

**GENDER POLITICS AND WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN NIGERIA: A CRITICAL
EXAMINATION OF THE 2020 GOVERNORSHIP ELECTION IN EDO STATE.**

BY

UMAHI INNOCENT

SSC1909632

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

MAY, 2024

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE IN
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POLITICAL SCIENCE**

MAY, 2024

DECLARATION

I, **INNOCENT UMAHI**, with matriculation number, **SSC1909632** hereby declare that this project is entirely my work and composition. The work embodied in this project has not been previously submitted for award of any degree elsewhere. All references made to works of other persons have been duly acknowledged.

UMAHI INNOCENT

DATE

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project was carried out by **INNOCENT UMAHI** with the Matriculation Number – **SSC1909632** in the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City in partial fulfillment of the requirement for award of Bachelor Degree in Political Science

Dr. Kingsley Omoruyi
(Project Supervisor)

Dr. Charles O. Eghweree
(Ag, Head of Department)

Date: _____

Date: _____

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to God Almighty, the source of all wisdom, strength, and guidance. In His infinite grace and mercy, He has bestowed upon me the opportunities, abilities, and resources to embark on this endeavor.

I am profoundly grateful for His unwavering presence, which has illuminated my path, provided me clarity in moments of uncertainty, and instilled in me the determination to persevere through challenges. May this work be a testament to His boundless blessings and a reflection of my gratitude for His constant support and divine guidance.

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Abstract

This study critically examines gender politics and women's participation in Nigerian politics, focusing on the 2020 governorship election in Edo state. Through four key research objectives, the project aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing women in Nigerian politics. Firstly, it analyzes historical trends in women's political participation, spanning from pre-colonial eras to the present day. Secondly, it explores the socio-cultural, economic, and political barriers that inhibit women's empowerment in Nigeria, including patriarchal norms and institutional biases. Thirdly, the study evaluates existing strategies and policies aimed at promoting women's political participation, such as affirmative action and gender quotas. Finally, based on these analyses, the project proposes recommendations to enhance women's political empowerment in Nigeria, encompassing legislative reforms, institutional changes, and grassroots mobilization efforts. Through this research, the study contributes to the scholarly discourse on gender politics and women's empowerment in Nigeria, offering insights to inform policy-making and advocacy initiatives toward achieving gender equality in the political sphere.

This research utilizes a quantitative data collection method. A well-structured questionnaire was used to obtain information from 164 respondents. Findings revealed that women's participation is still at a lower level during the 2020 governorship election in Edo State. The results highlight the persistent gender disparities in political representation and engagement, underscoring the need for targeted interventions to promote gender equality and increase women's political participation. The findings contribute to the ongoing discourse on gender and politics in Nigeria, emphasizing the importance of addressing the systemic barriers that hinder women's full participation in the political sphere.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Background to the study "Gender Politics and women's participation in Nigeria" is rooted in the multifaceted evolution of Nigeria's socio-political landscape. Traditional Nigerian societies were often characterized by deeply entrenched patriarchal norms, where women's roles were predominantly confined to domestic spheres. Throughout ages and virtually in all cultures, women were rarely considered equal to their male counterparts. From the home as daughter, wife, and mother, through the school, office and church as student, employee and worshiper respectively, to the public sphere of life as in business and politics, women are known to have been discriminated, marginalized and dominated through the combination of gender-biased cultural norms and practices which were in favour of men. In Ancient Rome, an adulterous wife could be killed by her husband without trial, while the reverse attracted no punishment on the man (Keiefer, 1934).

The Ancient Hebrew also considered women as legally minor and thus preferred a male child to a female child who was seen as inferior to the former. Prehistoric culture considered women as part of men's possession such that their wives' virginity is exclusively "part of the personal estate of their husbands' ' (Izugbara, 2013:283), and the absence of which attracted severe punishment. Nowhere is the inferiority and subordination of female gender made clearer than in sacred texts – the Holy Bible and the Quran. African societies, including Nigeria are equally

replete with several cultural practices which tend to promote male superiority over the female gender. Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, is a complex and diverse nation with over 250 ethnic groups. The country's political landscape has been characterized by military rule, coups, and, more recently, a return to democratic governance. Despite these changes, Nigerian politics has remained predominantly male-dominated. However, there has been a growing interest in understanding the role of gender in politics, particularly focusing on women's participation and empowerment.

In Nigeria, a nation marked by its rich cultural diversity and complex political history, the issue of gender in politics holds particular significance. This research explores the multifaceted realm of women's participation and empowerment in Nigerian politics, a critical yet often overlooked component of the country's political landscape. The rationale behind this study lies in the recognition that a democratic society thrives when all its members, regardless of gender, have equal opportunities to participate. In Nigeria, women constitute a significant portion of the population, yet their representation in political arenas remains disproportionately low. This study aims to uncover the barriers to women's political participation and identify strategies for enhancing their role in the political sphere.

In the case of Nigeria for instance, Enemu (1999: 230) has rightly observed that “Nigerian communities approve such practices as preference for male child, payment of bride price, female circumcision or female genital mutilation, FGM, negative attitude (to women) towards

childlessness, degrading widowhood practices and inheritance practices that discriminate against women... giving away girls in marriage early and without their consent”.

Many other scholars including Aina (2012), Soetan (2014) and Agbalajobi (2010) have unveiled the travail of the female gender humiliation, manipulation and marginalization through a number of culturally biased norms and practices which has culminated into systematic institutionalization of male superiority over the female in all spheres of life – socio-culturally, economically and politically. Indeed, the life circle of a woman from the cradle to the grave is said to be characterized by all manners of violent relates manipulation and control of women by men through sex selective, abortion, different access to medical care, incest and sexual harassment in the workplace, rape, marital rape, abuse of widow, etc. (Aina, 2012:84). Our focus here however, is to explore the process through which the Nigerian political space became predominantly a reserve of the male gender to the exclusion of their female counterparts, and identity instances Nigerian women have been politically marginalized or otherwise. Over the years, the Nigerian political scene has been characterized by patriarchy which in the words of Heywood (2007:98), generally connotes the “rule by men”. Although women were politically active and relatively less exclusive in decision-making in many pre-colonial societies, the advent of colonial administration with its anti-women policies gradually transformed a hitherto politically gender-unbiased to a predominantly male dominated political scene. For instance, women were known to have occupied very influential political offices, including the highest political office (the King

or the Oba) among the Yorubas. Female individuals such as the Iyalode of Ibadan, Efunsetan Aniwura, Moremi of Ile-Ife, Queen Amina of Zaria, etc. were powerful political forces who occupied very sensitive positions in the overall political hierarchy of their Awofeso and Odeyemi 105 respective communities.

Some of these women performed credibility even as military warlords in their respective communities. On the other hand, the offices of the President or the Head of State and the Defence Minister in Nigeria since independence till date have been the exclusive reserved areas for the male gender. Apart from major political offices which were keenly manipulated by men, statistics also show that “women are grossly under-represented in public life and decision-making positions”. Udegbe (1998), had for instance, demonstrated that women representation in the three tiers of government since independence in 1960 till late 1990s was as low as two per cent. Similar trends were witnessed under successive administrations, both military and civilian. The little improvements made in female gender political representation in recent times were only marginal. Two major colonial policies helped to promote patriarchy in Nigerian politics. One, the colonial considered “only men to be active in the public sphere and earn a living to support their families' ' (AssieLumuba, 1996). Consequently, few educational assistance programmes under the colonial administration were reserved for only African male who were later recruited into colonial civil service and merchant houses. This practice gave African male gender undue advantage over their opposite sex and thus marked the beginning of women under-representation

in formal agencies of government. Secondly, the restructuring of the African traditional economies and their linkage with the international capitalist economic system transformed the Nigerian economy to producer of primary crops which were to be exported to Europe as cheap raw materials in their factories. African male quickly filled the vacuum of producers and exporters of these crops while their female counterparts concentrated on the production of food crops and domestic management. The control over export crops, resources and other merchandise activities by the male gender partly accounted for the post-independence domination of the Nigerian political scene by men who could fund the cost of elections. Having tasted political power and found it appealing, the male gender continued to consolidate its position by fencing out their female counterparts from the mainstream political activities where the real power lies. At best, women were strategically, through several means including cultural exclusion, reduced to the second fiddle offices of 'deputy' and 'vice'. This development has raised several questions which remained largely unanswered, and has equally attracted many gender-related studies and intellectual discourse on gender-related matters.

Colonial influence further reinforced gender disparities by impacting women's access to education and political participation. The post-colonial era witnessed a gradual shift in societal attitudes, leading to increased awareness and activism for women's rights. Notably, the struggles for independence and subsequent democratization prompted discussions on inclusivity, laying the foundation for women's participation in politics. The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform

for Action marked a pivotal moment, as Nigeria committed to advancing gender equality. Subsequently, constitutional reforms and affirmative action policies were introduced to address gender imbalances in political representation. Despite these efforts, challenges persisted, including cultural barriers, gender-based violence, and economic disparities that hindered women's full engagement in politics. The study delves into key milestones, such as the establishment of the National Gender Policy in 2006, and analyzes their impact on enhancing women's political participation. It also explores landmark moments, such as the election of women into prominent political offices, highlighting the progress made while acknowledging persistent gaps. By contextualizing the historical trajectory, the study aims to unravel the intricate layers that have shaped the current status of gender and politics in Nigeria, providing insights into the ongoing struggle for women's participation and empowerment within the country's political sphere.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Historically, Nigerian women have played significant roles in social and political movements. During the colonial era and the struggle for independence, women were active in protests and advocacy. However, post-independence, their political involvement was marginalized. Women's participation in politics is not only a matter of gender equality but also crucial for the democratic development of any nation. In Nigeria, women constitute about half of the population, yet their representation in political offices remains disproportionately low. This underrepresentation raises

concerns about the inclusivity and representativeness of the political system. In contemporary Nigeria, women face numerous challenges in politics, including cultural norms, patriarchal structures, economic barriers, and violence. Despite these challenges, there have been notable advancements and opportunities for women's political empowerment. This paper will explore the historical trajectory of women's political participation in Nigeria.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is imperative to note that this research work will contribute to existing literature on the subject matter by providing a critical assessment of gender politics and women's participation in Nigeria using the 2020 Edo state gubernatorial elections as a case study.

It will provide the students of political science and public administration with the needed framework for tackling the phenomenon of gender politics and women's participation in future elections in Nigeria. It will also be useful to the electorate, as it will educate or enlighten them on the dividends of portraying a positive behavioral pattern during political participation .

1.4 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The primary objectives of this research are:

1. To analyze the historical trends of women's participation in Nigerian politics.

2. To examine the socio-cultural, economic, and political barriers that limit women's political empowerment in Nigeria.
3. To identify and evaluate strategies and policies aimed at promoting women's participation in the political process.
4. To propose recommendations for enhancing women's political empowerment in Nigeria.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What historical factors have influenced women's participation in Nigerian politics?
2. What are the key barriers to women's political participation and empowerment in Nigeria?
3. What strategies have been employed to enhance women's political participation, and how effective have they been?
4. What policy recommendations can be made to promote gender equality in Nigerian politics?

1.6 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

In line with the research question posted for this study, the following hypotheses are proposed:

HO: There is no significant relationship between Gender politics and women's participation in Nigeria politics.

HR: There is a significant relationship between Gender politics and women's participation in Nigeria politics.

1.7 SCOPE OF STUDY

Basically, this study will take a critical assessment of the issue of gender politics and women participation, which shows forth in elections and the electoral process in the 2020 governorship elections in Edo State.

The scope of this study is focused on women's participation in Nigerian politics since the country's return to civilian rule in 1999. While the study aims to be comprehensive, it is limited by the availability of data and the challenges of conducting field research in diverse regions of Nigeria.

1.8 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

There are limitations associated with this study, which include:

Time constraint

Due to time constraints for this study, the researcher will not be able to capture what happened in all local government areas in Edo State. Also, the researcher will simultaneously engage in this

study with other academic work, which will consequently cut down on the time devoted to this research work.

Financial constraint

Also, this study will not be as exhaustive as it ought to be due to financial constraints.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Gender : Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. (World Health Organization 21, March 2023)

Politics: Politics has been seen as the authoritative allocation of values. (Easton, (1965).

Women: Refers to the female gender, the opposite of male gender. There is the dependency syndrome that women are known to have being dependent on men. In other words their roles are that of helpers to men.(Luka R.C Department of Political Science Nasarawa State University, Keffi 2021) page 25

Patriarchism: According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, patriarchy is a social organization whereby the male gender disproportionately controls various aspects of society, including family or clan leadership, descent, inheritance, and even power structure.(Merriam-Webster dictionary, 2016)

Participation: ‘Participation means the involvement of intended beneficiaries in the planning, design, implementation and subsequent maintenance of the development intervention. It means that people are mobilized, manage resources and make decisions that affect their lives’ (Price and Mylius 1991) page 6.

Democracy: democracy provides the equal opportunity platform for political participation and fairness in such competition, thus: a system of government that meets three essential conditions: meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and groups, especially political parties, for all effective positions of government power, at regular intervals and excluding the use of force; a highly inclusive level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies, at least through regular and fair election, such that no major (adult) social group is excluded; and a level of civil and political liberties, freedom to form and join organizations sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation. by (Larry Diamond 1989: xvi).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, a review of related works or contributions of some notable authors would be undertaken. This is basically to understand, identify, criticize and analyze the critical variables that are related to the present study. In view of this, the following areas are looked into : (i) theoretical framework (ii) literature review .

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The core of political engagement in any society, whether advanced or primitive, revolves around the pursuit of power. This includes the acquisition, control, and distribution of power to shape society, manage resources, and influence decision-making to align with either collective or personal interests (Arowolo and Abe, 2008:13-14). All societal groups, including women, strive to shape the allocation of power according to their stated interests, a key driver of political participation. Recently, women have become more aware and actively pursue a more equitable share in the power dynamics and resource distribution. However, despite their participation, particularly in voting and passive support, their active involvement in Nigerian politics remains limited. This limitation is largely due to violence and electoral conflicts, often instigated by men and young males, which serve as significant obstacles to women's active political roles (Adeniyi, 2003:353). Debates are intensifying about the specific roles women should assume in society. There is a split in opinion over whether women's roles should be confined to domestic duties or

whether they should also partake in socio-economic and political activities similar to men. It is often argued that a mother's natural bond with her child might limit her to more static roles, yet it is equally vital for her to contribute to her family's and society's broader development. This paper specifically focuses on women's participation in political activities.

Political participation is a fundamental aspect of democracy, characterized by its openness and freedom. Okolie (2004:53) views it as encompassing the freedom of expression and association, the right to communicate freely, the ability to influence decision-making processes, and entitlement to social justice, health services, better working conditions, and voting rights. Democracy, as defined by Larry Diamond (1989:xvi), ensures an equal opportunity for all to engage politically and compete fairly. This system involves meaningful competition for governmental positions by various individuals and groups, including political parties, at regular intervals without resorting to force. It also demands a wide level of participation in selecting leaders and formulating policies through regular and just elections, ensuring that no significant adult social group is excluded, alongside a guarantee of civil and political freedoms sufficient to maintain the integrity of political competition and participation. Onyeoziri (1989:6) outlines four key areas of democracy:

1. Individual and group rights and freedoms.
2. Equitable and widespread participation in decision-making.

3. Governmental accountability to the public and minority constituents.

4. Enforcement of equal citizenship rights across social, economic, and political domains.

2.1.1 CONCEPT OF GENDER POLITICS

Gender politics is a complex and multifaceted concept that seeks to understand and analyze power dynamics, inequalities, and social structures based on gender identity. This concept recognizes that gender is not just a biological fact, but a socially constructed phenomenon that shapes individuals' experiences and opportunities. Gender politics considers how gender norms and expectations influence access to resources, decision-making processes, and societal attitudes towards different genders. This framework is crucial for addressing systemic discrimination and oppression based on gender identity. Within the realm of gender politics, intersectionality plays a key role in understanding the complexities of power dynamics. Intersectionality acknowledges that individuals have multiple identities and experiences that intersect and interact to shape their social standing. This means that factors such as race, class, sexuality, and ability can impact how gender is perceived and experienced. By adopting an intersectional perspective, gender politics can better address the diverse experiences and challenges faced by individuals who hold marginalized gender identities, such as women of color or transgender individuals.

Gender politics also encompasses the ongoing struggles for gender equality and social justice. This includes efforts to challenge gender stereotypes, dismantle patriarchal structures, and promote diversity and inclusivity in political and social institutions. By engaging in gender politics, individuals and communities can work towards creating a more equitable and just society where all genders are valued and respected. Ultimately, understanding and engaging with gender politics is essential for promoting gender equality and social change on a systemic level.

WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The concept of women's political participation is a crucial aspect of modern democratic societies. Women make up more than half of the global population, and their voices and perspectives are essential for creating inclusive and representative governance. However, historically women have been marginalized and excluded from political processes and decision-making, leading to gender disparities in leadership positions and policy outcomes. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of women's political participation and efforts to close the gender gap in politics.

The underrepresentation of women in politics is a systemic issue that stems from societal norms, cultural biases, and institutional barriers. Women have often been perceived as less competent or assertive than men, leading to their exclusion from political leadership roles. In addition, structural obstacles such as limited access to education, lack of financial resources, and gender-

based violence further hinder women's political participation. These factors contribute to a vicious cycle where women are marginalized from political power, leading to policies that do not adequately address their needs and interests. Efforts to increase women's political participation have gained momentum in recent years, with many countries implementing gender quotas, electoral reforms, and affirmative action policies to promote gender equality in politics. Gender quotas, for example, mandate a minimum percentage of female candidates on electoral lists, ensuring that women have a fair chance at political representation. These measures have been successful in increasing the number of women in political office and diversifying political leadership.

Women's political participation is not only a matter of gender equality but also crucial for good governance and sustainable development. Research shows that when women are involved in decision-making processes, policies are more inclusive, responsive to diverse needs, and sustainable in the long term. Women bring unique perspectives and experiences to the table, challenging existing power dynamics and enriching political debates with new ideas and solutions. Therefore, increasing women's political participation is not only a matter of social justice but also a pragmatic strategy for improving governance and advancing democracy.

Despite the progress made in recent years, challenges remain in achieving full gender equality in politics. Women still face discrimination, harassment, and violence in the political sphere, limiting their ability to fully participate and lead. Structural barriers such as patriarchal norms,

lack of access to resources, and institutional biases continue to hinder women's political empowerment. Urgent action is needed to address these challenges and create a more inclusive and equitable political system that reflects the diversity of society. Women's political participation is a fundamental aspect of democracy and good governance. Closing the gender gap in politics is not only a matter of social justice but also a strategic imperative for advancing development and ensuring inclusive decision-making. Efforts to increase women's representation in political leadership must be supported by comprehensive policies, legal reforms, and cultural changes that address the root causes of gender inequality in politics. By empowering women to participate and lead in political processes, we can create a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society for all.

PROCESSES OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

There are various ways and processes through which individuals can participate in the political process, ranging from voting in elections to engaging in advocacy and activism. Understanding these different avenues of political participation is vital for ensuring a well-functioning democratic society. One of the most common ways for individuals to participate in the political process is through voting in elections. This fundamental democratic activity allows citizens to choose their representatives at local, state, and national levels. By casting a vote, individuals have a direct say in the leadership and policies that govern their communities. Voting is a

relatively simple and accessible form of political participation, yet it is critical for ensuring that the government reflects the will of the people.

Beyond voting, political participation can also take the form of advocacy and activism. This involves individuals actively working to shape public policy and influence decision-makers. Advocates may engage in activities such as lobbying, organizing protests, and supporting political campaigns. Through advocacy and activism, individuals can raise awareness about important issues, mobilize support for certain causes, and hold elected officials accountable for their actions. This form of political participation can be more time-consuming and demanding than voting, but it can also be highly effective in bringing about change.

Another key process of political participation is engaging in public discourse and debate. This involves individuals expressing their opinions and engaging with others on political issues through various platforms, such as social media, public forums, and community meetings. By participating in public discourse, individuals can contribute to shaping public opinion, fostering dialogue, and promoting informed decision-making. This form of political participation is essential for building a well-informed and engaged citizenry.

In addition to traditional forms of political participation, individuals can also get involved in their communities through volunteering and civic engagement. This may include participating in local government meetings, serving on community boards, or volunteering for political campaigns. By actively engaging in community activities, individuals can have a direct impact

on local issues and contribute to creating positive change at the grassroots level. This form of political participation is a valuable way for individuals to make a difference in their communities and build stronger social ties.

2.1.2 GENDER POLITICS IN NIGERIA : HISTORICAL VIEWS

According to Afolabi et al. (2003), women make up more than half of the global population and play crucial roles in the overall development of society. Typically, women fulfill five essential roles: mother, producer, home-manager, community organizer, and socio-cultural and political activists. The last role has been significantly shaped by women's movements, which arose in response to historical gender discrimination and inequality. Before the advent of these movements, gender roles were distinctly divided between men and women, categorized broadly into productive roles for men and reproductive roles for women. These roles, deeply embedded in the cultural beliefs and values of societies worldwide, positioned men as the primary holders of cultural value across various societies, from the most egalitarian to those with significant sexual stratification. Rosaldo and Lamphere (1974) noted that some areas of activity are always considered predominantly male and thus highly significant. Consequently, women have long faced various forms of discrimination, inequality, and exclusion, particularly in politics. The movements aimed at alleviating or eradicating gender discrimination are a direct result of these cultural beliefs and values. These societal beliefs, along with ethnic and often religious norms, have become self-fulfilling prophecies. Sex role socialization assigns distinct and frequently

unequal roles in work and politics to the biological sexes, creating a social distinction and a sexual division of labor. This concept is especially relevant in the Nigerian political system, where different sexes are assigned complementary tasks now embedded in the labor market and political sector.

Women's political participation in Nigeria from 1960 to present day has been a complex and evolving process marked by both progress and setbacks. In the early years following independence in 1960, Nigerian women faced significant barriers to political participation, with few opportunities to run for office or have their voices heard in decision-making processes. However, over the past six decades, women in Nigeria have made significant strides towards greater political equality, although challenges remain. In the early years of independence, women in Nigeria were largely excluded from political participation. The patriarchal nature of Nigerian society meant that women were often relegated to the role of homemakers and caregivers, with little access to education or opportunities for leadership. As a result, women were vastly underrepresented in political institutions, with only a handful of female politicians serving in the early years of independence.

However, women in Nigeria began to mobilize for greater political representation in the decades following independence. In the 1970s and 1980s, women's organizations and advocacy groups began to advocate for gender equality and increased political participation for women. These efforts were bolstered by the adoption of international instruments such as the Convention on the

Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which Nigeria ratified in 1985. Despite these efforts, progress towards greater women's political participation in Nigeria has been slow and uneven. While there have been some notable successes, such as the election of the country's first female governor in 1991, women still face significant barriers to political participation. Cultural norms and traditions continue to limit women's access to political power, and violence and intimidation against female politicians remain common.

In recent years, there have been some positive developments towards greater women's political participation in Nigeria. In 2011, the Nigerian government adopted a National Gender Policy aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. The policy includes provisions to increase women's representation in political institutions and decision-making processes, as well as measures to address gender-based violence and discrimination. In addition to government initiatives, women's organizations and civil society groups in Nigeria have played a crucial role in advancing women's political participation. These groups have worked to raise awareness about the importance of gender equality, provide training and support for female politicians, and advocate for policies that promote women's empowerment.

Despite these efforts, significant challenges remain in the quest for greater women's political participation in Nigeria. The country's political system is still dominated by men, and women continue to face discrimination and marginalization in political institutions. Violence and intimidation against female politicians remain common, making it difficult for women to fully

participate in the political process. Moving forward, it is crucial for Nigeria to continue to prioritize efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. This includes enacting and enforcing laws that protect women's rights, increasing access to education and training for women, and addressing the underlying social and cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequality. By taking these steps, Nigeria can ensure that women have an equal voice in the country's political future and contribute to a more inclusive and democratic society.

Focusing on the 2020 Edo governorship election, the election saw a significant increase in women participation compared to previous elections in the state. Women have historically been underrepresented in Nigerian politics, but efforts to increase their involvement have been gaining traction in recent years. In the Edo governorship election, women played crucial roles as candidates, campaign managers, and voters, highlighting the importance of their participation in the political process. One of the key factors contributing to the increased participation of women in the 2020 Edo governorship election was the implementation of gender quotas by political parties. The major political parties in the state made conscious efforts to field female candidates for various positions, including the governorship, which helped to elevate the visibility of women in the election. This move was a significant step towards breaking the gender barrier in politics and encouraging more women to take an active role in shaping the future of the state.

Civil society organizations and women's advocacy groups played a vital role in mobilizing and

empowering women to participate in the election. These organizations provided training, support, and resources to female candidates, helping them navigate the challenges of running for office and promoting their campaigns. Their efforts helped to create a more inclusive political environment that encouraged women to assert their voices and contribute to the democratic process. The increased participation of women in the 2020 Edo governorship election also highlighted the growing recognition of the importance of gender equality in governance. Women bring unique perspectives and experiences to the table, and their presence in political leadership has been shown to lead to more inclusive and effective decision-making processes. By electing more women to positions of power, Edo state took a significant step towards creating a more representative and equitable government that better reflects the diversity of its population.

The successful participation of women in the 2020 Edo governorship election served as a catalyst for inspiring future generations of women to pursue political careers. Seeing women candidates actively campaigning and winning elections sends a powerful message to young girls across the state that they too can aspire to leadership roles and make a difference in their communities. This increased visibility and representation of women in politics will help to break down barriers and stereotypes that have traditionally hindered women from entering the political arena. Additionally, the 2020 Edo governorship election demonstrated the importance of women as a voting bloc in determining electoral outcomes. Women make up a significant portion of the electorate in the state, and their votes can swing elections in favor of candidates who prioritize

issues that are important to them, such as healthcare, education, and economic empowerment. By actively participating in the electoral process, women have the power to shape the political landscape and hold elected officials accountable for their actions.

Furthermore, the successful participation of women in the 2020 Edo governorship election has paved the way for greater gender equality in the state's political leadership. As more women are elected to office and take on leadership roles, they will have the opportunity to advocate for policies that promote women's rights and address gender disparities in areas such as education, healthcare, and economic empowerment. This will help to create a more inclusive and equitable society that benefits all members of the community, regardless of gender.

FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST ACTIVE WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN NIGERIAN POLITICS

Observations and empirical data indicate that various factors have either promoted or led to the subordinate position of women in Nigeria's political landscape. Some of these factors are seen as inherent to the societal status of women, while others are intentionally created by men to keep women engaged in more passive roles. These factors encompass, but are not limited to, the following:

Cultural Practices

Cultural practices play a significant role in shaping women's political participation in Nigeria. Traditionally, Nigerian society has been deeply patriarchal, with women relegated to the role of homemaker and caregiver. These cultural norms often discourage women from actively participating in politics, as they are expected to prioritize their familial duties over their career ambitions. Men frequently view the idea of women participating in politics as both unbelievable and unfeasible. (Iloh and Ikenna, 2009:124; Nda, 2003: 336).

Additionally, societal expectations for women to be submissive and obedient may hinder them from speaking out and asserting their political opinions in male-dominated spaces. As a result, women in Nigeria may face barriers to political participation that are deeply rooted in cultural practices and beliefs. e, cultural practices related to religion can also impact women's political involvement in Nigeria. Islam, Christianity, and traditional African religions all play a significant role in shaping societal norms and values in the country. Religious teachings and interpretations may influence how women perceive their role in politics, with some religious leaders advocating for women to prioritize their domestic responsibilities over their participation in public affairs. This can create a sense of guilt or conflict for women who wish to engage in political activism but feel constrained by religious expectations. As a result, cultural practices related to religion can impact women's agency and autonomy in the political sphere

Violence, Thuggery and Intimidation

The issue of violence and thuggery in Nigeria presents a significant barrier to women's political participation in the country. Many women face threats, intimidation, and physical harm in their attempt to engage in the political process. This creates a climate of fear and discourages women from speaking out or running for political office. In addition, the prevalence of violence and thuggery can also undermine the credibility of elections and the democratic process as a whole, further disenfranchising women and other marginalized groups. These was captured by (INEC, 2006:5), that Additional barriers that hinder women from fully engaging in politics and governance include patriarchal control within political parties, the influence of godfathers, issues of local residency rights (indigeneship), internal party manipulation (intra-party rigging), political violence, thuggery, and significant levels of intimidation

Moreover, the impact of violence and thuggery on women's political participation in Nigeria extends beyond just physical intimidation. The threat of violence also results in self-censorship and a reluctance to express opinions or advocate for change. This stifles women's voices and prevents them from fully participating in public discourse and decision-making processes. As a result, women are often sidelined in political discussions and marginalized from positions of power and influence

Nature of Political Party Formation

The party nature in Nigeria has a significant impact on women's political participation in the country. Nigeria has a deeply entrenched patriarchy within its political system, with political

parties often being dominated by men, which act as a barrier for women seeking to become involved in politics. Women are often marginalized within political parties, with limited opportunities for leadership roles and decision-making processes. This lack of representation and inclusion discourages women from actively participating in the political arena.

Furthermore, the party structure in Nigeria often reinforces traditional gender roles, with women being expected to prioritize their roles as wives and mothers over their political ambitions. This creates a cultural barrier for women, as they may face social stigma or backlash for actively engaging in politics. Additionally, the lack of resources and support within political parties for women candidates can make it difficult for them to compete with their male counterparts, further limiting their opportunities for political participation

Inadequacy of Willing and Educated Women

The lack of education greatly affects women's political participation in Nigeria. Education plays a crucial role in empowering individuals to critically analyze political decisions and actively engage in the political process. Women who lack access to quality education are often unable to fully understand the importance of their participation in politics or the impact of political decisions on their lives and communities. This lack of awareness and knowledge hinders women from effectively asserting their rights and advocating for their interests in the political arena.

Furthermore, the lack of education among women in Nigeria contributes to their marginalization in political leadership and decision-making processes. Women with higher levels of education are more likely to hold positions of power and influence within the government, allowing them to advocate for policies that address gender disparities and promote gender equality. In contrast, women with limited education are often excluded from political leadership roles, resulting in a lack of representation for their needs and concerns in government decision-making. This perpetuates a system of gender inequality and limits the ability of women to influence political outcomes in a meaningful way. Many women in Nigeria tend to prioritize domestic responsibilities and the preservation of their family unit, which naturally limits the pool of qualified and willing female candidates for both appointed and elected positions.

High Cost of Election

The cost of elections can have a significant impact on women's political participation in Nigeria. Women often face barriers to accessing financial resources necessary to run a successful campaign, such as funding for advertisements, campaign materials, and travel expenses. This can hinder their ability to compete with male candidates who may have greater access to financial resources and support networks. As a result, women may be discouraged from running for office or may struggle to gain visibility and traction in the political arena.

Furthermore, the high cost of elections in Nigeria may also contribute to a lack of gender parity in elected positions. Women are often underrepresented in political leadership roles, and the

financial burden of running for office can exacerbate this inequality. Without adequate support and resources, women may be less likely to pursue political careers or may face additional challenges in gaining the necessary funding to compete in elections. This perpetuates a cycle of gender disparity in political representation and limits the diversity of voices and perspectives in decision-making processes.

The Issue of Endogeneity

This presents another significant obstacle that undermines active participation by women in politics. Women who are married outside their original constituencies but choose to run for office in their marital constituencies are often seen as outsiders by the local electorate, especially if they were born elsewhere. This perception is even more pronounced if the woman comes from a different ethnic group. Such women are frequently viewed as overly ambitious and may face prevention or discouragement from pursuing political office.

EFFORT MADE TOWARDS FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS IN NIGERIA

Since the return to democratic governance in Nigeria in 1999, efforts towards increasing women's participation in various sectors of society have been gradually gaining momentum. Despite the patriarchal nature of Nigerian society, significant strides have been made towards promoting gender equality and empowerment for women. One of the notable milestones in promoting women's participation in Nigeria was the passage of the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill in 2006. This bill aimed to address issues of discrimination and promote equal

opportunities for women in all spheres of society. It highlighted the need for affirmative action in areas such as education, employment, and political representation to bridge the gender gap and promote gender equality. In the political realm, efforts have been made to increase women's representation in decision-making positions. The introduction of gender quotas in the National Assembly and state houses of assembly has helped to increase the number of women in elected positions. The creation of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in 1999 also played a crucial role in advocating for women's rights and promoting gender mainstreaming in government policies and programs.

Furthermore, various non-governmental organizations and civil society groups have been instrumental in advocating for women's rights and empowerment in Nigeria. These organizations have carried out campaigns, workshops, and training programs to raise awareness on gender issues and promote women's participation in leadership positions. They have also provided support and resources to women to enable them to reach their full potential and actively participate in the development of the country. Some notable examples of such organizations are: **Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre (WARDC)**, This organization focuses on promoting and ensuring the enforcement of women's rights and the attainment of equality, development, and peace. WARDC conducts research, advocacy, and documentation to empower women and increase their participation in Nigeria. **Women in Nigeria (WIN)**, Founded in 1982, WIN works to address issues of inequality and to enhance the status of women

in Nigeria. They focus on advocacy for legal rights, education, health, and increased participation of women in the political process. **Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA)**, WRAPA empowers women to engage in issues affecting their social well-being. It focuses on legal education, advocacy, and conflict resolution, promoting women's participation through a deep understanding of their rights. **Kudirat Initiative for Democracy (KIND)**, Founded in memory of Kudirat Abiola, KIND seeks to empower democracy and development in Nigeria by strengthening the capacity of women and youth. Their programs promote leadership and advocate for the increased involvement of women in politics and governance. **Project Alert on Violence Against Women**, This organization works to protect the rights of women and girls by combating gender-based violence. Project Alert also offers support services to victims while advocating for legal reforms to enhance women's participation and protection.

To further engender the participation of women in political activities some other initiatives have been undertaken to tackle the issue of underrepresentation of women in both elected and appointed roles in Nigeria. These initiatives include the creation of the Women Political Empowerment Office and the Nigeria Women Trust Funds, as well as the Women Lobby Group. Additionally, the implementation of a gender policy by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and the organization of national multi-stakeholder dialogues have been significant. Efforts to enforce affirmative action through various interventions and the

organization of the Nigeria Women Strategy Conference also play a crucial role. Furthermore, the National Center for Women Development, in partnership with the National Bureau of Statistics, is working towards gathering reliable data to further understand and address this issue.

Despite these efforts, challenges still exist in promoting women's participation in Nigeria. Gender stereotypes and cultural norms continue to hinder women's progress in various sectors of society. Limited access to resources, lack of support networks, and gender-based violence are also obstacles that women face in their quest for equal opportunities and participation.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework is a conceptual model of how one theorizes or makes logical sense of the relationships among the several factors that have been identified as important to the problem, Maxwell (2005). This definition highlights the function of a theoretical framework in making logical connections between identified factors in a study. Joe Maxwell (2013), in his own explanation elaborates that a theoretical framework provides a particular perspective, or lens, through which to examine a topic. It helps in focusing the study and determining what things you will measure and what statistical relationships you will look for.

The theoretical framework used in this work is that of structural barrier theory, critical mass theory, human capital theory and rational choice theory. this theory and their application to the subject of study shall be discussed below:

2.2.1 STRUCTURAL BARRIER THEORY

The term "Structural Barrier Theory" does not point to a specific singular theory or a distinct originator in the conventional sense within academic disciplines. Instead, the concept of structural barriers is woven throughout various theories across multiple fields, including sociology, economics, political science, and gender studies. The idea central to structural barriers, is that systemic and institutional structures can impose obstacles that limit individuals or groups based on their social, economic, or racial characteristics.

Structural barrier theory is a sociological perspective that seeks to explain how societal structures and institutions create barriers and obstacles that prevent individuals from achieving their full potential and accessing opportunities. This theory is rooted in the idea that social systems are not neutral and can perpetuate inequalities and perpetuate discrimination and disadvantage among certain groups. One of the key concepts of structural barrier theory is the notion of systemic discrimination, which refers to the ways in which social structures and institutions perpetuate inequality and disadvantage for certain groups. For example, discriminatory practices in hiring and promotion processes, unequal access to education and healthcare, and limited opportunities for advancement can all serve as barriers that prevent individuals from marginalized communities from realizing their full potential.

Another important aspect of structural barrier theory is the idea of social exclusion, which refers to the ways in which individuals from certain social groups are systematically marginalized and

excluded from mainstream society. This can manifest in various forms, such as poverty, lack of access to resources and opportunities, and limited social networks. Social exclusion can have profound effects on individuals' well-being, self-esteem, and overall quality of life. Moreover, structural barrier theory emphasizes the importance of understanding the role of power dynamics in shaping social structures and institutions. Power imbalances within society can result in the concentration of resources and opportunities among certain groups, while simultaneously marginalizing and disenfranchising others. For example, in a capitalist society, those with economic power and privilege may have greater access to education, healthcare, and political influence, while those without such resources may face significant barriers to social mobility and advancement.

Additionally, structural barrier theory underscores the interplay between individual agency and structural constraints in shaping individuals' life chances and opportunities. While individuals may strive to overcome barriers and achieve their goals, they are often constrained by institutionalized discrimination, systemic inequalities, and social hierarchies that limit their ability to succeed. This recognition of the complex interplay between individual effort and structural barriers is crucial for understanding the dynamics of social inequality and injustice. Structural barrier theory highlights the importance of intersectionality in understanding the multiple dimensions of discrimination and disadvantage that individuals may face. Intersectionality theory emphasizes that individuals' experiences of oppression and privilege are

shaped by a complex interplay of factors, such as race, gender, class, sexuality, and disability. By taking into account the intersecting nature of social identities and experiences, structural barrier theory provides a more nuanced understanding of how societal structures and institutions create barriers and obstacles for marginalized groups.

Structural barrier theory offers a powerful analytical framework for understanding the ways in which social structures and institutions create barriers and obstacles that prevent individuals from marginalized communities from realizing their full potential and accessing opportunities. By examining the systemic nature of discrimination and disadvantage, the role of power dynamics, the impact of social exclusion, and the interplay between individual agency and structural constraints, this theory sheds light on the complex mechanisms that perpetuate inequality and injustice within society. Moving forward, it is imperative for policymakers, researchers, and advocates to take into account the insights offered by structural barrier theory in order to address the root causes of social inequality and work towards a more just and equitable society.

THEORETICAL APPLICATION

Structural barrier theory is a sociological concept that examines how social structures, such as institutions and systems, create barriers that prevent certain groups of people from fully accessing opportunities and resources. When applied to the context of gender politics in Nigeria, this theory helps us understand how entrenched patriarchal norms and discriminatory practices continue to limit women's participation and representation in politics and decision-making

processes. Nigeria has a long history of gender inequality, with women facing numerous structural barriers that prevent them from fully participating in political life. These barriers include limited access to education, economic disparities, cultural norms that prioritize male leadership, and discriminatory laws and policies that perpetuate gender-based discrimination. As a result, women in Nigeria are vastly underrepresented in political office, with only a small percentage holding positions of power or influence.

One of the key structural barriers that women face in Nigerian politics is the lack of access to financial resources. Political campaigns in Nigeria are often expensive, and women are typically at a disadvantage when it comes to fundraising and securing financial support. This lack of financial resources can prevent women from running for office or competing effectively against male candidates who have greater access to funding. Another significant structural barrier for women in Nigerian politics is the prevalence of patriarchal attitudes and beliefs that reinforce traditional gender roles and expectations. These attitudes contribute to a culture of sexism and discrimination that manifests in various forms, including gender-based violence, harassment, and exclusion from decision-making processes. As a result, women in Nigeria often find themselves marginalized and disenfranchised in political spaces, unable to fully assert their rights and interests. Structural barriers in the form of discriminatory laws and policies also limit women's political participation in Nigeria. For example, the Nigerian Constitution contains provisions that discriminate against women in matters of citizenship and property rights, effectively restricting

their ability to fully engage in political and economic activities. Similarly, laws that fail to adequately address issues such as gender-based violence and discrimination perpetuate a system that marginalizes women and reinforces their subordinate status in society.

Despite these challenges, there have been efforts to address the structural barriers faced by women in Nigerian politics. Organizations and activists working on gender equality issues have pushed for policy reforms, awareness campaigns, and capacity-building initiatives to empower women and increase their representation in political decision-making processes. Additionally, international organizations and development partners have supported initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and women's rights in Nigeria, recognizing the importance of gender-inclusive governance for sustainable development and social progress. It is clear that addressing the structural barriers that hinder women's political participation in Nigeria requires a multi-faceted approach that tackles both the root causes of gender inequality and the systemic obstacles that perpetuate it. This approach should include legal reforms that recognize and protect women's rights, as well as efforts to challenge patriarchal norms and attitudes that perpetuate discrimination and exclusion. Moreover, there is a need for targeted interventions that address the specific challenges faced by women, such as providing access to financial resources, political training, and mentorship opportunities to enhance their political leadership skills and capabilities.

2.2.2 CRITICAL MASS THEORY

Critical Mass Theory, a concept rooted in sociology, is a framework that examines social phenomena through the lens of group dynamics and collective behavior. This theory posits that social change can occur when a critical mass of individuals within a given population adopts a new behavior or belief, leading to a ripple effect that influences others to follow suit. The underlying premise of Critical Mass Theory is that individuals are influenced by their social environment and the actions of those around them, creating a domino effect that can lead to significant societal shifts.

At the core of Critical Mass Theory is the idea of a tipping point, where a small but influential group of individuals can spark widespread change by creating momentum and visibility for a particular cause or movement. This concept has been applied to a wide range of social issues, from civil rights movements to environmental activism, where the actions of a committed few can inspire others to join in and create a groundswell of support for change. Critical Mass Theory highlights the importance of networks and social connections in spreading ideas and mobilizing collective action. One key aspect of Critical Mass Theory is the notion of social contagion, where behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes can spread rapidly through social networks and influence a large number of people. This process is often facilitated by social media and other forms of communication that allow information to be disseminated quickly and widely. By understanding

the mechanisms of social contagion, advocates and activists can strategically target influencers and opinion leaders to help amplify their message and reach a larger audience.

Another important concept in Critical Mass Theory is the role of social norms in shaping behavior and attitudes within a society. Norms are unwritten rules and expectations that govern how individuals should behave in a given context, and they play a significant role in determining whether a behavior or belief will be adopted by a critical mass of people. By challenging existing norms and promoting alternative behaviors, activists and change agents can work to shift the social landscape and create new opportunities for positive change. Critical Mass Theory also highlights the importance of timing and strategic planning in mobilizing social movements and effecting change. By identifying key moments of opportunity and leveraging existing resources and infrastructure, advocates can maximize their impact and create lasting change. In some cases, a well-timed action or event can catalyze a larger movement and inspire widespread participation, leading to a snowball effect that builds momentum and accelerates social change.

One of the strengths of Critical Mass Theory is its recognition of the power of collective action and the potential for individuals to come together to effect change on a larger scale. By harnessing the energy and resources of a diverse group of stakeholders, advocates can amplify their impact and create a broad-based movement that is capable of challenging entrenched power structures and promoting social justice. This collective approach to social change is based on the idea that individuals are more powerful when they work together towards a common goal, rather

than acting in isolation. Despite its many strengths, Critical Mass Theory also has its limitations and criticisms. Some scholars have argued that the concept of a critical mass is overly simplistic and does not fully account for the complexities of social change. Others have raised concerns about the potential for groupthink and conformity within a critical mass, which could stifle dissent and discourage critical thinking. Additionally, the theory has been criticized for its focus on individual behavior change and its relative neglect of structural factors that contribute to inequality and social injustice.

THEORETICAL APPLICATION

Critical mass theory is a concept that emphasizes the importance of having a sufficient number of people from marginalized groups in positions of power in order to effect significant change within a society. In the context of gender politics in Nigeria, this theory is particularly relevant as women continue to face significant challenges in gaining equal representation and opportunities in political and social spheres. Despite making up roughly half of the population, women in Nigeria are severely underrepresented in positions of power and decision-making roles, perpetuating a cycle of gender inequality and discrimination. One of the key issues contributing to the lack of gender equality in Nigeria is the deep-rooted patriarchal system that governs social norms and expectations. Traditional gender roles often dictate that women should be subservient to men, limiting their opportunities for education, employment, and political participation. As a

result, women face significant barriers in accessing resources and opportunities that are essential for achieving gender parity in society.

In order to overcome these challenges, it is crucial for women in Nigeria to come together and mobilize in order to achieve critical mass in key decision-making spaces. By increasing the number of women in positions of power, women can collectively work towards dismantling the patriarchal structures that have long perpetuated gender inequality in the country. This can be achieved through efforts such as advocacy, education, and grassroots organizing to empower women to take on leadership roles and challenge the status quo. Additionally, it is important for men to be allies in the fight for gender equality in Nigeria. By recognizing the importance of diversity and inclusion in decision-making processes, men can support women in their efforts to achieve critical mass and create a more equitable society for all. This includes challenging traditional gender norms and biases, as well as actively promoting and supporting women in leadership positions.

Furthermore, the implementation of policies and legislation that promote gender equality and address the unique needs of women in Nigeria is essential in achieving critical mass and advancing gender politics in the country. This includes measures such as quota systems for political representation, gender-sensitive budgeting, and programs aimed at empowering women economically and socially. By creating a supportive environment for women to thrive, Nigeria can work towards achieving greater gender equality and social justice. Critical mass theory

provides a valuable framework for understanding the importance of women's representation and empowerment in shaping gender politics in Nigeria. By increasing the number of women in positions of power and decision-making roles, women can collectively work towards overcoming the barriers and challenges that have long hindered gender equality in the country. Through collaboration, advocacy, and policy reforms, Nigeria can create a more inclusive and equitable society that values the contributions of women and promotes gender parity for the betterment of all.

2.3. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Women and Power in Postcolonial Africa"by Filomina Chioma Steady

This book analyzes the role of women in African politics with a focus on postcolonial challenges and achievements. Steady discusses how colonial legacies have shaped gender roles in African societies, including Nigeria, and how women have navigated these structures to gain political power. The book is known for its broad analysis, historical depth, and case studies that illustrate larger trends across the continent.

2. Gender and Democracy in Nigeria: Issues and Perspectives"edited by Isiugo-Abanihe et al.

This collection of essays addresses various aspects of gender and democracy in Nigeria, exploring themes such as women's political representation, gender-based policies, and the impact of socio-cultural factors on democratic participation. Each chapter contributes a unique

perspective, making it a comprehensive resource for understanding the multifaceted challenges and opportunities for women in Nigeria's democratic processes.

3. Engendering Nigeria's Third Republic"by Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi.

Akiyode-Afolabi's work focuses specifically on the Third Republic in Nigeria, examining women's roles and the challenges they faced during this political era. The book offers insights into the mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion within Nigerian politics and provides recommendations for increasing women's political participation and representation.

4. Women's political participation in Nigeria: The role of culture and religion"by Hussaina J. Abdullah.

Published in the Journal of African Election, this article critically examines how cultural and religious practices influence women's political participation in Nigeria. Abdullah uses specific examples and case studies to argue that while such factors can restrict women's roles in politics, they also provide unique platforms and opportunities for mobilization and advocacy.

5. Challenges to Women's Participation in Nigeria's Politics"by Oluyemi Fayomi and Felix Chidozie.

This article in the International Journal of Politics and Good Governance, looks at the institutional, societal, and economic barriers that hinder women's political participation in Nigeria. The authors use empirical data to discuss issues such as discriminatory laws, patriarchal

structures, and the lack of economic resources that affect women's ability to engage fully in politics.

6. Gender Politics in Nigeria's Fourth Republic"by Hakeem Onapajo.

Featured in Cogent Social Sciences, this article explores the dynamics of gender politics during Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Onapajo analyzes the policies that have been implemented to enhance gender equality and assesses their effectiveness. The paper also discusses the ongoing challenges women face in gaining political equity.

7. UN Women Nigeria Country Office publications

These publications typically include reports and policy briefs that provide updated statistics, policy analysis, and recommendations regarding gender equality in Nigeria. They are valuable for understanding the current landscape of gender policies, the progress made, and the challenges that persist.

8. Women in Politics: Gender and Participation in the Political Environment of Nigeria"by the National Institute for Legislative Studies.

This policy paper provides an analytical perspective on the barriers and drivers of women's participation in Nigerian politics. It includes legislative reviews, case studies, and policy recommendations aimed at fostering a more inclusive political environment for women.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 METHODOLOGY

Research methodology describes the techniques and procedures used to identify and analyze information regarding a specific research topic. It is a process by which researchers design their study so that they can achieve their objective using selected research instruments. Further, Methodology refers to the set of methods and techniques used by a researcher to solve a specific problem (Kothari, 2004).

There are three types of research methodology, based on the type of research and data required. First, is that of quantitative research methodology, which focuses on measuring and testing numerical data. Second, is the qualitative research methodology that examines the opinions, behavior and experience of people. Thirdly, is that of Mixed-Method research methodology, that uses the characteristics of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in the same study. For this study, the methodology adopted is that of quantitative methods. To effectively use quantitative methods, the researcher follows a systematic and structured approach, through the use of the appropriate research design, sampling methods and data collection techniques. The researcher also ensures that the data collected is reliable and valid, by using standardized measurement tools and ensuring that the sampling size is understood for drawing conclusions. Findings from this method can often be generalized to the larger population from which the sample was drawn by using larger, representative sample size and random sampling techniques.

Other aspects of this study include the research design, population of the study, sample frame or size, sampling procedure or technique, sources of data, method or instrument of data collection, and method of data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

Research design can be defined as a master plan for the determined methods, structure, and strategy of a research to find out alternative tools to solve the problem and to minimize the variances(Kothari, 2004).This study aims at a critical assessment of the issue of gender politics and women participation, using the 2020 Edo state governorship election as a case study by systematically gathering data that is relevant to the issue under investigation from respondents. In relation to the quantitative method, the research design in this study is survey research design, this design allows for the collection of quantifiable data that can be statically analyzed. This was used so as to identify pattern, correlation, and trends, facilitating the testing of hypotheses, it also provides a foundation for making data driven decisions and policy recommendations. The researchers rely on the information generated by the respondents to ascertain their perceptions on the subject matter through printed questionnaires, which will be subjected to statistical analysis.

3.3 Population of Study

The population of the study is the totality of objects or elements being studied and to which the conclusion or generalizations of our study will apply (Agbonifoh and Yomere, 1999). The population of this study consist of persons who are age 18 years upward. The target population

for this study consists of 41,310 citizens of oluku communities in Ovia North East, Edo state. However the community was randomly sampled for case of administration, retrieval, collection and data analysis.

| | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------|
| General population | Edo state | 4,777,00 |
| Sample size | Ovia North East LGA | 229,500 |
| Sample frame | Oluku | 41,310 |

3.4 Sources of Data

As a survey research design, the study will utilize the primary source of data through the administration of a questionnaire. This is the research method where the researcher goes to the field to sample peoples opinions on the topic under investigation.

3.5 Instrument of Data Collection

The instrument used for this research work is a written questionnaire. This is a technique of data collection in which the researcher systematically presents well-structured written questions that are to be answered by the respondents. This is preceded by a covering letter, introducing the researcher, explaining the purpose of the research and soliciting assistance in providing the required information. The questionnaire consists of two sections: the first section (A) will

contain the personal data (bio-data) of the respondents, which includes their sex, age, marital status, etc., while the second section (B) will examine issues that address the core subject matter under study. It comprises closed-ended questions.

3.6 Methods of Data Collection

In research, data are collected using various methods depending on the research methodology being followed and the research being undertaken. Both qualitative and quantitative research have different data collection methods, for qualitative, the methods are: one-on-one interview, document studies, focus groups, qualitative observation. For quantitative, the most common type is probability sampling, the methods are: interviews, observations, document review, survey and questionnaire. For this research, there is personal contact between the respondents and the researcher with the aim of gathering reliable and vital information through the use of a questionnaire(structured questionnaire), which would be administered by the researcher to the respondents.

3.7 Sampling Technique/Sample Size

According to Osemwota et al. (1996), sampling is defined as a scientific method of obtaining unbiased and representative data from a given universe or population. Gay (1987) defined sampling as the process of selecting several individuals for a study in such a way that the individual represents the large group from which they were selected. In research, there are two types of sampling, this includes probability sampling which connote choosing a sample from a

larger population using some form of random selection, that is every number of the population has an equal chance of being selected, various types are : simple random, systematic, stratified and cluster. The second type is non probability sampling, that uses non random criteria like availability, geopolitical proximity or expert knowledge of the individual you want to research in order to answer a research question, various types are : convenience, purposive, snowball and quota. Thus, the sampling technique that is used in drawing the population for this study is simple random sampling. The sample is drawn using "**Cochran sampling formula**" $n=Z^2pq/e^2$, in which:

Precision Level: $\pm 5\%$

Confidence Level: 80%

Estimated Proportion: 0.5

Population size: 41, 310

Result : 164

Therefore 164 youths from the aforementioned area of the state (Ovia- North LGA, Oluku precisely), are picked for samples.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected using the various methods for qualitative and quantitative research need to be analyzed to generate meaningful conclusions. These data analysis methods also differ between quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research involves a deductive method for data analysis where hypotheses are developed at the beginning of the research and precise measurement is required, the method includes statistical analysis to analyze numerical data and are grouped into two categories: descriptive analysis and inferential analysis. Qualitative analysis, on the other-hand, involves an inductive method for data analysis where hypotheses are developed after data collection, the method includes: content analysis, narrative analysis, discuss analysis grounded theory and thematic analysis.

For this research, the research data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, which include frequency tables and simple percentages. The responses from the respondents will be grouped and arranged in tabular form. The percentage is the frequency of the occurrence of a category per 100 cases. To calculate a percentage, we simply multiply any given proportion by 100. The formula is; $\% = f/n * 100$, where f=frequency and n is total of responses. (Ogbeide, 1997).

3.9 Validity and Reliability

Validity and Reliability are two concepts in quantitative analysis that ensure the accuracy and consistency of the research results. Validity refers to the extent to which the research measures what it intends to measure, while reliability refers to the consistency and reliability of the

research result over time. Ensuring validity and reliability is crucial in conducting high quality research, as it increases confidence in the findings and conclusions drawn from the data collected. To ensure this the researcher is careful in designing the studies, selecting appropriate instruments and participants, control of extraneous variables, and the use of rigorous statistical analysis.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Conducting research that involves human subjects requires careful consideration of ethical principles to ensure the protection and well-being of participants. In adherence to ethical standards, the following considerations will be implemented throughout the research process:

Informed Consent: Before participation, all respondents were fully informed about the purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits of the study. Participants were provided voluntary and informed consent, with the assurance that their involvement is entirely voluntary and they may withdraw at any stage without consequences.

Confidentiality: The confidentiality of participants' information is paramount. All data collected was treated with the utmost confidentiality, and no personally identifiable information was disclosed in any reports or publications arising from the study. Respondents' identities were coded to ensure anonymity.

Data Security: All collected data, including completed questionnaires, were securely stored.

Minimization of Harm: Measures were implemented to minimize any potential psychological or emotional harm to participants. The questionnaire avoided intrusive or sensitive questions, and participants were assured that their responses would not have any negative consequences.

Debriefing: Participants will be provided with information about the overall findings of the study upon request. Additionally, a debriefing session may be conducted after the research, where participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and receive further clarification on the study's objectives.

Right to Withdraw: Participants were reminded of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without facing any negative repercussions. The withdrawal process was clearly outlined in the informed consent document.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents an analysis of the data gathered from participants and a discussion of the research findings. Data analysis involves a systematic review of data to identify patterns, extract valuable insights, and aid in decision-making. This process includes gathering, cleansing, transforming, and modeling data to derive useful information, draw conclusions, and support decision-making. From the field survey conducted, it was found that out of 169 questionnaires distributed by the researcher, only 144 were retrieved, with 25 being discarded due to improper responses or other inconsistencies. Consequently, the effective sample size for the study is 134 respondents, indicating a response rate of approximately 90%. Furthermore, it was noted that not all questions were answered by every respondent. To address this, specific signs and identifiers were used to mark and highlight these shortcomings.

n= total respondents who answered each question.

#= total questionnaires collected.

n*= indicates that the responses to a specific question are fewer than the total questionnaires collected.

*() = represents the precise number of respondents who did not answer a specific question.

Additionally, the tables in Section A of this study display the socio-economic (bio-data) characteristics of the respondents, while Section B details the responses of the research subjects concerning the questions related to the study's topic.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

TABLE 1.0 : Age Distribution of Respondents (n=144)

| DISTRIBUTION | RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE % |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 18 - 28 | 127 | 88.2 |
| 29 - 39 | 14 | 9.7 |
| 40 -50 | 2 | 1.4 |
| 50 and Above | 1 | 0.7 |
| TOTAL | 144 | 100 |

source: Field Survey, 2024.

Description: The table above shows the Age distribution of the various respondents that responded to the question. The result shows that larger percentages were of the age bracket 18-28 representing 88.2%, followed by age 29-38 with 9.75%, 40-50 with 1.4% and 50 above with 0.7%. This shows that most respondents were of the age 18-29.

TABLE 1.1 : Gender Distribution of Respondents (n=144)

| DISTRIBUTION | RESPONDENT S | PERCENTAGE % |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Male | 86 | 59.7 |
| Female | 56 | 38.9 |
| Prefer Not to Say | 2 | 1.4 |
| TOTAL | 144 | 100 |

source: Field Survey, 2024.

Description: The table above shows the gender distribution of the respondent who attempted the questionnaire. The result shows that 86(59.7%) respondents were male , while 56(38.9%) were female and 2 respondents preferred not to mention the gender class they belong to.

TABLE 1.2 : Marital Status Distribution of the Respondent (n=144)

| DISTRIBUTION | RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE% |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Singles | 135 | 93.7 |
| Married | 9 | 6.3 |
| Divorced | - | - |
| Separated | - | - |
| Widowed | - | - |
| TOTAL | 144 | 100 |

source: Field Survey, 2024.

Description: The table above shows the response of the respondent concerning their marital status. The result shows that 93.7% were single and the larger percentage, 6.3% were married. Other marital status were left blank, meaning none of the respondents belong to that circle.

TABLE 1.3 : Occupational Distribution of the Respondent (n=140), (#144)

| DISTRIBUTION | RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE% |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Self Employed | 109 | 77.8 |
| Civil Servant | 5 | 3.6 |
| Private Worker | 26 | 18.6 |
| TOTAL | 140* | 100 |

source: Field Survey, 2024.

***(4)** Four respondents did not attempt the question.

Description: The table above shows the occupational distribution of the respondent. The results show that 77.8% are self-employed, followed by 18.6% who are private workers and 3.4% as civil servants. It is important to note that Four(4) respondents did not attempt the question, leaving it blank.

TABLE 1.4 : Educational Qualification of the Respondents (n=141), (#144)

| DISTRIBUTION | RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE% |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| No Formal Education | - | - |
| Primary School | - | - |
| SSCE | 15 | 10.7 |
| BSC | 124 | 87.9 |
| MSC | 1 | 0.7 |
| PHD | 1 | 0.7 |
| TOTAL | 141* | 100 |

source: Field Survey, 2024.

***(3)** Three respondents did not attempt the question.

Description: The table above shows the Educational qualifications of the respondents. The result shows that most of the respondents, talking about the larger percentage(87.6) have BSc, followed by SSCE with 10.7, MSc with 0.7 and Phd with 0.7. Three(3) respondents did not attempt the question, leaving it blank.

TABLE 1.5 : Income Levels of the Respondents (n=140), (#144)

| DISTRIBUTION | RESPONDENT S | PERCENTAGE % |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Less than 30.000 | 57 | 40.7 |
| 31.000 - 50,000 | 39 | 27.9 |
| 51.000 - 80.000 | 12 | 8.6 |
| 81.000 - 100.000 | 9 | 6.4 |
| 100.000 and Above | 13 | 16.4 |
| TOTAL | 140* | 100 |

source: Field Survey, 2024.

***(4)** Four respondents did not attempt the question.

Description: The table above shows the response of the various respondents, concerning their income level. The result shows that 40.7% have an income level less than 30,000, 31,000-50,000 for 27.9%, 51,000-80,000 for 8.6, 16.4 were 100,000 and above. 4 out of 144 respondents did not attempt the question.

TABLE 1.6 : Religion Distribution of the Respondents (n=142), (144)

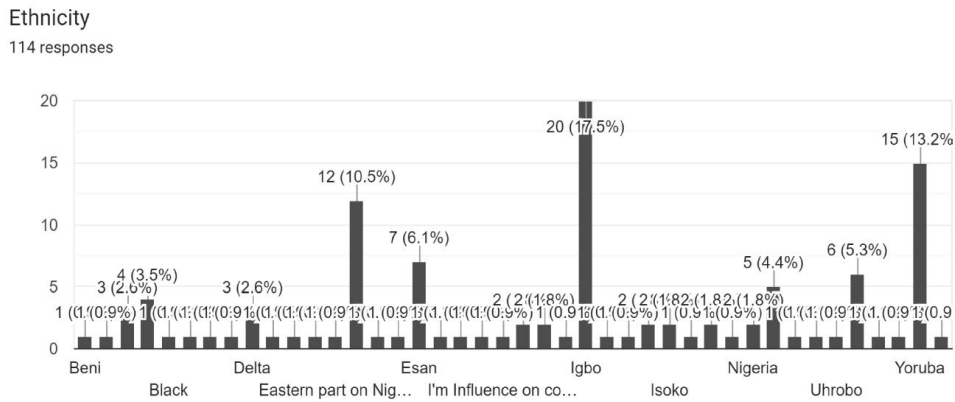
| DISTRIBUTION | RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE% |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Christian | 140 | 98.6 |
| Islamic | 2 | 1.4 |
| African Religion | - | - |
| TOTAL | 142* | 100 |

source: Field Survey, 2024.

*(2) two respondents did not attempt the question.

Description:

GRAPH 1.7 : Ethnicity Distribution of the Respondents (n=144)



source: Field Survey, 2024.

Description: The graph above shows the ethnic distribution of the various respondents that responded to the questions. The result shows that, though our research focuses on a particular community in Edo state, this place has been occupied by different ethnic groups. In this explanation we only focus on those that are of larger percentage like that of the igbo, represented by 27.5%, followed by the yoruba with 13.2%, Edo with 10.5, Esan with 6.1 and Urhubo with 5.3. All other tribes fall short of this percent, among those who responded to the question.

ANALYZING IN PERCENTAGE EACH ITEMS IN SECTION B OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE IN RELATION TO RESPONDENTS PERCEPTION OF THE SUBJECT MATTER.

SECTION B

QUESTION 9 : Do you know what political participation is?

TABLE 1.8 (n=144)

| DISTRIBUTION | RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE % |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Yes | 140 | 97.2 |
| No | 4 | 2.8 |
| TOTAL | 144 | 100 |

source: Field Survey, 2024.

Description: The table above shows the response of the Study concerning whether yes or no the respondents knows what political participation means. From the field survey the results dictate that 97.2% agreed to knowing what political participation is and 2.8% did not.

QUESTION 10 : If yes, what is political participation?

TABLE 1.9 (n=143), (#144)

| DISTRIBUTION | RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE % |
|---|--------------------|---------------------|
| Actively involved in politics | 63 | 44.1 |
| Taking interest in political affairs of your state and county | 80 | 55.9 |
| TOTAL | 143* | 100 |

source: Field Survey, 2024.

*(1))One respondent did not attempt the question.

Description: The table above put forward the result of respondents on what is political participation in the aspects of definitions. The result shows that 54.9% see political participation as showing interest in political affairs, while 44.1% see it as actively taking part in politics. One respondent did not answer this question, leaving it blank.

QUESTION 11 : Do you think women have ever been represented well in Nigerian politics in the past?

TABLE 1.10 (n=134), (#144)

| DISTRIBUTION | RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE% |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Yes | 38 | 28.8 |
| No | 96 | 71.6 |
| TOTAL | 134* | 100 |

source: Field Survey, 2024.

***(10)** Ten respondents did not attempt the question.

Description: The table above shows the results on whether according to the knowledge of the respondents, women have been represented well in Nigeria politics in the past. From the table, 71.6% chose No, while 28.8% said Yes. It is very important to know that 10 respondents did not answer this question.

QUESTION 12 : Do you think they are being represented now with what is obtainable in the Nigerian political sphere

TABLE 1.11 (n=144)

| DISTRIBUTION | RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE% |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Yes | 25 | 17.4 |
| No | 119 | 82.6 |
| TOTAL | 144 | 100 |

source: Field Survey, 2024.

Description: The table above shows the respondents opinion on whether women have been represented well in the political sphere at the present. The result showed that they have not been represented well as we have larger percent(82.6%) responded No, while 17.4% said Yes.

QUESTION 13 : Can you remember any year a female aspirant won president or vice president in Nigeria?

TABLE 1.12 (n=141), (#144)

| DISTRIBUTION | RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE% |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Yes | 8 | 5.7 |
| No | 133 | 94.3 |
| TOTAL | 141 | 100 |

source: Field Survey, 2024.

***(3)** Three respondents did not attempt the question.

Description: The table above shows the result of the respondents whether they are aware of any female who has won president or vice president positions in Nigeria. 94.3 said No, while 5.7 said Yes. 3 respondents did not attend to the question.

QUESTION 14 : What are the socio-cultural factors affecting women participation in Nigerian politics?

TABLE 1.13 (n=142), (#144)

| DISTRIBUTION | RESPONDENT S | PERCENTAGE % |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Illiteracy | 6 | 4.2 |
| Family Background | 5 | 3.5 |
| Religion | 5 | 3.5 |
| Level of Education | 5 | 3.5 |
| Cultural Norms | 121 | 85.3 |
| TOTAL | 142* | 100 |

source: Field Survey, 2024.

***(2)** Two respondents did not attempt the question.

Description: The table above shows the result on the question on the socio-cultural factors affecting women participation in Nigerian. The result shows that the most socio-cultural factors

affecting women participation are cultural norms with 85.3%, followed by Illiteracy with 4.2, Family background, religion and level of education with 3.5. 2 respondents did not attend to this question.

QUESTION 15 : What are the economic factors affecting women's participation in Nigerian politics?

TABLE 1.14 (n=139), (#144)

| DISTRIBUTION | RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE% |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Income Level | 22 | 15.8 |
| Employment Status | 15 | 10.8 |
| Lack of Sponsors | 102 | 73.4 |
| TOTAL | 139* | 100 |

source: Field Survey, 2024.

***(5)** Five respondents did not attempt the question.

Description: The table above the answer to the question of what economic factors affect women's participation in Nigerian. The result shows that lack of sponsors took the lead with 73.4, followed by income level with 15.8 and employment status with 10.8. 5 respondents did not attend the question.

QUESTION 16 : What are the institutional factors affecting women's participation in Nigerian politics?

TABLE 1.15 (n=138), (#144)

| DISTRIBUTION | RESPONDENT S | PERCENTAGE % |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Political Stability | 44 | 31.9 |
| Government Policies | 53 | 38.4 |
| Access to Credits | 26 | 18.8 |
| Rule of Law | 25 | 10.9 |
| TOTAL | 138 | 100 |

source: Field Survey, 2024.

*(6) One respondent did not attempt the question.

Description: The table above shows the result on the question on what institutional factors affecting women's participation in Nigerian. The result shows that government policies take the lead with 38.4%, followed by political stability with 31.9%, access to credit with 18.9% and rule of law with 10.9%. Important to note 6 respondents did not attend to the question.

QUESTION 17 : The government and some NGOs have clamored for equal representation of women in Nigerian politics and politics in Africa through some policies and intervention, do you know of any of these policies?

TABLE 1.16 (n=141), (#144)

| DISTRIBUTION | RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE% |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Yes | 79 | 56 |
| No | 62 | 44 |
| TOTAL | 141* | 100 |

source: Field Survey, 2024.

***(3)** Three respondents did not attempt the question.

Description: The table above displays the results gathered concerning the question on whether the various respondents are aware of any policies being made by the government to engender women participation in Nigeria. The survey shows 56% said Yes while 44 said No. 3 respondents did not attend to the question.

QUESTION 18 : If yes, do you think it worked?

TABLE 1.17

(n=115), (#144)

| DISTRIBUTION | RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE% |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Yes | 30 | 26.1 |
| No | 85 | 73.9 |
| TOTAL | 115* | 100 |

source: Field Survey, 2024.

***(29)** Twenty-nine respondents did not attempt the question.

Description: The table above shows the results of the respondents on the question of whether the policies of the government made towards engendering women participation works or not. The table shows that 73.9% said No and 26.1% said Yes. 29 respondents did not attend to the question.

QUESTION 19 : Would you like to see more women in the Nigerian political sphere?

TABLE 1.18 (n=141), (#144)

| DISTRIBUTION | RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE% |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Yes | 133 | 94.3 |
| No | 8 | 5.7 |
| TOTAL | 141* | 100 |

source: Field Survey, 2024.

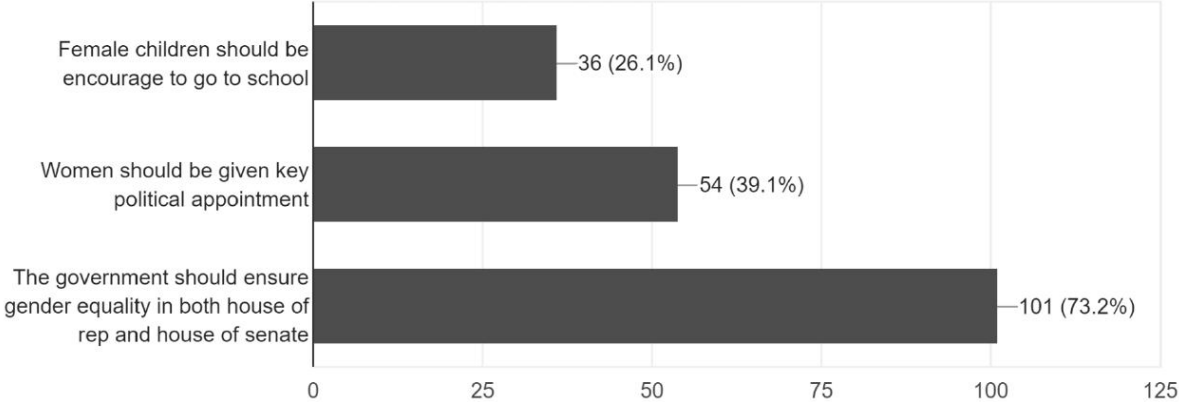
*(3) Three respondents did not attempt the question.

Description: The table above showcases the results of the respondents on whether they would like to see more women in Nigeria political sphere. The result shows that the majority(94.3%) of respondents are interested in seeing more women in the political sphere, while 5.7 said No. 3 respondents did not attend to the question.

QUESTION 20 : If yes, tick the options you think will help to make this possible?

TABLE 1.19

If yes, tick the options you think will help to make this possible.
138 responses



source: Field Survey, 2024.

Description: The graph above shows the opinion of the respondents concerning the best option that will engender women political participation in Nigeria. The result shows that 73.2% support that the government should ensure gender equality in the house of rep and senate, followed by the opinion that women should be given key political appointments with 39.1 and female children should be encouraged to go to school with 26.1.

4.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Women's participation in Nigerian politics has evolved significantly over the years but continues to face substantial challenges. Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, has a complex social, economic, and political landscape that shapes the role of women in its political arena.

The study find out that women participation in Nigeria is still at the lower heb, meaning that there has not been significant improvement in women political participation as well as Nigeria is concerns.In analyzing our findings from this research work, is was discovered that majority of the sampled respondents falls under the age bracket 18-28 with 88.2%, followed by age bracket 29-39 with 9.7%, other age grade falls short of this. Also the Study found out that both male and female participated in the research, with 59.7 representing male while 38.9 representing female,(see table 1.1),this shows that both male and female were duly represented. In the aspects of marital status of the respondents, the Study found out that majority of those who responded were singles taking 97.7% of the total population, (see table 1.2). In continuation, the Study discovered that most of the respondents were self-employed, taking 77.8%, followed by private workers with 18.6%(see table 1.3). Concerning the educational qualifications of the respondents, the Study found out that most respondents with 87.9% were BSc holders, followed by those with SSCE with. 10.7%(see table 1.4). On income distribution, the Study found out that 40.7% leave less than 30,000 followed by 27.9% who live between 31 to 51,000(see table 1.5). Very close to

this is that of religion, they study found that the majority of the respondents were Christian with 98.6%, followed by Islam with 1.4%(see table 1.6).

Further the study also found that the majority of the respondents understand what political participation means with 93.2% answering Yes, why 2.8% answered No(see table 1.8). Very close to thi is that in table 1.9, concerning the definition of what political participation really means, the study shows that 44.1% see political participation as actively involved in politics while 59.95.9% see it as just taken interest in political affairs, this result shows that majority have less understanding when it comes to the real explanation of political participation. Table 1.10 and 1.11 shows the participation of women in politics both in the past and present, the finding shows that women are not being properly represented in politics in Nigeria. The survey also find out that there are so many factors affecting women participation in politics this was done under the different factors, such as social-cultural factor, under this, cultural norms takes the lead with with 85.3% cable 1.13, under economic Factor, lack of sponsors takes the lead with 73.4%(see table 1.14) under institutional Factor, government policies takes the lead with 38.4%, followed by political stability with 31.9%.

Table 1.16 and 1.17, In correlation to one another shows the finding of government policies concerning women participation the result shows that to a large extent most respondents are aware of various policies of the government clamored by NGOs. but the majority of all these policies do not function appropriately or work accordingly, this was noted as majority of the

respondent 73.9% responded No to the working of those policies. The study also found out that the majority of the respondents desire to see more women participating in the political affairs of the country with 94.3% supporting this notion. In engendering women participation the study find out that there are steps that is needed to be taken first, is that the government should ensure equality in both house of rep and house of senate, followed by, women should be given key political appointment and also that female children should be encouraged to go to school (see table 1.19), all these make up the finding of the survey.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter deals with the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

5.1 SUMMARY

The research was focused on the levels of women participation as well as representations in Nigerians politics using, Edo state 2020 general election, adopting a survey research design. The objective was to find out the nature, extent, levels, causes as well as solution to the problem of women participation in Nigeria. The major findings derived from the study were based on the research questions. Nigeria, like many other countries around the world, has historically seen a low level of women's political participation. Despite the fact that women make up half of the country's population, they have been significantly underrepresented in political positions. This lack of representation stems from various cultural, social, and economic factors that have traditionally marginalized women in Nigeria. However, in recent years, there has been a significant push for greater inclusion of women in politics by government and NGOs, with efforts being made to increase their participation and representation in decision-making processes. One of the key challenges to women's political participation in Nigeria is the deeply rooted patriarchal norms and traditions that have limited women's access to political power. Traditional beliefs about the role of women in society have often relegated them to the domestic sphere, preventing them from actively engaging in political activities. Additionally,

discriminatory practices in political parties and electoral processes have further hindered women's ability to run for office and be elected into positions of power. These systemic barriers have made it difficult for women to fully participate in the political landscape of Nigeria. Despite these challenges, there has been a growing movement to promote women's political participation in Nigeria. Various organizations and advocacy groups have been working to challenge gender stereotypes, provide training and support for women interested in running for office, and advocate for policy changes that ensure greater representation of women in political leadership roles. Additionally, the Nigerian government has implemented gender quotas and affirmative action policies to increase the number of women in decision-making positions. These efforts have shown some progress, with more women being elected to political offices at both the national and local levels. However, there is still much work to be done to ensure equal representation and participation of women in Nigerian politics.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The study concluded that Women's political participation in Nigeria, while gradually improving, remains significantly hindered by a range of social, cultural, and systemic barriers. Despite Nigeria's vibrant and dynamic political landscape and the country's commitments under various international conventions and national policies aimed at gender inclusivity, the actual implementation and results have been less than satisfactory. The challenges are deeply rooted and multifaceted, necessitating comprehensive and sustained efforts from various sectors.

Women are still vastly underrepresented in all levels of government. Although there are policies aimed at enhancing women's roles in politics, such as the National Gender Policy, the actual numbers in legislative and executive positions remain dismally low compared to global standards.

Structural and Cultural Barriers Deep-seated cultural norms and patriarchal structures continue to be major obstacles. These societal norms often dictate the roles deemed acceptable for women, sometimes relegating their participation to the sidelines or to less influential roles within political parties and governmental structures.

Economic Disparities in the form of Limited access to economic resources significantly restrict women's ability to run for political office. Campaign financing is crucial in politics, and the economic disenfranchisement of women puts them at a disadvantage compared to their male counterparts. The political arena in Nigeria is fraught with intimidation and violence, which disproportionately affects women. This environment deter women from participating actively in politics, whether as candidates or as activists. While there are policies and quotas intended to improve the participation of women, enforcement is weak, and there is a lack of accountability mechanisms to ensure these policies are implemented effectively.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Women's political participation in Nigeria has historically been limited, despite the country's commitment to gender equality and women's rights. In order to promote greater inclusion of women in politics, several recommendations can be made to address the barriers they face.

Firstly, there is a need for targeted efforts to increase women's representation in political parties. Women should be encouraged to join political parties and run for elective positions through affirmative action measures. This can help to address the gender imbalance in political leadership and promote greater diversity in decision-making processes.

Secondly, there is a need for increased support for women candidates running for political office. This includes providing financial resources, training, and mentorship opportunities to help women navigate the political landscape. Women often face challenges such as lack of funding, social stigma, and limited political networks, which can hinder their ability to effectively campaign and secure electoral victories. By providing support and resources tailored to women candidates, they can be better equipped to compete in the male-dominated political arena.

Thirdly, there is a need for greater awareness and advocacy efforts to promote women's political participation. Civil society organizations, media outlets, and government agencies can play a crucial role in raising awareness about the importance of women's representation in politics and advocating for policy changes to support women candidates. Public campaigns and outreach programs can help to challenge stereotypes and cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequality in politics, while also mobilizing support for women candidates and promoting their visibility.

Promoting women's political participation in Nigeria requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses systemic barriers and challenges faced by women in the political sphere. By implementing targeted efforts to increase women's representation in political parties, provide

support for women candidates, and raise awareness about the importance of gender equality in politics, Nigeria can move closer towards achieving greater gender balance in political leadership. It is essential for all stakeholders to collaborate and work together towards creating a more inclusive and equitable political environment that empowers women to participate and contribute to decision-making processes in the country.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, NIGERIA

Dear Respondent

I am Umahi Innocent, an Undergraduate student of the department of Political Science Faculty of social sciences, University of Benin, City. I am currently conducting research on Women's participation in Nigerian Politics. This is purely for academic purpose as it is part of the requirements for the award of Bachelors (BSc) degree In Political Science. Every information gotten in the study will be handled with strict confidentiality. Thank you for your willingness to participate in this survey.

SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

1. Age: 18-28 ()

29-39 ()

40-50 ()

50 and above ().

2. Sex : Male () Female ().

3. Marital status: single (),Married (), divorced(), separated (),Widowed (), other specify().

4. Occupation: Unemployed (), Self employed (), Civil servant (), Private worker ().

5. Educational qualification: No formal education (), primary school SSCE(), BSC(), MSc(), PHD().

6. Income level: less than 30, 000 (), 30,001-50,000(),50,001-80,000 (), 80,001-100,000 (), above 100,000 ().

7. Religion: Christianity (), Islam (), African religion ().

8. Ethnicity: _____

SECTION B:

9. Do you know what political participation is? Yes (), No ().

10. If yes, what is political participation? Actively involved in politics (), Taking interest in political affairs of your state and county ().

11. Do you think women have ever been represented well in Nigerian politics in the past? Yes(), No().

12. Do you think they are being represented now with what is obtainable in the Nigerian political sphere? Yes(), No().
13. Can you remember any year a female aspirant won president or vice president in Nigeria? Yes (), No ().
14. What are the socio-cultural factors affecting women participation in Nigerian politics? Illiteracy (), Family background (), Religion (), Level of education (), Cultural norms ().
15. What are the economic factors affecting women's participation in Nigerian politics? Income level (), Employment status (), Lack of sponsors ().
16. What are the institutional factors affecting women's participation in Nigerian politics? Political stability(), Government Policies (), Access to credit (), Rule of law ().
17. The government and some NGOs have clamored for equal representation of women in Nigerian politics and politics in Africa through some policies and intervention, do you know of any of these policies? Yes (), No ().
18. If yes, do you think it worked? Yes (), No ().
19. Would you like to see more women in the Nigerian political sphere? Yes (), No ().

20. If yes, tick the options you think will help to make this possible. Women should be given key political appointments (), Female children should be encouraged to go to school (), The government should ensure gender equality in both the house of rep and house of senate ().