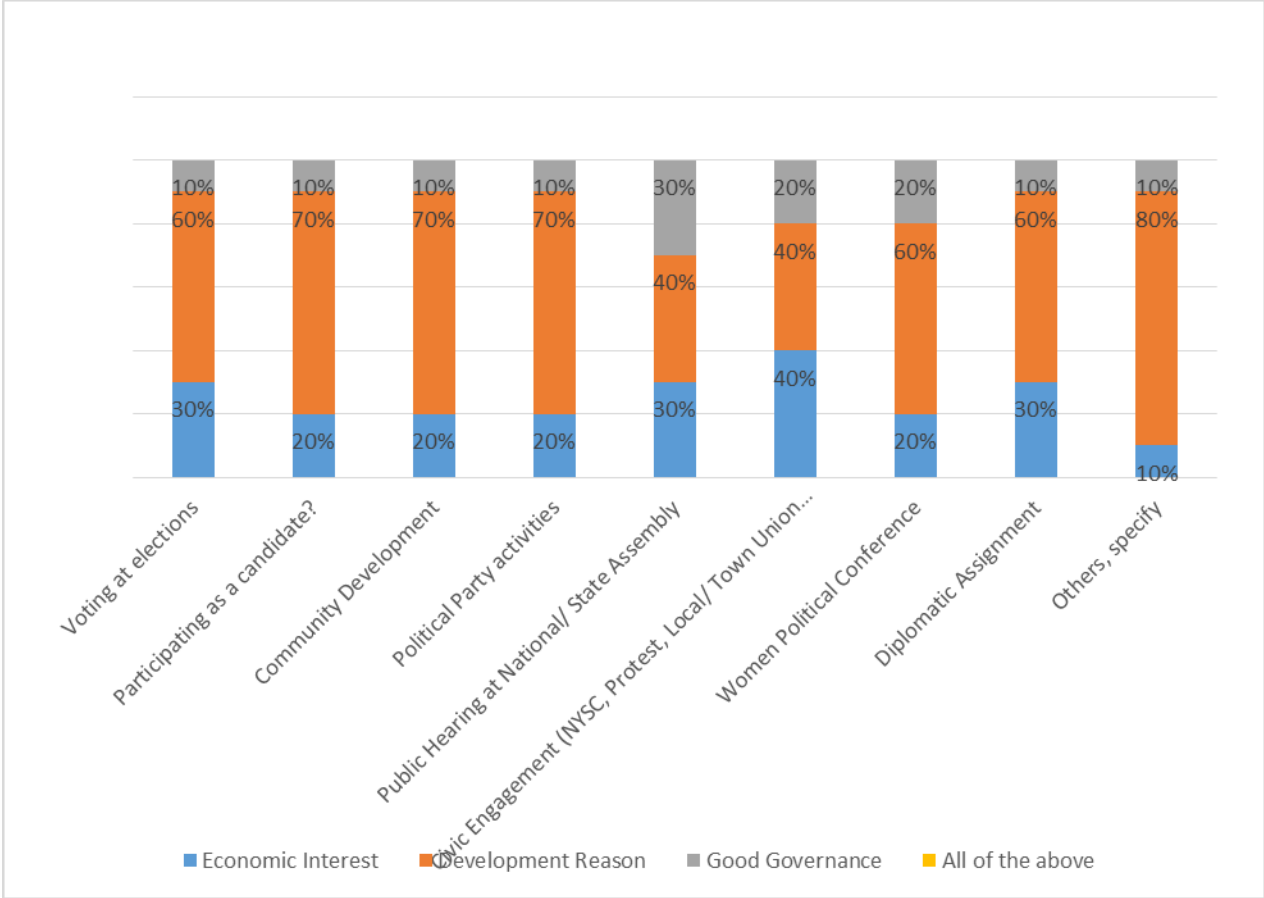


Chart 6 shows how participants felt about their participation in national or local politics. 45% had been involved in national or local politics, while 55% had never been involved in politics.

Figure 3.7: If “Yes” in the question above, what motivated your participation?



In accordance with the enumerated factors, the survey asked respondents about their motivation to participate in politics. Respondents cited economic interests (30%), developmental reasons (60%), and good governance (10%) as motivations for voting. Respondents in candidacy highlighted 20% as economic reasons, 70% as developmental reasons, and 10% as good governance. Community development was cited as a reason for political participation by 20% of those polled, 70% for developmental reasons, and 10% for good governance. The following were the motivations for participating in Political Party activities: 20% for economic reasons, 70% for developmental reasons, and 10% for good. Public hearings at the National/State Assembly were motivated by 30% economic reasons, 40% developmental reasons, and 30% good governance. As motivation for Civic Engagement (NYSC, Protest, Local/Town Union Meetings, etc.), respondents argued that economic interests were 30%, developmental reasons 40%, and good governance 30%. Respondents at the Women Political Conference cited 20% as economic reasons, 60% as developmental reasons, and 20%

as good governance. Diplomatic Assignment as a motive for participating in politics recorded 30% as an economic reason, 60% as developmental reasons and 10% as good governance.



WOMEN MUST BE REPRESENTED

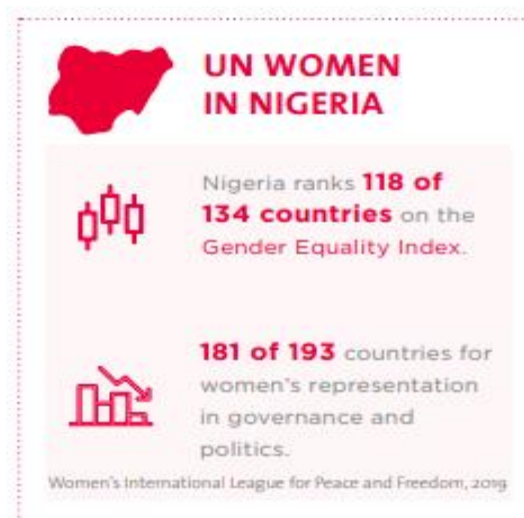
In Governance in Nigeria



KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

According to findings by Gender Strategy Advancement International (GSAI), only 37 women have been elected into the Nigerian Senate since 1999 when the current democratic dispensation began. The Nigerian Senate has had 654 members since 1999, and men have had 618 slots while women has had only 36 slots, giving a percentage of 5.6% for women and 94.4% for men.

With an estimated population of over 200 million (representing one sixth of the continent's population and a growth rate of 3.2%), Nigeria remains the most populous country in Africa. Nigeria also has the largest economy in Africa with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US\$ 448.10 billion, and a significant influence in the ECOWAS sub-region. The inadequate inclusion of women and girls' perspectives in policy-making decisions; resource allocation; and challenges in economic and social sectors continued to challenge the advancement of gender equality. The situation of women and girls in Nigeria has a key role



to play in determining the progress of the whole sub-Saharan Africa region. Constitutional guarantees and a National Gender Policy have not translated into actions or mobilized political will to make the necessary changes in the lives of girls and women in Nigeria.

The country currently, ranks 181 of 193 countries on the Gender Equality Index for reasons such as poor resource allocation in the economic and social sectors, frequent conflicts, forced displacements and inadequate inclusion of women and girls' perspectives in policy-making decisions. Other reasons include low representation of women in governance and politics; and inadequate legal framework and limited capacity to support women's empowerment and equality efforts, (UN Women, 2020). Despite all efforts to promote the contribution of women in the domain of politics and decision making, women have continued to record low representation at all tiers and levels of governance although they constitute almost half of the electorate. Findings reveal that males constituted 94.2 per cent of the members of the National Assembly in the periods from 1999-2015 (on average) while female participation remained low at 5.8 percent (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019).

Whether at national or state level, the minute female membership of Nigeria's legislature is the same. Over the years, there has been less than 15% representation of females in the legislature. At federal courts, 29.4% of Judges were female while 70.6% were male from 2011 – 2016 (National Judicial Council). State Assemblies also record similar low participation rates for women at 5.2% while men occupied 94.8% of available positions from 1999 – 2015 (State House of Assembly). At the local government level from 1999 to 2015, 9% of chairpersons were females while 91% were males. Women also constituted just 5.9% of Councilors compared with 94.1% for men

Data from the National Bureau of Statistics further revealed that the percentage of men employed in the State Civil Service from 2010 to 2015 was higher than that of women for both senior and junior positions. On average the percentage of women employees from 2010 to

2015 was 38.16% for both junior and senior positions while it was 61.84% men (for both subgroups). Also, in federal MDAs, men dominated the civil service while women within grade level 01 – 17 plus the special grade level constituted 34.67, 35.08 and 32.79% for 2015, 2016 and 2017 respectively.

There have been six administrations in Nigeria between 1999 and 2019. President Obasanjo occupied the office of president between 1999 and 2007, President Umaru Musa Yaradua (2007 – 2010), President Goodluck Jonathan (2010 – 2011; 2011 – 2015) and President Muhammadu Buhari (2015 – 2023). The position of vice president has also been dominated by men as that of the president.

Globally, the percentage of women occupying legislative positions stands at 42.4% (Inter-Parliamentary Union, IPU; 2019). Out of 193 countries surveyed, Nigeria occupies the 181st position in the world ranking of women parliamentary representation (IPU, 2019) as shown in table 1 below.

According to the IPU (2015), “the past two decades have witnessed an impressive rise in women’s

KEY FINDINGS

- Nigeria ranks 118 of 134 countries in the Gender Equality Index.
- Women have never occupied the Presidency or the Vice Presidency post in the history of Nigeria.
- Representation at National Parliament was 94.2% male and 5.8% female (1999 – 2015).
- State Assemblies also has 5.3% female and 94.7% male from 1999 – 2015.
- Women make up only 21% of the non-agricultural paid labour force.
- Nigeria has one of the lowest rates of female entrepreneurship in sub-Saharan Africa. The majority of women are concentrated in casual, low-skilled, low paid informal sector employment.
- Only 7.2% of women own the land they farm, which limits their access to credit and constrains entrepreneurship and business activity.
- LGA Chairpersons were 9% female and 91% male from 1999 – 2015.
- Councilors were 94.1% men and 5.9% women from 1999 - 2015.
- Only 33% of women have a bank account compared to about 46% of males.
- Judges at the federal court constituted 29.4% female and 70.6% male (2011 – 2016).
- At every educational level women earn less than their male counterparts and in some situations men with less education earn more than better educated female peers.
- In eight Northern States, over 80% of women are unable to read (compared with 54% for men). In Jigawa State, 94% of women (42% of men) are illiterate.
- Nigerian girls who enroll in school leave school earlier than their male counterparts.
- More than two thirds of 15–19 year old girls in Northern Nigeria are unable to read a sentence compared to less than 10% in the South.
- Only 4% of females complete secondary school in the Northern zones.
- Over half of all women in the North are married by the age of 16 and are expected to bear a child within the first year of marriage.
- Nigeria has 2% of the world’s population but 10% of global maternal deaths.
- Each day 144 Nigerian women die in childbirth, which is equivalent to one death every 10 minutes.
- Women are politically under represented. Their upper and lower house representation fell from 7% in 2007 to 6% in the 2011 election (the African average is 19%). Only 7 of 109 Senators and 25 of 360 Representatives are women.
- Nearly half of unmarried women in parts of Southern Nigeria have

political representation around the world, with the global average in the share of women in national parliaments doubling during that time, and all regions making substantial progress towards the goal of 30 per cent women’s representation in decision making.”

Nowhere in the world has the rate of increase in the political representation of women been as rapid as in sub-Saharan Africa. In 1995, no African country had elected more than 30 per cent women to its single or lower houses, but by 2015, twelve countries elected more than 30 per cent women to such legislative houses; five elected more than 40 per cent; while one (Rwanda) elected more than 60 per cent. (IPU, 2015: 6). Despite this laudable progress in the region, Nigeria still remains one of the countries with a very low women representation in parliament.

Table 4.1: Gender Representation in the Senate and House of Representatives since 1999

Election Year	SENATE					HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES				
	No of Seats	Men	%	Women	%	No of Seats	Men	%	Women	%
1999	109	106	97.2	3	2.8	360	347	96.4	13	3.6
2003	109	105	96.3	4	3.7	360	339	94.2	21	5.8
2007	109	100	91.7	9	8.3	360	333	92.5	27	7.5
2011	109	102	93.6	7	6.4	360	334	92.8	26	7.2
2015	109	102	93.6	7	6.4	360	338	94	22	6
2019	109	102	93.6	7	6.4	360	350	97.2	11	3.06

Source: NBS, 2017

In addition, the number of women elected into executive positions at the sub-national level has remained abysmally low. The number of women appointed into ministerial positions has not increased significantly since 1999 as Table 2 shows that it has remained between 4 (in 2003) to the highest number of 15 in 2011.

Table 4.2: Appointive Ministerial Political Position by Sex (1999 – 2015)

1999		2003		2007		2011		2015		2019	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
89	11	38	4	83	12	53	15	31	5		7

Source: NBS, 2017

Similarly, very few women have been appointed into top government and senior administrative positions since 1999 as Table 3 shows:

Table 4.3: Top Government Officials and Senior Administrator, 1999-2015

Position	M	% M	F	% F
Head of Service	9	75	3	25
Permanent Secretary	25	86	15	14
Special Adviser	27	77	8	23
Special Assistant	98	72	38	28
Central Bank Governors	4	100	0	0
Chief Executive Officers	307	87	44	13
Director General	114	90	12	10
Executive Secretary	29	78	8	22

Source: NBS, 2017

In 1999 only 631 women contested for positions out of a total of 11,117 electable positions available. This represented a mere 5.7% of the total number of contestants for the number of positions available for contest. Of these 631 female contestants, only 180 were elected and 143 of them were elected as ward councilors, representing just 1.6% of the electable positions. At the State Houses of Assembly, women captured only 27 seats nationwide out of the total 1172 seats available. At the senate, there were only 3 women (Flourence Ita Giwa, Stella Omu, and Khairat Abdulrazaq-Gwadabe) out of the 109 members representing 2.8% of the members of the Senate. In the House of Representatives, out of the 360 seats only 13 were women representing 3.6% of the lower chamber of the National Assembly.

The statistics on elective offices in the 1999 national elections show that only 25 female political officers emerged as against 583 male political office holders (Uchendu, 2008, p. 263); giving a ratio of 2.78% (for female officers) to 97.22% (for male officers). At the local government level, out of 774 local government chairmen elected in 1999 only 8 were women representing 1%. Women membership of political parties stood at 5% in 1999, female party Executive members were 7%, and only 8% women qualified as party delegates. In the FCT, the Municipal Area Council/Bwari federal constituency has had only one female representative since 1999, Austen Peters-Pam Amanda Iyabode 2007 to 2011.

Furthermore, from 1999-2003, the Obasanjo's administration appointed 4 women out of the 29 senior ministers representing 13.8% and 3 out of the 18 junior ministers representing 16.7%. There were 2 women advisors and 2 senior special assistants and 6 special assistants and 1 special assistant to the Vice President, while 8 permanent secretaries were women. Some

notable women who were appointed into political positions are Mrs. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, Mrs. Obi Ezekwesili, and Prof. Dora Akunyili.

Table 4.5: Gender Representation in Election Offices in 1999

POSITION	AVAILABLE SEAT	MALE OFFICERS	% MALE	FEMALE OFFICERS	% FEMALE
President	1	1	100%	0	0%
Vice President	1	1	100%	0	0%
Governor	36	36	100%	0	0%
Deputy Governor	36	35	97.2%	1	2.8%
Senator	109	106	97.2%	3	2.8%
House of Rep.	360	347	96.4%	13	3.6%
LGA Chairman	774	766	99%	8	1%

Of all seats contested, women held only 5% in 1999 with less than 4% representation in the legislature and 16.28% in Ministerial appointments. Cumulatively, women had a meager 2.5% representation in government in 1999.

The representation of women in the 2003 election was also very poor. One major improvement recorded in the 2003 elections was the increase in the number of political parties that participated in the exercise. As against 2 political parties that was cleared for the 1999 elections, some 30 political parties fielded candidates in the 2003 contest but this did not significantly translate to an increase in women’s participation and representation.

There were nineteen candidates officially registered for the presidential elections and only one was a woman (Sarah Jibril). The total number of 25 women were elected into the National Assembly in 2003 with only 4 women: Daisy Danjuma, Gbemisola Saraki-Fowora, Mrs. Iyabo Anishilowo, and one other in the Senate, and only 21 women: Abike Dabiri, Azuma Namadi Debeji, Aondona Sharon Adzuana, Binta Garba Koji, Fanta Baba Shehu and others, elected out of 360 members of the House of Representatives. This amounted to 3.7% and 5.8% respectively. Of the total 990 seats in the State Houses of Assembly across the country, only 38 women were elected. There were also only 9 women appointed as ministers from 2003 – 2007.

As early as January 2003, and three months to the national elections, women in Anambra State in Nigeria’s southeast geopolitical zone publicly announced their preference for a female deputy governor, with a public declaration that they would not give their vote to any governorship candidate whose running-mate was not a woman. Large billboards with this information were mounted on major highways in the state. Two months later, on March 2003, Nigeria’s Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development, Aisha Ismaila, announced in a press conference marking the year’s International Women’s Day that “Nigerian women would ensure that each political party fields a woman as a running-mate in the presidential elections.” (Daily Independent Newspaper, March 11, 2003, p.1.). As already shown, Nigeria has had no record of a female deputy governor, elected or appointed, a female governor, or a female vice-president. But, in spite of the women’s threats majority of the political parties contesting for offices in the 36 states of the federation and at the federal level, that year, made no attempts to field female candidates as either gubernatorial or presidential running-mates. One notable exception was the Alliance for Democracy (AD), which fielded a female deputy governor and which won the governorship election in Lagos State.

In 2007 women saw an increase in legislative representation as women occupied 9 seats, in persons of Nkechi Justina Nwaogu, Grace Folashade Bent, Eme Ufot Ekaette, Joy Emodi, Gbemisola R. Saraki, Patricia Akwashiki, Zainab Abdulkadir Kure, Iyabo Obansanjo-Bello and one other, out of 109 slots in the Senate representing 8.3%, and 27 seats out of the 360 slots in the House of Representatives which amounted to 7.5%. At the Sub-national level, women’s representation also increased as 54 women were elected, out of the 990 slots available, to the State Houses of Assembly across the country representing 5.5%

Zone	State	Senate	House of Reprs.	Governor	Deputy Governor	State Assembly	LG Chair	LG Councillor	Total
South West	Lagos	2	23	3	4	68	N/A	N/A	100
	Osun	1	2	-	4	13	N/A	N/A	20
South East	Enugu	4	9	1	1	8	N/A	N/A	23
	Abia	3	6	-	-	9	N/A	N/A	18
North Central	FCT	2	9	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	16	26
	Plateau	2	6	1	-	8	N/A	N/A	18
North West	Kano	1	2	2	-	1	N/A	N/A	4
	Zamfara	-	-	-	-	-	N/A	N/A	-
North East	Bauchi	-	-	-	-	2	N/A	N/A	2
	Adamawa	1	1	-	-	1	N/A	N/A	3
South-South	Edo	-	8	1	-	8	N/A	N/A	17
	Delta	1	4	-	-	11	N/A	N/A	16

Source: Extracted from INEC Database, 2007. [32]

Below are some INEC’s preliminary statistics depicting estimated numbers of female candidates by state and zone for national, state, and local elected positions.

Table 4.6: Zonal statistics, female candidates in 2007 general election, selected states.

	State	House of Reps	No. of Women Elected		Percentage	
			2003	2007	2003	2007
1.	Abia	8	1	1	12.5	12.5
2.	Adamawa	8	0	2	0	25
3.	Akwa Ibom	10	1	0	10	0
4.	Anambra	11	0	2	0	18.18
5.	Bauchi	12	0	0	0	0
6.	Bayelsa	5	0	0	0	0
7.	Benue	11	1	1	9	9.09
8.	Borno	10	1	0	10	0
9.	Cross Rivers	8	0	0	0	0
10.	Delta	10	1	1	10	10
11.	Ebonyi	6	1	1	16.6	16.6
12.	Edo	9	1	0	11.11	0
13.	Ekiti	6	1	3	16.6	50
14.	Enugu	8	0	1	0	12.5
15.	Gombe	6	0	1	0	16.6
16.	Imo	10	0	0	0	0
17.	Jigawa	11	0	0	0	0
18.	Kaduna	16	3	1	18.75	6.25
19.	Kano	24	1	0	4.1	0
20.	Katsina	15	0	0	0	0
21.	Kebbi	8	0	1	0	12.5
22.	Kogi	9	0	0	0	0
23.	Kwara	6	1	2	16.6	33.3
24.	Lagos	24	3	2	12.5	8.3
25.	Nassarawa	5	1	0	20	0
26.	Niger	10	0	0	0	0
27.	Ogun	9	0	0	0	0
28.	Ondo	9	0	0	0	0
29.	Osun	9	1	1	0	11.1
30.	Oyo	14	0	2	0	14.28
31.	Plateau	8	0	2	0	25
32.	Rivers	13	0	1	0	7.69
33.	Sokoto	11	0	0	0	0
34.	Taraba	6	0	0	0	0
35.	Yobe	6	1	1	16.6	16.6
36.	Zamfara	7	0	0	0	0
	F.C.T.	2	0	0	0	0
	Total	360	19	28	5.38	7.78

Source: Etubom Bassey – Ekpo and Nkoyo Toyo (eds.), *Nigerian Women & Political Entrism: Power, Intrigues, and Obstacles around the 2003 Election*; NDI, GADA and INEC Lists of women elected in 2007. [32]

Table 4.7: Comparison of women elected by state, 2003 & 2007 Nigeria National Assembly, House of Representatives.



When more women get involved, the process and outcome are usually better.

Table 4.8: Comparison of Nigeria women elected by the state 2003 & 2007 senate elections.

	State	House of Reps	No. of Women Elected		Percentage	
			2003	2007	2003	2007
1.	Abia	3	0	1	0	33.3
2.	Adamawa	3	0	1	0	33.3
3.	Akwa Ibom	3	0	1	0	33.3
4.	Anambra	3	0	1	0	33.3
5.	Bauchi	3	0	0	0	0
6.	Bayelsa	3	0	0	0	0
7.	Benue	3	0	0	0	0
8.	Borno	3	0	0	0	0
9.	Cross Rivers	3	0	0	0	0
10.	Delta	3	0	0	0	0
11.	Ebonyi	3	0	0	0	0
12.	Edo	3	2	0	66.66	0
13.	Ekiti	3	0	0	0	0
14.	Enugu	3	0	0	0	0
15.	Gombe	3	0	0	0	0
16.	Imo	3	0	1	0	33.3
17.	Jigawa	3	0	0	0	0
18.	Kaduna	3	0	0	0	33.3
19.	Kano	3	0	0	0	0
20.	Katsina	3	0	0	0	0
21.	Kebbi	3	0	0	0	0
22.	Kogi	3	0	0	0	0
23.	Kwara	3	1	1	33.3	33.3
24.	Lagos	3	0	0	0	0
25.	Nassarawa	3	0	1	0	33.3
26.	Niger	3	0	1	0	33.3
27.	Ogun	3	0	1	0	33.3
28.	Ondo	3	0	0	0	0
29.	Osun	3	0	0	0	0
30.	Oyo	3	0	0	0	0
31.	Plateau	3	0	0	0	0
32.	Rivers	3	0	0	0	0
33.	Sokoto	3	0	0	0	0
34.	Taraba	3	0	0	0	0
35.	Yobe	3	0	0	0	0
36.	Zamfara	3	0	0	0	0
	F.C.T.	1	0	0	0	0
	Total	109	3	9	2.75% of Total Seats	3.25 of Total Seats

Source: Extracted from DNEC List of Senators Elect, Nigerian National Assembly, 2007 [32].

In President Umaru Yar'Adua's cabinet between 2007 and 2010, there were only seven (7) female ministers. When Goodluck Jonathan took over to complete the remaining period of that administration, he appointed only five (5) female ministers. Between 2007 and 2011 there were only 6 female Deputy Governors out of the 36 states amounting to 16.7%

The 2011 election results suggest a regression from the clear democratic progress achieved in 1999. Very few candidates for the National Assembly elections in April 2011 were women. Out



 **36**
States
+FCT

Available
Seats
 **360**

Elected Candidates 2003 & 2007

94.2%	21
339	5.8%
92.5%	27
333	7.5%



of the 353 candidates who contested on the platform of different political parties for the position of governor, only 13 of them were women. Of the total 10,037 candidates who contested in the elections for the available seats, only 909 of them were women which represent 9.06%. At the National Assembly, women elected to the Senate and House of Representatives were 7 (6.4%) and 26 (7.2%) respectively. Women’s representation in local government between 2011 and 2015 was equally low as only about 4% of councilors were women, and only one state had a women as a Deputy Governor. The Table 8 below shows clearly this pattern of underrepresentation of women across the regions of the country (Iwuagwu, 2018).

Table 4.9: Participation in Elections in Nigeria by Gender in April 2011.

Office Contested	Gender		Total
	Female Candidates	Male Candidates	
President	1	19	29
Vice President	3	17	20
Governor	13	340	353
Deputy Governor	58	289	347
House of Reps	220	2,188	2,408
Senatorial	90	800	890

Table 4.10: Women elected to political office by region in 2011, Nigeria.

Region	Governor	Senate	House of Reps	State House of Assembly
North-Central	0	1	2	15
North-East	0	1	4	4
North-West	0	1	1	2
South-East	0	2	6	21
South-South	0	1	4	12
South-West	0	1	8	15

Though the government of President Goodluck Jonathan prided itself as having increased women’s participation in government from 10% to above 30%, the administration, between 2011 and 2015, appointed 13 female Ministers out of the 40 Ministers. This amounted to

32.5%. This was a major milestone in women's participation in government but sadly, the next government after that could not sustain that milestone.

In 2015, the federal government appointed 6 women as minister but with the resignation of one of them, Amina Mohammed, the Minister of Environment, only 5 women were left in the cabinet of the Federal Executive Council. At the National Assembly, women's representation stood at 6.4% at the Senate with only 7 female Senators out of 109 and 6% at the House of Representatives with only 22 members out of the 360 seats. Also in the 9th National Assembly between 2019 and 2023, only 7 (6.4%) women were elected Senators and 11 (2.7%) women elected to the House of Representatives. Furthermore, the president only appointed 7 women as ministers. Out of 43 ministers appointed by the president, Muhammadu Buhari, only 7 were women and that represents just 16.3%

Ahead of the 2019 elections, there were 91 political parties and women appeared to have had a better chance. This was evident in the number of women who declared an interest and eventually contested in the party primaries. However, the outcome of the party primaries and eventually, the general elections, was rather disappointing. Fact sheet released by the CDD Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) showed that only 62 women were elected, a meagre 4.17% of elected officials. This reveals a decline from the 2015-19 period, where women formed 5.65% of elected officials. There were only 2,970 women on the electoral ballot, representing only 11.36% of nominated candidates (Premium Times, April 2019).

In the presidential race were 6 women but all 6 of them stepped down before the election, though their names still appeared on the ballot. 235 women, making 12.34% of candidates, contested for a seat in the Senate of which only 7 (6.4%) were elected. For the House of Representatives, 533 women contested but only 11 (3.06%) have been elected. At the state level, in the race for governorship, women form 3.07% of the candidates but no woman was elected governor. There were also 275 women making 11.40% of candidates for the Deputy Governorship, but only 4 were elected. At the State Assemblies, the number of elected female lawmakers fell from 55 in 2015 to 40 in 2019.

Out of the total 479 members of the federal parliament, only 19 were originally female members in the two chambers. But with the demise of a female senator, Rose Oko in 2020, the number had reduced to 18. The seven female Senators include, Oluremi Tinubu, Stella Oduah, Uche Ekwunife, Betty Apiafi, Eyakenyi Akon, Aishatu Dahiru, and Abiodun Olujimi. In the House of Representatives, the list include Nkeiruka Onyejeocha, Khadija Abba; Lynda Ikpeazu; Onuh Blessing; Princess Onuoha, Olukemi Oluga, Zainab Gimba, Ogunlola Olubunmi, Aishatu Dukku, Onanuga Oriyomi, Tolulope Akande-Sadipe and Beni Lar.

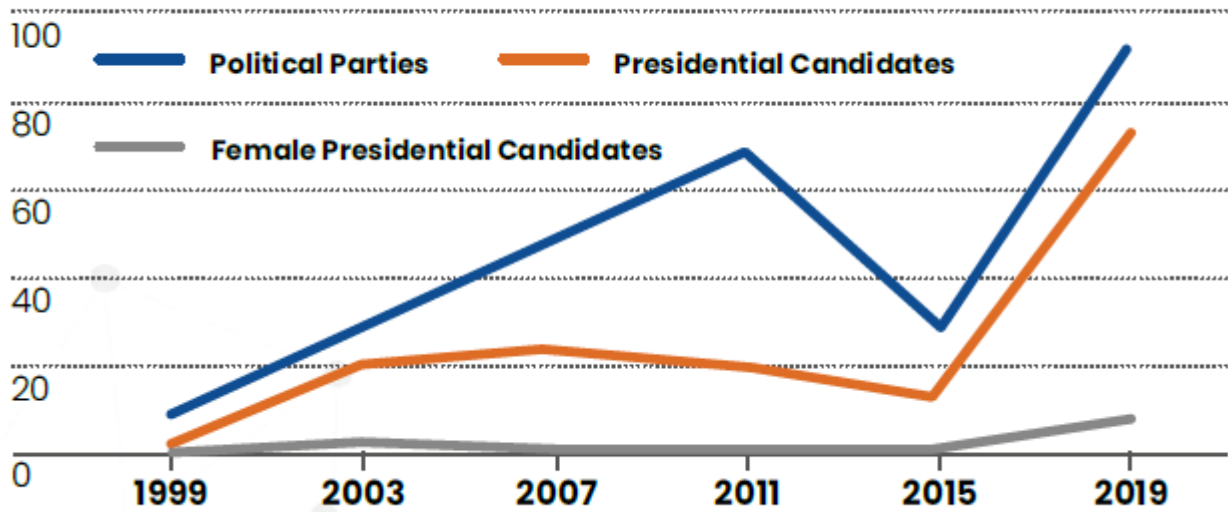
One of the most striking findings of CDD's recent series of studies on the issue is that women's political representation has steadily declined in recent electoral cycles. According to our Women in Nigerian Politics report, 45% fewer women took office across all levels in 2019 than

they did in 2011, marking women's poorest electoral outing since 2003. In 2019, women won less than 5% of all contested seats and were restricted to only 17% of all ministerial appointments. A partial answer seems to lie in the sheer lack of women candidates on the ballot paper. Of the 26,137 candidates that contested in the 2019 election, only 2970, or 11%, were women. This dearth of female candidates suggests an obvious if often overlooked point: women's exclusion in each new electoral cycle occurs long before Election Day.

PARTY PROLIFERATION

While the debate on the utility of multipartism for democratic consolidation continues, this study found that the multiplicity of political parties advanced, to a degree, women's political participation. More than preceding cycles, the 2019 electoral cycle opened up the political space, which served to boost political engagement for marginalized groups. This was especially the case for women and youth. A younger and more diverse crop of candidates took advantage of the platform provided by the proliferation of new and smaller political parties to run for various positions at the state and national levels.

Figure 4.1: Parties and candidates: 1999 – 2019



CHALLENGES AFFECTING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS IN NIGERIA

The challenges facing women are enormous, however, researchers have shown that the under listed are likely responsible for the huge marginalization of Nigerian women in politics.

1. **Patriarchy:** It refers to a society ruled and dominated by men over women, which in turn has given rise to women being looked upon as mere household wives and non-partisans in decision making process in households not to talk of coming out to vie for political positions.
2. **Stigmatization:** following the way politics in Nigeria is played, it is being perceived that it is for individuals that have no regards for human right and are quick at compromising their virtue for indecent gains. Therefore, women aspirants who ventured into politics are looked upon as shameless and promiscuous.
3. **Low level of education:** The low participation of women in education is also part of the shortcomings. The National Adult Literacy Survey, 2010 published by National Bureau of Statistics revealed that the adult literacy rate in English in Nigeria is 50.6% while literacy in any other language is 63.7 per cent (female adult age 15 and above). This explains why most women are least qualified for political offices due to low educational attainment. This is also an effect of colonialism, where men were more favoured than women.
4. **Meeting Schedules:** The time scheduled for caucus meetings to strategize and map out political plans either for the pre or post- election periods are odd and is not conducive for responsible and family women. The slated time are often time which women are expected to take care of their children and family. This method of schedules is viewed as an attempt to side-lining women from engaging in political process.
5. **Financing:** Competing for political positions in Nigerian requires huge financial backup. 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 parties. And so, they could do little or nothing to outweigh their male counterparts.
6. **Political Violence:** Nigerian elections have always been characterized by one form of violence or another since the return of democracy. Female aspirants of various political parties cannot withstand political violence; therefore, women participation in politics is drastically reduced.

7. **Religious and Cultural barriers:** Both Christianity and Islam do not accord women much role in public life, and same is obtainable in most cultural values, where women are seen culturally as quite submissive and image of virtue. However, they are not to be seen in public domain. And so it is a challenge to women participation in politics, more so, women found in the corridor of politics are not often religious in practice.

RECOMMENDATION

Following the trends and happenings around the political environment in Nigeria, it is becoming clearer that women may never achieve the mandated 30% affirmation as enshrined in the Beijing plan of action except the following recommendations are adhered to:

1. Political parties should create a support network for prospective aspirant by pairing them with established women politicians who will be playing key role as mentors and provide capacity building for young or aspiring female politicians as to enhance and develop them ahead of subsequent elections.
2. Building mass Coalition of women support and advocacy group using NGOs and Grassroots women associations to coordinate support and advocacy for fellow women aspirants.
3. To create enabling environment that allows women to engage meaningfully in decision making process in a sustainable and effective way that is free from violence and harassments of any kind.
4. Establishment of legal funds to assist women politicians to challenge electoral malpractices of any form at all levels of political processes.
5. Introducing quota system at all levels of government and Identifying and engaging relevant stakeholders such as Independent National Electoral Commission and political parties to ensure strict adherence to it.



CONCLUSION

Women's lack of participation in legislative processes has negatively impacted promotion and enforcement of their rights. An example is the Gender and Equal Opportunity Bill which was presented at the Nigerian Senate for a second reading on 15th March, 2016 and was rejected. One could argue that one of the reasons why the Bill was not passed is because only seven of the 109 senators are women. Men's efforts, if any, to promote these rights are not sufficient, because they are not direct beneficiaries. From 1960 to 2022, Nigeria has had 14 presidents of the Senate and none has been a female.

As gender issues and women's political and economic empowerment take center stage on the global arena, Nigeria appears intent on maintaining its position at the bottom of the ladder of women's political empowerment. 2018 data show that women's rates of participation in formal decision making remain one of the lowest on the continent and

across the world with women occupying an abysmal 5.6 per cent (86 out of 1534) of all elective positions at both the national and subnational levels. An analysis of Nigeria electoral system shows that the 2003, 2007 and 2011 elections witnessed unprecedented increase in the

number of female aspirants and heightened local mobilization of the generality of women, yet only a handful made it to the end.

Women Participation in Nigerian politics is a topic of importance. Politically, women have been relegated to the background, despite the tremendous effort put forward by government and non-governmental organizations following the declaration made at the fourth World Conference on women in Beijing, which advocated 30% affirmative action and National Gender Policy (NGP) recommendation of 35% affirmative action for a more inclusive representation of women both in elective and appointive positions. It is worthy to note that Nigerian women are still being marginalized due to the style of leadership inherent in the country. Despite the challenges women are facing, women activism and advocacy, education of women, positivity on the part of successive governments towards women empowerment and interest of women to participate in politics is getting a lot of positive energy. This is an indication that the participation of women in politics has a bright future.

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