

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

The growing debate by scholars and intelligentsias about the role of women in politics globally is an issue that has generated serious controversies than resolving the perceived gender inequalities in terms of participation in politics of nation states, be they advanced or developing. Several arguments have cropped up about the place of women in politics over the years

Thus while the conservative theorists argue that the actual role of women and in fact, female folks generally ends in the kitchen, the liberalists have variously opined that women's political process as those of their male counterparts, and hence, such responsibilities cannot be washed away in the societal scheme of things.¹ Opinions are however divided on whether the role of women is predominantly in the home fronts or whether women can also engage meaningful in other socio-economic and political activities like their male counterparts, thereby contributing their own quotas in the sequence and development of the polity. This and several arguments about the place of women in global vis-à-vis Nigerian politics have constituted a huge problem atique in gender discourses as it patterns to the low level of women involvement in politics at whatever level of analysis.² This trend of high-level inequality on the potential role of women in shaping the direction of politics in the Nigerian

¹ E. C Esidene & S. U Abdul, 'The Role of Women in Nigerian Politics: Addressing the Gender Question for an Enhanced Political Representation in the Fourth Republic' *International Journal of Gender and Women's Studies* [2013] (1) 45-55

² D H Madsen, 'Gendered Institutions and Women's Political Representation in Africa' (2020) <<https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1508223/FULLTEXT01.pdf>> Accessed 12 May 2022

society from time immemorial constitutes a broader gender question of this research paper which the authors intend to address.

However, throughout history, women have had to overcome both direct and indirect obstacles to their ability to advance personally and fully engage in the social, political, economic, and cultural life of many countries. This research emphasizes on the barriers to the participation of women in politics with suggestions on how these barriers can be erased.

Especially in Africa, discrimination against women begins at birth with the tradition of "son preference."³ A leading Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in Nigeria, the Civil Resources Development and Documentation Centre (CIRDDOC)⁴ describes it as: "the practice whereby the male child is given preferential treatment over the female child. The male child gets all the attention, with time he is the one sent to school, while the girl child remains at home."⁵ When a father passes away, some Igbo customary law norms go one step further and claim that only the sons can inherit; the daughter(s) are viewed as some sort of commodity.⁶

Though, the tide of discrimination against women in Nigeria is changing. Many Nigerians have access to education and the re-orientation of Nigerians (with respect to women's rights) has been improving. However, discriminatory practices and laws are still prevalent in the country.

However, with the return to democratic rule in Nigeria in 1999, many laws have been promulgated in Nigeria to improve the status of women in the country and enhance their

³Ine Nnadi, 'Son Preference – A Violation of Women's Human Rights: A Case Study of Igbo Custom in Nigeria' <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272802688_Son_Preference_-_A_Violation_of_Women's_Human_Rights_A_Case_Study_of_Igbo_Custom_in_Nigeria> Accessed July, 2022

⁴*Tribunal on Violations of Human Rights in Nigeria*, (2002) CIRDDOC Public Education Series No12.

⁵Ibid.

⁶*Mojekwu v Mojekwu*[1997] 7NWLR (Pt 512) p. 283.

participation in politics. For example, many states in Nigeria have enacted laws proscribing domestic violence against women.⁷

Discrimination against women has been noticed and accepted on a global scale. As a result, the preamble of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, the “inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights to all members of the human family” As a result, the definition of women's human rights has included both the terms "rights that women enjoy by virtue of being human" and "rights that are special to women." It is important to remember that sometimes women experience special types of human rights violations because of their gender.⁸ When rights are asserted, it is assumed that they are being violated or will soon be, and that there is a desire to stop the infringement.⁹ Due to how these rights affect women, feminism as a concept, gender studies, and women's movements have all developed as a result.¹⁰

These discriminatory trends against Nigerian women are violations of the fundamental human rights against discrimination, a right recognized in a number of core international human rights instruments. Article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) provides that all persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. It requires States to prohibit discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.¹¹ Article 2(3) and 3 of the International Covenant

⁷ **Jimmy O. Chijioke and Olufemi Abifarin**, *The Protection Against Domestic Violence Law* (2007) *Lagos state University Law Journal* (Lagos State)

⁸ O.A. Ilumoka, *African Women's Economics Social and Cultural Rights: Towards a Relevant Theory and Practice*. (University of Philadelphia Press 1994).

⁹ *Ibid* p. 307

¹⁰ R. Tong, *Feminist Theory* (2001) < <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/feminist-theory>> Accessed on the 23rd September, 2021.

¹¹ ICCPR 1976.

on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) also contains similar provisions on non-discrimination.¹²

The issue of gender inequality and imbalance, particularly in the political sphere, has persisted for a very long period. But according to history, there were fewer women in positions of authority even before colonisation. Thus examples of such are the Queen of Daura, the Sarauniya of Zazzau in pre-jihad, the Angwu Tsi who was nearly the partner of the King, with her own Palace, in the middle belt, Iyayun the Queen who ruled in Oyo in the fifteenth century after the death of her husband.¹³ It's important to note that discrimination against women and the zeal to fight for political relevance has been a long age issue.

About half of the people in Nigeria are women¹⁴, and it is well known that they play important roles as mothers, producers, managers, community developers, and organizers, among other things. Due to their dual roles in the reproductive and productive spheres, women contribute more than half as much to the social and economic development of civilizations as do males. However, their involvement in political structures and procedures, where choices are made about the use of resources generated by both men and women in society, is still minimal.¹⁵ Whereas, women's legal status is strictly connected with their political participation and has an impact on their capacity to contribute to and profit from economic and social progress. The involvement of women in political activities accentuates this correct assertion that without the vigorous participation of women and the incorporation

¹²ICESCR 1976.

¹³ Modupe, A. *Women Political Participation in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects*. (2001) In Akinboye (ed) *Paradox of Gender Equality in Nigerian Politics*. Lagos: (Concept Publications, 2015)

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵Makama, Godiya Allanana, Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria: The Way Forward, *European Scientific Journal* [2013] (9) (17)

of women's viewpoint in all levels of decision making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved.¹⁶

Hence, since the return to democratic rule in 1999, Nigerian women have exasperated to gain access to political decision-making positions by contesting for elective positions at different political levels. Their efforts however have not transformed to appreciative gains as subsequent elections since 1999 revealed. Not only has there been marginal gain over the years which in itself is not very encouraging, but a decline in the number of elected female politicians in the 2015 General Elections shows a manifestation of female political disempowerment and this is more worrisome.¹⁷

To combat the issue of women's limited political engagement The Nigerian government ratified a number of regional and global agreements, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1989. In addition, the government adopted a National Policy on Women in 2000, which was later replaced by a Platform for Action and National Policy on Gender Equality in 2007, The National Committee on Affirmative Action, the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality of the African Union (2004), the Additional Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), the National Gender Policy (2006), etc.¹⁸

Data from the general elections in April, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019 from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) demonstrate the high level of marginalization of women in Nigerian politics. For instance, just 628 out of the 7160 candidates running in the April 2007 election were female. Of them, 25 ran for president, and only one of them was

¹⁶Akiyode- Afolabi and Arogundade, Gender Audit 2003 Election: And Issue in Women's Political Participation in Nigeria: *Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre (WACOL)*

¹⁷ M. O Quadri, Women And Political Participation In The 2015 General Elections In Nigeria: Fault Lines And Mainstreaming Exclusion: *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa [2018](20) (1)*

¹⁸Ajayi, Kunle, Gender self-endangering: The sexist issue in Nigerian politics. *Journal of Social Science*, [2007] (14) (2) 137 – 147.

female. Five women ran for vice president.¹⁹ Furthermore, there were only 54 female members of the State Assemblies and just 9 women out of the 109 senators.²⁰ Looking at the most recent presidential elections in Nigeria, only Sarah Jibril, a candidate for the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), was a woman; the other two candidates were men. This illustrates the patriarchal structure of the Nigerian political system.²¹ Out of the 380 candidates competing for governor and deputy governor in the 29 states where governorship elections were held in 2011, 87 (22.9 percent) were women.²² Only 32 women were elected to the national assembly out of the 469 members, or just 8% of all legislators, while only 7 (6.4%) of the 109 senators who won elections in 2011 were female.²³ Seven of the 109 senators who won re-election in the general elections of 2015 and four of the 109 senators who won the general elections of 2019 were women. As in the cases of Sarah Jubril and Professor Oluremi Sonaiya of the KOWA party who ran against former president Goodluck Jonathan for the presidency in 2011 and 2015, respectively, and Hon. Mulikat who fiercely challenged for the position of Speaker of the House of Representatives.²⁴ In any society, developed or underdeveloped, political participation is essential to society's organization, the exploitation and distribution of resources, and the influencing of decision-making to advance the interests

¹⁹Ake M. and others. Women and Political Marginalisation in Nigeria (2019) <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331529667_WOMEN_AND_POLITICAL_MARGINALIZATION_IN_NIGERIA> Accessed December 2021

²⁰ Vanguard Nigeria: "16 days of Activism against Gender Base Violence": November 25th December 10th 2011.

²¹ Ake M. and others. Women and Political Marginalisation in Nigeria (2019) <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331529667_WOMEN_AND_POLITICAL_MARGINALIZATION_IN_NIGERIA> Accessed December 2021.

²² Nse-Etim, A. Men without Women: An Analysis of the 2015 General Election in Nigeria. (2018) Unpublished manuscript, Federal University Wukari.

²³ Eme, O., Onyishi, T and Nwaoha, C. Women and Politics in Nigeria: Strategizing for 2015 <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299983303_Women_and_Politics_in_Nigeria_Strategizing_for_2015> accessed December 2021.

²⁴ Chioma, G. Elective positions: Why Nigeria records more women losers than winners (2015). <<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/05/elective-positions-why-nigeria-records-more-women-losers-than-winners/>> Assessed December 2021.

of the people.²⁵ Everyone, including women, participates in politics with the primary goal of influencing the distribution of resources and power in accordance with their interests.

1.2 Statement of Research Problem

The right against discrimination is firmly enshrined in the constitutions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This is as expressly provided for in section 42 as amended. However, reports still reveal that women make up a small portion of individuals involved in political decision-making and leadership, despite Nigeria's signing of the United Nations and other international Organizations' advocacy and declaration of the rights and equality between men and women.²⁶

The level of women in political participation and representation in Nigerian are low. A sexist and patronage-based political culture, combined with gendered economic and household inequalities, are seen to be the main barriers to women's participation in governance. Following the return of Nigeria to democratic government, the proportion of women in all levels of government have remained low at all levels of government. The same constitution's provision 42 additionally upholds women's rights to participation in any acceptable endeavour without discrimination. Due to violence and thuggery, women's participation is already dramatically declining. Recently, Nigeria commemorated 62 years of independence and 22 years of democracy. Why would such a promising country continue to keep almost half of its people out of roles that would benefit the entire society? Only 28 of the 1543 national elective posts in Nigeria's 1999 general elections (1.82%) were won by women. Prior to declining in the following two general elections to 5.65 and 4.17 percent in 2015 and 2019, respectively, this surged to 4.2 percent in 2003 and reached a high of 6.4 percent in 2011. Nigeria is one of

²⁵ Arowolo, D. and Abe, O, "Features of the Present International Power System" in Arowolo, D. (Ed)., Contemporary Issues in International Relations. (Lagos: Princeway-Gbade Ltd 2008).

²⁶ Women's Political Participation (Africa Barometer 2021)

many countries that needs to assess the costs of putting women in positions of political leadership and give priority to measures to remove the obstacles that keep politics expensive and dangerous for women to participate in and prevent society at large from benefiting from it.

In analysing the concept of women's political participation, it's easy to envision empty seats around the decision-making table, but it's a little more difficult to envision the numerous obstacles and challenges women face in order to get into those seats. Women are increasingly being recognized as being marginalized in political and public life from time immemorial. This can be seen in high-profile elections in Nigerian fourth republic. Women are increasingly running for office, but their numbers still lag far behind those of men.

1.3. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this thesis is to examine and assess the requisite laws that relates to women's political participation in Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- (a) discuss the factors hindering women participation in Nigeria politics;
- (b) examine the international state of laws on women political participation;
- (c) examine women's right to political participation under the Nigerian laws and the efforts by Nigerian women to increase their political participation through legal instruments
- (d) discuss the effects of Gender Quota Laws on Women Political Participation on a global perspective

1.4 Research Questions

- (a) What are the factors hindering women participation in Nigeria politics?
- (b) What is the international state of laws on women political participation?
- (c) What are the women's right to political participation under the Nigerian laws and the efforts by Nigerian women to increase their political participation through legal instruments?
- (d) What are the effects of Gender Quota Laws on Women Political Participation on a global perspective

1.5 Research Methodology

This is a Legal research that relies on qualitative method of analysis. The research work relied on the primary and secondary source of Nigerian laws. The primary source includes statutes such as the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999²⁷, the Criminal Code, Penal Code, 2003 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) [Maputo Protocol]²⁸, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)²⁹, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)³⁰, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS)³¹ and case laws. It also relied on secondary source of law relevant to the research work such as textbooks, Journals, articles, Newspaper

1.6. Scope of the Study

²⁷ As amended (especially Third Alteration Act, 2010)

²⁸Adoption: July 01, 2003,Date entry into force: November 25, 2005

²⁹ADOPTED 16 December 1966 by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI)

³⁰The Fourth World Conference on Women, Having met in Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995, Adopted at the 16th plenary meeting, on 15 September 1995; for the discussion

³¹The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by world leaders in 2015, embody a roadmap for progress that is sustainable and leaves no one behind.

The focus of this thesis is on the examination of women political participation in Nigeria vis-à-vis ascertaining the extent of their involvement as well as unearthing factors that influence the degree of their engagement in politics. The study is against the backdrop of global agitation for gender equality and women participation in politics. Adopting liberal feminism as its framework of analysis, the study employed content analysis in analysing data sourced mainly from secondary sources of data generation. The thesis shows that the extent of women participation and representation in Nigeria is very low and calls for urgent action. Furthermore, the study espoused inter-alia that factors such as culture, media portrayal, religion, finance and nature of politics in Nigeria play a critical role in the extent to which women participate in politics in Nigeria. Also, appropriate laws should be enacted and rigorously enforced to drastically reduce the negative nature of elections in the country to enable level playing ground for all devoid of all forms of harassment and intimidations.

1.7. Significance of the Study

The research sought to explore and ascertain into specific context the dismal participation of women in Nigeria politics, following the country's return to democracy in 1999. This therefore makes the study both timely and significant

It is hoped that the findings will add to the existing knowledge on the challenges confronting women in politics and decision-making process.

Students, policy makers, non-governmental organizations "NGOs that seek further research, literature and other learning materials on the research problem would find this study useful. It will also serve as a guide for research processes. The research will equally be beneficial to government agencies on gender related issues such as the ministry of women affairs etc, as it will aid them in their search for gender equality. The research will give valuable guidance to those international organizations and

development agencies which provide program support to NGOs and political parties in relations to women political participation. This study will also help to enhance the advocacy efforts of those individual activists, and organizations who strive to bring gender issues that borders around women political participation to the limelight. In addition, it could serve as reference material for women politicians to map out strategies that would help overcome most of the challenges confronting them as politicians in Nigeria.

Finally, the suggestions and recommendations that will be proffered in this study will help improve the level of political participation of women in Nigeria.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

Some of the limitations that may be encountered during the course of this research work could be;

- 1) Time is problem that was be encountered during the course of this study is time due to the limited time available to carry out the research
- 2) Lack of current update on political parties' website on women political participation.
- 3) Inability to get accurate data from various source, due to conflicting facts and figures

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

- i. **Woman:** an adult female human. Prior to adulthood, a female human is referred to as a girl (a female child or adolescent). The plural is referred to as women.

- ii. **Human right:** those rights which are inherent in the mere fact of being human. The concept of human rights is based on the belief that every human being is entitled to enjoy her/his rights without discrimination.
- iii. **Discrimination:** an action or practice that excludes, disadvantages, or merely differentiates between individuals or groups of individuals on the basis of some ascribed or perceived trait.
- iv. **Law:** a legislation created and enforced through social or governmental institutions to regulate behaviour or the system of rules which a particular country or community recognizes as regulating the actions of its members and which it may enforce by the imposition of penalties
- v. **Practice:** the customary, habitual, or expected procedure or way of doing of something.
- vi. **Policy:** a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by an organization or individual
- vii. **Abuse:** the improper usage or treatment of a thing, often to unfairly or improperly gain benefit. Abuse can come in many forms, such as: physical or verbal maltreatment, injury, assault, violation, rape, unjust practices, crimes, or other types of aggression.
- viii. **Protection:** the act of keeping someone or something safe from injury, damage, or loss, or the state of being protected in this way.
- ix. **Violence:** behaviour involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something.

- x. **Political participation:** Political participation refers to the civic activities, such as voting, that citizens use to take part in political processes and express their opinions and preferences.
- xi. **Democracy:** a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives.
- xii. **Nigeria:** a republic in West Africa: member of the Commonwealth of Nations; formerly a British colony and protectorate. 356,669 sq. mi. (923,773 sq. km). *Capital:* Abuja.

1.10 Structure of the Study

Chapter One contains the general background of the thesis. It introduces the background of the thesis. It states the statement of the problem, Aim and Objectives, Research Questions, Research Methodology, the Scope of the research, Significant of study, Limitation of the study, Operational Definitions and the Structure;

Chapter Two contains Literature Review and theoretical frame work;

Chapter Three discusses the factors hindering Women's political participation;

Chapter Four examines the International and National Laws for the Protection of Women's right to political participation in Nigeria;

Chapter Five provides the summary and conclusion of the research, findings and recommendations.

Chapter Two

2.1 Literature Review

Building and maintaining strong, vibrant democracies depends on the full and equitable participation of women in public life.³² Accordingly, the meaningful participation of women in national, local and community leadership roles has become an important focus of global development policy. Still, some may ask why it matters if women become political leaders, elected policymakers or civil society activists. Why does the world need more women involved in all aspects of the political process? Women's political participation results in tangible gains for democracy, including greater responsiveness to citizen needs, increased cooperation across party and ethnic lines, and more sustainable peace.³³

Women's participation in politics helps advance gender equality and affects both the range of policy issues that get considered and the types of solutions that are proposed. Research indicates that whether a legislator is male or female has a distinct impact on their policy priorities, making it critical that women are present in politics to represent the concerns of women and other marginalized voters and help improve the responsiveness of policy making and governance. There is strong evidence that as more women are elected to office, there is also a corollary increase in policy making that emphasizes quality of life and reflects the

³² Why Women in Politics? (2018) <<https://womendeliver.org/why-women-in-politics/>> accessed 10 June 2022

³³ S. Brechenmacher and C. Hubbard 'Political Party Development' (2020) <<https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/03/24/breaking-cycle-of-gender-exclusion-in-political-party-development-pub-81345>> Accessed June

priorities of families, women, and ethnic and racial minorities. Women's political participation has profound positive and democratic impacts on communities, legislatures, political parties, and citizen's lives, and helps democracy deliver.

In the course of developing this work, it is essential to clarify some important concepts that will be discussed in this study, such as: Democracy, Politics and political participation.

2.1.1 Democracy

Democracy is a multi-dimensional concept and a phenomenon. It has been viewed in various ways by policy makers, politicians, analysts, some scholars alike. Democracy originated in ancient Greece. It comprises of two Greek words 'demos', which means the people and 'Kratien' which means the government or rule.³⁴ Democracy is a concept that has been extensively discussed by both classical and modern scholars. It is described as signifying a political system dominated by representatives either directly or indirectly chosen by the people.³⁵

Democracy is a continuous process of promoting equal access to fundamental rights, which should not be compromised but rather, be richer than the liberal model, especially in developing nations.³⁶ It is a political system that operates based on popularly elected or appointed representatives to run the affairs of the state, which most often than not is premised on effective representation and participation.³⁷ It is also a way of life, goal, ideal and philosophy which guarantees freedom of the majority and rights of the minority. It has certain

³⁴ Ujo, A. A. *Understanding political parties in Nigeria*. (Klamidas Books 2000)

³⁵ Nwoye, I. *Consolidating Democracy in Nigeria: A Philosophical Prognosis*". *Ethnic Nationalism and Democratic Consolidation: Perspectives from Nigeria and the United States of America*. (Nsukka: Great AP Express Publishers Ltd 2017)

³⁶ Ntalaja, G. N. *Democracy and Development in Africa*. *African Centre for Democratic Governance*, (Abuja, Nigeria 2000)

³⁷ Ibid

tenets which include: free elections, majority rule participation of political parties, unimpeachable judiciary and parliament.³⁸

Some fundamental elements for sustaining democracy in Nigeria as highlighted by the Report of the Chatham House democratic process include:

- i. the institutions and processes of functional electoral agencies, political parties and their formation, administration and funding;
- ii. conducting of free and fair periodic elections and electoral processes;
- iii. broad based participation by the electorate;
- iv. observance of rule of law;
- v. protection of fundamental human rights;
- vi. a free and unfettered press;
- vii. a healthy civil society;
- viii. Government that is built on the consent of its people.³⁹

Democracy can therefore be regarded as a system of government involving the widest range of participation either through elections or through the administration of the accepted policies. It consists of the following: a governmental system that is founded on the principle of rule of law and that goes against arbitrariness, high handedness, and dictatorship. It is the antithesis

³⁸Oddih, M. 'Electoral fraud and the democratic process: Lessons from the 2003 elections. *Elections and the future of democracy in Nigeria*, (2007)

³⁹ Chatham House, "Democracy in Nigeria; Explaining the history of Africa's largest democracy and the influence of the military, ethnicity, and religious belief." *The Royal Institute of International Affairs* (2022) <<https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/06/democracy-nigeria>> Accessed 22 June 2022

of military governance or dictatorships and is associated with accountability and transparency.⁴⁰

Democracy represents first and foremost an increase in citizens' political equality and equity in terms of their popular participation in the society. It is a system of government that enables both the leaders and the citizens to be conscious of what is required, and accomplish it for the betterment of the society in terms of political, social and economic development.⁴¹ This simply means that, in any democratic society, the citizens should be given the freedom to participate in the electoral processes, to enable them choose whom to vote into power without being sentimental or afraid of the electoral outcome. Democratic rule emphasises majority rule as opposed to the authoritarian rule by the few. When people talk about democracy in contemporary times, as a system of governance which serves as a framework within which human affairs are managed in modern nation-states, they are basically talking about "Representative Democracy" which have the features or characteristics earlier discussed.

One of the most important weapons for democracy is the party system. Additionally, conflict is practically inevitable in democracies. This is accurate because democracy looks for efficient means of governing a community as it should be. Conflict occurs when two or more persons use discordant tactics to pursue their goals in order to possess the same thing or hold the same place.⁴²

⁴⁰ Gana, A. T. 'The promise of liberal democracy in Africa: The Nigerian betrayal'. *African Centre for Democratic Governance* (1999) (No.1).

⁴¹ Badru, F. A. Patriarchy and constraints of democratic political space of women in Nigeria. *Unilag Journal of Politics*, [2005] (2) 77–101.

⁴² Aleyomi, M. B. 'Intra-party conflicts in Nigeria: The case study of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)'. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, [2013] 15(4), 281-296.

Nigeria has been into democratic rule for over two decades (1999 till date) however, peace and security are still not guaranteed. Political parties' function and citizens' right to participate are crucial for preserving peace and security. These include, among others, preserving democracy, preserving peace and security, and acting as a unifying factor in a divided polity. Despite difficulties, the overall management of elections implies that they might not be "a fading shadow of democracy" or "without choice".⁴³

Contemporary democratic systems require intermediary actors between state and society as well as institutional mechanisms for the articulation and advocacy of diverse views and policy preferences. Although civil society organisations have for some time claimed to be the rightful and legitimate 'middlemen'; it has been asserted that: "it is now becoming axiomatic that in essence; political parties have a fundamental role to play in the experimentation of modern democratic polity that their roles and significance are not to be taken for granted".⁴⁴ As a result, the idea of democracy has gained popularity in all modern discourse. As people fight for freedom and improved working circumstances, the word 'democracy' has come to ring in their ears and leap to their lips.

It has however been difficult to argue for a certain conceptualization of the term democracy. This is because the word is now being used as a phrase with multiple meanings due to the clear lack of consensus among scholars on the proper definition of the nature and contours of the term.⁴⁵ In response to the aforementioned findings, it has been asserted that if democracy is defined as the "rule of the people" or "sovereignty of the people," without defining it in

⁴³ International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance; The Global State of Democracy 2019 Addressing the Ills, Reviving the Promise. (2019)

⁴⁴ Heywood, P. The emergence of new party systems and transitions to democracy: Spain in comparative perspective (Routledge, 2002) (159-180).

⁴⁵ S McGlinchey, R Walters & C Scheinflug International Relations Theory (2017) <<http://www.e-ir.info/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/International-Relations-Theory-E-IR.pdf>> Accessed 12 June 2022

terms of the characteristics of democratic regimes in modern society, the idea would not become obscure.⁴⁶

The ideal definition of democracy, according to Izibili and Eribo (2008), should acknowledge the "rule of the people" is at its core. This indicates that true democracy would encourage a form of government in which everyone takes part in the decision-making process. If any definition of democracy is to be regarded as accurate, it must take the idea of participation into account. It must also adhere to a set of fundamental principles. These ideas include the right to freedom or liberty, accountability to the people, and the ability to vote and be elected.

The rule of law, majority rule, and constitutionalism are the fundamental tenets of democratic governance, which places sovereignty in the hands of the people rather than a specific group of individuals.⁴⁷ However, Ramaswamy believes otherwise. He states that democracy implies the rule of the people as opposed to the rule of a person or group of people. He continued by saying that in contrast to other systems like monarchy, dictatorship, or oligarchy where there is a separation between the ruler and the ruled, it is the people who are both the rulers and those who govern in democracy.⁴⁸

A critical assessment of the Nigerian political system contradicts the core elements of democracy. Although Nigeria as a democratic nation allows its citizens to exercise their fundamental human right by voting, the system still does not provide sufficient privileges for their votes to count due to some set of people "cabals" which still preside over the outcome of the election behind closed doors.

⁴⁶ R Arnold and I Danélienė "The concept of democracy as developed by constitutional Justice" (2019) <<https://lrkt.lt/data/public/uploads/2020/10/the-concept-of-democracy-web.pdf>> Accessed 12 June 2022

⁴⁷Ogah, I. & Ogenyi, E. 'Democracy and Economic Development in Nigeria: An overview of the role of the mass media'. *African journal of management, social sciences and humanities*. [2014] (2) (1) 52- 65.

⁴⁸Ramaswamy, S. *Political theory: Ideas and concepts*. (Delhi: Macmillan India Ltd 2007).

2.1.2 Politics

The concept of politics on the other hand, has been viewed in different perspectives by scholars who have written on the subject. To the Greeks, the polis was the most relevant community beyond the family level. It was argued that any community larger than the family contains some political elements.⁴⁹ Because the word "politics" derives from the Greek word "polis," which means "city-state," it is frequently employed in the context of states. Political science is described by Harold D. Laswell and Abraham Kaplan as "the study of shape and sharing of power." It included family, property, and other social institutions in his eyes. The German philosopher Karl Marx's Marxist school of thought defines politics as:

“A study of irreconcilable conflicts between the two classes have (those who have private property or simply the rich) and the have nots (those who do not have any private property or simply the poor)”

Politics has been defined in many ways, amongst which are that of Aristotle. He considered the state as the most inclusive association formed by man where he can fully develop. Therefore, he believes that politics deal with the state. Aristotle's main reason for criticising other definitions is that they neglected the aspect of politics which discuss the interaction of state.⁵⁰

The various definitions above consider the concept of politics from the viewpoint of the normative function of politics which is the resolution of conflict of interests. However, it is necessary that its ascriptive value be also put to bear. As a result, the idea of politics will be applicable to the setting of emerging nations, notably Africa, rather than merely the viewpoint of established nations. The holistic approach to the idea of politics can be viewed

⁴⁹ W. J. Korab-Karpowicz Plato: Political Philosophy < <https://iep.utm.edu/platopol/> > Accessed 2 May 2022

⁵⁰ E. O Harriet 'Introduction To International Relations' (2017) <<https://learnclax.com/schooltextbooks/schooltextbooks.php?bookid=5537&Introduction-to-international-relations-PDF-by-Efanodor-Obeten-Harriet>> Accessed 22 May 2022

from two perspectives.⁵¹ Political administration of the public's common affairs is a subject of universal rather than specific concern, with the objective of defining and promoting the common goods.

Politics is, first and foremost, a dishonourable activity whose virtue is the competitive pursuit of private interests. The definition of politics varies from time to time and from place to place.⁵² In other words, the phrase "politics" is laden. When used consistently, it can signify a variety of things. There are many other ways to define politics, including: the study of conflict resolution, the art of government, the conduct and management of public affairs, etc. Scholars have stated that there exists such a connection between politics, politicians, and nation building.⁵³

This is because the concept of politics refers to a procedure in which people (referred to as "politicians" on the one hand and the people on the other) converse about issues pertaining to the "polis," or political society, and act in the interest of the public or for everyone's benefit. The public interest remains the main criterion for measuring nation building. Thus, politics is linked to activities of governance by political actors, with the intention of setting up institutions, structures, and infrastructures focused on public interest and nation building.

Political specialist commonly utilises the term position to depict out of choice of a sovereign government that all residents should acknowledge or follow. The issue with this view is that it isn't inside political settings that qualities are or might be distributed. Qualities are ordinarily designated in other social units and associations, which their individuals are

⁵¹ Williams P.M. The Politics of the US Supreme Court < <http://www.amazon.com/Politics-United-States-Supreme-Court/dp/0043280102>>

⁵² Modebadze, V. The term politics reconsidered in the light of recent theoretical developments, *IBSU Scientific Journal (IBSUSJ)*, ISSN 1512-3731, International Black Sea University, (2010). Tbilisi, 4(1): 39-44

⁵³ Akubor, E. Politics and Politicians in Nigeria: Establishing the Nexus between the Actors, their Actions, and Nation Building (2018). < https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331772538_POLITICS_AND_POLITICIANS_IN_NIGERIA_ESTABLISHING_THE_NEXUS_BETWEEN_THE_ACTORS_THEIR_ACTIONS_AND_NATION_BUILDING> Accessed 13 May 2022

needed to, agree to on the off chance that they most dodge censure or even discipline, for example, removal. This implies that allotment with this unit may not be less definitive than that of by and large perceived political association, for example, government and ideological groups.

Politics has also been seen as "power structure relationship, which means, an arrangement whereby a group of people are controlled by another."⁵⁴ Politics is focused on the institution and the process of acquiring power. It is also an activity through which people strive to acquire power in the society. It can be seen as those public issues that gave rise to conflict in many human societies or groups, there are always differences in opinion or clash of interest which inheritably led to conflict.⁵⁵

In all organised human societies, primitive or modern, past, or present there is bound to be agreement and disagreement. For instance, election is a public issue and all political parties in the country agreed in its principles and practice, that is the process that legally give public office seekers the control of such power could lead to disagreement and thus generate conflict.

It has been proposed that politics is a cycle. This implies its continuing sequence of activities and interactions among different actors (people, organisations and government) which mostly occur within a structure of rules, procedures and institutions instead of erratically.⁵⁶ The essentialness of politics to the existence of statehood makes politics "the science which examines the state and the condition required for its existence and development".⁵⁷ Following

⁵⁴ A R .Saravanakumar 'Power and Politics' (2019) ([PDF](#)) [POWER AND POLITICS \(researchgate.net\)](#)
Accessed May 2022

⁵⁵ Ball, A. R. Modern politics and government. < <https://www.amazon.com/Modern-Politics-Government-Alan-Ball/dp/0333961617> > Accessed 13 May 2022.

⁵⁶ M M Mongiello 'Powerless in Movement: How social movements influence and fail to influence, American politics and policy' (2016)
<<https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4267&context=edissertations>> Accessed 12 May 2022

⁵⁷ P. C. Schmitter 'Politics as a science (aka Politology)'
<<https://www.eui.eu/Documents/DepartmentsCentres/SPS/Profiles/Schmitter/Politics-as-a-science.pdf>>
Accessed 12 May 2022

this viewpoint, politics can be defined as any steady example of human relationships that includes power and supremacy.⁵⁸

So far, the conceptual definitions of politics depict the perspective of these scholars as it identifies with the topic of discussion, one could find the core value of politics from their various views. Therefore, politics deals with topics like the use of power or authority, group decision-making, allocating limited resources among competing interests, the creation and maintenance of rules, as well as the act of deceit and control. Due to Aristotle's assertion that "people can only lead a pleasant existence within a political community," all facets of life have become increasingly politicized.'

It is crucial to come to the realisation that all social issues are in one way or the other connected to political choices of the power that exist, a participation in this basic element of a political framework is consequently a lot of a need.⁵⁹

2.1.3 Political Participation

Political participation as a concept discusses and explores the level at which each citizen of a given country participates in the nation's political affairs by making decisions on who to elect to power, how resources should be allocated and distributed.⁶⁰ In other words, every citizen (adult) of a nation has the civil and political right to participate actively in the country's political affairs.⁶¹

The issue with women's political participation, representation and governance should be viewed from four perspectives: Access, Participation, Representation and Transformation.

⁵⁸ T. Ruuska, 'Domination, Power, Supremacy: Confronting Anthropolitics with Ecological Realism' (2020) <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340225435_Domination_Power_Supremacy_Confronting_Anthropolitics_with_Ecological_Realism> Accessed 12 May 2022

⁵⁹ E I Amah 'Federalism, Nigerian Federal Constitution and the Practice of Federalism: An Appraisal' (2017). <<https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation.aspx?paperid=78734>> Accessed 12 May 2022

⁶⁰Odetola, T.A. and A. Ademola, . *Sociology: An Introductory African Text*. (Macmillan Press, Lagos, 2011)

⁶¹Momodu, R. Intricacies of Women Participation in Party Politics in Akiyode Afolabi, A. and Arogundade, L. (eds) *Gender Audit - 2003 Elections: And Issues in Women's Political Participation in Nigeria*. Lagos. *Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre (WARDC)*.(2003). 37-62

Access to political organisations, participation (which encompasses control of power within such organisations), quantitative and subjective representation and the outcome will be social and political change in the nation. The fulfilment of these four conditions can enhance the chances of women being politically empowered.

The idea that women's involvement in politics is important is supported by three reasons: Firstly, politics is a significant arena for decision making. Government officials tend to decide how to distribute scarce resources, for example, tax incomes. People holding governmental positions make political choices that may favour a few people to the detriment of others. Politicians' choices are most likely to influence personal preferences by promoting some behaviours and forbidding others. Second, political influence is a worthwhile asset. Politically powerful people rule over other social institutions like the family. Thirdly, occupying a political position entail exercising authority.⁶² Women in positions of authority can make an informed decision on issues that concern women in general and positively impact the lives of the female gender.

Political participation is the degree and types of the people's contribution in governance and related organisations of society, for instance, the economy and culture. In active sense, it includes participating in political missions and discussions, being present in political gatherings or strategy meetings, casting votes during elections, indicating interest in political positions, holding a government and party posts.⁶³ Political participation has also been defined as the freedom of expression, association, right to communicate freely, influence

⁶²Paxton, P., Hughes, M., & Painter, M. 'Growth in Women's Political Representation: a Longitudinal Exploration of Democracy, Electoral system and Gender Quotas'. *European Journal of Political Research*. [2010].

⁶³ Osimen G, & others, Political Participation and Gender Inequality in Nigeria Fourth Republic (2018). <<https://www.eajournals.org/journals/global-journal-of-political-science-and-administration-gjpsa/vol-6-issue-5-october-2018/political-participation-and-gender-inequality-in-nigerian-fourth-republic/>> 13 May 2022

decision processes, and right to social equity.⁶⁴ Accordingly, it further expresses such rights to demand for better health and social services, better working conditions, and increase in wages, among others. As a result, this will only be utilized in the narrow sense of running for office as well as engaging in electoral politics in this instance. Seeking control of power, resource distribution, and making decisions in accordance with group or individual interests are the goals of political engagement in any society, developed or underdeveloped.

All groups, including women, engage in politics primarily to sway the balance of power in favour of their own personal interests. In recent years, women have been seeking power dynamics, resource distribution, and allocation in their subconscious minds. Even yet, circumspect observations have revealed that the presence of women in Nigerian politics is typically apparent during the voting process and through sporadic support. It was suggested that violence and other forms of political conflicts caused and sustained by the men (mostly youths) is the major barrier that hinders Nigerian women from actively participating in politics.⁶⁵

There are on-going arguments with regards to specific roles women should play in society, whether they should mainly focus on household affairs or also participate in other socio-political and economic activities like their male counterparts.⁶⁶ For instance, It has been argued that women not having equal opportunity as their male counterparts to participate in political positions is a form of oppression and discrimination against them.⁶⁷ However, on the contrary, it can be argued that political gender inequality in Nigeria is not an oppression against the women or marginalisation in the Nigerian political space, rather it is simply and

⁶⁴ I Suleiman 'The role of women towards political participation in Nigeria'. *American Economic & Social Review* [2017] (1) (1)

⁶⁵ S.K Rachel, Barriers for Young Women in Northern Nigeria (2022)
<<https://www.usip.org/blog/2022/08/barriers-young-women-northern-nigeria> > Accessed 30 August 2022

⁶⁶Dare, A. & Folorunso, S. Women and Political Participation in Nigeria (2012)
<https://www.academia.edu/7018305/Women_and_Political_Participation_in_Nigeria> Accessed 10 May 2022

⁶⁷Onyenwere, J. *Women and Governance: A Case Study of Nigerian Women*. (Tallinn University of Technology 2017).

evidently a natural phenomenon as the women, right from inception were created as subordinates to men, while the men are structured to “lord” over them. In other words, women are naturally predisposed towards socio-political activities. While it is presumed that a mother's natural bond with her child may compel and prevent her from being involved in various social and political activities, it is equally crucial that such a mother provides her fair share to the growth of her family and that of society as a whole. The persistent exclusion of Nigerian women from participation in these activities prevents it. It is interesting to note that while society recognizes the importance of women in politics only as participants in the democratic process, they are nevertheless viewed as unqualified to occupy political office, preventing them from engaging in power structures and achieving their political objectives.

When women are a minority, having access to positions of power does not necessarily mean that their interests will be better coordinated. This also explains why women risk having their basic needs subsumed in their interests with regards to their involvement in a specific class, cultural or ethnic groups. The inclusion of women in politics can contribute to "the feminization of the political plan," which is the expression of women's interests and points of view in public discourse, in the same way as it is important to consider how public policies affect women.⁶⁸

In a male-dominated parliament, gender-related topics are typically either ignored or viewed primarily from a male perspective. In another situation, female lawmakers may need to persuade or convince their male colleagues to see the benefits of passing a particular gender law. Individuals who do not support the idea of women involvement in politics are strongly against the idea of women going out of their way to encourage or convince others to participate in politics.

⁶⁸Dovi, S. Making Democracy work for Women? (Being a Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago 2006).

In response to the question of women's emancipation, the minister of women's affairs and social development "decried poor participation and marginalization of women in the Nigerian political realm, attributing it to the unfavourable political climate in Nigeria.⁶⁹ She further linked the low representation of women in politics to the pervasiveness of violence and patriarchy, in addition to financial concerns. Money, politics and power are some of the major requirements needed to participate, contest and possibly win elections in the Nigerian political system, and these factors indirectly relegates women to the political background because they are not financially empowered to challenge their male counterparts.

Moreover, there have consistently been instances of much violence and killings, and most women are not psychologically fit to withstand these conflicts.⁷⁰ Conventional Nigerian society considers women's education to be in the home front. Therefore, the girl child is informally trained to be domesticated and well behaved. The girls were socialised into domestic chores of cooking, domestic chores, food crop production, childbearing, managing the home and also fulfilling their wifely duties, while the boys on the other hand are trained to get formal education with parental and societal support, and also encouraged to participate in some leadership positions in their communities, these privileges indirectly gave them the sense of superiority over the girls.

Consequently, the society unconsciously contributed to the challenges women encounter in the contemporary Nigerian political system due to leadership and education privilege given to the boy child. Most people associate women with the dissemination of society culture and moral ideals. However, a population with a high level of education tends to create adults who are politically aware and engaged. Educational negligence of a significant population of the

⁶⁹Suleiman, J. "Untangling Feminist theory" in Richardson D. and Robinson V
<<https://eprints.ncl.ac.uk/fulltext.aspx?url=208627%2FC47AFBCF-3899-4C18-A618-7B793E2FFF53.pdf>>
Accessed 15 May 2022

⁷⁰ Osimen G, & others, Political Participation and Gender Inequality in Nigeria Fourth Republic (2018).
<<https://www.eajournals.org/journals/global-journal-of-political-science-and-administration-gjpsa/vol-6-issue-5-october-2018/political-participation-and-gender-inequality-in-nigerian-fourth-republic/>> 13 May 2022

society (women) could be dangerous and retrogressive. Women marginalisation has been in existence for decades. Discrimination against women comes in various forms, such as economic, socio-cultural, religious, traditional and political, these and many more hinders women from actualising their desired dreams, especially in politics. These cultures and traditions accord lots of respect to the men while the women are seen as the weaker gender.⁷¹

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 African Feminist Theory

There are various feminist theories, feminist perspectives and definitions. Some African scholars suggested utilising the African version theory as a theoretical framework to facilitate the subject of African women in insolvent leadership positions. They argued that more research is required in order to understand African women experiences and statuses with regards to leadership positions⁷². As this research is based on gender study in Nigeria society, discussing African feminist theory does fundamental, to give a better understand on the realities of African culture, traditions, and beliefs. affirm that traditional and cultural practices perceive and treat women as being inferior to men which result in women subjugation, while giving room for men to continue dominating women in the political, economic, social and religious realm.⁷³ A research in Georgia claims that traditional values is one of the factors hindering women from political participation, considering that fact that women have the greatest responsibilities in domestic works, some cultural and stereotypical

⁷¹Iloh E. & Mike A. Electoral Process and Gender Discrimination in Nigeria. *UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights & International Bar Association*, (2009), 508.

⁷²Nkomo, S., & Ngambi, H. African women in leadership: Current knowledge and a framework for future studies. *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies*, [2009]. 4(1), 49-68.

⁷³Okafor, E. E. & Akokuwebe, M. E. Women and Leadership in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects. *Developing Countries Studies*. (2015). (5), 1-11

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292141382_Women_and_Leadership_in_Nigeria_Challenges_and_Prospects > 10 June 2022

roles have been assigned to the women in the society.⁷⁴ Women subjugation has been in practice right from the colonial period, generally, their participation and political representation in Nigeria has a very long history of marginalisation and domination by men. Perhaps, man has always been characterized by discrimination: racial, class and of course, gender or sex discrimination from antiquity.⁷⁵ Consequently, the majority of the research works written about Nigerian women contribution to political participation and decision-making shows that, women are poorly represented in politics, and the existing research works also reveals that the factors militating these women from assuming leadership positions are centred on gender inequality, culture, women oppression, patriarchy and religion. In other words, most of these existing works are focused on pin-pointing the major issues that have been preventing women from having rights and access to political positions like their male counterparts in Nigeria

2.2.2 Patriarchal Theory

Scholars among other authors advocated for the “theory of Patriarchy”. The male dominance of females was emphasized by patriarchy theorists. It is argued that men shape ideology, philosophy, art, and religion to fit their purposes and that they control access to institutional authority⁷⁶. Men strategically dominate the economic, political, and sociological systems in the majority of the world's societies, leaving women generally in "second fiddle" roles. They went on to say that colonialism in Nigeria is frequently linked to the gender bias in that country's political structure. So, their interactions with Nigerians reinforced the western

⁷⁴Blomgren, E. *Women and Political Participation*. (Linnaeus University 2010).

⁷⁵Abubakar, M. & Ahmad, Z. Women and Political Participation: Toward Attainment of 35% Affirmative Action and Obstacles to the Women Participation in Nigerian Politics and Decision-Making Process. *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science*, (2014) 2(9): 65-71.

⁷⁶Ajibade, D., Ocheni, M. M. & Adekunle, A. Factors Militating Against Women Active Participation in Politics in Ofu Local Government Area of Kogi State Nigeria. *Current Research Journal of Social Sciences* (2012) 4(6): 459-465.

cultural paradigm of colonialism built upon masculine dominance.⁷⁷ The aforementioned scholars are convinced that women's marginalization in modern Nigerian society, particularly in the area of political participation and decision-making, is largely due to the influence of western culture during the colonial period. Colonialism was a significant factor in the oppression of women in public settings.⁷⁸ They contend that colonialism deliberately restricted women to home work and removed their standing from public life. They contended that certain of the colonial measures outlined in Sir Hugh Clifford's 1992 constitution inherently disenfranchised the women from taking part in any political action. From the onset, the British colonialists influenced by the patriarchal attitudes set out to undermine the traditional indigenous structures that empowered women and ensured the balance of gender power in the communities they took over.⁷⁹ Thus, patriarchy and colonialism are intertwined, taking into consideration that most of the western cultures and policies during the colonial period promoted the dominance of men over women. The men were held in high esteem while the women were seen as their subjects, which automatically conditioned the society to see men as leaders and dictators. When it comes to governance, men's attitudes toward women are those of demotion, denial, insubordination, and pity. Due to inadequate representation and inequities in the leadership structure, women have quietly experienced severe misfortune in religious contexts, workplaces, academic organizations, and family life. This means that because they demand a State monopoly over those forces—the press, the radio, the film, and even culture—and because they won't allow organized minority groups, males are viewed as "dictators".⁸⁰ The above excerpt clearly indicates that women are not only oppressed in political spaces, but also in other parastatals in the society both publicly

⁷⁷Omodia, S. M., Esidene, E. C. & Abdul, S.U. The Role of Women in Nigerian Politics: Conceptual and Theoretical Issues for an Enhanced Political Participation in the Fourth Republic. *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences*. [2013] 5(1): 88-105.

⁷⁸Edegebe U & Imafidon K. Women Participation in Politics and Affirmative Action in Nigerian Democratic Governance, 1999-2015. *Lapai International Journal of Management and Social Sciences*(2018) 9(1):195-209.1

⁷⁹Anigwe, A. *Perceptions of Women in Political Leadership Positions in Nigeria*. (Walden University 2014)

⁸⁰Themeje, G. The need for participation of women in local governance: A Nigerian discourse. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, [2013] (5) (4), 59-66.

and privately, including religion which ascribed some 25 stereotypical roles to the women. Hence, women marginalisation has caused a major setback on national development

In the past two decades, the term "patriarchy" has been reinvented to examine the causes and dynamics of men's oppression of women.⁸¹ The term "patriarchy," which was first used to denote the father's authority as the head of the family, has come to mean the systematic structuring of male supremacy and female submission in post-1960s feminism. The word refers to a male-dominated authority structure that subjugates women through its social, political, and economic institutions. Feminist theorists contend that a sex gender system and a system of economic inequality coexist in any historical form of patriarchal society, including feudal, capitalist, and communist societies. They define patriarchy as an unfair societal structure that is hostile toward women. Carole Pateman, a feminist and political theorist, writes "The patriarchal construction of the difference between masculinity and femininity is the political difference between freedom and subjection"⁸². In feminist philosophy, the term "patriarchy" refers to any social structures that perpetuate and enforce male supremacy over women. Typically, feminist theory views patriarchy as a social construct that may be dismantled by exposing and examining its forms.⁸³ It is submitted that the term "patriarchy" refers to a complex network or system of hierarchical structure that spans the political, economic, social, religious, cultural, industrial, and financial sectors and is characterized by the preponderance of top positions in society held by men⁸⁴. Therefore, a patriarchal system is one that institutionalizes an order that gives men an unfair advantage over women.

⁸¹C Bruneau 'How do patriarchy and capitalism jointly reinforce the oppression of women'? (2022) <<https://www.cadtm.org/How-do-patriarchy-and-capitalism-jointly-reinforce-the-oppression-of-women>> 14 September 2022

⁸² Muskan Soni, 'Patriarchal Power: A Theoretical Unravelling Of Power Imbalances' (2022) <<https://feminisminindia.com/2022/03/29/patriarchal-power-a-theoretical-unravelling-of-power-imbalances/>> Accessed April 2022

⁸³ Ashley Crossman, *Feminist Theory in Sociology: An Overview of Key Ideas and Issues*. (2020) <<https://www.thoughtco.com/feminist-theory-3026624>> Accessed April 2022

⁸⁴Okpe, O. *Mainstreaming Gender in the African Development Process: A Critic of NEPAD and the Women Question*. (Nigeria: BSU Press 2005)

According to the literature, the patriarchal family served as the fundamental organizational unit that allowed for the formation and practice of male domination over women and children. The head of the household in a patriarchy is said to manage the family's production resources, labour force, and reproductive capabilities based on ideas of superiority and inferiority that are justified by distinctions in gender and generation. A set of social connections known as patriarchy has a material foundation and is characterized by hierarchical relationships and male solidarity that allow men to rule over women. The dominance of men over women's labour is the material foundation of patriarchy. Women are denied access to resources that are necessary for economic productivity and are subjected to sexual restrictions in order to preserve that control. Men exercise their control by getting women to perform personal services for them, by not having to take care of the house or raise kids, by having access to women's bodies for sex, and by feeling and acting powerful. Heterosexual marriage, female childrearing and household duties, women's economic dependence on men (which is reinforced by labour market policies), the state, and the numerous institutions based on social relations among men; clubs, sports, unions, professions, universities, churches, corporations, and armies; are the key components of patriarchy as we currently experience it.⁸⁵

2.2.3 Feminist Theory

In this thesis I will use basic feministic theory in order to spotlight the problem of women's under-representation in politics. The gender-power-order according to feminist theory is always present in our society; it shapes structures and sets current power relations.⁸⁶ The core

⁸⁵Franca Attoh, Gender, religion and patriarchy: a sociological analysis of catholicism and Pentecostalism in Nigeria (2017)

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319603610_GENDER_RELIGION_AND_PATRIARCHY_A_SOCIOLOGICAL_ANALYSIS_OF_CATHOLICISM_AND_PENTECOSTALISM_IN_NIGERIA> Accessed May 2022

⁸⁶There are as known different types of feminist theories which I will not further investigate.

of this theoretical framework is the essentials of feminist theory. It appears that all feminists share the notion that different social benefits and burdens follows depending on what sex you are born as. A central feature of feminist political theory is the notion that women and their situation are central to political analysis. Its interest lies in questioning the fact that men appear to have more power and privilege than women and asking how it can be changed. Gender in politics has two sides, and although separate it is associated with each other. One is women's representation and the other is concern for women's issues. Representation increases the likelihood for considering women's issues as well as brings in gender perspective; however, representation on its own cannot guarantee the desired outcome. Gender refers to the roles, relationships, attitudes, behaviour and values etc that society ascribes to men and women. Much of the recent focus on gender relations has to do with the influence of feminism. Feminists all over have come to characterize gender relations as matters of subordination and inequality. Men and women are assigned different roles, with men having an aggressive disposition and women being supposedly more nurturing.

2.2.4 Feminism and Representation

One fundamental point in feminist view on the politics of women's representation is that differences among women, such as class, ethnicity, race, generation etc, have great impact on their interests and priorities.⁸⁷ These between men and women play an important role in the politics of representation. I will mention some existing theories on the low representation of

⁸⁷ Feminist Perspectives on Class and Work (2022) <<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-class/>> Accessed June 2022

women in politics. It is for one said that traditionalistic cultures have a lower female representation than so called moralistic and individualistic state cultures.⁸⁸

Clark brings up several common theories on low representation within feminist theory sex-role socialization is a factor much similar the gender role structure and relations mentioned in the as the cause. When it comes to life roles, women and men are taught that the home is the woman's domain and that politics and public life belong to the male. The fact that housework and parental responsibilities prevent women from engaging in politics and public life is another aspect of this sex-role dilemma. She brings up the male conspiracy theory, which is a product of feminism and is predicated on the notion that men discriminate against women and as a result, women are underrepresented in political power.

She goes on to discuss the structural barriers that prevent women from holding elected office since they are less likely than men to become incumbents. She concludes that while political office is viewed as being powerful, prestigious, and desirable, it has also been considered a factor in determining the degree of representation of women since women face significant challenges competing with men in these fields.

There are primarily two approaches to the issue of female underrepresentation in politics: some studies contend that there must be a certain number of female representatives (descriptive representation), known as the critical mass; other studies emphasize the significance of a small number of female politicians who actively promote gender-equality issues (substantive representation). Depending on the researcher, estimates of the proportion of women that make up this critical mass range from 10 to 35 percent. One researcher, Laurel Weldon, believes that some amount of female representation is less significant than the few

⁸⁸These categories of cultures come from Elazar's classification of the states in the United States of America. I do not regard these categories as perfectly adaptable in any way. Nonetheless, they are useful in getting an overview and some sort of idea on different types of cultures (Clark 1991:70-75).

female politicians who actively support issues of gender equality, as opposed to the many who genuinely participate in "the game of males".

Theories of descriptive representation contend that depriving any group of power may skew political results and policy judgments. How much power women have in elected office has to do with substantive representation. Even while there are now more women than males in positions of power, it does not automatically follow that their views and interests are taken into account. Elazar's classification of the states in the United States of America yielded these cultural groups.⁸⁹ These categories are not, in my opinion, completely customizable. However, they are helpful for acquiring a broad perspective and idea of many cultures.

The notion of a "critical mass," or the number of women needed in politics, say, 30%, for them to genuinely have an impact. There is an assertion that the presence of more women in politics will result in a decline in gender stereotypes. The fact that more types of women are represented in politics has led to a decline in the stereotyping of women. Accordingly, when there are few women in elected office, there are few female role models, and there are few possibilities for women to gain political experience. I'll make an effort to apply the aforementioned theoretical representational points of departure to the study's findings. My goal is to assess the various ideas, apply them to the findings, and determine which hypothesis most closely matches the findings. For instance, I'll investigate if the descriptive or substantive approach receives more attention. Comparing the outcomes with the theoretical framework discussed in this chapter, as well as with earlier outcomes, is another crucial consideration.

⁸⁹ Thien Chau, The Effects of Political Culture and Structure on Nutrient Reduction Policy (2015) <<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1173&context=envstudtheses> > 14 Accessed 2022

Chapter Three

Factors Hindering Women's Political Participation in Nigeria

Women have historically been excluded from political participation and decision-making processes. Women were excluded from political participation and decision-making even in the fifth century BC, when democracy first emerged in ancient Athens⁹⁰. The women in Athens were not considered citizens and did not have the right to vote or participate in the democratic process.

Even in African nations, women did not have the right to vote or have any influence over public policy until the turn of the 20th century. As a result, during the first wave of democratisation (1828–1926), women's franchise rights were not recognised in many European nations⁹¹. In the case of Nigeria, women's status in the political and public sphere is a relatively new phenomenon, and their participation is still very low. They continue to be largely underrepresented in positions of decision-making across all levels. They haven't made much progress either in terms of gaining political influence in legislative bodies. Even though more women are working in formal jobs, they are still underrepresented in middle and upper management positions. There are also still very few women who are leaders and decision-makers at the various levels of the decentralised government structure⁹².

Women's under-representation in politics and governance has long been a source of concern on a global scale. In Nigeria, the proportion of women in politics is not proportionate to the 50 percent of the population that they represent, and this has not translated into equal

⁹⁰Federica Carugati, "Tradeoffs of Inclusion: Development in Ancient Athens" *Sage Journals* (2019) (53) (1)

⁹¹ Women's Political Participation ~ Africa Barometer 2021

<<https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/womens-political-participation-africa-barometer-2021.pdf>> Accessed 22 May 2022

⁹²A.W. Geiger and Lauren Kent, "Number of women leaders around the world has grown, but they're still a small group" <<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/03/08/women-leaders-around-the-world/>> Accessed 22 May 2022

representation in political leadership positions⁹³. Rising global focus on gender equality issues, aided by calls such as goal three of the Millennium Development Goals, is bridging the gap created by long-standing discriminations against women and assisting in making women more visible in politics. In this context, Nigeria has acknowledged women in politics, including them in both appointive and elective positions⁹⁴. The participation and access of women to formal political power structures varies by country. Gender inequality permeates every level of Nigerian society including the political sphere. This gender stratified society assigns rights and responsibilities on the basis of physiological differences between men and women⁹⁵

The challenges that women face are enormous; however, researchers have shown that the following are likely to be to blame for the massive marginalization of Nigerian women in politics. It should be noted that full and equitable participation of women in public life is critical to the development and maintenance of strong, vibrant democracies. Furthermore, women's political participation promotes gender equality by influencing both the range of policy issues considered and the types of solutions proposed. And one might wonder, "Why are women in politics?" In many pre-colonial communities, women participated in politics and were less excluded from decision-making, but the gender-bias policies of the colonial government helped to establish and uphold patriarchy⁹⁶. Examples of such women who even served as military warlords in their own communities include Queen Amina of Zaria, Iyalode of Ibadan, Efunsetan Aniwura, Moremi of Ile-Ife, and others. Additionally, they noted that

⁹³ Pauline Tallen, "Low number of women in politics, bane of Nigeria's development" premium times News Paper (2022) <<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/528219-low-number-of-women-in-politics-bane-of-nigerias-development-minister.html>> Accessed 22 May 2022

⁹⁴ Banjo O. O and others, "Women Participation in Elective and Appointive Political Positions and Influence on younger women's political aspiration among female undergraduates in Nigeria." *African Scholar Publications & Research International* (2021) (23) (6)

⁹⁵Eniola B. O., Gender Parity in Parliament: A Panacea for the Promotion and Protection of Women's Rights in Nigeria, (2018), < <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fsoc.2018.00034/full>> Accessed 13 May 2022

⁹⁶ E O Jaiyeola and Aladegbola Isaac, "Patriarchy and Colonization: The "Brooder House" for Gender Inequality in Nigeria" *Journal of Research on Women and Gender* [2020] (10) (3-22)

women's political participation differs around the world and that discussions of development and governance today are inextricably linked to women's involvement in politics and the democratic process. Furthermore, women's fundamental right to participate in political life includes them having equal access to power and decision-making with males. This is also at the core of gender equality and women's empowerment.

More so, the Nigerian 1999 constitution (as amended) clearly states that any citizen, male or female, may form or join any political party, trade union, or other association for the protection of his or her interests. The same constitution further upholds the rights of women to be treated equally when participating in any legal endeavour⁹⁷. Results reveal that women continue to make up a small portion of individuals active in political decision-making and leadership, despite the lobbying and declarations of men's and women's rights and equality made by the United Nations and other international organizations, to which Nigeria is a signatory⁹⁸. Numerous reasons contribute to the continued decline in women's participation. The number of women coming out has decreased from prior years. In especially in the Fourth Republic, the researcher aims to discuss and examine the elements that affect women's political participation. There are many obstacles in Nigeria that prevent women from actively participating in politics. The following, among others, are some of the difficulties this thesis looks at:

3.1 Socio-cultural Factors

Women's active engagement in politics is significantly hampered by the deeply ingrained sociocultural norms in Nigeria that favour men over women. Due to the traditional ideal of a virtuous woman characterized as quiet and submissive who should be seen and not heard,

⁹⁷Section 42 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended)

⁹⁸Comfort Y A, "The Invisibility of Women's Organizations in Decision Making Process and Governance in Nigeria" <<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fsoc.2018.00040/full>> Accessed 23 June 2022

women (particularly Northern women) are discouraged from participating in public life by authority figures such as spouses, dads, mothers, and other relatives from childhood to adulthood. The majority of Nigerians, including women, continue to hold conventional viewpoints that perceive women as inferior to men, second-class citizens, weaker sex, to be seen but not heard, child bearers/primary carers, and other stereotypes because of the patriarchal nature of Nigerian society⁹⁹. They typically do not dare to enter politics because they think it is a game played solely by men, and those that do are typically consigned to the rear rows.

In many countries, traditions continue to emphasize women's primary roles as mothers and housewives and to restrict them to those roles. A traditional strong, patriarchal value system favours sexually segregated roles, and 'traditional cultural values' militate against the advancement, progress and participation of women in any political process¹⁰⁰. Societies all over the world are dominated by an ideology of 'a woman's place'. According to this ideology, women should only play the role of 'working mother', which is generally low-paid and apolitical. In addition, in some countries, men even tell women how to vote. This is the environment, in which a certain collective image of women in traditional, apolitical roles continues to dominate, which many women face¹⁰¹.

So that today, cultural ideas about women can affect women's levels of representation throughout the political process, from an individual woman's decision to enter politics, to party selection of candidates, to the decisions made by voters on election day. Hence, women

⁹⁹ Sanni Yaya and others, "Men's perception of barriers to women's use and access of skilled pregnancy care in rural Nigeria: a qualitative study" *Reproductive Health Journal* (2019) < <https://reproductive-health-journal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12978-019-0752-3> > Accessed 22 June 2022

¹⁰⁰ Chinwe P I, "Hurdles to Women Political Participation and Advancement in Nigeria: The Legal Leeway" *Law and Social Justice Review (LASJURE)* [2021] (2) (1)

¹⁰¹ Women's Political Participation ~ Africa Barometer 2021 < <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/womens-political-participation-africa-barometer-2021.pdf> > Accessed 22 May 2022

face prejudice as leaders because people tend to assume that leadership is a masculine trait¹⁰². And when women do lead, they face a problem. People evaluate autocratic behaviour by women more negatively than the same behaviour by men. Thus, even in countries where women have made gains in employment or education, they face cultural barriers to participation in politics.

In the context of Nigeria, there is a traditional belief that, women are made to take care of children and do kitchen works than participating outside home activity. Hence, there is division of works between men and women, which means home activities are belongs to women and outside home activities are belongs to men. Women are overburdened with different household activities like cooking, take caring kids, washing and so on. These all activities make women busy in the household and impede their involvement in the politics of the country. In line with a study conducted by on Socio-cultural Factors that Hinder Women's Access to Management Positions, revealed that women have to do house duties, gardening, and washing up while men go out for duty and also go for further studies outside the family as women stay back to take charge of the family¹⁰³.

Culturally, there is a belief that women are supposed to be led but not to lead. In fact, stereotyped notions about women constitute major barriers; societal perception about leadership ability of women, women's lack of assertiveness is some barriers that hinder the participation of women. According to George¹⁰⁴ women's ability to engage politically both within and beyond the voting booth particularly as community organisers and elected

¹⁰²C Radu, A Deaconu and C Frăsineanu, Leadership and Gender Differences—Are Men and Women Leading in the Same Way? (2017) <<https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/52779>> Accessed 22 May 2022

¹⁰³ G.H Lunyolo and others, "Socio-cultural Factors that Hinder Women's Access to Management Positions in Government Grant Aided Secondary Schools in Uganda: The Case of Eastern Region" *International Research Journals* (2014) (2141-5161) (5) (7) 241-250

¹⁰⁴ George, R. Gender norms and women's political participation: Global trends and findings on norm change. (2019). < <https://www.alignplatform.org/resources/2019/02/gender-norms-and-womens-political-participation-global-trends-and-findings-norm>> Accessed 22 May 2022

officials is often shaped by norms that drive wider social structures. Fundamental to the constraints that women face is an entrenched patriarchal system in which family control and decision-making powers are in the hands of males. Traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes especially as regards women's roles and status in society remain strong, particularly in rural areas¹⁰⁵. Traditional roles and the division of labour are still clearly gendered. Social norms that make it more difficult for women to leave their traditionally domestic roles for more public roles outside of the home¹⁰⁶. Women's gender identity is still predominantly conceived of as being domestic in nature, and continues to act as a barrier to women's entry into formal politics.

This low participation of women in politics may be as a result of some socio-cultural, factor which include: gender and cultural patterns, ideology, pre- determined social roles assigned to women, male dominance and control, limited access to education and illiteracy, poverty and unemployment, lack of confidence in other women, lack of access to information, conflicting demands on time of women candidates among others¹⁰⁷. The marginalization and low participation of women ran through all the political parties. For instance, the cultural tradition which supports patriarchy in most African societies upholds that men should be considered first in all human endeavours because women are looked at as second class citizens therefore should be under men's control. Women are relegated to the background and are placed in subordinate positions in the family and the society at large. Men assume leadership positions in the family and take major decisions in the family even at the detriment of women; due to this subjugation, many girls and women are not educated so as not question

¹⁰⁵ Sadie, Y. Women in political decision-making in the SADC region (2005).
<<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/4066648.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A3e02ca47208b5dc4c5e21bb15ee0c3cb>>
Accessed 22 May 2022

¹⁰⁶ Kangas, A., Haider, H., Fraser, E., & Browne, E. Gender and governance. (2015). <https://gsdrc.org/topic-guides/gender/gender-and-governance/> Accessed 22 May 2022

¹⁰⁷ Afolabi, A.A." Nigeria's electoral reform and the prospect for women's participation in the 2011 elections". Women Advocate Research & Development Centre (WARDC) [2011]

the authority of men because women education ends in the kitchen as men usually say. Also this culture of patriarchy is a very strong determinant of male dominance over female and as a result men will sit back in the family to keep the family name and lineage growing while women will be married out. Thus, men are being trained for leadership activities while women are confined to domestic activities; roles ascribed to them by culture which affect them later in life, thereby making them to lose self-confident/worth and have low self-esteem in their career in adult life, politics inclusive. However, in politics, the manifestoes of the parties reveal the inclusion of gender provisions which exists only in theory and not in practice. For instance, “the articles of PDP and APGA titled ‘the character of the party’ and ‘the policy of women’ have it that the parties shall be a non-tribal, non-religious and non-sexist democratic organization; it shall promote the emancipation of women by encouraging their representation at all levels devoid of gender discrimination and shall emphasize more on the need to work in accordance with the Beijing declarations and promote gender parity and more inclusive democracy¹⁰⁸ (Moghadam, 1993). But none of the parties abide by the rules guiding the parties on election matters with regard to women’s participation. Similarly, Beijing Platform for Action calls on governments, national bodies private sector and political parties to implement measures to ensure women’s equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision making, establish the goal of gender balance in all government bodies and committee, protecting and promotion of equal rights of women and men to engage in political activities. Yet most of these bodies ignore women when it comes to political matters or leadership positions because of the cultural belief that women are weaker sex. Equally the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) upholds the importance of women’s involvement in the political machinery of state parties and elimination of discrimination in women’s political participation through

¹⁰⁸ Moghadam, V.M. “Social protection and women workers in Asia”. The United Nations University Working Papers No. 110. *World Institute for Development Economic Research*. [1993].
<www.wider.unu.edu/./WP110.pdf> Accessed 10 May 2022

legal and temporary special measures and affirmative action (CEDAW, 2002). Consequently, in Ekwusigo local government area, women are highly marginalized and are poorly represented in political activities. Some of the reasons are that culturally, women see politics as masculine activities; and also they are being limited by their domestic chores such as child rearing, care for the family members, poor orientation about what politics entails, illiteracy or limited education and violent political activities. As such, women prefer to vote for men candidates rather than to be voted for. Despite, all these Beijing declarations and party manifestoes, the problem of poor representation and participation of women in political activities in this area of study still persist. This problem could only be reduced through the implementation of government and parties' policies. Implementation of policies and strategies are the most difficult challenges facing Nigeria and her citizens, and also the greatest obstacle to the pursuit of sustainable national development and peaceful co-existence. It is therefore necessary to identify the strategies for enhancing or improving women's participation in politics in the area of study and Nigeria in general for a sustainable national development.

3.2 Economic Factor

The gender status quo is maintained through low resource allocation to women's human development by the state, society and the family. While it is important for women to compete with men for political positions, lack of financial capability is a big hindrance in many countries.¹⁰⁹ The socio-cultural dependence of women is one of the key detrimental factors to their political participation in public political domain. Gender role ideology does not only create duality of femininity and masculinity; it also places them in hierarchal fashion in

¹⁰⁹ Anifowose, R., *Women Political Participation in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects*. In: Akuboye, S.O.(Ed.), *Paradox of Gender Equality in Nigerian Politics*. (Concept Publication Ltd., Lagos 2004).

which female sex is generally valued less than male sex because of their socially ascribed roles in reproductive sphere.¹¹⁰

Not many women are financially buoyant to participate in Nigerian politics. Politics in Nigeria is becoming increasingly commercialized. More money is needed to participate in the politics. Women participation in the politics of Nigeria was therefore limited because many women did not have access to ownership of productive resources. Also the idea of vote buying which is peculiar to Nigerian politics may not favour the women. Vote buying has implications for female candidates as many of them are not economically buoyant like their male competitors and may not be able to influence their voters with money as recorded in 2011 general election¹¹¹. Added to that was the fact that about 70% of the 1.3 billion women are living in on less than a dollar per day (World Bank 2001)¹¹². This indicated that gender inequalities in developing countries inhibit economic growth; and there is a correlation between gender discrimination and greater poverty, slower economic growth, weaker government and lower standard of living of the people¹¹³.

In Nigeria, politics, and specifically running for office, is an expensive endeavour that calls for a sizable financial commitment and solid financial support. Nigerian women's often precarious financial condition is a major issue that largely explains their poor political participation and electoral failure. Despite concessions granted by some major political parties that lower the cost of obtaining party nomination forms for women into elective office, the cost of realizing electoral ambition is still far beyond the reach of even the most highly placed women in the absence of "a godfather who foots the bill in exchange for unlimited

¹¹⁰ Rai M. S. International Perspective on Gender and Governance. (Macmillan Press, Great Britain 2010).

¹¹¹ Ojo, J. Nigeria Women and National Development. *The Punch*, [June 14, 2011]16.

¹¹² world development report; 2007 Development and the Next Generation
<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/556251468128407787/pdf/359990WDR0complete.pdf> Accessed May 2022

¹¹³ Ibid

favour when the seat is eventually secured."¹¹⁴ Due to the cultural value assumption that political activities are masculine and that male candidates have a better chance of winning elections, the godfathers and other funders of Nigerian politicians favour male political aspirants over female ones when it comes to financial support. In Nigeria, women's lack of financial stability serves as a significant impediment to active political participation due to their lack of access to credit facilities, lack of inheritance rights for developmental purposes, and culturally unacceptable control over their income and resources while residing with their husbands (for married women). Thus, competing for political positions in Nigeria 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.¹¹⁵

3.3 Religious Factor

Religion is another important source of cultural beliefs in most countries. Arguments about women's inferiority to men are present across all dominant religions, and religion has long been used to exclude women from aspects of social, political, or religious life around the world¹¹⁶.

But the major religions of the world are differentially conservative or patriarchal in their views about the place of women, both in the church hierarchy and in society. For example, Protestantism promotes nonhierarchical religious practices and more readily accepts women

¹¹⁴Yahaya, A. "Muslim Women and Political Participation in Nigeria" (Being Paper Presented at the Nigerian Muslim and Democracy Conference Abuja, 2012).

¹¹⁵ Ngara, C.O. & Ayabam, A.T. "Women in politics and decision making in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects". *Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, (2013).

¹¹⁶M R Abdulla, "Culture, Religion, and Freedom of Religion or Belief" *The Review of Faith & International Affairs journal* (2018) (16) <<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15570274.2018.1535033>> Accessed 30 June 2022

as religious leaders compared with Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity. And Islamic law is typically interpreted in a manner that constrains the activities of women

Hence, exclusion of women from religious institutions and religious leadership may have a negative impact on women's status in society and limit their opportunities in politics and public life. Hence, religion is one of the anachronistic cultural beliefs in many communities in the country that excludes women from the mainstream of leadership. In most religions, power and authority is believed to divinely belong to men hence subjugating women. Thus women are encouraged to play subsidiary roles since their place is in the kitchen and men are the decision makers. Arguments about women's inferiority to men are present across all dominant religions, and traditionally religion has long been used to exclude women from aspects of social, political, or religious life around the world. Women are also seen to be their own enemies in their own political advancement and empowerment, especially when they internalize these long held anachronistic assumptions and perceptions that politics is a dirty game thus a preserve game of men

In Christian tradition, passages in scripture calling for women to "not teach or usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence", keep silence in the church, and to "submit to their husbands"¹¹⁷ are used in society to keep women in submission and away from sharing equality with men. Because religion holds such influential power in the affairs of people in Nigeria, women's roles being limited by religion keeps them from being fully free to engage in political processes and government decision-making arenas.

Muslim women faced three simultaneous difficulties. First, their identity as a Muslim which is frequently in conflict with a modern political regime. Secondly, women should fight the Islam fundamentalist who always rejects their ideas about promoting human rights among the

¹¹⁷Clifford Meesua Sibani "Gender Inequality and its Challenge to Women Development in Nigeria: The Religious Approach" <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ujah/article/view/158966/148587> Accessed 23 May 2022

limited¹²³. As of 2015, there were no legal requirements for parties to appoint a certain number of women. Moreover ‘most political parties have also failed to implement their party gender policies and there are no sanctions imposed by the members for this failure’¹²⁴. The workings of parties are geared towards men and patriarchal patronage systems. The rules of engagement at the nomination stage are ‘defined and organised around male norms and values’¹²⁵. As well as money, getting a nomination often requires the influence of elders¹²⁶. Women often do not have the experience of campaigning, organising and winning support in male-dominated environments. In the 2011 election, women candidates had a ‘conversion rate’ that was roughly half that of male candidates, which is likely because they were given hard to win seats to contest¹²⁷. Female candidates are often disadvantaged, and even disqualified, by rules and cultural norms surrounding marriage and indigeneship (the status of being native to a particular area): ‘Often times, women become stateless once they are married. Their state of origin asserts that she has adopted her husband’s state while her husband’s state refuses to recognise her as an indigene’¹²⁸. In some cases, parties have actively excluded women from standing for office. Many parties use ‘indirect primaries’ to select candidates which means, in effect, that a small number of leaders are in a position to choose candidates¹²⁹. In one example, a woman, Bakori, stood for nomination but was sidelined by the party leadership who declared that her opponent was standing ‘unopposed’

Other issues keeping women from political decision-making and leadership are nepotism and cost. Just before the country’s previous nation-wide election in February 2019, women held

¹²³ Orji, N., Orji, C., Agbanyim, O.” Women’s political representation in Nigeria: Why progress is slow and what can be done to fast-track it”. *Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre*. (2018).

¹²⁴ NCWD. Who Are Those Making Key Decisions: a survey of women and men in public life and in politics. (2016).

¹²⁵ Ibid

¹²⁶ (n 15)

¹²⁷ British Council Nigeria, Gender in Nigeria Report 2012: Improving the lives of girls and women in Nigeria. <https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british-council-gendernigeria2012.pdf> Accessed 23 May 2022

¹²⁸ (n 13)

¹²⁹ Ibid

only 7%¹³⁰ of public offices, and less than 10%¹³¹ of the leading parties' (APC and PDP) candidates for the national legislature in the February 2019 cycle were women. The poor numbers show how almost impenetrable it is for women to gain access to political participation and leadership without being drawn from or favoured by Nigeria's elite.¹³² For instance, since 1995 to 2015, the 46% of women elected to the Nigerian senate were either a wife or daughter of a prominent male politician.¹³³ Another barrier keeping women barred from participating fully in political affairs in the country is cost. To be nominated for president, one must be ready to pay 5 million naira to express interest, and then provide 40 million naira to apply¹³⁴. A nomination for governor costs 22.5 million, with expression of interest costing 2.5 million; senate costs 7 million, with expression of interest costing 1 million naira; a nomination for the house of representatives cost 3.5 million naira to apply, with expression of interest costing 350,000 naira¹³⁵.

For PDP, the party pegged its presidential nomination and expression of interest form at N2 million and N10 million respectively making a total of N12 million while that of governorship is N1 million and N5 million, making a total of N6 million. Others are Senate, N500,000 and N3.5 million, House of Representatives N500,000 and N1 million, and House of Assembly N100,000 and N500,000.¹³⁶

However, in 2022, the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) fixed the cost of nomination forms for president at N100 million (\$240,884), governorship at N50 million (\$85,470),

¹³⁰ <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/2019/0213/A-candidate-s-message-for-Nigerian-politics-Make-way-for-women>

¹³¹ Ibid

¹³² ibid

¹³³ ibid

¹³⁴ Breaking: APC begins sale of forms for 2019 elections, *The Vanguard* (September 4, 2018)

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/09/breaking-apc-begins-sale-of-forms-for-2019-elections/> Accessed 25 May 2022

¹³⁵ Ibid

¹³⁶ 2019: PDP commences sale of nomination forms, *Premium times* (August 28, 2018)

<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/281577-2019-pdp-commences-sale-of-nomination-forms.html>> Accessed 25 May 2022

senate at N20 million (\$34,188), house of representatives at N10 million (\$17,094) and state assembly at N2 million (\$3,418).¹³⁷

The leading opposition party, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) pegged N40 million (\$68,376) as the cost for presidential nomination forms, N21 million (\$35,897) for governorship, N3.5 million (\$5,982) for senate, N2.5 million (\$4,273) for the house of representatives and N1.5 million (\$2,564) for state house of assembly.¹³⁸

Political parties in Nigeria act as a framework for politicians to accomplish their objectives. Males continue to make up the majority in its leadership, membership, and finance, giving them the ability to have an impact on the party's internal politics while usually marginalizing women¹³⁹. Affirmative Action for Women is rarely mentioned in Nigerian political party manifestos and constitutions, and when it is, the provisions are less stringent than those required by regional and international accords. In Nigeria, discrimination by political parties against women is frequently an intentional strategy to demoralize and frustrate them, causing them to lose focus and being shut out of active political engagement. For instance, most married women are immediately disqualified from active political engagement due to the scheduling of political meetings (which are typically held late at night) and serious politicking, which necessitates a lot of travel. Who is nominated to run for elected seats may be significantly influenced by the governing systems of political parties. It is improbable that Nigerian women will be elected to leadership roles in political parties. The least important offices of ex-officio members and female leaders, whose significance is restricted to encouraging women to vote for men, are held by women in a number of large political parties.

¹³⁷Political party nomination fees and the shrinking political space *The Cable News Paper* (May 05 2022) <https://www.thecable.ng/political-party-nomination-fees-and-the-shrinking-political-space> Accessed 25 May 2022

¹³⁸ Ibid

¹³⁹ Ololade "Bamidele, Youth, Politics and the Future of Nigeria" (2021) <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/opinion/441775-youth-politics-and-the-future-of-nigeria-by-ololade-bamidele.html> > Accessed 30 June 2022

Because of this, they frequently find it difficult to speak up or defend women's rights during nominations, which marginalizes them during elections. Additionally, the majority of political parties in Nigeria marginalize and discriminate against women who want to run for office by keeping them out of the political process using age-old strategies based on masculine interpretations of culture and religion, as well as strict "zone out" and "step-down techniques" that are specifically used against women. The "step-down" strategy asks a female candidate who has successfully navigated party nomination and is qualified to run for office to step aside in favor of a more suitable candidate. The "zone out" strategy simply excludes a female candidate from a seat in a constituency where she is not regarded as an indigene (mostly men). A good example of affirmative action by political parties is the waiver of fees for acquiring party nomination forms for female candidates for elective offices. Affirmative action in the form of designated seats for women is one suggestion that would aid in addressing the issue of insufficient representation. It won't, however, always function properly. The provision for post-election nominations of women is not yet in effect in Nigeria. Discrimination against women by men in selecting, electing, or voting for candidates for elections and allocating political offices, which frequently relegate women to the background, is a critical challenge to women's active participation in politics in most Nigerian political parties.

3.5 Violence

In the year leading up to the 2015 Nigerian elections, "female politicians and the wives and family members of male political candidates have not only experienced heightened levels of gender-based hate speech, but have in some cases, been directly targeted by thugs and

criminals for physical violence, including sexual abuse.”¹⁴⁰ All of these actions are direct examples of violence against women in politics, a tactic used to reinforce entrenched patriarchal values and undermine the integration and representation of women’s experiences and perspectives into governance processes and institutions. This violence can take many forms including psychological threats, sexual harassment and abuse, and physical abuse and these harms hamper women’s ability to exercise political voice through voting, activism, public dialogue, campaigning and running for or holding office. Within the spectrum of violence against women in politics, gender-based electoral violence can take place before, during or after elections and serves “to delay, impede, intimidate, prevent or eliminate political opponents and/or electoral processes.”¹⁴¹ Women can be directly subjected to political violence when they engage in civic discourse, support or join a political party, or vote as a public citizen. For example, when women are seeking public office or as candidates, they face many challenges by the political party systems, including harassment, intimidation, and even assault.¹⁴² Political parties make it difficult for women to fundraise and get their names on the ballot, often using this type of harassment to bar women from entering politics. There are many cases of women being harassed and assaulted as they head to the polls and of female poll workers being targeted. Women also often face violence and interference against their political voice in the home, where they may be intimidated, harassed or even abused by their husbands in order to keep them from voting or to force them to vote for a specific candidate. This type of gender-based violence stems from women’s historic social exclusion from positions of decision-making within and beyond the household and, in turn, reinforces

¹⁴⁰ Hannah Blythe, "Gender Violence Spikes in Nigerian Election Run-Up," Web log post, World Square Blog, Fund for Peace, 25 Mar. 2015. <http://library.fundforpeace.org/blog-20150325-nigeriaelection> . Accessed 3 June 2022

¹⁴¹ Gabrielle Bardall, Breaking the Mold: Understanding Gender and Electoral Violence, Being a White Paper presented at the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, <https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/gender_and_electoral_violence_2011.pdf> Accessed 3 June 2022

¹⁴² Ibid

patriarchal norms that deny women their rights in the democratic process.¹⁴³ More commonly, women are the secondary victims of election-related violence as a result of their family relationships and social affiliations. In other words, women are often targeted not through their actions but because of their associations, such as being the wife, mother or daughter of a political candidate. However, this type of violence is understudied and more difficult to measure. Often they are victims of reprisal attacks, unable to flee their homes due to dependents in their care and other societal obligations. Even when women do participate in protests or demonstrations, they often have babies or small children with them, which makes it more difficult to run away if there is an outbreak of violence.¹⁴⁴

Violence against women in politics and elections is a complex issue that does not always fall into a clear categorization. For example, during the presidential election, two thousand women from the APC party gathered to peacefully protest misconduct in Rivers State and were forcibly dispersed by the police using teargas.¹⁴⁵ Eno Ben-Udensi, a representative of Pan African Women Projects, a South African NGO observing the election in Rivers state, stated: “We saw the women being [sic] teargassed and we don’t think it was a right thing to do because under the 1995 Beijing conference, women have the right to peaceful protests without any form of molestation or violence.”¹⁴⁶ It is unclear whether these women were targeted as protesters because they were women, or if the police would have responded to the protest with teargas regardless of gender, but it should be noted that some did interpret this as an attack on women, and we must also examine how the use of teargas may have impacted women differently than it would have impacted men.

¹⁴³ Ibid

¹⁴⁴ Ibid

¹⁴⁵ Associated Foreign Press, "Nigerian Election Protesters Teargassed in Port Harcourt," Yahoo! News, Yahoo!, 29 March 2015. <http://news.yahoo.com/nigerian-election-protesters-teargassed-port-harcourt001227130.html>
Accessed 3 June 2022

¹⁴⁶ Ibid

Women in Nigeria have been subjected to varying degrees of violence, cutting across socio-demographic factors including age, social status/class, educational background, ethnicity, religion, and mental and physical ability. Violence against women in politics is a global scourge that marginalises women in political and public life. A report examines the troubling, multidimensional phenomenon of violence against women in politics and elections with a specific focus on Nigeria, where historic presidential elections were held on March 28, 2015, followed by local elections on April 12.¹⁴⁷ In the lead up to the elections, which were postponed for six weeks due to the tenuous security situation, there was widespread fear of electoral violence.

The electoral process in Nigeria is not free from violence, and women face significant gender-based vulnerabilities. In the year prior to the elections, Nigeria experienced more political violence than it had during its previous election cycle in 2011, when over 1000 fatalities were reported. These numbers only reflect the violence that is either reported or visible to the election monitors. Unfortunately, violence against women in politics and elections often goes unreported and unmonitored but remains a troubling issue with far-reaching implications for democracy, human rights, gender equality and security.

Violence is a major impediment to economic growth and development. Violence committed against women has the propensity to impede progress in achieving development. The political system in Nigeria has historically been characterised by violence, uncertainty, fear, harassment and marginalisation of women in the electoral process, in the sense that men are the occupants of the majority of the political positions in the country and this constitutes major impediments to women's aspiration in contesting for elective positions at all levels of

¹⁴⁷ Vulnerable and Outside the Margins: From Challenges to Informed Inclusion: "A study on violence against women in the political space". *a study funded by Action Aid through the Strategic Innovative Fund* < <https://standtoendrape.org/a-study-on-violence-against-women-in-the-political-space-part-1/> > Accessed 3 June 2022

government within the country. The participation of women in terms of contesting for electoral positions in the act of governance in Nigeria has been minimal compared to their male counterparts and this could be termed as a way of cutting down women's involvement in the electioneering process.

Violence Against Women in Politics (VAWP) is a form of gender-based violence against women (GBVAW). VAWP is any act, or threat, of physical, sexual or psychological violence that prevents women from exercising and realising their political rights and a range of human rights. VAWP manifests in specific, gendered ways including, but not limited to, the following examples:

- Physical violence: This includes assassinations, kidnappings, and beatings – often with the intent to force women to resign or withdraw from political life.
- Sexual violence: This includes sexual harassment, unwanted advances and sexual assault, rape, sexualised threats, and altered pornographic or sexualised images intended to publicly question women's competencies and shame them.
- Psychological violence: This includes threats, character assassination, stalking, online abuse as well as economic violence such as denial of salary or political financing, property theft or damage.

Violence, maiming, assassinations, threats, blackmail, intimidation, humiliation, and other tactics, largely employed by men to deter women from actively participating in Nigerian politics, make the political landscape there a do-or-die situation¹⁴⁸. Most women avoid politics due to the involvement of thugs before, during, and after elections, as well as the associated insecurity that results in the destruction of lives and property that characterizes a

¹⁴⁸ Kolawole T.O & Others "Gender and Party Politics in Africa with Reference to Nigeria." Journal of Education Research, [2012]1(7), 132-144

typical political process in Nigeria. An illustration of electoral violence in Nigeria is the testimony of a female aspirant, Dorathy Nyone who narrated that “a ward chairman was shot dead; all the women and most of the men fled the scene. My husband rushed there and took me home. I was scared; men who were fully prepared for violence were the only ones who remained behind to hand pick the various winners”.¹⁴⁹ Nigerian women have throughout time become the victims of various types of violence because of their roles in advancing revolutionary politics.

According to a 2019 report by Peace Direct, ‘Invariably, Nigerian women are targeted in both the private and public spheres to prevent them from participating in rallies, voting and/or running as candidates. Despite decreasing incidents of violence and improved transparency measures during elections, violence against women continues to be a significant threat to Nigerian democracy’.¹⁵⁰ In some areas, gangs have been hired by politicians to stop female candidates.¹⁵¹ In the run-up to the 2015 election, the National Democratic Institute surveyed hate speech against women across Nigeria. They used 900 observers across Nigeria’s 774 local government areas, finding higher levels of gender-based hate speech in the North East and South East. They also conducted informal surveys showing that ‘gender-based hate speech was sometimes accompanied by other acts of gender-based violence, including threats of divorce, sexual violence, blackmail or destruction of property.’¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹Luka, R. C. “Women and Political Participation in Nigeria: The Imperatives of Empowerment. (2011). <<https://www.cenresinjournal.com/2020/03/12/women-and-political-participation-in-nigeria-the-imperative-of-empowerment/>> Accessed 15 June 2022

¹⁵⁰ Inclusive peace case study: Women-led election monitoring in Nigeria < <https://www.peacedirect.org/civil-society-and-inclusive-peace-case-study-nigeria/> > Accessed 12 June 2022

¹⁵¹ British Council Nigeria, Gender in Nigeria Report 2012: Improving the lives of girls and women in Nigeria. <https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british-council-gendernigeria2012.pdf> Accessed 23 May 2022

¹⁵² Gender-based hate speech in Nigeria, November 2014-March 2015. https://www.ndi.org/violence_against_women_elections Accessed 23 May 2022

3.6 Discrimination Against Women in Governance

Nigerian women have significant obstacles to actively participating in national politics because to their marginalization, discrimination, and extreme underrepresentation in politics and government, where crucial choices are made, as compared to their male counterparts. It is sad that women have not yet received equal representation in Nigerian politics despite making up the majority of registered voters in all elections. The 1999 Nigerian Constitution has vague references to non-discrimination on the basis of sex and other factors, but it is not clear about ensuring equal representation on the basis of gender, acknowledges no disadvantage faced by women, and lacks any provisions for gender equality. The Federal Character Principle, which is intended to ensure fair representation of states and ethnic groups in national appointments, also disadvantages Nigerian women by suggesting that they can only represent their ethnic and state of origin. A woman loses out on a great chance when her culture forbids her from representing her country of origin. There are many instances where a woman's home state refuses to support her appointment, and the same is true of her husband's home state. In many of these situations, the government decides to take the safe route and appoint a guy. This has made women's underrepresentation in politics in America more pronounced. Based on the Beijing Conference agreement to reserve 30 percent of public seats and posts for women, as well as the UN-approved quota allocation mechanism for international politics, it is evident that the number of Nigerian women in elective and appointive positions has increased. However, Nigerian women are still underrepresented in politics, which is a significant impediment to their active engagement.

3.7 Lack of Family, Fellow Women and Media Supports

In Nigeria, women's active participation in politics is hampered by a lack of family support. Because Nigerian society is patriarchal, it is traditionally accepted that women must ask their spouses for approval before running for office. However, these women's only choice is to give up on their political aspirations if such authorization is not granted. Therefore, even among the educated, the majority of family members especially husbands do not permit wives to actively participate in politics in Nigeria. Numerous underprivileged female politicians run without the financial, social, or other support of their families. Women in politics in Nigeria experience a lack of support from other women, which is a substantial obstacle to their active engagement in politics. It is unfortunate that women in Nigeria lack confidence in their fellow women's leadership abilities and do not support them in winning elections. Although factors such as envy, jealousy, and other interpersonal relationship problems are common among women, most women would rather vote or support men to win elections than their fellow women, regardless of their numerical strength, and this is true for Nigerian women. However, when it comes to mobilizing support for elections, Nigerian men have an advantage over their female counterparts. In Nigeria, "a classic example of this scenario was the case of Mrs Sarah Jubril, who contested the People's Democratic Party presidential primaries preparatory to the 2011 general elections against President Goodluck Jonathan and former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar." Sarah Jubril had only one vote left at the end of the exercise, which was obviously her own. This demonstrates that not even her closest female supporters voted in her favour. However, many Nigerian women mistakenly believe that other women in politics are conceited and irresponsible and are out to bring them down because they mentally see and perceive politics as a "dirty game" and the social stigma that goes along with it. Most Nigerian women fear politics because of this syndrome because they want to maintain their positive character traits and keep their marriages together (for the married ones). Lack of media support is a significant barrier to women's active participation

in politics in Nigeria. Because of the patriarchal structure of the country, the majority of political achievements of women in Nigerian cultural histories are either not adequately acknowledged, documented, or downplayed so as to render them unimportant to the nation's history and heritage. Unfortunately, the majority of media outlets are unwilling to promote female political candidates. For instance, Hon. Barrister (Mrs.) Ugochi Nnanna- Okoro,¹⁵³ had ugly experiences with the media. Ugochi, "was shocked to find her access to state-owned Radio and Television Stations blocked. Money she paid for publicity was returned to her 'on the pretext that I failed to get approval from the Imo State Government, also at the Imo Broadcasting service, some retorted, 'Madam take back your money. I don't want to be sacked' she said The majority of media outlets publicly portray stereotypical or unfavourable views of Nigerian women politicians and political aspirants. They seem to minimize the roles women play and the things they do to advance the country. The media consistently portrays women's political campaigns and other electoral activity in a negative light, likely favouring their male counterparts.

3.8 Indigenization of Women Political Aspirants

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,¹⁵⁴ continues to act as an impediment to women's active political ambitions as married women is often confronted with the problem of constituency, especially if she is married outside her locality or state of origin as she cannot claim the state of origin of her husband.¹⁵⁵ If a married Nigerian woman returns to her constituency or birth/state of origin, she is likely to experience the same discrimination because her own state of origin views her as overly ambitious and a "non-indigene." These women are also not given consideration for elective jobs and lack a foundation from which to

¹⁵³politician and former Peoples Democratic Party governorship aspirant in Imo state in the 2003 general elections in Nigeria

¹⁵⁴ 1999 as amended

¹⁵⁵Olufemi, O. Democracy and Development. (Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers Ltd 2006).

establish political ties with the populace or gain knowledge and experience concerning local concerns. The indigenization of Nigerian women, which deters them from engaging in active political involvement, is a noteworthy challenge.

Chapter Four

International and National Laws for the Protection of Women's Rights to Political Participation in Nigeria

Global trends show that countries are making slow progress in closing gender gaps across major dimensions of human development. Nigeria remains one of the worst performing countries in terms of closing gender gaps, particularly in terms of political empowerment. Nigeria ranked 145th out of 153 countries surveyed in 2020, and 149th out of 153 countries surveyed in 2021 in terms of political empowerment.¹⁵⁶The principle of human rights, including the grant and exercise of political rights for both men and women, is an essential

¹⁵⁶World Economic Forum-WEF; “Gender Gap Report” <<https://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2020/the-global-gender-gap-index-2020/>> Accessed 10th May 2022

tenet of any democratic framework.¹⁵⁷ Gender mainstreaming in various policies benefits from fair representation of women in political life.¹⁵⁸ In 2019, the Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU) noted that the majority of legislative bodies around the world are composed of men.¹⁵⁹ There are currently just roughly one in four women serving in lower or single houses of parliament globally, despite the fact that women's membership in parliaments increased to 24.1 percent at the end of 2018, a 13 percentage point increase from two decades ago. Several political, economic, and social factors contribute to women's under-representation in politics in Africa.

The international community has pushed to advance gender equality in politics and bust stereotypes about women's representation there over the past 30 years. These initiatives include adopting the following:

4.1.1 Convention on The Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women on December 18, 1979. It became an international treaty on September 3, 1981, after the twentieth country ratified it. By the Convention's tenth anniversary in 1989, nearly one hundred nations had agreed to be bound by its provisions.

The Convention was the result of more than thirty years of work by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, a body established in 1946 to monitor and promote women's rights. The work of the Commission has been critical in bringing to light all of the

¹⁵⁷ J Ballington and A Karam “Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers” A Revised Edition. *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance:Sweden*, (2005) 24.
<https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/women-in-parliament-beyond-numbers-a-revised-edition.pdf>
accessed 22 October 2021

¹⁵⁸ European Parliament Briefing ‘Women in politics: A global perspective’. 1,
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/635543/EPRS_BRI\(2019\)635543_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/635543/EPRS_BRI(2019)635543_EN.pdf)
accessed 23 October 2021.

¹⁵⁹PLAC (Being a Research Study on Legislative Efforts by the Nigerian National Assembly to Improve Women’s Political Participation in Nigeria’ 2015).

areas in which women are denied equality with men. These efforts for women's advancement have resulted in several declarations and conventions, the most important and comprehensive of which is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.¹⁶⁰

Articles 7 and 8 specifically address the issue of women's political participation. It ensures women's equality with men in the following areas: the right to vote; the right to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies; the right to participate in the formulation and implementation of governmental policy; the right to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government; and the right to participate in all public functions. It also guarantees women's non-discrimination in a nation's public and political spheres.¹⁶¹ Furthermore, the Convention's preamble connects the need for "full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world, and the cause of peace" with the need for "maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields," which essentially includes public and political aspects.

Public and private spheres of human activity have always been considered distinct, and have been regulated accordingly. Invariably, women have been assigned to the private or domestic sphere, associated with reproduction and the raising of children, and in all societies these activities have been treated as inferior. By contrast, public life, which is respected and honoured, extends to a broad range of activity outside the private and domestic sphere. Men historically have both dominated public life and exercised the power to confine and subordinate women within the private sphere.

Despite women's central role in sustaining the family and society and their contribution to development, they have been excluded from political life and the decision-making process,

¹⁶⁰<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>> 14th November, 2021

¹⁶¹Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 1979.

which nonetheless determine the pattern of their daily lives and the future of societies. Particularly in times of crisis, this exclusion has silenced women's voices and rendered invisible their contribution and experiences. In all nations, the most significant factors inhibiting women's ability to participate in public life have been the cultural framework of values and religious beliefs, the lack of services and men's failure to share the tasks associated with the organization of the household and with the care and raising of children. In all nations, cultural traditions and religious beliefs have played a part in confining women to the private spheres of activity and excluding them from active participation in public life. Relieving women of some of the burdens of domestic work would allow them to engage more fully in the life of their communities. Women's economic dependence on men often prevents them from making important political decisions and from participating actively in public life. Their double burden of work and their economic dependence, coupled with the long or inflexible hours of both public and political work, prevent women from being more active.

Stereotyping, including that perpetrated by the media, confines women in political life to issues such as the environment, children and health, and excludes them from responsibility for finance, budgetary control and conflict resolution. The low involvement of women in the professions from which politicians are recruited can create another obstacle. In countries where women leaders do assume power this can be the result of the influence of their fathers, husbands or male relatives rather than electoral success in their own right.

No political system has conferred on women both the right to and the benefit of full and equal participation. While democratic systems have improved women's opportunities for involvement in political life, the many economic, social and cultural barriers they continue to face have seriously limited their participation. Even historically stable democracies have failed to integrate fully and equally the opinions and interests of the female half of the

population. Societies in which women are excluded from public life and decision-making cannot be described as democratic. The concept of democracy will have real and dynamic meaning and lasting effect only when political decision-making is shared by women and men and takes equal account of the interests of both. The examination of States parties' reports shows that where there is full and equal participation of women in public life and decision-making, the implementation of their rights and compliance with the Convention improves.

While removal of de jure barriers is necessary, it is not sufficient. Failure to achieve full and equal participation of women can be unintentional and the result of outmoded practices and procedures which inadvertently promote men. Under article 4¹⁶², the Convention encourages the use of temporary special measures in order to give full effect to articles 7 and 8.¹⁶³ Where countries have developed effective temporary strategies in an attempt to achieve equality of participation, a wide range of measures has been implemented, including recruiting, financially assisting and training women candidates, amending electoral procedures, developing campaigns directed at equal participation, setting numerical goals and quotas and targeting women for appointment to public positions such as the judiciary or other professional groups that play an essential part in the everyday life of all societies. The formal removal of barriers and the introduction of temporary special measures to encourage the equal participation of both men and women in the public life of their societies are essential prerequisites to true equality in political life. In order, however, to overcome centuries of male domination of the public sphere, women also require the encouragement and support of all sectors of society to achieve full and effective participation, encouragement which must be led by States parties to the Convention, as well as by political parties and public officials. States parties have an obligation to ensure that temporary special measures are clearly

¹⁶² Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 1979.

¹⁶³ Ibid

designed to support the principle of equality and therefore comply with constitutional principles which guarantee equality to all citizens.

Although a lot has changed since then, the trend in terms of women's access to power in recent decades has been one of gradual but steady progress ever since international recognition of the challenges women in Nigeria face was achieved. In 1985, the government ratified the CEDAW without reservations, consequently binding itself to put all obligations stated in Article 2, towards the promotion of the principles of CEDAW and other internationally agreed norms and standards relate to women's leadership and political participation, into practice. The government is also committed to submitting national reports, at least every four years, on measures it has taken to comply with the treaty obligations. Since the return to democracy, not only has the global perception and the importance of gender equity increased, Nigeria continues to demonstrate and reaffirm her commitment to the implementation of the principle and provisions of the CEDAW, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), the Outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly, the MDGs (SDGs) and other international commitments to achieve gender equality. To date, the government has submitted eight national reports on measures it has taken to comply with CEDAW. The national reports reveal the measures undertaken by the government from 1999, to fulfil its obligations under the Convention, including steps taken to address the participation of women in political and public life. Since the development of the Nigeria 6th, 7th and 8th CEDAW report (covering the period 2003 to 2014), the Federal Government has made system wide efforts to generate inputs from within government MDAs and its State counterparts, CSOs and development partners. The reports highlighted various measures taken and gave an overview of the progress made, constraints and challenges encountered in promoting the status of women in line with the provisions of the Convention from July 2006 to December 2014. By the time of presentation of the 8th report, the

government was reported to have taken a variety of participatory and inclusive measures to address constitutional and legal stereotypes and discrimination against women. One of such critical steps is towards affirmative action in politics, a special measure taken to ensure equality between women and men.

The situation of women's level of participation and representation in politics and public service in Nigeria signifies that the Nigerian government is not carrying out its obligations as required by CEDAW. The poor conditions at different levels has been attributed mainly to the non-domestication of CEDAW. Lack of financial capacity of women and the culture of violence that surrounds Nigerian politics have also been the source of inequality and discrimination in the political sphere.

Although CEDAW continues to be implemented by the government as it relates to issues affecting Nigerian women, the CEDAW has still not been made a part of Nigeria law as a whole. Over the years, the government has taken legislative action and domesticated parts of CEDAW and other treaties to improve the participation of women in political and public life through the adoption of the Gender Equality Opportunity Bill, the Gender Mainstreaming Bill, the Affirmative Action Bill and the CEDAW Bill. The main criticism has been that despite the governments progress, reports still show that 48.78 per cent of the national population of Nigeria, still remain under represented in Nigeria's political life and decision-making processes.¹⁶⁴

It is instructive to note that a report on women in political and public life, the Committee recommended Nigeria to use the on-going constitutional review to adopt legislation on temporary special measures in order to increase the participation of women in political and public life, education and employment; to provide adequate resources to the national

¹⁶⁴ Statistical Report on Women and Men in Nigeria <<https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/download/784>> accessed June 2022

machinery for the advancement of women; and to intensify awareness-raising in the media and film industry about discriminatory gender stereotypes.¹⁶⁵ Many years after the ratification of CEDAW by Nigeria, its provisions still remains a paper tiger and cannot be enforced in any court in Nigeria, as a process of domestication must be undergone according to section 12 of the Nigeria Constitution, before it can become part of the nation's local law. Nigeria owes an obligation to CEDAW Committee to make domestic laws to conform to the provisions of CEDAW apart from periodic progress report. It is worthy to note that though Nigeria NGOs participation in this process only started about a two decade ago through Alternative or Shadow reporting to complement government's submissions in 1998, 2004 and 2008, yet through effective lobbying, they have been able to influence the Committee's decisions in all their concluding observations.¹⁶⁶

4.1.2 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)¹⁶⁷

The ICCPR, as one of two international treaties that comprise the 'International Bill of Human Rights' (along with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), provides the legal framework for protecting and preserving the most fundamental civil and political rights, such as the right to life, freedom from slavery, and equality. As a result, the majority of the rights enshrined in the ICCPR are concerned with addressing the causes and consequences of women's unequal enjoyment of their human rights in comparison to men.¹⁶⁸

The covenant guarantees protection against discrimination on any basis, including racial, religious, or political beliefs, as well as equality of all people before the law. To further this equality, the covenant forbids discrimination against anyone. The covenant states that:

¹⁶⁵ Outcome of CEDAW Review of Nigeria: More Action Needed to Implement the WPS Agenda (2017) <<https://www.wilpf.org/outcome-of-cedaw-review-of-nigeria-greater-action-needed-to-implement-the-wps-agenda/>> Accessed July 2022

¹⁶⁶ The Women's Convention in Nigeria <<https://ng.boell.org/en/2013/10/14/womens-convention-nigeria>> Accessed July 2022

¹⁶⁷ ADOPTED 16 December 1966 by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI)

¹⁶⁸ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) <<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/vaw/int/treaty-bodies/international-covenant-on-civil-and-political-rights/>> 14 November, 2021

“The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights set forth in the present Covenant.”¹⁶⁹

“All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”¹⁷⁰

4.1.3 2003 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) [Maputo Protocol]¹⁷¹

In July 2003, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa was adopted in Maputo. The AU's adoption of the Protocol is a positive step toward combating discrimination and violence against women, and it is significant in efforts to promote and ensure respect for African women's rights. The Protocol requires African States to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women in Africa, as well as to promote gender equality.¹⁷²

The 2003 Protocol appears to be Africa's most forward-thinking piece of legislation, giving African women a full range of human rights.¹⁷³ It describes broad and substantive human

¹⁶⁹Article 3

¹⁷⁰Article 26

¹⁷¹Adoption: July 01, 2003, Date entry into force: November 25, 2005

¹⁷² <<https://www.un.org/shestandsforpeace/content/protocol-african-charter-human-and-peoples-rights-rights-women-africa>> Accessed 14 November, 2021

¹⁷³ T Thabane & M Buthelezi ‘Bridging the gap between de jure and de facto parliamentary representation of women in Africa’ *Comparative and International Law Journal of Southern Africa* [2008] 175-176; Centre for Human Rights University of Pretoria ‘Op-ED: A Critical look at women’s representation in politics and governance in South Africa’ 30 August 2019 <https://www.chr.up.ac.za/opinion-pieces/1801-a-critical-look-at-womens-representation-in-politics-and-governance-in-south-africa#_ftn4> accessed 24 October 2021.

rights for women, including civil and political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights.¹⁷⁴ The Protocol deserves praise for emphasizing the equality of women and men at all levels of policy formation and implementation, as well as the right of women to vote in all elections without facing any discrimination.¹⁷⁵ Other instruments, such as the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (African Democracy) Charter, have bolstered the Maputo Protocol.¹⁷⁶

4.1.4 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)¹⁷⁷

In September 1995, an unprecedented 17,000 participants and 30,000 activists descended on Beijing for the start of the Fourth World Conference on Women. They were incredibly diverse, hailing from all over the world, but they shared a common goal: gender equality and the empowerment of all women everywhere.

Two weeks of heated political debate ensued, as representatives from 189 governments hammered out historic commitments. A parallel Forum attended by thirty thousand non-governmental activists kept the pressure on, networking, lobbying, and training a global media spotlight. By the end of the conference, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action had been produced, the most progressive blueprint for advancing women's rights

¹⁷⁴ Maputo Protocol on Women's Rights: *A Living Document for Women's Human Rights in Africa* Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD) of the African Union Commission, (2018). https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/31520-doc-maputo_protocol_on_womens_rights_a_living_document_for_womens_human_rights_in_africa_submitted_by_the_women_gender_and_development_directorate_wgdd_of_the_african_union_commission.pdf > accessed 27 October 2021.

¹⁷⁵ Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa ['Maputo Protocol'] https://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/protocol_rights_women_africa_2003.pdf > accessed 27 October 2021.

¹⁷⁶ P Paxton & S Kunovich 'Women's political representation: the importance of ideology' (2003) 82 *Social Forces* 87-88; S M Rai 'Gender and democratization: Ambiguity and opportunity' in R Luckman & G White (eds) *Democratization in the South: The Jagged Wave* (1996) 221.

¹⁷⁷ The Fourth World Conference on Women, Having met in Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995, Adopted at the 16th plenary meeting, on 15 September 1995; for the discussion

ever,¹⁷⁸ Due to the monitoring and assessment system developed at the international, regional, and sub-regional levels, African women's presence in politics has improved.¹⁷⁹

4.1.5 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)¹⁸⁰

In September 2015, 193 United Nations Member States unanimously adopted a new global agenda to end poverty and pursue a sustainable future for all. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) includes a specific goal to achieve gender equality, which aims to end discrimination and violence against women and girls, as well as to ensure equal participation and opportunities in all aspects of life.¹⁸¹

Promoting women's political participation is critical to meeting the SDGs. As a result, one of Goal 5's targets is to "ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life."¹⁸²

4.2.1 The 1999 Constitution (as amended)

In addition to the international instruments ratified by Nigeria, domestic instruments include extant provisions on the protection of human rights. These include certain provisions of the 1999 Constitution. Chapter II deals with the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy. According to section 17(1), the state's social order is founded on the ideals of freedom, equality and justice. Section 17(2) notes that in furtherance of the social order: (a) every citizen shall have equality of rights, obligations and opportunities before the law; and

¹⁷⁸The Beijing Platform for Action Turns 20: The Beijing Platform for Action: inspiration then and now <<https://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/about>>accessed 27 October 2021

¹⁷⁹ Souad Abdennebi-Abderrahim (Being a Study on Discrimination against women in law and in practice in political and public life, including during times of political transitions 2012) 6, <https://www.ohchr.org/documents/issues/women/WG/PublicPoliticalLife/AfricaRegion.docx>> accessed 26 October 2021.

¹⁸⁰The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by world leaders in 2015, embody a roadmap for progress that is sustainable and leaves no one behind.

¹⁸¹Women's political participation: a fundamental prerequisite for gender equality, democracy and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

<https://www.iknowpolitics.org/en/discuss/e-discussions/womens-political-participation-fundamental-prerequisite-gender-equality>>accessed 26 October 2021

¹⁸²SDG Target 5.5

(b) the sanctity of the human person shall be recognized and human dignity shall be maintained and enhanced. The implication of section 17 is that there should be no disparity of any kind; all citizens, whether male or female, should be treated equally. This suggests that male citizens should not dominate their female counterparts. However, the provisions of Chapter II of the Constitution are mere policy guidelines and are not justiciable [section 6(6) (c) of the 1999 Constitution].¹⁸³ Accordingly, they do not grant legal rights to Nigerian citizens, and their breach cannot be redressed in court. Chapter IV of the Constitution recognizes various human rights, particularly in relation to civil and political rights. These include the right to life, dignity, personal liberty, private and family life, freedom from discrimination, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and the right to freedom of expression and the press. Apart from section 42 which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex, the Constitution contains no specific and substantive provisions on the protection of women's rights.¹⁸⁴

It is thus evident that although the Nigerian Constitution has the intention to protect women's rights, it does not take into consideration that, women are vulnerable and that the fact that Nigerian society is a patriarchal one invariably affects the realization of such rights.

4.2.2 Electoral Act

Prior to the Electoral Act Amendment Bill, Nigerian electoral laws were considered to be deeply patriarchal. This is in addition to recurring problems like violence, the selection process, the exclusion of women, the monetization of the electoral process, the lack of a level playing field, vote-buying, delegate bribery, electronic voting, the authority of the

¹⁸³ Inioluwa Olaposi, Justiciability of Chapter II of the Nigerian Constitution
<<https://www.lawglobalhub.com/justiciability-of-chapter-ii-of-the-constitution-of-nigeria/>> 26 June 2022

¹⁸⁴ B.O Eniola, Gender Parity in Parliament: A Panacea for the Promotion and Protection of Women's Rights in Nigeria (2018)
<<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fsoc.2018.00034/full#:~:text=Apart%20from%20section%2042%20which,the%20protection%20of%20women's%20rights.>> Accessed 12 June 2022

Independent National Electoral Commission, and litigation related to the process, among others. The dominance of male MPs in the National Assembly, both in terms of numbers and power, serves to support the opposition to "electoral gender quotas" in the new electoral law due to patriarchal hegemony. The three main types of gender quotas are legislated candidate quotas, legislated reserved seats, and voluntary political party quotas.¹⁸⁵ The new electoral law is biased in several areas. Unfortunately, the new election legislation often focuses on the procedures for returning elected officials to their positions without directly addressing the urgent national problem of women's underrepresentation. Instead of accepting that women are badly underrepresented compared to their demographic, which makes up more than 50% of Nigeria's population, oligarchy is more concerned with how to impose the wealthy. As probed by Nkwo:

*The newly approved campaign spending threshold to a minimum of N50 million and N15 billion is nothing short of gender-based violence against women in another form. How many women can muster such a financial war chest after years of discrimination, violence, and lack of opportunities? The Electoral Act has failed to address religion, culture, tradition, finances, and practices that have subdued women since the inception of the country. This is condemnable. We cannot pretend to be unaware of the challenges foisted on women by society, culture, religion, and even tribe.*¹⁸⁶

The new electoral law has not made any provision for at least 40 percent gender quota strictly for women. Therefore, the perennial quandaries and quagmires still remain unsettled. This problem is not outlandish and unabated. For instance, having acknowledged the fact that the current Constitution¹⁸⁷ is biased in sex, religion, ethnic affiliation, as well as female marginalization, one of the major tenets of the National Conference in 2014 was the need to forge a constitution that will ensure equity, fairness and justice to all Nigerians. However, till

¹⁸⁵ A Nkwo, 'Women and 2022 Electoral Act' *The Punch Newspaper* (1st February 2022) <<https://punchng.com/women-and-2022-electoral-act/>> accessed on 12th June, 2022

¹⁸⁶ Ibid

¹⁸⁷ Nigeria 1999 Constitution as Amended

today, the law reform has taken up this task and proffer pragmatic provisions to address female discrimination in political participation. Political parties¹⁸⁸ also feel relaxed about this and settled at titles like Women Leader, Deputy Women Leader, Chief Women Organizer, Women of Substance, Women Wing, and so on for women. As they saw themselves as the eternal followers, these designations limit them to working only within their respective parties. Despite the aforementioned, there is hope because of the ongoing women's movement in this environment. This extends beyond the response to the fact that the proportion of women elected to political office has decreased from 5.6% in 2015 to 4.7% in 2019, which aims to buck the trend. Ifendu claims that multiple civil society organizations, including WIPF, implementing partners, and donor organizations have set up various creative programs to halt these decreasing trends in order to address this decrease.¹⁸⁹ The prospect is further seen in the activities of civil societies like Women in Politics Forum (WIPF) headed by Barr. Ebere Ifendu. WIPF has launched a website tagged: the 'Nigerian Women Aspirant Website', supported by Action Aid UN body seeks to mobilize 6m women for voters' registration exercise in Q1, 2022.¹⁹⁰

4.2.3 Affirmative Action

¹⁸⁸ For example Article 6 of the PDP manifesto titled the 'The character of the Party' states that 'it shall be a non-tribal, nonreligious and non-sexist democratic organization' (6.1). Section 6.5 says it shall promote the emancipation of women by encouraging their representation at all levels and combat sexism while Section 16 (a) specifically provides for the position of a woman leader from national to Ward level (local). The ALL PROGRESSIVE GRAND ALLIANCE (APGA) constitution and manifestoes has a chapter 16, titled the Policy on Women, which gives a brief but incisive analysis of gender discrimination and emphasized the need to work in accordance with the Beijing Declarations and promote gender parity and more inclusive democracy. The policy proposes to 'fight gender inequality and insensitivities in all aspect of national life through public enlightenments, promote affirmative action in employment, and promote girl child education and compulsory education for girls until 16...' Also, the National Democratic Party dedicated her Chapter 20 to Women Policy. The party promises to take active practical and concrete steps to empower women and facilitate their entrance into various organs of the party; women will be encouraged to contest elective party and public political post and as a matter of politics women will be given their fair share of appointment and accept equality of men and women. Some of these provisions provide opportunities for women to hold their party accountable and demand internal democracy and parity towards 2011 general elections, such interventions can only yield fruits if it is well thought out.

¹⁸⁹ L Jannamike, 'Woman's Own 2023: Mode of Primaries not Enough Reason to Ditch Electoral Bill' Vanguard (January 19, 2022) <<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/01/2023-mode-of-primaries-not-enough-reason-to-ditch-electoral-billwomen-forum-2/>> accessed on 12th June, 2022.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid

The subject of affirmative action has recently gained steam. The idea and what it stands for have gained significant notoriety, or should we say notoriety, particularly among feminists and other gender-based researchers of the post-Conference age. As a result, ever since that meeting was convened in 1995, women's rights experts have watched with considerable interest as affirmative action has been touted as the essential solution to correct the long-standing imbalance in various fields where women are treated less favorably than males. In accordance with the idea, women must hold at least 30% of all political and other roles and appointments in the relevant enclave. However, it is more accurate to say that the concept of affirmative action does not only apply to problems with gender dynamics. Prior to the Beijing Conference, affirmative action, or positive discrimination, has been promoted and, to put it mildly, used to benefit marginalized groups from the political, racial, ethnic, religious, business, economic, and educational perspectives. However, the issue of the principle's legality or legitimacy has to be addressed by the protagonists or the pertinent policy makers at every stage. While some academics believe that affirmative action measures are in conflict with the time-honored constitutional foundations that support citizens' right to live without discrimination, others regard it as a necessary measure that will chore up the battered status and image of the disadvantaged group in order to square with the practical legal meaning of freedom from discrimination.

Scholars appear to agree on the definition of affirmative action. However, considering the "equal opportunity" clause entrenched in many national constitutions, opinions vary on whether it is proper to implement the notion in actual life scenarios. Although there are important distinctions, affirmative action has been referred to by a variety of names, including positive discrimination, reverse discrimination, equality of result, quota system, reservation, majority-minority districting, and so on.

The Oxford concise Dictionary of Politics defines Affirmative Action as a “policy designed to correct past practices of discrimination against any historically disadvantaged group”. It implies taking proactive steps to encourage the group to participate in the socio-economic and political life of the country. Similarly, in the words of Lowi, Ginsberg and Shepsle, Affirmative Action connotes a “policy or programme fashioned to redress historic injustices committed against specific groups by making special efforts to provide members of these groups with access to educational and employment opportunities”.¹⁹¹ This description of Affirmative Action encapsulates “policies intended to promote access to education or employment aimed at a historically socio-politically non-dominant group...”.¹⁹² Hence, “the motivation for affirmative action policies is to redress the effects of past and current wrongful discrimination and to encourage public institutions...to be more representative of the population”.¹⁹³

According to the criteria given above, terms and phrases like "short term," "temporary," "corrective," "actual," "historical," "past discrimination," and others stand out and are frequently used. The inference is that affirmative action is not permanent and continuous but rather transient and intended to have an immediate and short-term impact. In contrast to abstract concepts, it is real and action-oriented. It is neither preventive nor prohibitive in character, but rather equally corrective and redressal. Instead, it aims to make up for historically pervasive previous discriminations that prevented the relevant disadvantaged or non-dominant group from having a chance to get along with others. Perhaps for this reason, Buchan Love compares affirmative action to the idea of a race:

¹⁹¹ T. J. Lowi, B. Ginsberg & K. A. Shepsle, *American Government: Power and Purpose*, 9th Edition, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006, p. 149.

¹⁹² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/affirmative_action. Accessed on 05/12/14.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

If a race has started between two runners, and one is shackled, simply removing the chains and allowing the runners to continue is insufficient because one runner must be moved up to an equal position. Otherwise the runner will never make it¹⁹⁴.

According to studies, affirmative action's target population is diverse. It may be gender-oriented if it prioritizes, for example, raising the status of women while rejecting measures that would strengthen their position in all walks of life. It may be race-based, in which case it aims to mainstream individuals of a certain color into various sectors of life where they have experienced such discrimination. Affirmative action can also be used to make up for opportunities that have been denied to other minority groups of different ethnic, religious, and linguistic affiliations. The goal of affirmative action depends on the kind of discrimination that predominates in a given society. In India where the term used is 'reservation' instead of Affirmative Action, the target has been on the undoing of caste discrimination. In Nigeria, experience has shown that Affirmative Action, if adopted, should be directed to bear not only on gender-related discriminatory practices but also those based on religion and ethnicity.

4.3.1 Efforts by Women to Increase Their Political Participation Through Legal Instrument

All facets of the people must actively participate in governance for Nigeria's developing democracy to be long-lasting. For the best possible growth and development of the nation, women's voices must be heard, and their experiences and talents must be used. The advancement and strengthening of democracy will be aided by women's empowerment and involvement in governance. In Nigeria, women hold less than 5% of senior leadership posts,

¹⁹⁴ Cited in *Ibid*.

and both houses of the current National Assembly have appallingly low average female representation (0.05%).¹⁹⁵

These numbers must be acknowledged as some progress even though they are far below the hopes and expectations of those who are fighting to attain gender parity in governance. However, there is still a long way to go until women are equally represented in politics and government. In order to speed up the process in the upcoming years, it calls for all hands on deck and additional measures. Over the course of Nigeria's political history, including earlier attempts at democratic leadership, women have been notably underrepresented in the government. Women have never had more than 3% representation in national government despite making up 50% of the population and 51% of electors. During the era of military governments in Nigeria, women were virtually non-existent in governance and even in civilian regimes they have faced numerous obstacles¹⁹⁶

The growth of women as a political group from 1999 on may be seen historically and through the expanding range of activities carried out by nonprofit organizations in the absence of strong politically motivated "First Ladies" (NGOs). After years of pro-democracy demonstrations, the nation was governed by a liberal democratic system. However, many people who benefited from the newly established political climate of independence mistook this for freedom from laws and restrictions. The arguments for freedom of association, choice, and expression were weakened in the absence of accompanying structures or regulatory frameworks.

Many of those who advocated for equal treatment and access for men and women in the politi

¹⁹⁵Oluoyemi Fayomi, Women and Politics in Nigeria: a: Towards Participatory Democracy in Ogun State, Southwestern Nigeria, (Being a Paper Presentation, Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, 7 January 2009).

¹⁹⁶Gender audit 2003 election : and issues in women's political participation in Nigeria <https://www.worldcat.org/title/gender-audit-2003-election-and-issues-in-womens-political-participation-in-nigeria/oclc/58748132>> Accessed 13th May, 2022.

cal system did so primarily to ensure that their ability to exploit systematic flaws was not hampered by any policy or process that favored women.¹⁹⁷

Nigeria has the highest proportion of educated women in all of Africa, but it also has one of the lowest proportions of women participating in politics, which is a semiotic sign of the discriminatory ideology engrained in the nation's fledgling democracy. In Nigeria, there were approximately 101.67 million females and 104.47 million males in 2020, representing a 23% annual growth since 1950.¹⁹⁸ Despite this population expansion, the number of women in politics has not greatly increased. Women and girls in Nigeria are free to exercise their right to vote, join political parties, engage in civil society, put themselves forward for public office, sit on boards, and engage in a variety of other forms of public discourse, but they are not allowed to run for elective positions like governor, president, top Senate position, or speaker of the House of Representatives.¹⁹⁹ However, it is important to note a brief historical background to women participation in Nigeria.

4.3.2 The Fourth Republic- 1999 – 2019

The Fourth Republic, a democratically elected government in Nigeria, was created in 1999 after 16 years of military rule. Despite the provisions in the 1999 Constitution, which served as the cornerstone of administration in this republic, Nigerian women were not allowed to participate in politics due to cultural norms of socialization and political barriers in the country. Women did run for office at the local, state, and federal levels, but their accomplishments were less noteworthy. This is most likely due to the lack of political will on the part of the women, their ignorance of their political rights, and, most crucially, the gender

¹⁹⁷A Okeke and A Taiwo, “*Entrism and Policy Space: 1999 and Beyond*” in Ekpo-Bassey Bassey and Nkoyo Toyo(Eds), *Nigerian Women and Political Entrism: Power, Intrigues and Obstacles around the 2003 Elections*, (Lagos: *Gender and Development Action*, 2003)

¹⁹⁸ National Bureau of Statistics; Statistical Report on Women and Men in Nigeria <https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/download/491> accessed 30 June 2022

¹⁹⁹Favour Obi, *35% Women Participation in Politics Not Too Much to Ask For* <<https://dailytrust.com/35-women-participation-in-politics-not-too-much-to-ask-for>> accessed 13 June 2022

discrimination they experienced as a result of socialization, which restricts women's involvement in public life to the home. More than any other, this aspect influenced the Fourth Republic's unfriendly political environment for women. The situation of political discrimination against women has been described as follows:

“...Nigerian women do have ...numerical strength to overturn the male dominated political system, the numerical strength will remain just that, a numerical fact.”²⁰⁰

Similarly little female engagement was seen in Nigeria's political life under the fourth republic, which took office in 1999. Only 181 of the 11, 881 positions that were up for grabs in the 1999 general elections were held by women nationwide. Out of 109 senators, only 5 (4.6%) women were elected to the Senate, while 13 (3.6%) women were elected to the House of Representatives, giving women a 6.3% representation in the national legislature. Among the 36 possible governors, none were female. Only 12 (1.21 percent) women were elected to the States House of Assembly, and Chief Kofoworola Akerele-Bucknor, the deputy governor of Lagos State, was the only female deputy governor in Nigeria between 1999 and 2003.²⁰¹

The International Human Rights Law Group, the Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA), and Gender and Development Action organized a national conference for all women politicians on June 28, 2002, in Abuja in response to the underwhelming performance of women in this election (GADA). The summit's objective was to boost women's political engagement in Nigeria. Despite all efforts to increase women's political involvement in Nigeria, there was little improvement during the 2003 elections. Only 21

²⁰⁰Karunwi. A. 'Gender, Politics and the 2003 Elections' in Remi Anifowose and Tunde Babawale (ed.) "2003 General Elections and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria", (Lagos: Frankel Publishers 2003).

²⁰¹ Ebuka O, FACT SHEET: Women 'poorly represented' in Nigeria's 19 years of democratic rule – CDD. *The Premium Times, Nigeria* [July 2, 2018] <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/274577-fact-sheet-women-poorly-represented-in-nigerias-19-years-of-democratic-rule-cdd.html> accessed 12 June 2022

(6.1%) of the 339 House of Representatives members that participated in the 2003 elections were female.²⁰²

Similarly, only three (2.7 percent) women were elected to the Senate out of 109 senatorial seats, for a total of 8.8 percent women representation in the national legislature (UNDP Report, 2003).²⁰³ No woman was elected to one of the 36 gubernatorial seats available, and 38 (3.84 percent) women were elected to the country's States House of Assembly.²⁰⁴ In 2007, only 25 (6.9 percent) women were elected to the House of Representatives and 9 (8.3 percent) women were elected to the Senate, for a total of 7.3 percent women representation in the national parliament, while no woman was elected to the 36 gubernatorial seats available and no woman was elected to the 990 seats available for the States House of Assembly in the country, 54 (5.5%) women were elected²⁰⁵

A total of 7160 candidates (including men and women) ran in the April 2007 elections, according to information from the Independence National Electoral Commission's (INEC) database. There were only 628 women who applied, representing 8.8% of the total number of candidates. 3141 candidates competed for seats in the National Assembly (799 candidates for the senate and 2342 candidates for the House of Representatives). Only 209 individuals, or 6.7%, were women (59 or 7.4 percent women for Senate and 150 or 6.4 percent women for

²⁰²Oni S & Joshua S, *Gender Relations in Nigeria's Democratic Governance*
<<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/79125049.pdf>> accessed 23 May 2022

²⁰³Adewuyi Abiodun Ayo, *Women Participation In Nigeria Politics (Case Study of Lagos Nigeria*
<https://www.academia.edu/14690024/WOMEN_PARTICIPATION_IN_NIGERIA_POLITICS_CASE_STUDY_OF_LAGOS_NIGERIA> accessed 23 May, 2022

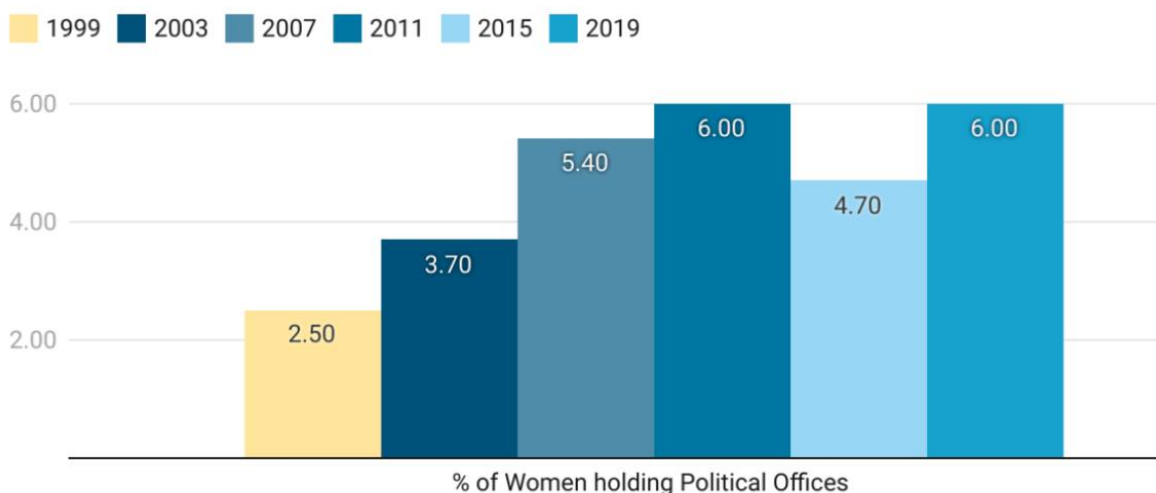
²⁰⁴Adu, O. *The missing link: Women's representation and participation in Nigeria's electoral politics and their effects on Nigeria's development.* (Being a Ph.D Thesis. Dept. of Political Science, Haverford College, Haverford, USA)

²⁰⁵The Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition Shadow Report, Submitted To The 41st Session Of The United Nations Committee on the Elimination Of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women Holding At The United Nations Plaza New York <https://www.refworld.org/docid/48a0007a2.html> accessed 23 May, 2022

House of Representative). The numbers above show that, in 1999, 2003, and 2007, women made up 2%, 4%, and 6% of the workforce, respectively.²⁰⁶

The pattern does suggest a rise in the representation of women, though. This came about as a result of the Obasanjo administration's deliberate efforts to improve the participation of women in his political administration. Political parties in the country decided to waive pre-registration fees for female political candidates as a result. A national summit for all female politicians was also held on June 28, 2002, in Abuja, by the International Human Rights Law Group, the Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA), and Gender and Development Action (GADA), in an effort to increase women's active participation in Nigerian politics. Awareness campaigns by these and other gender-related organizations and NGOs additionally inspired women in the federation to run for political office in the 2003 and 2007 general elections.²⁰⁷

Percentage of Women Representation in Political Seats



²⁰⁶Okocha, C. 'Why Nigerian Women Fail in Elections'. *This Day* (Lagos, 30 September 2007). <https://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/Political-Participation-and-Gender-Inequality-in-Nigerian-Fourth-Republic.pdf> accessed 23 May, 2022

²⁰⁷Oluyemi Fayomi, Lady Ajayi, An Exploratory Study of Women in Political Leadership in Nigeria <<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/32225836.pdf>> accessed 23 May, 2022

The Minister of Women Affairs, Pauline Tallen,²⁰⁸ has cited the lack of women in politics and other leadership roles as a significant obstacle to the growth of the nation. She said that the underrepresentation of women in positions of power was to blame for the nation's low investment and sluggish growth in some of the most important areas of human development outcomes. Among the sectors Tallen identified as having low levels of development were security and peace processes, health, education, ICT development, finance, trade, and investments. She asserts that the news conference's goal is to remind political parties and candidates that, despite the fact that states have huge populations, there is not a particularly high representation of women in various positions. She claimed that the purpose of the news conference was to determine how well political gatekeepers and key players had done in acknowledging the sacrifices made by Nigerian women and how to best assist their objectives.

The minister claimed that there had been a persistent underrepresentation of women and a gender imbalance in important fields over the years, and that the narrative needed to be changed. For instance, only 18 of the 360 members of the House of Representatives, or 4.61 percent, are women; in the Senate, there are eight women, or 7.34 percent, of the 109 members. Nigeria has ratified both the 1995 Beijing Declaration and the United Nations Convention on the Political Rights of Women. These are crucial global institutions that guarantee that states give women a voice in politics. Nigeria ratified the 2003 Maputo Protocol, also known as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, the 2004 Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, and the 1985 Nairobi Conference on Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. The National Gender Policy

²⁰⁸ Low number of women in politics, bane of Nigeria's development — Minister. The minister stated this on Friday 12th February, 2022 in Abuja at a news conference while giving an update on the status of women inclusion, participation in governance, both at the state and sub national levels. <<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/528219-low-number-of-women-in-politics-bane-of-nigerias-development-minister.html>> Accessed 13th May 2022

of Nigeria, which was put into effect in 2008, emphasizes the equality of women in all aspects of life, including the political, social, and economic ones. It sets a goal of having 35% of women in elected and appointed political positions.²⁰⁹ The Ministry of Women Affairs in Nigeria works toward gender equality in the development process, despite the fact that this has not yet been put into practice.²¹⁰

Based on the number of women holding elected office in Nigeria following the 2019 elections. Currently, only 6% of women hold positions of political leadership at the federal level, compared to 94% men. This percentage blatantly violates Nigeria's pledge to having 35% women in the legislature. Clearly, women did poorly in the 2019 elections. The estimated current population of Nigeria is 200,923,640.²¹¹ Ninety nine million, or 99,180,412 people, are women, or 49% of the population. 2,970 women ran for office, constituting almost 11% of all candidates. But just 57 of them were chosen to serve (4 percent of all elected candidates). There were six female presidential contenders this year (in contrast to one woman in 2015). In 2019, there were 22 women running for vice president, making up 30% of all candidates.²¹² All six of the female contenders for president quit during the campaign. In the race for governor, women made up just 3% of the field of contenders. Enugu, Kaduna, Ogun, and Rivers are the four states in Nigeria that now have female deputy governors, despite the fact that there were no female candidates for governor. This number rose in 2015 as women were elected as deputy governors in six states.²¹³

²⁰⁹Okoronkwo-C, U. 'Female Representation in Nigeria: The Case of The 2011 General Elections and The Fallacy of 35% Affirmative Action.', (Being a Research on Humanities and Social Sciences, 3(2), The International Institute for Science, Technology and Education, 2013). 40-6.

²¹⁰ Nigeria National Gender Policy (Being a Draft of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Situation Analysis/Framework, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development. Abuja, 2006) .

²¹¹Centre for Democracy and Development , *How Women Fared in the 2019 Elections*, (March 2019) < www.cddwestafrica.org > Accessed May 14th 2022

²¹² UPDATED: 2019 elections worst for Nigerian women in nearly two decades, analyses show. *Premium times* (2019) <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/326243-2019-elections-worst-for-nigerian-women-in-nearly-two-decades-analyses-show.html> accessed 23 June 2022

²¹³ Ibid

4.3.3 The Gender Bill

A coalition of 229 women's organizations criticized the National Assembly for rejecting all gender-related legislation when the 1999 Constitution was being amended. The parliamentarians' choice to vote against gender laws, denying women the chance to be included and represented in administration, was criticized by the organisations as being sad.²¹⁴ “The National Assembly, they said, has spoken loud and clear that it does not want progress for society – for mothers, aunties, sisters, wives, and for daughters”.²¹⁵

Some of the groups listed in the unsigned statement are Action Aid Nigeria, African Women’s Initiative (AWI) and Amnesty International Nigeria. Others are EiE Nigeria, UN Women and Stand to End Rape (STER). The lawmakers, on Tuesday 1st of March, 2022 voted on 68 bills that seek to alter the Constitution. Of the 68 legislations, about five bills sought to promote more opportunities for women in political parties, governance and the society at large but unfortunately all the five bills were rejected.

The organisations stated in a press release that the failed gender measures were intended to address the country's current gender imbalance in the legislative branch of government and to increase the representation of women in political office. They added that lawmakers had made the decision to deny women's fundamental human rights (rights enjoyed by every Nigerian except women). They argued that the ninth assembly's men had strengthened the political bias and discrimination against women that is incorporated in the constitution by:

- 1) Denying citizenship to a foreign-born husband of a Nigerian woman. (While it allows Nigerian men’s foreign-born wives to be awarded automatic citizenship);
- 2) Denying Nigerian women indigeneity through marriage;

²¹⁴ Constitution Amendment: Over 200 women groups berate National Assembly, set to protest Wednesday, *Premium times* (2022) <<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/514752-constitution-amendment-over-200-women-groups-berate-national-assembly-set-to-protest-wednesday.html> >

²¹⁵ Ibid

- 3) Denying 35 per cent appointed positions for women and settling for 20 per cent;
- 4) Denying women affirmative action in party administration and leadership; and
- 5) Denying specific seats for women in the National Assembly.

“The men of the ninth assembly, by their actions, have taken us backwards. Their actions undermine the importance and relevance of women’s contribution to the governance of Nigeria including the key role women play to bring victory to political parties in elections at all levels across the country. They also voted against diaspora voting!”²¹⁶

They, therefore, demanded that all gender bills be reconsidered for they will benefit not just women but Nigeria as a whole.

“More women in governance will only bring progress, and respect for Nigeria in the committee of nations. We cannot, in 2022, be negotiating the rights of women and the sanctity of the dignity of girls We call on the National Assembly to re-present these bills as a matter of urgency and ensure that they are passed.”²¹⁷

4.3.4 Judicial Process and Affirmative Action

The long-term advocacy for 35 per cent inclusion in public service slots for women got a big boost when a Federal High Court in Abuja ordered the federal government to implement its 35 per cent affirmative action policy.²¹⁸ As contained in the National Gender Policy 2006, sections 42, 147 (3) and 14 (3) of the 1999 constitution as amended, and Articles 2, 13 (2) and (3) and Article 19 of the African Charter of Human and Peoples Rights approved by the

²¹⁶ Ibid

²¹⁷ Ibid

²¹⁸ Affirmative Action: Court orders Nigerian govt to reserve 35% of public offices for women. *Premium Time News Paper* (April 6, 2022) <<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/522195-affirmative-action-court-orders-nigerian-govt-to-reserve-35-of-public-offices-for-women.html>> Accessed 14 July 2022

Federal Executive Council (FEC) in 2006, states that 35 per cent of public offices be reserved for women.²¹⁹

Justice Donatus Okorowo ruled in favor of women after agreeing with the plaintiffs that the President Muhammadu Buhari-led government's lopsided appointments were illegal and an arbitrary violation of the NGP. He added that the policy is more than just a statement; it must be supported by the necessary action on the part of the government. Following their victory in court, Nigerian women asked that the federal government quickly implement the court's ruling, which required 35% affirmative action for women and gender equality in hiring. They also called on the NASS to acknowledge and pass all the gender related bills before it. It was stated that the affirmative judgement came at a very good time for Nigeria as the country is preparing for another general elections.²²⁰ It was ascertained that the judgement was the law and the law must be obeyed until there was a superior judgement, stressing that women groups needed to ensure that this law was implemented and leaders were held accountable.²²¹ The WiPF equally urge President Buhari to fill the vacant ministerial positions with women, stating that it was a good opportunity for the President to make an indelible mark in making the 35 per cent affirmative action court ruling a reality. "The judgement is the law and the law must be obeyed until there is a superior judgement."²²²

The forum president maintained that women groups needed to ensure that this law is implemented by holding leaders accountable.

Since the President made the call that members of the panel, ministerial appointees that are interested in running at the election should resign from their respective positions this is the best time to call on the president to replace the

²¹⁹ National Gender Policy Federal Republic of Nigeria <https://nigerianwomentrustfund.org/wp-content/uploads/National-Gender-PolicySituation-Analysis.pdf> accessed 12 July 2022

²²⁰ Ebere Ifendu, President, Women in Politics Forum (WiPF)

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

empty positions with women just to ensure there is implementation of the law.

WIPF has sent a letter to the President the previous day informing him that women should replace the men as enforcement of the judgement implementation is very important. The President as a matter of urgency must enforce the law as women groups will hold him accountable.

“The Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) will give the protocol assistance to ensure implementation and assist in case there is a breach.

The Manager²²³, described the court ruling in favour of women as a great feat for women groups and organisations. She noted the energy and resources put into the women’s struggle over the years, pointing out that a good number of organisations had been working on ensuring the 35 persons Affirmative Action was passed into law to ensure that women get the right spaces in governance and other leadership positions across the country.

Given the discouraging outcomes experienced in the past she suggested that women should explore other options to achieve the desired goals, particularly in holding government to account on the marginalisation of women in leadership.

“We should not stick to only one strategy in getting things done as over the years we discovered some level of reluctance by the government in getting to live up to their commitment of getting women their right leadership spaces hence unconventional ways can be introduced to drive our demands home and get results,”.

One crucial point that was stressed was the necessity of continuing the conversation about women's rights since, as is often said, "a closed mouth is a closed destiny." Women's organizations were exhorted not to give up and to always work together to accomplish the desired result..

4.3.5 Appeal Against the Ruling

²²³Nkechi Ilochi-Kanny, Women’s Right Programme at Action Aid Nigeria.

Hundreds of women groups led by the Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTF) have been described as highly unconstitutional and distraction tactics, the appeal of the 35 per cent affirmative action, which was decided in favour of the women group's coalition on April 6 at the High Court sitting in Abuja.²²⁴

The Attorney General of the Federation, Abubakar Malami on behalf of President Muhammad Buhari, appealed the litigation process involving Nigerian women against the Federal Government of Nigeria on the affirmative action ruling won by the women.

Recall that following the ruling in April, the President expressed his gratitude to the women's organizations for the historic decision and pledged to uphold and carry out the court's decision through the minister of women's affairs, Dame Pauline Tallen.

The coalition's president, Mufuliat Fijabi, stated that Malami's appeal is "very unconstitutional" in an interview with *The Guardian* because appeals are typically filed within 30 days of a ruling. Therefore, the appeal filed by Malami and President Buhari demonstrates that they both regard themselves as above the law and are opposed to efforts to advance and develop Nigeria as a nation, particularly as an election year approaches. After their earlier commitment, this turnaround is, to put it mildly, unexpected."²²⁵

4.4 The Effect of Gender Quota Laws on Women Political Participation; The global perspective

Argentina enacted a national gender quota law in 1991 that mandates that women make up 30% of the candidates nominated by all political parties seeking to win seats in the Chamber of Deputies.²²⁶ The concept of gender quotas wasn't novel (international organizations had

²²⁴ Women fault appeal of 35 per cent affirmative action by government *The Guardian* (2022) <https://guardian.ng/news/women-fault-appeal-of-35-per-cent-affirmative-action-by-govt/> accessed 23 July 2022

²²⁵ Ibid

²²⁶ Mona Lena Krook, Quotas for Women in Politics: Gender and Candidate Selection Reform Worldwide <https://academic.oup.com/book/8767?login=false> accessed 22 September 2022

been promoting them since the 1975 U.N. First World Conference on Women), and neither was the application of them: several political parties, most frequently in the Nordic countries, had been using them since the 1970s.²²⁷ The Argentine statute, however, presented the greatest possibility to enhance women's representation in the entire legislature, not just in one political party's parliamentary delegation, as it was the first democratic state law to apply to all political parties. Argentina provides evidence that quotas have been effective. In the 1993 election, the first after the quota law went into effect, women won 14.4% of the seats in the Chamber, compared to only 5% in the 1991 election.²²⁸ By 2001, Argentina's Chamber of Deputies was 31% female and ranked ninth in the world in terms of women's representation in national parliaments.²²⁹ Twenty-five very diverse countries have followed Argentina's example and adopted gender quotas, either through national legislation or constitutional provisions (or both), since 1991.²³⁰ Some of these quotas have only recently been implemented, affecting only one election. In 2005 and 2006, respectively, Liberia and Mauritania implemented quota systems, while in 2006, Mexico's quota law was used to Senate elections for the first time.²³¹

Quotas have gone through several election cycles in different nations. Since 1994, when quotas were implemented in Belgium, three elections have taken place. The quota for the Chamber of Deputies in Argentina has been in effect for seven elections.²³² In two cases, Italy and Venezuela, quota laws were adopted but then rescinded a short time later. Gender quotas' main objective is to raise the proportion of women who are elected to legislatures. But in

²²⁷Melanie M. Hughes and others, Global Gender Quota Adoption, Implementation, and Reform https://www.jstor.org/stable/26563456#metadata_info_tab_contents Accessed 12 October 2022

²²⁸ Ibid

²²⁹ Inter-parliamentary Union 2002 survey <http://archive.ipu.org/english/pressarc02.htm> accessed 12 October 2022

²³⁰ Ibid

²³¹ Ibid

²³² Making Quotas Work: The Effect of Gender Quota Laws On the Election of Women https://www.jstor.org/stable/20680225#metadata_info_tab_contents accessed 12 October 2022

nations with quotas, the proportion of women in the legislature varies greatly.²³³ For instance, after enacting its national quota law in 2001, Argentina observed a nearly instantaneous rise in the proportion of women in office. Brazil, in comparison, has seen essentially no change in the percentage of women in government since its quota system was put into place in 1997. Since the quota was established in 1999, the average percentage of women in the Armenian legislative has dropped to 5.6% from 6.3% in the pre-quota 1995 election.²³⁴ Why do some quota laws promote the election of more women than others? Laws governing candidate gender quotas vary greatly between nations along three axes. If all other factors are equal, requiring more women to be listed on the party ballot should result in more women winning seats in the legislature. The size of the current quotas varies, ranging from 5% in Armenia to 50% in France.²³⁵ The placement mandate is the second dimension. Female candidates must be put in electable districts or electable positions on party ballots, according to a placement mandate. Eleven nations, including Argentina, have a placement requirement as a part of their quota. The effectiveness of the quota law's enforcement procedures makes up the third dimension. Some nations stipulate no way of enforcing the quota, while others impose severe penalties on parties that submit candidate.²³⁶

4.5 The African Experience

Since the early 1990s, the introduction of gender quotas has been a political issue in Africa. Both optional and required quotas have been successfully incorporated into the political platforms and legal frameworks of numerous African nations. Political parties typically embrace voluntary quotas, whereas governments enact mandated quotas through national

²³³ See Appendix one

²³⁴ Making Quotas Work: The Effect of Gender Quota Laws On the Election of Women
https://www.jstor.org/stable/20680225#metadata_info_tab_contents accessed 12 October 2022

²³⁵ Drude Dahlerup, Women in Decision-Making in Public Life Types, Usage, and Effects of Temporary Special Measures, Including Gender Quotas (2020)

https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/65/EGM/Dahlerup_TS_Ms_EP3_EGMCSW65.pdf

²³⁶ Ibid

constitutions, electoral codes, and other election regulatory laws. Currently, for elections to the National Parliament in Africa, including North Africa, 6 nations have constitutional quotas, 19 countries have voluntary party quotas, and 3 countries have reserved seat quotas.²³⁷ The regional average of women in parliament presently stands at 18%, which is somewhat lower than the global average of 18.6%, according to a politics expert and program specialist with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).²³⁸ It was also said that while Africa does better than the Pacific (13%) and the Arab States (9.7%), it lags behind the Americas (21.7%), Europe (21.2%), and Asia (18.3%) in terms of women's access to parliaments.²³⁹ This comprehensive response outlines the various kinds of quotas imposed in African nations and gives information on how quotas are implemented under various election systems. The response also includes a number of annexes that contain information on quotas by country and quota type.

According to the Quota Project, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Uganda have constitutional quotas for National Parliaments. Among these countries, Burundi, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania call for 30 % quotas for women in Parliaments.²⁴⁰ Articles 164 and 129 of the Burundian Constitution, which was enacted in February 2005, call for quotas for women in the legislature and executive branch. A 30% quota for women in the legislature is mandated under Article 164, and if the quota is not met, women must be included through the cooptation procedure outlined in the Burundian

²³⁷ Ace Project (*Implementation of Quotas: African Experiences. 2004*) <https://aceproject.org/electoral-advice/archive/questions/replies/165671188>

²³⁸ Inter-parliamentary Union 2002 survey <http://archive.ipu.org/english/pressarc02.htm> accessed 12 October 2022.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Consolidated Response on Gender Quotas in African Countries <https://aceproject.org/electoral-advice/archive/questions/replies/165671188> Accessed October 2022

electoral code. In addition, Article 129 of the Burundian Constitution stipulates that women must hold 30% of ministerial positions regardless of their ethnicity.²⁴¹

4.5.1 United Republic of Tanzania.

The United Republic of Tanzania is a successful example of quotas being used in a majoritarian voting system. Tanzania's constitution was changed to increase the proportion of special seats allotted for women to 30%.²⁴² In addition, the Constitution mandates that five of ten seats designated for presidential appointees and two of the five seats reserved for candidates from.²⁴³ After the December 2005 elections, the National Assembly of Tanzania has 30.4% female parliamentarians, per IPU statistics.²⁴⁴ IPU commented on this accomplishment by pointing out that Tanzania had the largest proportion of women ever represented in a majoritarian political system as of 2005.²⁴⁵ However, Tanzania's representation has increased from 30% to 36% in the most current ranking.²⁴⁶

4.5.2 Burundi

The year 2020, which also happens to be the 15th anniversary of the introduction of gender quotas in politics, saw Burundi hold its fourth general election following a conflict. The 2005 Constitution of the Republic of Burundi²⁴⁷ announced a requirement that women hold a minimum of 30% of seats in Parliament (both in the National Assembly and in the Senate) and in the Executive branch. Burundian women have historically been underrepresented in public life since the country's independence in 1962, and this initiative attempted to rectify that issue. Despite the fact that women were first appointed to the Executive branch in 1984

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² African Democracy Encyclopaedia Project; Tanzania: National Assembly seat allocation <https://www.eisa.org/wep/tanseatallocation.htm> accessed 12 October 2022.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Women in national parliaments <http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm> accessed 14 October 2022

²⁴⁵ Women in Parliament in 2005: the Year in Perspective 2005 IPU Survey

²⁴⁶ See Appendix 1.

²⁴⁷ Articles 129, 164, 182(2)

and first elected to the House of Representatives in 1982, records reveal that their representation in both chambers has fluctuated about 10% until 2005.²⁴⁸ Even after the 1993 elections, when Sylvie Kinigi was chosen as Burundi's first female prime minister, only 2 out of the 23 members of the cabinet and 8 out of the 81 members of the National Assembly, the country's unicameral legislature, were female.

Women made remarkable advancements in the general elections of 2005, which served as the first gender quota test. In the Executive branch, the National Assembly (upper chamber), and the Senate, women's representation increased by 12%, 19%, 31%, and 18.8%, 34.6%, respectively.²⁴⁹ Women took over as Speaker of the National Assembly and Second Vice President of the Republic, respectively. Even today, the same pattern has been present. Women made up 31.8% of executive branch officials and 36.36% of parliamentarians during the 2015–2020 period (the final legislative term under the 2005 constitution).²⁵⁰

The 2005 Constitution instead demanded "gender equilibriums" in other institutions and decision-making bodies where the 30% minimum quota for women was not specifically needed (such as in general public administration, diplomatic positions, the judiciary, and defense and security forces).²⁵¹ This directive was also fairly carried out. At now, women make up at least 30% of members of significant national institutions, such as the National Independent Electoral Commission, the National Independent Commission on Human Rights, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR Burundi) (CENI Burundi). The

²⁴⁸ Fikiri Nzoyisenga, '15 Years of Gender Quotas in Burundi: What's the Impact?' <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/15-years-of-gender-quotas-in-burundi-whats-the-impact/> Accessed 12 October 2022

²⁴⁹ Ibid

²⁵⁰ Inter-parliamentary Union, Women in parliament in 2020 The year in review file:///C:/Users/SOLOMON%20AGBATOR/Downloads/2020-women%20in%20parliament_EN-LR_2.pdf accessed 14 October 2022

²⁵¹ Article 135, 208, 255

Burundian legislature even went so far as to mandate that political parties' national and provincial executive committees must have at least 30% women.²⁵²

The government of Burundi has strengthened the legal protections against sexual abuse and exploitation of women and girls as a result of the adoption of the gender quota. This includes the acceptance of the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography to the Convention on the Rights of the Child in November 2007.²⁵³ Additionally, we witnessed the restructuring in 2009 of the 1981 Criminal Code that punished women only for adultery, the adoption of a new law on criminal procedure in 2013²⁵⁴ that gives civil society organizations the likelihood of supporting victims of sexual violence in their quest for justice²⁵⁵ and the adoption of a very strong law against sexual and gender-based violence in 2016.

4.5.3 Somalia

Due to its history of upheaval, Somalia is notably different from other countries in Africa. Despite having a gender quota provision, Somalia has failed to elect enough women to the national Parliament for nearly three straight election cycles.²⁵⁶ It contrasts important institutional factors that are deemed to be crucial in determining whether quotas were successful or unsuccessful throughout the previous three cycles. In Somalia, the exclusionary nature of the electoral system and the importance of clan-based politics are the main explanations for the low percentage of women elected. Women are frequently ignored in a political system that is permeated with clan dynamics and where voting for clan interests is promoted. In order to clarify this contradiction, the brief first discusses how the gender quota provision is being

²⁵² Article 33 of the law of political parties, Burundi

²⁵³ Burundi Country Report 2022; The BTI Transformation Index is a project <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/BDI> accessed 12 October 2022

²⁵⁴ 2018 amendment

²⁵⁵ Article 64 para 4 and 5 of the Criminal Procedure Law of Burundi

²⁵⁶ EISA Somalia: Women's representation in electoral and governance processes <https://www.eisa.org/somalia-women.php> accessed 23 October 2022

implemented and the factors that make it less successful. This short also describes the operation of Somalia's hybrid voting system, highlighting the patriarchal aspect of that country's. The lack of a legal base can make a gender quota policy weak and consequently unenforceable in the face of non-compliance and a lack of political will, as seen by the inadequate representation of Somali women in the Somali Parliament throughout the last three electoral cycles.²⁵⁷ Somalia execute the quota for its federal and state elections based on a provision not backed by law.²⁵⁸ This shows that other factors, rather than the 30% women's quota, are more significant in deciding the percentage of women elected to Somalia's legislature. This demonstrates that improving women's representation does not only require special measures like quotas; rather, it also requires improving the institution in question and its operations.²⁵⁹

Women's political representation in Somalia is declining, as seen by the dramatic decline in the percentage of women elected between 2016 and 2022.

Thus, in contrast to widespread opinion and regional and global trends, the likelihood of women being elected in Somalia is declining rather than increasing as quotas are introduced.²⁶⁰

Since the establishment of the Republic of Somalia in 1960, Somali women have been disproportionately underrepresented in positions of power. Following pressure from advocacy organizations and the international community lobbying at the Somali National Consultative Constitutional Conference in February 2012, Somalia's transition period ended in 2012 with women being granted 30% representation in all government sectors.²⁶¹

²⁵⁷Mukenyi B, Antonetta H and Ilona T, ' Why Gender Quotas Don't Work in Somalia? The Influence of The Electoral System and Clan Politics' <https://www.eisa.org/pdf/som2022brief.pdf> accessed 23 October 2022

²⁵⁸ Ibid

²⁵⁹ Ibid

²⁶⁰ Realizing Women's 30 Per Cent Quota, Political Participation in Somalia 'a Game Changer' For Sustainable Peace, Deputy Secretary-General Tells Security Council <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/realizing-women-s-30-cent-quota-political-participation-somalia-game-changer> accessed 23 October 2022

²⁶¹ Women in Parliament 1995-2020 (2020). <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reports/2020-03/women-in-parliament-1995-2020-25-years-in-review>. Accessed 20 October 2022

However, in the first indirect election in 2012, clan elders chose lawmakers from their individual clans who opposed women in leadership positions.

Since the gender quota provision was announced in 2012, it has been fundamentally weak since it has not been institutionalized in the national constitution, which is still being finalized and is still provisional.²⁶² Having no procedures in place to ensure enforcement, the failure to institutionalize the constitution has left the implementation of satisfying the quota requirements up to the political actors' goodwill.²⁶³ The gender quota is not included in any of Somalia's legislative instruments pertaining to election administration, including the 2012 Provisional Federal Constitution, the 2018-passed but never-implemented Electoral Law, and the Political Party Law that has not yet been enacted.²⁶⁴ Therefore, the 30% gender quota clause continues to be an unofficial, unenforceable practice.

The impact of the lack of institutionalizing gender quotas is demonstrated by the unequal representation of women in Parliament throughout the last three indirect elections (in 2012, 2016, and 2022).²⁶⁵

In order to ensure that the 30% quota is applied, the implementation of the gender quota is currently most often negotiated with male political officials and clan elders. In 2012, 14% of the seats were held by women. Before a dramatic decrease to 20% in the House of the People

²⁶² Ibid

²⁶³ Osman, D. "The End of Transition in Somalia and the Role of the Technical Selection Experience" *Journal of Somali Studies* (2015) (2)

²⁶⁴ Ibid

²⁶⁵ Hujale, M. 'Somalia edges closer to first democratic election in half-a-century'. The Guardian, 24 February, 2020 <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/feb/24/somalia-edges-closer-to-first-democratic-election-in-half-a-century> Accessed 23 October 2022

in 2021–2022, this grew to 24% in 2016. (Lower House). Women's representation in the Senate (Upper House) rose by 2% to 26% in 2021–2022.²⁶⁶

Chapter five

Conclusion

5.1 Summary

The findings of this study were consistent with its primary objectives, which were to examine the current state of international laws on women's political participation, to examine how Nigerian law protects women's right to political participation, to identify and analyze the barriers to women's political participation in Nigeria, and to evaluate efforts and policies to increase women's political participation. Findings also showed that, if permitted by their families and society at large, women are capable, willing, and able to run for office and win. The majority of women only register to vote and cast ballots. Most women do not receive equal opportunities as their male counterparts do in terms of the level of female participation. Concerning possible measures to encourage women participation in politics, economic empowerment, educational empowerment, stoppage of all obnoxious traditional practices and creating more political appointments for women should be encouraged. Women political

²⁶⁶ Heritage Institute, (2022) <https://heritageinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Women-and-Politics-July-2022.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1nRmZI4keRQDFZQN9VOApbnqgkZ2xTeRQIjOICAI4BExr9sc9HBLGjdE> Accessed 12 October 2022

participation in Nigeria is a topic of great concern and importance. The relegation of Nigerian women to the political background over the years, could be linked to the reason why women are under-represented in leadership positions both in politics and society at large. But from the standpoint of culture and tradition, women actually encounter a lot of opposition when it comes to participation in politics. It is important to mention that many women feared that politics would hinder them from providing for their family completely. Due to their upbringing, women are typically very committed to what happens in the home, which leads them to prioritize household responsibilities over involvement in any social or political activities. Therefore, family responsibility plays a significant influence in women's low involvement in politics. In order to facilitate and promote women effective participation in politics, Federal, States, and Local Governments should work hand in hand to support and equip educated women to be able to raise social awareness especially in rural areas in order to instill values in the women and improve their self confidence that has been damaged by patriarchy. More so, the men need to be oriented on the importance of allowing their wives to participate in politics. This is necessary as most of the male respondents are of the opinion that women who participate in politics are irresponsible housewives and that any woman in politics is an irresponsible housewife. In addition, the government at all levels should encourage girl child education. Education and economic empowerment for all girls, whether they live in urban or rural regions, are necessary to help them become ethically and financially independent. The exclusion of women from political and economic involvement is a slap in the face to the principles and ideals of democratic government and a free market economy. The continued socio-economic and political advancement of the society depends in large part on women. Women are essential to the success of all development policies and programs. In fact, because of their humanity, strength in numbers, and distinctive roles, women are in a

strategic position to shape and influence the progress of the society as a whole, and as a result, they are deserving of special consideration and care.

Despite the relatedness that has greeted the rise of women in leadership positions of the country in recent time, the positive development however is not a true reflection of the potential rewards and benefits due to women in view of their population, strength, contribution to national development as meeting the call for justice and equity as reflected in the 35 percent affirmative action. There is the need to critically address the societal induced limitations and hurdles to the political empowerment of women in Nigeria. This goes beyond society to the government, political parties, national and international development agencies, civil society and non-governmental organisations to take up the challenges via necessary building to redress the continued political subordination to empowering the society as a whole. More so, there should be equality in the sharing of political offices on the basis of the quota system between competing candidates. As a result, both men and women will have equal access to these public positions. Additionally, the Federal Government should make it a requirement that women be appointed to public offices on an equal basis. Due to the fact that this will end all gender discrimination on the part of men. In Nigeria, money politics should be avoided, and women who desire to actively participate in politics should be encouraged to do so without fear or favor. Additionally, it is important to set up legal funds so that female legislators can contest electoral fraud. The affirmative action and CEDAW doctrines should be strengthened in order to have a significant impact on Nigeria's political environment and end all forms of discrimination against women. Also, building a coalition of NGO's and grassroots women associations that coordinates the support and advocacy for women aspirants. Again, there should be a support network and prospective role models: through the identification of aspirants and pairing them with established women politicians, playing mentoring roles and providing capacity building training to young or aspiring female

politicians. In addition, a supportive climate exists that enables women to participate in decision-making in an efficient and long-lasting manner free from political harassment and violence. If any significant reforms are to be made to encourage women's participation in politics, the ideology of male hegemony, which has taken over the political arena of Nigeria, must be completely abandoned. The prospects of women effectively participating and making decisions in the Nigerian political system will increase if the aforementioned recommendations and those of other works are implemented properly.

5.2 Conclusion

Women's underrepresentation in politics around the world is a topic of intensive academic discussion and growing public awareness as a result of women's movements' expanding global campaigns for gender equality. The significance of women's participation in political and human development cannot be emphasized because effective democratic governance depends on all citizens taking part in choosing their leaders through elections and political processes. Women have historically been underrepresented in politics and positions of decision-making, despite growing calls for gender equality worldwide. Despite the fact that women make up almost half of the world's population, this continues. When Nigeria failed to reach the necessary threshold of 30% women's representation in the National Assembly in 1999, despite having successfully undergone four consecutive legitimate political transitions through democratic elections following the country's return to a civilian government in that year, it became a worrying phenomenon. Although women make up half of Nigeria's population, like in other nations throughout the world, there has been no increase in women's engagement in political activities in the nation.

The underrepresentation of women in Nigeria continues to hinder national growth. A persistent mystery is why women in this country and elsewhere continue to think that the men

in positions of authority will willingly give up their jobs to female rivals. Due to the power dynamics implied by the relationship between gender and democracy, the realist paradigm of this study is still applicable. Indeed, it appears that the historically male-predominant gender representation in Nigeria's democracy has only led to a system of general underdevelopment and poverty. As a result, the nation's gender studies must concentrate on the function of power in democracy. The ultimate objective should be to use these rights for national progress on both sides of the border.

The prevalent assumption that patriarchy is what most stops Nigerian women from participating in their country's representative government and national advancement has been challenged by this study. The extensive voting rights that Nigerian women still enjoy can be used to fight back against the state's current harmful trends in gender, democracy, and national development. Nigeria has consistently experienced problematic national development as a result of the existing disarticulations between gendered representation and democracy.

It is sufficient to mention that the topic of women's participation in politics has generated debate throughout political history. But in recent years, there has been a global battle to ensure that women are recognized as human beings with the same rights as men. Some development experts believe that more socio-economic development will take place if women's potentials were properly tapped and utilized. Progress has been hampered over time by the false notion that only women are capable of handling domestic duties. Worldwide, it is incredibly rare for women to hold executive positions in national governments and make decisions. Nigeria's condition is still far worse. Despite the fact that women make up the majority of the population in Nigeria, they are underrepresented in politics and even administrative positions. Therefore, it is essential to engender Nigeria by challenging the

socioeconomic order that excludes or limits the participation of women. Additionally, domesticating women should be discouraged while promoting equal representation for all genders and social classes.

Women won't be able to contribute to the social, economic, or political advancement of society until this is done, making their participation in politics an illusion. Generally speaking, the Nigerian government must give resources and a deliberate commitment to women's empowerment, development, and better integration into the mainstream political system as a matter of priority. Above all, women must stand up and fight, participate, and even get their due through and on merit rather than just the meager 30% concession that was demanded at the 1995 Beijing conference in China.²⁶⁷ In other words, However, just like Nigeria another impediment to the Somalia gender quota provision is that despite the principle of gender equality being a universally acknowledged value and a basic human right, Somalia as of August 2022, has not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This failure by the Nigerian government to ratify the international normative framework for gender equality weakens the legitimacy of the claim for equal representation and participation by all human beings, including women. It would have been a great opportunity for Nigeria and Nigerians to follow the footsteps of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, “Somalia”, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Uganda who have fully implemented the gender quota laws so as to give more opportunity for women political participations.

5.3 Recommendation

²⁶⁷Women and Political participation in Nigeria: A Discourse https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325514657_Women_and_Political_participation_in_Nigeria_A_Discourse> Accessed 13th May 2022

Advancing women's political participation requires determined efforts not only by women themselves, but also by Governments, the international community and civil society. Action by political parties is particularly important.

1. The constitution should be amended to create room for the government to introduce a formal quota system of at least 35 % women political participation with enforcement mechanisms to increase the number of women members of the legislature and political appointment irrespective of any form of disability.

2. It is also recommended that there should be a reservation of seats for women at all level and arms of government. The goal of this measure is to enhance the proportion of women in political participation. Surprisingly, there are no women in 15 out of the 36 states assembly. It is understandable why the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) presently ranks Rwanda first and Nigeria 186th in terms of the presence of women in national parliaments.²⁶⁸ If the Reserved Seat Bill had passed, women would have made up substantial percentage at the Senate, House of Representatives, and state assemblies

3. There is the need for government and the political parties to introduce political, institutional and financial guarantees that promote women's candidacies to ensure the equal participation of female nominees in electoral campaigns.

4. The government and the political parties should create or establish educational programmes and centres designed to prepare women for political careers.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

²⁶⁸ See Appendix One

The primary aim of the researcher in this study is to relook at the political participation of women in Nigeria from a legal perspective. The study gives an in-depth discussion on the role of law in political participation of women in Nigeria. So far, most studies on factors affecting or limiting political participation of women in Nigeria alone.

In this study the researcher has tried to shift the focus to a more contemporary issues on the role of law and affirmative action which can enhance women participation in politics.

Finally, the study has provided answers to the research questions/objectives, and has added to the existing literature on women's political participation.

5.5 Suggested Areas for Further Research

1. Women lawmakers and their responsiveness to Constituent Concerns
2. Legal framework for women's participation and the encouragement of citizen confidence in democracy

Appendix One

The data in the table below has been compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union on the basis of information provided by National Parliaments by 1st February 2019. 193 countries are classified by descending order of the percentage of women in the lower or single House. Comparative data on the world and regional averages as well as data concerning the two regional parliamentary assemblies elected by direct suffrage can be found on separate pages.

Rank	Country	Lower or single House				Upper chamber	
		Elections	Seats*	Women	% W	Elections	Seats
1	Rwanda	9.2018	80	49	61.3	9.2019	26
2	Cuba	3.2018	605	322	53.2	-	-
3	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	10.2019	130	69	53.1	10.2019	36
4	Andorra	4.2019	28	14	50	-	-
5	Mexico	7.2018	500	241	48.2	7.2018	128
6	Spain	4.2019	350	166	47.4	4.2019	261
7	Sweden	9.2018	349	165	47.3	-	-
8	Finland	4.2019	200	94	47	-	-
9	Grenada	3.2018	15	7	46.7	4.2018	13
10	Namibia	11.2014	104	48	46.2	12.2015	42
11	South Africa	5.2019	395	181	45.8	5.2019	53
12	Costa Rica	2.2018	57	26	45.6	-	-
13	Nicaragua	11.2016	92	41	44.6	-	-
14	Belgium	5.2019	150	63	42	7.2019	60
15	Senegal	7.2017	165	69	41.8	-	-
16	Switzerland	10.2019	200	83	41.5	10.2019	46
17	Mozambique	10.2019	250	103	41.2	-	-
18	New Zealand	9.2017	120	49	40.8	-	-
**	Norway	9.2017	169	69	40.8	-	-
20	Argentina	10.2019	254	102	40.2	10.2019	72
21	France	6.2017	577	229	39.7	9.2017	348
22	Austria	9.2019	183	72	39.3	-	61
23	North Macedonia	12.2016	120	47	39.2	-	-
24	Denmark	6.2019	179	70	39.1	-	-
25	Ethiopia	5.2015	547	212	38.8	10.2015	153

26	Portugal	10.2019	230	89	38.7	-	-
27	Timor-Leste	5.2018	65	25	38.5	-	-
28	Iceland	10.2017	63	24	38.1	-	-
29	Ecuador	2.2017	137	52	38	-	-
30	Serbia	4.2016	247	93	37.7	-	-
31	United Republic of Tanzania	10.2015	393	145	36.9	-	-
32	Burundi	6.2015	121	44	36.4	7.2015	39
33	Italy	3.2018	630	225	35.7	3.2018	320
34	United Arab Emirates	10.2019	20	7	35	-	-
35	Uganda	2.2016	459	160	34.9	-	-
36	Belarus	9.2016	110	38	34.6	9.2016	56
37	Monaco	2.2018	24	8	33.3	-	-
38	Nepal	11.2017	275	90	32.7	2.2018	59
39	United Kingdom	6.2017	650	208	32	-	789
40	Guyana	5.2015	69	22	31.9	-	-
**	Zimbabwe	7.2018	270	86	31.9	7.2018	80
42	Suriname	5.2015	51	16	31.4	-	-
43	Netherlands	3.2017	150	47	31.3	5.2019	75
44	Cameroon	9.2013	180	56	31.1	3.2018	100
45	El Salvador	3.2018	84	26	31	-	-
**	Trinidad and Tobago	9.2015	42	13	31	9.2015	31
47	Germany	9.2017	709	219	30.9	-	69
48	Australia	5.2019	151	46	30.5	5.2019	76
49	Angola	8.2017	220	66	30	-	-
**	Latvia	10.2018	100	30	30	-	-
**	Peru	4.2016	130	39	30	-	-
52	Estonia	3.2019	101	30	29.7	-	-
53	Albania	6.2017	122	36	29.5	-	-
54	Canada	10.2019	338	98	29	-	105
55	Poland	10.2019	460	132	28.7	10.2019	100
56	South Sudan	8.2016	383	109	28.5	8.2011	50
57	Montenegro	10.2016	81	23	28.4	-	-
58	Philippines	5.2019	304	85	28	5.2019	24
59	Afghanistan	10.2018	244	68	27.9	1.2015	68
60	Slovenia	6.2018	90	25	27.8	11.2017	40
61	Lao People's Democratic Republic	3.2016	149	41	27.5	-	-
62	Kazakhstan	3.2016	107	29	27.1	6.2017	47
63	Dominican Republic	5.2016	190	51	26.8	5.2016	32
64	Viet Nam	5.2016	494	132	26.7	-	-
65	Djibouti	2.2018	65	17	26.2	-	-
66	Algeria	5.2017	462	119	25.8	12.2018	132
**	Bulgaria	3.2017	240	62	25.8	-	-
68	Republic of Moldova	2.2019	101	26	25.7	-	-
69	Iraq	5.2018	329	83	25.2	-	-

70	Dominica	12.2014	32	8	25	-	-
**	Luxembourg	10.2018	60	15	25	-	-
**	San Marino	11.2016	60	15	25	-	-
**	Turkmenistan	3.2018	124	31	25	-	-
74	China	3.2018	2975	742	24.9	-	-
75	Somalia	10.2016	275	67	24.4	10.2016	54
76	Cabo Verde	3.2016	72	17	23.6	-	-
**	United States of America	11.2018	432	102	23.6	11.2018	100
78	Armenia	12.2018	132	31	23.5	-	-
79	Israel	9.2019	120	28	23.3	-	-
**	Lesotho	6.2017	120	28	23.3	7.2017	32
81	Singapore	9.2015	100	23	23	-	-
82	Malawi	5.2019	192	44	22.9	-	-
83	Guinea	9.2013	114	26	22.8	-	-
84	Chile	11.2017	155	35	22.6	11.2017	43
**	Tunisia	10.2019	217	49	22.6	-	-
86	Czech Republic	10.2017	200	45	22.5	10.2018	81
87	Ireland	2.2016	158	35	22.2	4.2016	60
**	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	12.2015	167	37	22.2	-	-
89	Eritrea	2.1994	150	33	22	-	-
90	Romania	12.2016	329	72	21.9	12.2016	136
91	Kenya	8.2017	349	76	21.8	8.2017	68
92	Bosnia and Herzegovina	10.2018	42	9	21.4	2.2019	15
93	Lithuania	10.2016	141	30	21.3	-	-
94	Seychelles	9.2016	33	7	21.2	-	-
95	Honduras	11.2017	128	27	21.1	-	-
**	Panama	5.2019	71	15	21.1	-	-
97	Equatorial Guinea	11.2017	100	21	21	11.2017	72
98	Greece	7.2019	300	62	20.7	-	-
99	Bangladesh	12.2018	349	72	20.6	-	-
100	Croatia	9.2016	151	31	20.5	-	-
***	Morocco	10.2016	395	81	20.5	10.2015	120
***	Ukraine	7.2019	424	87	20.5	-	-
103	Mauritania	9.2018	153	31	20.3	-	-
104	Pakistan	7.2018	341	69	20.2	3.2018	104
105	Barbados	5.2018	30	6	20	6.2018	21
***	Cambodia	7.2018	125	25	20	2.2018	62
***	Slovakia	3.2016	150	30	20	-	-
108	Saudi Arabia	12.2016	151	30	19.9	-	-
109	Fiji	11.2018	51	10	19.6	-	-
110	Guatemala	6.2019	160	31	19.4	-	-
111	Kyrgyzstan	10.2015	120	23	19.2	-	-
***	Uruguay	10.2019	99	19	19.2	10.2019	30
113	Tajikistan	3.2015	63	12	19.1	3.2015	32

114	Colombia	3.2018	171	32	18.7	3.2018	105
115	Zambia	8.2016	167	30	18	-	-
116	Cyprus	5.2016	56	10	17.9	-	-
***	Gabon	10.2018	134	24	17.9	12.2014	100
118	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	3.2019	687	121	17.6	-	-
119	Jamaica	2.2016	63	11	17.5	3.2016	21
***	TÃ¼rkiye	6.2018	596	104	17.5	-	-
121	Indonesia	4.2019	575	100	17.4	-	-
122	Mongolia	6.2016	75	13	17.3	-	-
123	Niger	2.2016	171	29	17	-	-
124	Azerbaijan	11.2015	119	20	16.8	-	-
125	Republic of Korea	4.2016	300	50	16.7	-	-
***	Saint Lucia	6.2016	18	3	16.7	7.2016	11
127	Togo	12.2018	91	15	16.5	-	-
128	Thailand	3.2019	500	81	16.2	5.2019	250
129	Libya	6.2014	188	30	16	-	-
***	Uzbekistan	12.2014	150	24	16	1.2015	100
131	Madagascar	5.2019	151	24	15.9	12.2015	62
132	Russian Federation	9.2016	450	71	15.8	-	170
133	Jordan	9.2016	130	20	15.4	9.2016	65
134	Bahrain	11.2018	40	6	15	12.2018	40
***	Brazil	10.2018	513	77	15	10.2018	81
***	Paraguay	4.2018	80	12	15	4.2018	45
137	Bhutan	10.2018	47	7	14.9	4.2018	25
***	Chad	2.2011	168	25	14.9	-	-
***	Egypt	10.2015	596	89	14.9	-	-
***	Malta	6.2017	67	10	14.9	-	-
141	Georgia	10.2016	149	22	14.8	-	-
142	Sao Tome and Principe	10.2018	55	8	14.6	-	-
143	India	4.2019	542	78	14.4	1.2018	244
***	Malaysia	5.2018	222	32	14.4	-	68
145	Guinea-Bissau	3.2019	102	14	13.7	-	-
146	Burkina Faso	11.2015	127	17	13.4	-	-
147	Saint Kitts and Nevis	2.2015	15	2	13.3	-	-
148	Syrian Arab Republic	4.2016	250	33	13.2	-	-
149	Ghana	12.2016	275	36	13.1	-	-
150	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	12.2015	23	3	13	-	-
151	Bahamas	5.2017	39	5	12.8	5.2017	16
152	Hungary	4.2018	199	25	12.6	-	-
153	Palau	11.2016	16	2	12.5	11.2016	13
154	Liberia	10.2017	73	9	12.3	12.2014	30
***	Sierra Leone	3.2018	146	18	12.3	-	-
156	Liechtenstein	2.2017	25	3	12	-	-

157	Mauritius	12.2014	69	8	11.6	-	-
158	Congo	7.2017	151	17	11.3	8.2017	69
***	Myanmar	11.2015	433	49	11.3	11.2015	224
160	Antigua and Barbuda	3.2018	18	2	11.1	3.2018	17
161	Côte d'Ivoire	12.2016	255	28	11	3.2018	99
162	Botswana	10.2019	65	7	10.8	-	-
163	Nauru	8.2019	19	2	10.5	-	-
164	Gambia (The)	4.2017	58	6	10.3	-	-
165	Japan	10.2017	465	47	10.1	7.2019	245
166	Democratic Republic of the Congo	12.2018	500	50	10	3.2019	109
***	Samoa	3.2016	50	5	10	-	-
yu6168	Qatar	6.2016	41	4	9.8	-	-
169	Mali	11.2013	147	14	9.5	-	-
170	Belize	11.2015	32	3	9.4	11.2015	13
171	Brunei Darussalam	1.2017	33	3	9.1	-	-
***	Marshall Islands	11.2015	33	3	9.1	-	-
173	Central African Republic	2.2016	140	12	8.6	-	-
174	Tonga	11.2017	27	2	7.4	-	-
175	Eswatini	9.2018	69	5	7.3	10.2018	30
176	Benin	4.2019	83	6	7.2	-	-
177	Kiribati	12.2015	46	3	6.5	-	-
178	Tuvalu	9.2019	16	1	6.3	-	-
179	Comoros	1.2015	33	2	6.1	-	-
180	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	2.2016	289	17	5.9	-	-
181	Sri Lanka	8.2015	225	12	5.3	-	-
182	Lebanon	5.2018	128	6	4.7	-	-
183	Kuwait	11.2016	65	3	4.6	-	-
***	Maldives	4.2019	87	4	4.6	-	-
185	Solomon Islands	4.2019	49	2	4.1	-	-
186	Nigeria	2.2019	355	12	3.4	2.2019	107
187	Haiti	8.2015	118	3	2.5	11.2016	28
188	Oman	10.2019	86	2	2.3	11.2015	85
189	Yemen	4.2003	301	1	0.3	4.2001	111
190	Micronesia (Federated States of)	3.2019	14	0	0	-	-
***	Papua New Guinea	6.2017	111	0	0	-	-
***	Vanuatu	1.2016	52	0	0	-	-
Suspended	Sudan	-	-	-	-	-	-

Notes :

- The data in this table have been compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union on the basis of information provided by national parliaments.
- Parliaments are classified according to the percentage of seats held by women in lower or single parliamentary chambers.

- The figures correspond to the number of seats filled in parliament at the given time. The ranking may evolve over time based on updates received from national parliaments.
- When countries appear at the bottom of the table with no ranking number, it means that data on the number of women in the single or lower parliamentary chambers are temporarily unavailable. This is usually the case when elections have taken place recently and the official results have not yet been published. Once the data on the number of women become available, the ranking is updated accordingly.
- South Africa: The figures on the distribution of seats in the Upper House do not include the 36 special rotating delegates appointed on an ad hoc basis; the Upper House percentage is therefore calculated on the basis of the 54 permanent seats.

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Appendix Two

Some Women Who Have Made Their Mark in The Nigeria Political Fourth Republic

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

The 66-year-old is the first woman, and the first African, to occupy the position of Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO). She studied at Harvard 1973-76 and earned a PhD at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1981. Spent 25 years at the World Bank, rising to the No.2 position as managing director (2007-11). During her 25 years at the World Bank, she is credited with spearheading several initiatives to assist low-income countries, in particular raising nearly \$50bn in 2010 from donors for the International Development Association (IDA), the World Bank's fund for the poorest countries. But it is her reform agenda in Nigeria in which she takes real pride – especially the two times she served as the country's finance minister under Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan.

One of her greatest achievements was leading a team which negotiated a whopping \$18bn debt write-off in 2005 for the country, helping Nigeria obtain its first ever sovereign debt rating. The country's debts had dated back to the early 1980s, and had ballooned to more than \$35bn due to penalties and late fees during the 1990s. Her economic reforms had a far-reaching impact and saved Nigeria at a critical period, according to prominent Nigerian economist, Bismarck Rewane. This included de-linking the budget from the oil price, allowing the country to save money in a special account when oil prices were high.

Josephine Anenih

Josephine Anenih born in 1948 was appointed Nigerian minister of Women Affairs on 6 April 2010, when Acting President Goodluck Jonathan announced his new cabinet. She was the chairperson of the Federation of Women Lawyers from 1994 to 2000, and was the first National Woman Leader of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) from 1999 to 2005. In April 2002, she said that implementation of the Sharia legal system in Kano State had ensured the promotion of women's rights as dictated by Islam. She co-founded the Women Foundation Nigeria, an organization to help Nigerian women exchange views on global women's issues and to help empower women in politics. She is a member of the Gender Electoral and Constitutional Memoranda Committee, which aims to incorporate women's perspectives in Nigeria's Electoral Laws and reforms.

Florence Ita Giwa

Ita Giwa born in 1946 is a Nigerian politician, who was the Senator for the Cross River South Senatorial District of Cross River State. Ita-Giwa joined politics and emerged as NRC chairman for Delta State. Thereafter, she was elected a member of the federal House of Representatives (1992–93) and was a member of the committee on devolution of power constituent assembly 1994–95. She became involved in Bakassi affairs, and earned the nickname "Mama Bakassi".

Ita-Giwa was elected Senator for the Cross-River South constituency in April 1999 and was appointed to committees on Rules and Procedures, Environment, Foreign Affairs, Women, Niger Delta and Drug & Narcotics. After leaving the senate in 2003, she joined the People's Democratic Party PDP, and became President Olusegun Obasanjo's Special Adviser on National Assembly Matters. In May 2010, there were rumors that funds were missing from the account of the Bakassi Resettlement Committee, chaired by Ita-Giwa, who asked the

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission to investigate the matter. Ita Giwa has worked against human trafficking and sex slavery.

Oby Ezekwesili

Ezekwesili is a Public Analyst/Senior Economic Advisor, Nigerian chartered accountant from Anambra state. She was a co-founder of Transparency International, serving as one of the pioneer directors of the global anti-corruption body based in Berlin, Germany. She served as Federal Minister of Solid Minerals and later as Federal Minister of Education during the second-term presidency of Olusegun Obasanjo. Subsequently, she served as the Vice-President of the World Bank's Africa division from May 2007 to May 2012, later replaced by Makhtar Diop.

In March 2014, she delivered a keynote speech at the national summit of the All Progressives Congress (APC), the leading opposition party in Nigeria. She criticized the many cross-carpeting governors and urged the party to have “a conversation deeper than how you're going to chase (the ruling) PDP out of power”.

In the aftermath of the nearly 300 mainly Christian girls were abducted from Chibok by the Islamist militant group Boko Haram. Oby used the Bring Back Our Girls (BBOG) advocacy group to draw global attention to the plight of all persons who have been abducted by terrorists from Nigeria's war ravaged northeast region.

Aisha Yesufu

Yesufu, the hijab wearing revolutionary, is a Nigerian socio-political activist, and co-convenor of the Bring Back Our Girls Movement, an advocacy group that brings attention to

the abduction of over 200 girls, from a secondary school in Chibok, Nigeria, on 14 April 2014, by the terrorist group Boko Haram. Yesufu was among the women protestors at Nigeria's National Assembly, in the nation's capital, Abuja, on 30 April 2014. Yesufu has also been at the forefront of the End SARS movement, which draws attention to the excesses of a controversial police unit in the Nigeria Police Force, called the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). She said she would not leave the fight against End SARS protest in Nigeria for her children.

Aisha Halilu Buhari

Aisha is the First Lady of Nigeria and wife of the current President Muhammadu Buhari, who assumed office on 29 May 2015. Aisha Buhari is a vocal advocate of women's rights and children rights, and this was a focal point during her campaign for her husband's election in 2015. Aisha has, on several occasions, emphasized the need for young girls to get primary and secondary school education before getting married, saying that she believes no girl should get married before the age of 17. In May 2015, on the side-lines of the Global Women Conference held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, she stressed the need for Nigerian laws that will protect the women from forced early marriages, sex trafficking and other issues Nigerian girls and women contend with. Aisha raised concerns on child sexual abuse in Nigeria, sex trafficking and the need for legislation against early marriage.

On 12 June 2015, Aisha Buhari met with some mothers of the abducted Chibok Girls on 14 April 2016, and donated proceeds from her book to parents of the Chibok girls, the Buni Yadi boys murdered in 2014, and children suffering from malnutrition. In October 2016, Aisha Buhari said that she would not back her husband in the next election unless he got a grip on his government. He responded that she belonged in his kitchen, saying "I don't know which party my wife belongs to, but she belongs to my kitchen and my living room and the other

room.” Aisha Buhari surprised Nigerians when she made it known that her role as the wife of the president of Nigeria will be limited to whatever is constitutionally recognized, as she promised not to overstep.

Pauline Kedem Tallen

Tallen is a politician and currently serving as Women Affairs Minister. She was appointed in 2019 by President Muhammad Buhari after turning down ministerial nomination in 2015 on the grounds that she was not consulted prior to the announcement of the appointment and that she would not accept the offer for equal distribution of power among the three senatorial districts of her native state of plateau because she is from same local government as Governor Simon Lalong. In 1999, she was appointed Minister of state for science and technology, becoming the first woman to be appointed as a minister in that capacity by former president, Olusegun Obasanjo.

Sadiya Umar Farouk

Farouk is a Nigerian politician and the current minister of humanitarian affairs, disaster management and social development. Appointed by President Muhammadu Buhari in July 2019, Farouk is by age the youngest minister in the current federal cabinet.

Uche Lilian Ekwunife

Ekwunife is a Politician and member of the 9th Nigerian Senate representing the people of Anambra Central Senatorial District of Anambra State and she is one of the most active female senators in the House. She was elected as a representative in 2007 for Anambra’s Anaocha/Njikoka/Dunukofia constituency. She was one of 11 women elected in 2007 who were re-elected in 2011 when the lower house was nearly 95% male. Other women elected included Juliet Akano, Mulikat Adeola-Akande, Abike Dabiri, Nkiru Onyejeocha, Nnena

Elendu-Ukeje, Olajumoke Okoya-Thomas, Beni Lar, Khadija Bukar Abba-Ibrahim, Elizabeth Ogbaga and Peace Uzoamaka Nnaji.

In 2015, she was elected to the Nigerian Senate. She was one of the six women elected to the 8th National Assembly. The other women were Rose Okoji Oko, Stella Oduah, Fatimat Raji Rasaki, Oluremi Tinubu and Bintu Garba. She won the 2019 senatorial elections representing Anambra central Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Betty Apiafi

Apiafi is a Nigerian Politician, economist, retired banker and educationist, who was elected to the Senate for Rivers West Senatorial District in 2019. She has also served as a House of Representatives Member for Abua/Odual- Ahoada East [4] [circular reference Federal Constituency of Rivers State since 2007.

Nkeiruka Chidubem Onyejocha

Nkeiruka is a ranking lawmaker in Nigeria's Federal House of Representatives. She represents Isuikwuato/Umunneochi Federal Constituency of Abia State. Onyejocha is an active member of the Nigeria federal parliament and often contributes brilliantly to debates on critical national issues in the house. She has sponsored several bills and moved motions that have improved the lives of ordinary citizens and help safeguard their rights. In 2017 she sponsored a bill that makes emergency treatment of victims of gunshot obligatory and compulsory for hospitals without demanding or delaying treatment to first obtain police reports before commencing treatment in emergency situations.

Onyejocha was first elected in 2007 on the platform of Peoples Democratic Party, PDP then Nigeria's ruling party. She defected to All Progressives Congress, APC in 2018 after coming under intense pressure from her former party leaders to drop her ambition for a return ticket to the house. In 2019, she won her re-election bid for a fourth term in the Nigeria's Green

Chamber. She is one of the longest serving members of the house. In 2019, Onyejocha contested for the position of speaker of the male dominated Federal House of Representatives against Femi Gbajabiamila from Lagos State nominated for the position by their party – All Progressives Congress, APC. Onyejocha major campaign issue was to zone speakership position to her region – south-east of Nigeria for balanced distribution of key federal powers among the six geo-political zones of the country. But she stepped down less than 24 hours to the election. She’s currently the deputy chief whip of the House.

Aishatu Jibril Dukku

Dukku is a politician from Gombe state. She served as Federal Minister of State for Education during the presidency of the late President Umaru Musa Yar’ Adua. Since then, she served as a parliamentarian in the National Assembly. She is currently an Honourable Member of Nigerian House of Representatives representing Dukku and Nafada Federal constituency, Gombe State. She chaired the House of Representatives Committee on Electoral Matters and Political Parties Affairs. Aishatu focuses her legislative interest on the education of the girl child, women and youth empowerment, and poverty alleviation and skills acquisition. She is committed to the establishment of schools, skills acquisition centres, scholarship programs for the youth and other similar projects.

Tolulope Akande-Sadipe

Sadipe is a politician from Oyo State, Nigeria, who represents Oluyole Local Government Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives. She is the chairman of the House Committee on Diaspora.

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- Good communication, planning and organization skills.
- Ability to work under pressure with little or no supervision.
- Highly personable with the ability to work well in a team.

- Ability to take to corrections and make effective use of them.
- Ability to lead others with positive impacts.
- Ability to impact knowledge with ease.
- Ability to formulate new policies and ideas from old ones
- Computer skills

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- Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti (**LL.B Hon.**) **2017**
- Lead City University (**BSc. In Public Administration**) **2011**
- Olaoluwa College, Iju, Akure. (**SSCE**) **2004**
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- Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM). **Chartered** **2013**
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