

**UNDER-REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN NIGERIAN POLITICS: A CASE
STUDY OF EDO STATE, NIGERIA, 1999-2020**

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**A PROJECTWORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND
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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that to the best of our knowledge this work was carried out by
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DEDICATION

This project work is dedicated to GOD Almighty and my dear parents Mr. and Late Mrs. Godwin Oboh. Thank you for your prayers and great support and most especially, for always believing in me and supporting me all through my academic journey.

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First of all, I really want to appreciate God Almighty for his grace and favour upon my life throughout my stay in University of Benin. With all the challenges of the past years, this journey of four years appeared impossible, but God infinite mercies and grace made it possible. Lord I am forever grateful.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Women participation in governance in Nigeria and Edo State in particular, remains a burning issue in nearly every political discourse in Nigeria. For years, it has been observed that women have played comparatively less role as political office holders to their male counterparts.¹ In Edo State, Nigeria, the political arena is not different from other parts of the world where political participation is imbalance in favour of men.² Women's participation in the political process has therefore become the focus of many local and international debates in the past two decades.³ Different fora such as the 1995 Beijing Declaration, the 1995 Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women held in Kenya and the United Nations Development Fund for Women, had recognized the plight of women's participation in politics especially in the developing countries.⁴ Against this backdrop, this study seeks to assess the political under-participation of women in politics to Edo state and investigate the reasons for this imbalances.

Therefore the main thrust of this work, is the study of under-representation of women in Nigerian politics: a case study of Edo state. The study looks into patterns of the role of women in national development and how is very important in the development of any country. It is important to examine the pattern of emphasis the mind of humanity on the undisputable role of women in national development. In time past, the significant role

of women in this our contemporary Nigeria especially as its relate to Edo state politics has not been brought to light and following this realization, this research fully intends to undertake further exposition of all the political activities of the Edo state women participation in politics and governance.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine women under-representation in politics and governance in Edo State Nigeria. The specific objective of the study includes:

- i. Elucidate the impact of women activities in Edo state politics and governance.
- ii. Examine the effects of women under-representation in politics and governance in Edo State Nigeria..
- iii. Asses profile of women who were successful in politics and governance in Edo state Nigeria in the Fourth Republic.
- iv. Observed the challenges of women in politics in Edo State.

Scope of Study

The study intends to focus on the women political activities in Edo state Nigeria in the Fourth Republic, 2000 to 2019. The study covers the effects of women under-representation in politics and governance in Edo State Nigeria. In the course of this work, attempt will be made to look at the origin of women in politics in Nigeria. Thereafter, their various socio-political activities of women representation will be reviewed. The work looks into the organization of women in political party, political appointment, and

elective position in Edo state. The instrument used for the aforementioned activities will be highlighted.

Research Methodology

The credibility and authenticity of any research depends on the method employed and the process of gathering, processing and analyzing data. The study has relied on data from both primary and secondary sources.

The primary sources include oral interviews with in the women Leaders of political parties like All Progressive Congress and People Democratic Party women leaders in Edo State. The secondary sources include articles, in journals, book chapters, projects, media sources and online sources. Other secondary sources such as textbooks, journals, seminar paper and monographs are also impact sources. Information obtained from these sources will help to guide and complement the materials obtained from primary sources. These sources provide data for a historical analysis of women participation in politics and governance in Edo state Nigeria.

Literature Review

Not much research has been done on women participation in politics in Edo State. This however cannot be said of Nigeria where there are numbers of works which deal with on the impact of women participation in politics in Nigeria. There is however certain literature that deals on relevant aspect of women impact in Edo state politics, Some of the literatures include:

Ainabor Augustine Eguavuon's, article titled "Patriarchy and the state of Women Participation in Governance in Edo State of Nigeria,"⁵ analyzed the relationship between patriarchy and women participation in the governance of Edo State and found that there is low participation in the state politics and governance on the part of Edo women; that there is discrimination against women in governance in the state, and that patriarchy remains a factor that limits women participation in the governance of Edo State. The implication of the article was that there was need for policy action on the part of the state government to enable more women to be included in the governance of Edo State. The author recommended government policy aimed at allocating political positions to women on quota basis. Also, societal obstacles of patriarchy, custom, religion, tradition and other obnoxious beliefs found to be responsible for low women political participation must be set aside in the State.

In a similar exploration, M O Ehiyamen, work on "Problems and Prospects of Women in Managerial Positions in Edo State Civil Service,"⁶ reappraised the problems and prospects of women in managerial positions in Edo state Civil Service between the 1990-2000. The work revealed gross under representation of women in managerial positions in the state due to several, factors including poor value placed on female education. It has therefore, made appropriate recommendations among which are deliberate granting of access to women to education and career opportunities.

Gabriel Enogholase report in the vanguard newspaper titled "PDP accuses Edo Govt of Blackmailing Market Women for Votes,"⁷ asserts how Peoples Democratic Party

(PDP) accuses the All Progressives Congress (APC) led administration in the state of intimidation and blackmail of market women in the state. Towards the 2019 House of Assembly election in Edo State. He further posits that

The PDP in its statement issued by State Publicity Secretary of the party. Mr Chris Nehikhare said, “Their target this time are the hardworking traders in the markets especially New Benin, Oba Market, Ekiosa Market and Ekiuwa market to mention a few in Benin metropolis. “After financially inducing the APC “Iye-Eki”, market leaders, they deployed them to these markets to threaten, intimidate and harass. The market women are been forced and blackmailed to join an “Apology March” to government house scheduled for Tuesday, March 5, 2019 to beg Adams Oshiomhole and Governor Obaseki for forgiveness.”⁸

Simon Ebegbulem article titled “Edo election: APC, PDP Women Engage in War of Words,”⁹ emphasizes how All Progressives Congress, APC women in Edo state have engaged in a war of words with their Peoples Democratic Party counterparts over an attack on the wife of the APC governorship candidate, Mrs. Betsy Obaseki. He further reiterated how some women leaders of the PDP in the state, led by Mrs. Evelyn Igbafe however misconstrued the interview accusing Mrs. Obaseki of referring to Edo women as prostitutes and vowed that she would never become the first lady of Edo state. He later interrogate that one Mrs. Igbafe of the PDP then went on to issue a seven day ultimatum to Mrs. Obaseki to apologise to Edo women or there will be massive protest on the streets against her. But APC women led by the Woman Leader of the party in the state, Dr Mrs.

Aisosa Amadasun, in her immediate reaction described Mrs. Evelyn Igbafe-Omokhodion of the PDP as a political jobber who cannot be taken serious in the politics of the state.

Issa Aremu in his work titled “Edo: Politicide or Political Renaissance?”¹⁰ identifies how the September poll in Edo state 2020 will either further deepen the slide towards politicicide or political renaissance that will consolidate on the achievements of the last 12 years. Much had been written about how Comrade-Governor, Adams Oshiomhole positively transformed Edo State after his two year long walk to Osadebe Avenue government house in Benin City. Yours sincerely has a number of reflections on Edo political renaissance since Adams Oshimhole joined the political process in 2006 to 2008 when he regained his mandate in a landmark historic unanimous judgment which upheld the petition of the Action Congress, AC, candidate in the 2007 April 14 gubernatorial election in Edo State and subsequently declared Comrade Adams Oshiomhole.

Sariah Omotayo’s, article titled Obaseki canvasses more roles for Women in Politics, Governance,”¹¹ she narrated how the Edo State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki has made a strong case for more roles for women in politics and governance, arguing that a society that doesn’t open up the space for women to contribute to nation building harnesses only half of its potential.

She reiterated how Obaseki made the submission while declaring open the 2018 Annual National Women Conference organised by the Committee of Wives of Lagos State Officials (COWLSO), with the theme, Strengthening Our Collective Impact, held in Lagos State. And that the governor noted that “if only one segment of the society is

allowed to actively participate in politics, the society cannot realise its full potential. Our country stands to benefit a lot more when both segments of the society play active role in political development.”

Oluchi Grace Nwosu’s article titled “The Role of Credible Elections on the Consolidation of Democracy: A Case Study of Anambra State from 2003 – 2006,”¹² examines the link between credible elections and the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria, with focus on the 2003 gubernatorial elections in Anambra state. Specifically, the study evaluated the political and other settings for the 2003 gubernatorial elections in Anambra state. He also elucidates the political, legal, economic and other problems created by the 2003 gubernatorial elections in Anambra State. Utilizing the theory of post colonial state which, focusing on the Nigeria State as a creation of imperialism and as such, has followed a development strategy dictated by the interest of imperialism and its local allies, highlights the inability of the Nigeria State, as it is presently constituted, to mediate political conflicts in form of conducting credible elections, resolving peacefully post-election disputes and above all consolidating democracy in the country.

Esther Stella Taiwo, article “Women Participation in Nigeria Politics Case Study of Lagos Nigeria,”¹³ The author investigates the factors that limit women’s participation in Nigeria’s politics using as a case study, the period between 1999 and 2007, with emphasis on Lagos States. Among these factors are socioeconomic development, the country’s cultural heritage, historical legacies and institutional designs. The study reveals that the patriarchal system and male domination of the society, which relegates women to

subordinate role, has created women's inferiority complex and alienated them from the mainstream politics in Nigeria. The Nigerian political culture of thuggery and gangsterism has made the political terrain too dangerous for most women to venture into mainstream politics.

Okpukpara, Ifeoma Lily's article titled; "*Female Legislators in the Nigerian National Assembly and the Promotion of Policies that Empower Women, (1999-2009)*,"¹⁴ assesses the efforts of the female parliamentarians in promoting issues that border on women empowerment in Nigeria. Specifically the author investigates attempts by the female legislators in initiating bills that enhance women empowerment in Nigeria since 1999. Utilizing the theory of substantive representation which upholds that representation of women through initiating of policies is not a function of numerical strength but hat each individual legislator does, the study transcended the existing inquiries to unveil that female legislators in Nigeria have not been able to play leading role in initiating bills that enhance women empowerment. This study is very useful to the present races especially in chapter three that deals on the participation of women in politics and governance of Fourth Republic in Nigeria.

Oloyede Oluyemi in his work "*Monitoring Participation of Women in Politics in Nigeria*,"¹⁵ is a review of the importance of data in monitoring women participation in politics in Nigeria vis-à-vis the affirmative declaration. He argues that the National Center for Women Development embarked on the collection of a national data on involvement and participation of women in politics in Nigeria from (1999-2015) and that

the one of the objectives of the data collection is to provide a baseline for the implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). The author further identify that it improve evidence based planning and programming involving women in decision making; increase the support of key stakeholders on measures to increase representation of women in decision-making and further improved awareness of new advocacy tools among stakeholders to support the campaign for increased representation of women in decision making in Nigeria.

As a matter of fact, the existing literatures contain a lot of gaps that this study will fill. For instance, the existing literature, though talk about women in politics Nigeria, they fail to examine women participation in politics and governance in Edo state Nigeria. On profile and case study of women in Edo state politics, none of the reviewed work or existing literature examine in detail the various women who have impacted positively to Edo state politics. Therefore, this study will ill in the gaps in the existing knowledge of women in Edo state politics.

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CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF WOMEN IN POLITICS IN EDO STATE

Introduction

Women participation in governance in Nigeria and Edo State in particular, remains a burning issue in nearly every political discourse. For years, it has been obvious that women have been relegated to the background in governance in Nigeria and Edo State in particular.¹ In Edo State of Nigeria, the political arena is not different from other parts of the world where political participation is imbalance in favour of men. Women are rendered nearly invisible and excluded from the political space which is often regarded as the male preserve, thereby depriving the state from benefiting from their potentials and contributions to development.² This chapter examines the history of women participation in politics in Edo State.

The Political Formation of Edo State

Edo State was created in 1991 when Bendel State was split into Edo and Delta States. The state is located in the South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria and occupies a landmass of 19,794 square kilometres.³ The capital city is Benin City, and its commercial cities are Benin, Auchi and Ekpoma. Edo state is made up of three major ethnic groups: namely the Binis, Esan and Afemai. It is bounded in the south by Delta State, in the west by Ondo State, in the north by Kogi State and in the east by Anambra State.⁴ Edo State's three major ethnic groups, the Binis, the Esan and the Afemai occupy Edo South, Edo Central and Edo North Senatorial Districts respectively. The state is also

politically divided into eighteen (18) Local Government Areas. The state has a population of 3,497,502 based on 2006 estimate, and which of course has increased considerably in the past years.⁴

Nature of Women Participation in Politics in Edo State

In an interview with Hon. Omorede Osifo, the current the Deputy National Treasurer of the All Progressives Congress APC, narrated that women in politics in Edo State carry out functions assigned to them by the party. Some are women leaders in their wards, Local Government and State. As women leaders, they are expected to mobilize women, call meetings and also ensure the welfare and empowerment of their women. They are also to ensure that more women run for political offices and get elected into office. We also have women in the Local Government (LGA) as Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Councilors, etc who carry out their assigned functions at the LGA level. “We have women appointed also as Honourable Commissioners, Special Advisers, Special Assistants, etc. These women carry out the functions assigned to them by the State Governor. We also have elected women in positions such as House of Assembly, House of Representatives and Senate. They are responsible for passing laws and carrying out projects that will better the lives of their Constituents.”⁵

In another interview with Mrs. Regina Oviaesu, Former Vice Chairman Oredo Local Government and Former Executive Director Executive Director Edo State Rapid Response Agency. She point that women handle checks and balances during election. Women are more vibrant and active and the role women play in Edo politics is vital,

which they usually used to galvanize and mobilize other women to gathered vote for their interested candidates. She further explain that although people seen women as a non-state actor in politics, but from her own view women are not state actors in Edo politics because of financial constraints and that women are hardly given opportunity to take front role in politics and that the financial burden is much and women hardly part with their hard earned money, but the men are ready to spend their money to get what they want.

Mrs. Oviaesu, further asserts that most times women are victimized and sidelined as a result of the societal cultural values that places women in the home while men have more authority. She also identifies that women also worsen this situation by not helping each other in politics. Women are naturally envious and they are fond of back stabbing each other. However women can be given more roles and opportunities. The reality is that the men after election dictate what the women should have. Most believe that women should not be part of governance. However gender friendly men tend to prefer women in leadership roles. For example our governor, Godwin Obaseki is women friendly; he ensures that women have a role in his government. His wife, Betsy, has always been a crusader for women participation in Edo politics. She works hard to ensure women take up political positions and are involved in government affairs but unfortunately when women get to these positions, they don't follow in this footstep.

She also advances her point that women have done quite a lot and the like of Daisy Danjuma, Elizabeth Ativie, Late Franca Afegbua, have ensured that women find

their proper place in politics. These women have helped a lot of women and been the voice for women and also extended opportunities to other women; these women have contributed to women participation in politics, helped women in empowerment, and ensured that some women have gone back to school and they have done quite a lot in fighting for fellow women right. Look at women's achievement in politics in Edo, women don't pay to collect forms, unlike their male counterparts, this is to encourage women's participation in politics in Edo. As a woman who aspires in politics, you have opportunity to collect forms free of charge. Great women of politics have fought for these rights, in the area of human right, the Daisy Danjuma centre for woman is an establishment where women who are victims of domestic violence and trafficking can get support and this entire are to help women have a good life and have their respect.⁶

Cases of Women in Politics in Edo State since Inception

Since the creation of Edo State, women have not really occupied elective position. Although few of Edo women have been elected in political office within the state government and the federal government. Most of these women witness series of attacked by male folks and other challenges from the political arena.⁷ However, there is need to identify cases of women in politics in Edo State, which is as follow:

Elizabeth Ativie (Former Speaker of Edo State)

Elizabeth Ativie's came into politics in 1999 when she was actively involved in National Youth Council of Nigeria political activities. With her commitment as woman in the NYCN activities she was elected as a time NYCN national president in 1999. At this

point Elizabeth Ativie was eager to further her political carrier, this was what led her to involved in active politics. She registered herself as members of the People Democratic Party (PDP) in 1999 and was actively involved in grass-root politics in her home town and local government (**Uhunmwode Local Government Areas**).⁸

At that time she was involved in party executives politics in Uhunmwode local government areas, and later pick her interest form to run for election as a lawmaker in Edo State House Assembly. Although she witness a lot of political challenges from her male counterpart both within the party and the opposition party.³ She became a law maker in Edo state House of Assembly and later rose to the Speaker of Edo House of Assembly on 9th May 2016.¹⁰

Daisy Ehanire Danjuma Political Achievement

Daisy Ehanire Danjuma was born on the 6th of August 1952 in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. Senator Daisy Ehanire Danjuma is a law graduate of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria with over 40 years of post-call experience. She began her career as a State Counsel in the Lagos State Ministry of Justice (Department of Public Prosecutions) and was a pioneer Legal Counsel to the Legal Aid Council of Nigeria before working for the investment bank Nigerian Acceptances Ltd. (NAL). She spent the next decade as Company Secretary/Legal Adviser to the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) before moving into private practice.¹¹

She is a former Chairman of SAPETRO from 1999 to 2003. In 2003 she was elected Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria where she served on numerous

committees, most notably as Chairman of the ECOWAS Parliament's Women and Children's Rights Committee and Senate Committee Chairman on Women Affairs and Youth Development.¹²

Omosede G. Igbinedion

Igbinedion was born in the early 1980s into the family of The Esama of Benin kingdom. Her father is Chief Gabriel Igbinedion. She attended Igbinedion Education Center, where she sat for the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) in 1998. She attended Cambridge College in the United Kingdom where she acquired her A- Levels and went on to obtain a Bachelor of Law Degree (LL.B.) from University of Kent in 2003. She obtained a master's degree in diplomatic studies from the University of Westminster in 2005. She then returned to Nigeria and attended Nigerian Law School, and was called to the Bar in 2007.¹³

Omosede was elected as the youngest female member into the 8th Assembly of the House of Representatives (Nigeria) in 2015, where she represents the Ovia Federal constituency which consists of Ovia North-East and Ovia South-West Local Government Areas of Edo State under the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). During her term, She was the Deputy Chairman House Services in the House of Representatives and a member of the following committees: Local Content, Aviation, Downstream Petroleum, FCT, Judiciary, Rural Development, Women in Parliament.¹⁴

Mrs. Eki Igbinedion and her Political Life

Mrs. Eki Igbinedion is the President of the Idia Renaissance, a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Edo state. The NGO which also has a youth resource centre was established in 1999 as her pet project when she was the first lady of the state, shortly after her husband, Chief Lucky Igbinedion was sworn in as Governor of the state. The objective of establishing the centre was to fight human trafficking and prostitution which was the prevailing trade among girls from Edo state then. Some of these girls were repatriated back home from Italy where they engaged into prostitution, through her effort. Even after she left office in 2007, she still kept the centre alive.¹⁵

The Idia Renaissance was ten years old last weekend and Saturday Vanguard cornered the former first lady for this interview after she granted ten orphans scholarship just as she also donated ten wheel- chairs and food items to physically challenged persons. Governor Adams Oshiomhole was at the occasion and he commended Mrs Igbinedion for keeping faith with the centre where over four thousand youths have been trained, even after she left office. She told Saturday Vanguard how life has been after being a first lady for eight years.¹⁶

Nature of Women Participation in Edo State Politics

Edo State since the democratic government of the fourth republic in 1999, women have been involved in the state politics. The nature of their participation in Edo politics have be influence by their male counterpart and also the political party they belong.¹⁷

However, historically, women in Edo have involved in the state politics through different processes, this is as follows;

Through Election: since inception of Edo state politics in the fourth republic, women have been oppressed by their male counterpart in elective positive. This can be as a result of the lack of financial capability of the man and the nature and cost of process or gaining a ticket from the respective political party. Meanwhile, there are few women who have gain dominace in their political activities through election process.¹⁸ For instance, Mr. Uyemen Ativie, a former member of the Edo House of Assembly who later rose to the position of a speaker. Others are Dr. Daisy Ehinanire Danjuma, who was a two-time senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and just recently Dr. Omosede Igbenedion who was the immediate pass House Rep Member representing Ovia North East Local Government area of Edo State.¹⁹

Through Appointive Positive: Edo state women have been very active they involve in political appoint when it comes to politics in Edo state and Nigeria at large. These women have impacted positively on the political development of the state and have contributed to governance for the socio-economic and political development of Edo.²⁰ Among these women are Mrs. Ngozi Osahenhen, former Commissioner of Education of Edo State under Gov. Adams Oshomole, who sanitize Edo state educational sector, others are, Former First Lady of Edo State, Mrs. Eki Igbenedion, and Mrs Evelnly Igbafe.²¹

Market Women Association in Politics in Edo State

According to one of the members of the association, Mrs Esohe Omoruyi, asserts that in 2015 election in Nigeria, the association involve actively in the election. The meetings during that period was center on how the association will support any political party and politician that will provide basic amenities in the market, promote women empowerment and ensure there is development in all the markets in Benin. Based on this agreement, the association engages various political parties and politician who seek the association support, the women sell their agenda for supporting or endorsing any politician.²²

With these art, there were a lot of socio-economic development and government presence in Edaiken market, the women were given economic empowerment, stomach infrastructure and donations of pipe-bone water, street light within and around the market, proposal for the construction of a new modern market (which is now implemented by the party in government), giving out soft loans and other socio-economic facilities.²³

However, it should be noted here that women in Edo State politics have been a major challenges for the women. Most those Edo women who succeeded to be election or appointed as a political officer holder are subjected to various political threat and condition, while some were opportune by their political Godfather or biological parent who happened to be involved in active politics.

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CHAPTER THREE

WOMEN IN EDO STATE POLITICS, (1999-2020)

Women activities in Edo state has tremendously contributed to socio-political institutions of the state. There impacts are observed from their active participation in election matters, political parties activities, election contesting, social advocating and collaboration with government personnel for effective participation and representation of women in government.¹ It is in this light that this chapter seeks to examine the role of Edo state women in Edo politics.

Women have been a used by politician and stakeholders in the persecution of election in Edo state. The market women association in Edo state organized themselves politically to support any political office holder who meet their economic interest and sometimes meet their political interest.² The political interest of these women organization was most time gear towards the political ambition of their women leader or any market woman who her husband is a politician.³ During the election period, the ambitious women leader who influenced the women organization to support her or her husband by way of endorsing, campaigning and promoting the political party which her husband represent. Although, the organization sometimes might be hijack by the incumbent or other opposition party especially when prominent officials in the association of the other fraction or political party this most times resulted to conflict and in other occasion it divides the market women into fractions which led to spiritual attacked of both fractions.⁴

However, market women associations in Benin sometimes do support and endorsed a candidate for their personal interests. For instance, Mrs. Susan Adagbonyi narrated how

Uselu market association promotes a political party during the 2016 presidential election due to the construction of the borehole in Uselu market by the party in power.⁵ Also, Mrs. Isoken Igiehon narrated how she and her colleague in Ekioba market women association fought against the imposition of candidate in the association and proffers that the best political party who have worked for the market should be given the endorsement by the association this was successfully carried out in the just concluded 2019 general election.⁶

The Impact of women in Edo State Politics

Since 1999, in the emergence of the first republic market People Democratic Party women have impacted predominantly on the political formation in Edo state. These impacts are as follows;

Women Leader of Political Party: In Edo state, various political parties need women as members to pursue their political objectives in winning election. Most times these objectives can only be championed by a women leader who has numerous followers. In Edo state, women association as a major platform and target for their women members, this led the leaders of the political party to make the chairman of the market women association as the women leader of the political party. They believed that the women leader can influence its members and association to endorse and vote for the party candidate.⁷

Population in the Market; politicians and political parties have seen local market in Edo state as a lucrative place to sell their candidates, this led to them choosing market Women association as a way of penetrating into the entire market.⁸

Voters Enlightenment Campaign; electoral bodies and other observers of election have used market women association to encourage and promote the need for market women and their children to come out and vote during election. The market women association during election is seen as an important association and mechanism used by INEC to provide enlightenment campaign for elections in Edo state. This played itself in the 2019 general election.⁹

Women Empowerment: one of the major way politicians, government officials and constitutional bodies empower women either during election or political reward is through the market women association. For instance, 2013 the house of representative member's represented Ikpoba Okha Federal constituency used to empower women as part of its constituency project through market women association in various market within its constituency.¹⁰

Underrepresentation of Women in Politics in Edo State: A Casual Analysis

Market Women Association has witness a lot challenges hindrance in the participation in Edo state politics. And there is no doubt that women in Nigeria belong to the disadvantaged group in the society when compared to their male counterparts for reasons beyond their making and control.¹⁷ These challenges include the following;

Illiteracy: Education is basic to a person's ability to maximize any opportunity that may arise from development. Education, whether formal or informal constitutes a vital instrument for socio-economic development of any society as well as the upliftment of the individual concerned. Unfortunately, the problem of gender disparity in Nigerians

educational development as is the case of other parts of the world, remains the basic constraint to women development in Nigeria.¹⁸

The importance of literacy and women empowerment in promoting gender equality and the advancement of women was further stressed by the Millennium Development Goals the Education For All (EFA) and Dakar Goals. Access to women educational development programmes, in the words of Kagitabasis, Goksen and Gulgoz is considered one of the main factors for women empowerment and national development.¹⁹ For women to be integrated into development process, they need quality education, in order to become co-partners in national development. The problem of gender imbalance in access to basic education in this country has not been fully addressed going by gender disparities in school enrolments. Preference for male education and anti-women education traces which are still visible in some parts of Nigeria, particularly in the far North contribute to women's less access to basic education. This gender imbalance to access to educational development opportunities has for a long time hindered women's full development of their potentials and consequently affected their contributions to national development.²⁰

Cultures and Tradition: Various cultures and traditions in Nigeria restrict the role of women to domestic activities, such as keeping the home clean, bearing children, cooking food for the entire family members among others. The society as at today sees these roles as less important as they require less extensive formal education for one to be able to perform them. Most cultures and traditions in Nigeria depict male dominance in all

situations and as such females are inferior. These unfortunate belief systems have been a major obstacle to women development in Nigeria and as such constraints to their contribution to national development.²¹

Sex Stereotype: During the period of socialization females are usually trained to believe that there are different roles for males and females as well as the superiority of males over females. Adults also discourage competition between males and females and as such the female feel inferior to the males. Yomi also raised another challenge which he described as the “patrilineal system of descent” in which generations are identified through male off-spring. The responsibility for the preservation and continuity of the “family tree” rests on the male children and special recognition are accorded them than the females in the preparation for their adult roles. These mentality formed from childhood hinders the woman from aspiring to great heights and as such cannot exhibit Gods potentials in their lives and hence cannot contribute enough to the development of the nation.²²

No Sufficient Power: Nigerian women are generally not “aggressive or assertive” enough to seize leadership mantle from their male counterparts. People who lack power drive will find it difficult to assume leadership position. This impediment may be attributed to low self concept on the part of Nigerian women most of whom believe that males are better than them in human endeavors. This notion hinders them from trying to compete with their male counterparts which would have given them the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to national development.²³

Religious Beliefs The different religions in Nigeria have different views as regards the position of women in worldly affairs. Some religions strongly believe that women should only be seen and not heard while some view men as superiors, few others see them as equal. This difference in beliefs adversely affects the way women are treated and opportunities provided to them. As such what they believe in affects their effort towards national development.²⁴

Low Participation of Women in Politics: Women do not often see themselves as viable instruments of political participation and national development. The level of women's participation in politics is still very low in Nigeria. Very few women in Nigeria contest for elective post, rather, they limit their political activities to voting or appointment into political positions. The complacency of women in several aspects of national life not only reduces their capacity for manoeuvre in a male dominated society but also helps in perpetuating the culture of reducing women to positions and roles of second fiddle.²⁵ This was why Agu believed that women see politics as a dirty game, a business which involves intimidation, rigging, assassination, kidnapping of opponents and all sorts of electoral violence which they cannot cope with. This attitude of women may be related to their level of education and poor economic base a situation that hinders them from contributing meaningfully to national development.²⁶

Poor Economic Base Most Nigerian women are poor. This situation may be related to their low level of educational attainment. In business, most women do not often involve themselves in high profile ventures. They prefer instead to engage in petty trading where

the gains and losses are articulated at the end of each day. The access of women to finance is so minimal that woman is generally disadvantaged in terms of economic stability and independence. With poor economic base of most women their contribution to national development will be less substantial.²⁶

Conclusion

It should be noted here that women participation in Nigerian politics has been an issue of great importance. Women have been put at the background politically for years; this has engendered a consciousness of women under-representation in public life. This is their substantive responsibility and it is even on this platform that most women emerge as public office holders successfully. They use the platform of women movement as a veritable platform to seize political power and consolidate the power on this same platform. Be as it may, there is an increase in women participation on these bases and women movements are promising in achieving gender equality and equity. Meanwhile, one should note here that Edo state women over the years has been a voice for women in Nigeria, the association of women in Edo state has contributed to women plight and also promote the development of Edo economy, especially in women empowerment, providing and drawing government attention to facilities in the market and other socio-economic and political importance of the state.

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CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

With the attainment of independence, the influence of women grew and they sort for gender equality and inclusiveness in all spheres of the society there by promoting the

feminist term that have been dormant the previous eras. The Beijing Conference of 1975 promoted the notion of gender equality and gender balancing in the society. Post-colonial Africa has seen the emergence of great women who have in one way or the other contributed to nation building and growth of African and Nigerian affluence in the world scene . The idea of great personalities can never be overemphasized following the fact that they are persons who left an indelible mark in history. Chapter one examined the introduction of the study, which capture aim and objectives, literature review, methodology and scope of the study. Chapter two of the study elucidated the manifestations and impact of women activities in Edo state politics and governance. Chapter three revealed the effects of women under-representation in politics and governance in Edo State Nigeria and an assessment of the profile of women who were successful in politics and governance in Edo state Nigeria in the Fourth Republic and it also observed the various challenges faced by women in politics in Edo State.

Conclusion

This chapter as stated above, will concerns with summary of the findings of the entire research and make conclusions based on the findings. This research is aimed at finding out the impact women Participation in Politics and Governance in Edo State

Nigeria, with particular reference to Benin City. For proper understanding of the problem of study, historical method was adopted.

In treating this problem as assumption was made that women in Benin City have been involved in the politics of Edo state, this can be seen from the point that they form the political structure which politicians and the electoral body used to sensitize the entire public particularly rural women for full participation of politics in Edo. To justify this assumption, relevant literature and other related documents were reviewed and analyzed and the result shows that the women association have a well structure and organize socio-political mechanism which they use to control their members and by so doing there tend to be a strong followership within the women in the association and entire women in the market.

The study carryout an in-depth analysis on the historical background of the women political activities in Edo state Nigeria in the Fourth Republic, 2000 to 2019. Meanwhile, before looking at the above subject matter there was need to appraise the antecedence of women in politics in Nigeria.

It is observable from the discussion in this study that despite the marginalization of women in politics, women in Edo state have been very active in the election and political activities of the state. And that many women attributed their interest in politics to the desire to help their Association. Others, based on their reputations as community activists, were urged by their people to become involved in politics.⁴ Those who help politician to win elections looked forward eagerly to engaging the political system as

their people's representatives and were confident that they would make a difference. Those who their politician lost through what they believed were machinations, rigging, intimidation, and other unfair practices largely said that they were disillusioned with politics and the political process, but some were determined to fight for the mandate that they claimed was snatched from them.

The study also interrogated the women association activities and also talks about their contributions towards the development of the election, and promoting good governance and also their member's welfare the general impact of the association to the economic wellbeing of Edo state. The women association in the past contributed to their societal development and has continued to do so. However, despite the fact that they have continued to be relegated to the background by the government in power, the women with their little contributions provide certain basic amenities to the society, give members some incentives, promote peace and harmony within the areas of their political party they belong, provide security services for women right and promote women and cooperative association policies in the government.

During election period in Nigeria, Edo state women involve actively in the election. The meetings during that period was center on how the association will support any political party and politician that will provide basic amenities in the societies, promote women empowerment and ensure there was development in all the markets in Edo state. Based on this agreement, the women engage in various political parties and

politician who seek the association support, the women sell their agenda for supporting or endorsing any politician.

Based on the main trust of the study, It should be noted here, that women over the years has been a voice for women in Edo state, women political parties in Edo state has contributed to women plight and also promote the development of Edo economy, especially in women empowerment, providing and drawing government attention to facilities in the market and ensuring morality among women in the market.

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West-Erhabor Pat	55yrs	PDP South Senatorial Woman Leader	Benin City	6 th /08/2023
Osifo Omorede	57yrs	Deputy National Treasurer of APC	Benin City	8 th /08/2023
Oviaesu Regina	64yrs	Executive Director Edo Rapid Response Agency	Benin City	6 th /09/2023
Omorodion, Patience.	50yrs,	Trader,	Edaiken, Market,	12 th /08/2023
Omoruyi Esohe	43yrs	Trader	Benin City	16 th /07/2023

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