

**GENDER BIAS AND LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATION IN NIGERIA: AN
ASSESSMENT OF THE TENTH SENATE**



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SSC2208631

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

BENIN CITY.

JUNE, 2026.

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**BEING A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF
BENIN, BENIN CITY. IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.SC) DEGREE IN
POLITICAL SCIENCE**

JUNE, 2026.

DECLARATION

I, **OSEMUDIAMEN Becky Onosetale** declare that,

- i. This study is based on a study undertaken by me in the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, under the supervision of **Mr. R.I. OMOREGIE** of the Department of Political Science, Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.
- ii. This work has not been submitted for the award of degree elsewhere.
- iii. Ideas and views are product of my personal research and where the view of others has been expressed, they have been duly acknowledged.
- iv. Any liability arising from this work is to be wholly borne by me alone

Osemudiamen Becky Onosetale

SSC2208631

Date

CERTIFICATION

We, certify that this research project was carried out by **OSEMUDIAMEN Becky Onosetale** in the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. It is adequate in scope and quality in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science (BSc.) degree in Political Science.

Mr. R.I. OMOREGIE
(Project Supervisor)

Date

Dr. G. O. IGIEBOR
(Ag. Head of Department)

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to God almighty for His grace, wisdom, provision and sustenance throughout the course of my academic journey.

I also dedicate this project to my beloved mother, Mrs. Edeghonghon Osemudiamen Izebu, who believed, backed and supported my ambitions to thrive.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am most grateful to God almighty for making this great achievement possible. Indeed, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

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My special appreciation goes to friends who made my academic years remarkable and worthwhile. To Maryjoyce Ehizokhale, Patrick Blessing and especially Obire Ogaga, whose support and encouragement has been indispensable to my academic success.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined gender bias and legislative representation in Nigeria, with particular focus on the Tenth Senate, using the experiences of Senate President Godswill Akpabio and Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan as a case study. The study sought to determine how party-level discrimination, media bias, financial discrimination, and political violence influence women's legislative representation and participation in Nigeria. The study adopted a quantitative survey research design supported by qualitative insights and an ex-post facto approach. The population comprised the 109 members of the Tenth Senate, from which a sample size of 52 respondents was determined using Taro Yamane's formula. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and relevant secondary sources, including National Assembly records, scholarly publications, and media reports. Descriptive statistics, multiple regression analysis, and thematic analysis were used to analyze the data with the aid of SPSS/STATA. The findings revealed that gender bias remains a significant barrier to women's legislative representation in Nigeria. Party-level discrimination, financial constraints, media bias, and political violence continue to hinder women's access to elective positions and limit their effectiveness within legislative institutions. The study further found that the experiences of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, including her committee reassignment, suspension, and interactions with Senate leadership, generated widespread debate on institutional fairness, gender equality, and women's representation in the Tenth Senate. The study concluded that increasing the number of women in legislative offices alone is insufficient without addressing the structural and institutional barriers that limit their participation and influence. It therefore recommended reforms in political party nomination processes, improved access to campaign finance, stronger protection against political violence, and the promotion of gender-sensitive policies to enhance women's legislative representation in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Gender bias, legislative representation, Tenth Senate, women in politics, Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, Godswill Akpabio, Nigeria.*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Democratic governance is founded on the premise of political participation and representation, which guarantees the expression of various social groups' interests, values, and views within legislative and executive branches of government. Worldwide, substantial strides have been taken towards enhancing gender equality within the realm of political participation, with the Beijing Platform for Action and Sustainable Development Goal 5 emphasizing equal political representation and leadership for women. Nonetheless, there is still a substantial gap between the levels of female participation and their actual representation within legislative branches of government worldwide. Recent statistics obtained from the Inter-Parliamentary Union indicate that, on average, 26-27 percent of parliamentary positions worldwide are held by women, indicating a substantial gap between legislative representation for both male and female members of parliament (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2024). Sub-Saharan Africa has seen divergent levels of success within legislative branches of government, with some countries such as Rwanda and South Africa showing significant success in implementing gender quotas, thereby increasing the parliamentary representation of women within legislative branches of government by 40-60 percent (International IDEA, 2023). On the other hand, Nigeria, which is the largest

democracy on the African continent by population, has continued to show divergent levels of gender imbalance within legislative branches of government. According to statistics obtained from the National Bureau of Statistics (2023), women account for nearly half of the Nigerian population; however, the 2023 general elections saw only 4 percent of members of the House of Representatives and 3-4 percent of senators being women, with only four female senators out of 109 senators, placing Nigeria on the lower end of the spectrum of Sub-Saharan African countries (Solomon & Arum, 2025).

This can be seen in the composition of the Tenth Senate, which spanned between 2023 and 2027. The leadership positions, such as Senate Presidency, committee chairpersons, and party leaders, are largely held by males, while female representatives are largely underrepresented. This has a profound impact on their ability to access critical decision-making positions and ultimately on the legislative powers of female representatives (Yusuf, Alabi & Fagbadebo, 2025). The juxtaposition of Senate President Godswill Akpabio and female senators, such as Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, presents an interesting study on how gender bias influences both the distribution of power and legislative representation in Nigeria's Senate. Gender bias in Nigeria's politics is multifaceted and has both structural, institutional, and socio-cultural dimensions. Four major components have been identified as critical dimensions of gender bias that impact female representation in Nigeria's politics. These include party-level discrimination, media bias, financial discrimination, and political violence. Party-level discrimination refers to female representatives' limited access to

nomination forms, winnable constituencies, and leadership positions in political parties. Studies indicate that female representatives are largely underrepresented and disadvantaged by patronage networks dominated by male elites (Afolabi & Arowolo, 2022; Kartay, 2025).

The media's biased reporting influences how people perceive things. Women in politics in Nigeria are usually depicted in a manner that focuses on their personal characteristics, marital status, or emotional characteristics instead of their abilities. This makes people believe that politics is a game for men (Okunna, 2021; Apata & Adelabu, 2020). Another issue is financial discrimination. Campaigns in politics are expensive affairs. Women are less likely to access funds for their campaigns because they usually do not have access to wealth, political sponsorships, and funding mechanisms (International IDEA, 2023; Solomon & Arum, 2025).

Political violence, intimidation, harassment, and gender-specific attacks all contribute to a hostile environment that deters female participation in elections and in the overall process of legislation in the country. The elections that have been conducted in the country in recent times indicate that political violence is gender-specific, and female politicians are subjected to online harassment, verbal attacks, and threats to personal safety, all of which impact the level and outcome of elections (Onapajo & Babalola, 2020; Ejiofor & Udo, 2024). In this case, the experiences of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan are a clear manifestation of the hurdles that female politicians are likely to face in dealing with structural and socio-cultural

impediments, while the political journey and experiences of Senate President Akpabio are a clear manifestation of how male politicians in the country's legislature operate and how they are likely to impact and influence the outcome in the country's legislature. This study, therefore, seeks to analyze gender bias and legislation in the Tenth Senate, with a specific focus on the experiences and operations of Senate President Akpabio and Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan in the country's legislature.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the constitutional provision on the principle of equality under the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, women have continued to face numerous challenges in the bid for elective positions. Although Nigeria is a signatory to international agreements advocating for gender equality, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the number of female legislators remains lower than the international and regional averages. In the world over, women hold about 26–27 percent of parliamentary positions, but in Nigeria, despite the successful general elections held in 2023, the number of female legislators in the House of Representatives stood at only 4 percent, while the number of female Senators stood at only 3–4 percent. This represents a huge gap in the representation of the female gender (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2024; Solomon & Arum, 2025).

Various researchers have sought to identify the underlying factors that have contributed to the poor representation of the female gender. Afolabi and Arowolo (2022) argue that the internal mechanism of the political parties in Nigeria is patriarchal. These parties have been described as gatekeepers that have marginalized the female gender, limiting their access to winnable positions. In addition, the role of the media has also been identified as one of the underlying factors that have contributed to the poor representation of the female gender. The female legislators have been described as being portrayed on the basis of personal attributes, marital status, and physical looks rather than their competence (Okunna, 2021; Apata & Adelabu, 2020).

Another factor is financial discrimination. According to International IDEA (2023), female politicians in Nigeria are not able to access political finance networks and patronages, which are readily available to their male counterparts. This has made it difficult for female politicians to participate effectively in politics, as they are at a disadvantage compared to their male counterparts. Political violence is also an additional challenge that female politicians face. According to Onapajo and Babalola (2020), female politicians in Nigeria are subjected to intimidation and harassment during elections, which has made it difficult for them to participate effectively in politics. Though literature has helped to understand these different factors and how they affect female politicians, it has mainly concentrated on analyzing each factor separately without considering their combined effects on female politicians. There is limited literature that has used the experiences of female politicians in

Nigeria's Fourth Republic to investigate how these different factors combine and affect female politicians. This study is therefore an exception because it focuses on female politicians and legislators in Nigeria's Tenth Senate and how they have been affected by these different factors. This study has used a comparative case study design and has focused on Senate President Godswill Akpabio and Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan. While Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan's political life has been a reflection of the challenges female politicians face, Senate President Godswill Akpabio's political life has been a reflection of how male politicians have benefited from these different factors. The problem, therefore, is how these different factors, such as party-level discrimination, media bias, financial inequality, and political violence, have combined to affect female politicians and legislators in Nigeria's legislative politics, and how they can be better understood by using an integrated case study design.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine gender bias and legislative representation in Nigeria, focusing on the experiences of female and male legislators in the Tenth Senate.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Examine the extent to which party-level discrimination affects female political representation in the Tenth Senate.

2. Analyze the influence of media bias on public perception of female legislators.
3. Assess the impact of financial discrimination on women's electoral competitiveness and legislative effectiveness.
4. Investigate the effect of political violence on female legislators' engagement and retention.

1.4 Research Question

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent does party-level discrimination affect women's legislative representation in the Tenth Senate?
2. How does media bias influence public perception and legitimacy of female senators in Nigeria?
3. What role does financial discrimination play in limiting the electoral competitiveness of women in Nigeria?
4. How does political violence impact women's engagement and retention in legislative positions?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The study will test the following null hypotheses:

H₀₁: Party-level discrimination has no significant effect on women's legislative representation in the Tenth Senate.

H₀₂: Media bias has no significant influence on public perception and legitimacy of female senators in Nigeria.

H₀₃: Financial discrimination has no significant effect on women's electoral competitiveness and legislative effectiveness.

H₀₄: Political violence has no significant impact on female legislators' engagement and retention.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of the contributions of the present study to the understanding of the phenomenon of gender bias in Nigeria, specifically in the context of the Tenth Senate of Nigeria, should not be overlooked. The present study contributes to the understanding of the phenomenon of gender bias in Nigeria, specifically in the context of the Tenth Senate of Nigeria, by exploring the critical aspects of gender bias in Nigeria, such as the role of party-level discrimination, the role of the media in the phenomenon of gender bias in Nigeria, the

role of financial discrimination in the phenomenon of gender bias in Nigeria, and the role of political violence in the phenomenon of gender bias in Nigeria. The present study also contributes to the understanding of the phenomenon of gender bias in Nigeria by specifically exploring the role of the phenomenon of gender bias in the political career of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan in Nigeria, as well as the role of the phenomenon of gender bias in the political career of Senate President Godswill Akpabio in Nigeria. The findings of the present study can be extremely beneficial to the government of Nigeria, as it can guide the development of policies to promote the political participation of females in Nigeria (International IDEA, 2023; Solomon & Arum, 2025).

The political parties and their leadership stand to gain from the research as well. This is because the research sheds light on various practices within political parties that affect female aspirants in a negative manner. By understanding these practices, political parties can be motivated to make changes that support female candidature, implement quota systems within their parties, and reduce discriminatory practices against female aspirants (Afolabi & Arowolo, 2022).

Civil society organizations, advocacy groups, and election management bodies such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) can use the research to create awareness and develop strategies that support female candidates and make the political environment safer for them. By eliminating financial, structural, and violent barriers to

female political participation, these strategies can greatly contribute to enhancing female participation in Nigeria's democratic process and overall quality and integrity of Nigeria's democracy (Onapajo & Babalola, 2020; Yusuf et al., 2025).

Finally, the research contributes to the wider world of academia. It provides a valuable case study of a prominent female politician's political journey. It bridges the gap between individual experiences and structural issues in society. It can prove useful to political scientists, researchers, and students of gender studies and political representation and democracy. By linking individual experiences to structural issues, the research provides a template for other researchers to conduct studies on gender bias in Nigeria's democracy and other similar contexts.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study is centered on gender bias and its impact on legislative representation in Nigeria, with a specific focus on the Tenth Senate. It seeks to explore how factors such as party-level discrimination, media bias, financial discrimination, and political violence contribute to or impact gender bias in the political process. This study is based on a comparative case study research design, where the political process and experiences of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan are analyzed and explored, in addition to those of Senate President Godswill Akpabio. This is aimed at providing a deeper understanding and analysis of gender bias in comparison to the political experiences and trajectories of males in the same political

environment. This study is geographically centered on the political processes in Nigeria, with a specific focus on the experiences in the Tenth Senate (2023–2027), with a specific focus on the electoral and legislative processes in Nigeria. The temporal scope is centered on the Fourth Republic, with a specific focus on the current political process and recent trends in gender bias and its impact on representation in Nigeria.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

- **Gender Bias:** Systemic attitudes, structural barriers, and discriminatory practices within the political system that disproportionately disadvantage women and affect their access to legislative positions and political influence (Afolabi & Arowolo, 2022).
- **Party-Level Discrimination:** The unequal treatment and marginalization of female political aspirants within political party structures, including restrictions in nominations, leadership roles, and access to party resources, which limit women's opportunities to compete effectively (International IDEA, 2023).
- **Media Bias:** Gendered representation in news reporting and political coverage that portrays female legislators in terms of personal attributes, appearance, marital status, or emotions, rather than their competence, legislative performance, or policy agenda (Apata & Adelabu, 2020).

- **Financial Discrimination:** Unequal access to campaign finance, political sponsorship, and economic networks necessary for competitive participation in legislative elections, which disproportionately affects female politicians compared to their male counterparts (Solomon & Arum, 2025).
- **Political Violence:** Threats, intimidation, harassment, and other acts of physical or psychological harm directed at political actors—particularly female legislators—which constrain participation, retention, and effectiveness in the political sphere (Onapajo & Babalola, 2020).
- **Political Representation:** The extent to which elected officials, including women and men, are able to participate in legislative processes, influence governance, and effectively represent the interests and values of their constituents in the Tenth Senate (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2024).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews scholarly arguments, theoretical frameworks, and empirical findings on gender bias and legislative representation in Nigeria, with particular focus on socio-cultural bias, party nomination discrimination, media bias, political intimidation, institutional gender bias, financial discrimination, and political violence. The literature provides a foundation for understanding how these factors shape women's participation and influence within legislative institutions. The chapter situates the experiences of female legislators, such as Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, alongside male counterparts like Senate President Akpabio, within the broader context of Nigeria's Tenth Senate, highlighting the structural and societal challenges that affect gender equity in legislative representation.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

2.2.1 Legislative Representation

Legislative representation is defined as the existence, participation, and influence of legislative officials within legislative institutions. This is a measure of the extent to which various social groups, including women, the youth, and minority groups, are represented within legislative institutions and the ability of the representatives to articulate the interests

of their constituents within the larger governance framework. According to the political science literature, the representation of various groups within the larger democratic framework is normally analyzed through the lens of two major concepts, namely descriptive representation and substantive representation (Krook & Zetterberg, 2021).

In the democratic system of governance, the existence of legislative representation is normally viewed as a fundamental aspect of the democratic system, given the fact that legislative institutions need to be representative of the larger society in order to ensure that the issues of the marginalized groups within society are adequately addressed. According to the UN Women (2023), the existence of women within legislative institutions is likely to ensure that the issues of women, including health, education, and equality, are adequately addressed within the policy framework. This has, therefore, made the participation of women within legislative institutions a measure of democratic inclusiveness and equality between the genders.

Nevertheless, despite these democratic values, there is still an underrepresentation of women in legislative institutions across various parts of the world. In terms of global legislative institutions, it has been observed that, over time, there has been an increase in the percentage of women's participation in legislative bodies across the world. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, as of 2024, it has been recorded that, on average, 26.5% of parliamentary seats across the world are occupied by women, which is an increase from

24.9% recorded in 2020. Although it is important to acknowledge this positive trend, it is also important to note that there is still a gap between males and females in terms of their representation in legislative bodies. In comparison, it has been observed that, over time, various countries have made notable improvements through institutional reforms regarding legislative bodies. In this regard, it has been recorded that, currently, Rwanda has recorded the highest level of female representation in parliamentary bodies across the world. In this regard, it has been recorded that, after the 2023 elections, over 60% of seats in the lower chamber of the parliament of Rwanda have been occupied by women. Similarly, it has been recorded that, through institutional reforms, countries such as South Africa and Senegal have included gender quota systems in their political parties, which has resulted in higher levels of female representation, over 40% and 45%, respectively, in their legislative bodies, as recorded by the International IDEA, 2023. In contrast, Nigeria has recorded one of the lowest levels of female legislative representation. In this regard, it has been recorded that, despite nearly half of Nigeria's population comprising females, their participation is extremely low in legislative bodies. According to data recorded after the 2023 elections, it has been recorded that, out of 109 senators, only 4 have been elected as representatives from Nigeria. Similarly, it has been recorded that 17 representatives have been elected to the House of Representatives, out of 360 positions. In this regard, it has been recorded that, currently, women comprise less than 5% of members of the National Assembly, which is

considered to be the lowest ranking legislative institution globally, according to Solomon and Arum, 2025.

This low level of representation is further underscored when such results are compared with other African democracies. For instance, other African democracies such as Namibia, Mozambique, and Ethiopia show female parliamentary representation rates ranging from 30% to 40%, largely due to the implementation of gender inclusion policies and higher institutional support for women's participation (African Development Bank, 2023). Therefore, the low rates of female parliamentary representation in Nigeria underscore the need for structural barriers to women's legislative power to be addressed.

Several factors have been identified as contributing to the low female parliamentary representation in Nigeria's legislative institutions. These include socio-cultural factors such as women's low participation in politics, nomination and campaign finance issues, as well as the role of the media and the use of intimidation and violence in the electoral process (Okolie & Okafor, 2022; International IDEA, 2023). These factors create a structurally uneven playing field for women's participation in the country's politics and legislative processes. The country's political processes are also characterized by competitive and expensive processes, factors that are largely in favor of those with higher and stronger political networks and resources (Afolabi & Arowolo, 2022). Therefore, women's low access to such networks and resources compared to their male counterparts makes it difficult

for female politicians to ascend to higher positions in the country's hierarchy despite their qualifications and leadership ability.

2.2.1.1 Socio-Cultural Bias Against Women in Legislative Politics

Socio-cultural bias, on the other hand, refers to the attitudes, beliefs, and norms that shape perceptions of gender roles and leadership in society. These perceptions, which have been socially constructed, have also determined the types of people who are considered appropriate for political leadership. In most traditional societies, political leadership and authority have always been equated with masculine roles such as dominance, assertiveness, and control. Women, on the other hand, have always been expected to take up roles that involve domestic responsibilities. These perceptions have had an impact on the political behavior of the population, particularly in the voting patterns for women politicians. Socio-cultural perceptions have had an impact on the political behavior of the population, particularly in the voting patterns for women politicians. In most parts of the world, the political participation of women has been shaped by socio-cultural perceptions. Despite the progress that has been made towards the achievement of gender equality in political leadership, the cultural perceptions that have been generated over the years have had an impact on the acceptance of women politicians.

According to the United Nations Women, surveys conducted globally have shown that the political behavior of the population in several developing countries, particularly in Africa,

shows that the population still harbors some level of preference for men politicians. In Nigeria, the political behavior of the population, particularly in the voting patterns for women politicians, has been shaped by the socio-cultural perceptions that have been generated over the years. Nigeria is still largely controlled by patriarchal perceptions, which have also determined the political behavior of the population. In Nigeria, the traditional roles that have been played by men have always been the ones that involve political roles, while women have always been expected to take up domestic roles. These perceptions have also led to the discouragement of women from engaging in political roles, as they have also been perceived to be roles that have been dominated by men.

The statistical data reveals the impact of socio-cultural factors on women's political participation in Nigeria. According to a political participation survey conducted across various states, 30% of respondents cited traditional gender roles and cultural factors as major barriers to women's political participation, as per the survey findings by the International IDEA study, 2023. Furthermore, public opinion polls have revealed that a considerable percentage of voters perceive politics as dominated by males, which impacts their voting decisions for female candidates. In comparison with other African countries, Nigeria's socio-cultural factors have impacted the political participation of women, especially regarding their representation. For instance, other African countries, such as Rwanda and South Africa, have been successful in achieving higher levels of political representation by women, which is attributed to changes in cultural attitudes towards

women's participation in politics. In other words, cultural attitudes towards women's participation have gradually improved over time, leading to higher levels of political representation by women. In Rwanda, for instance, over 60% of parliamentary seats are currently occupied by women, whereas over 40% seats in South Africa's parliament are currently occupied by women, as per the Inter-Parliamentary Union study, 2024. In contrast, Nigeria's legislative representation by women is less than 5%, which is attributed to various factors, including cultural attitudes.

Moreover, socio-cultural bias is also reflected in the assessment of female politicians in the wider public domain. Women in politics are sometimes under a higher level of scrutiny with regard to their personal lives, marital status, and moral character, as compared to their male counterparts. In the wider media and the general public, the personal attributes of female politicians are given a higher level of emphasis, which is a reflection of the stereotyping that undermines the role of female leadership (Okunna, 2021). In this context, it is necessary to highlight that female politicians are not only required to compete in the political arena but also with the wider societal perception of their compliance with traditional gender roles. Socio-cultural factors may also influence women not to seek political positions because of the fear of being criticized socially or due to family pressure. According to research findings on the political ambition of women in Nigeria, many women have the qualifications and leadership potential to vie for political positions, but they lack the courage to do so because

of cultural stigmatization and the view that politics is not a female role (Adamu, 2024). This implies that there is a reduction in the number of women candidates for legislative positions.

2.2.1.2 Party Nomination Discrimination Against Female Legislative Aspirants

As such, political parties have an important role to play in the determination of who gets to hold an elective position. As the gatekeepers of the democratic electoral process, political parties have the power to determine who gets to fly their flag in the electoral process. As such, discriminatory practices that exist in political parties have an important bearing on the chances of women accessing legislative positions. For instance, political parties that have systems characterized by elite dominance tend to have gender inequalities that deny women the chance to compete for legislative positions. According to Afolabi & Arowolo (2022), political parties that have systems characterized by elite dominance have gender inequalities that deny women the chance to compete for legislative positions. As such, the chances of women accessing legislative positions in Nigeria depend on the nature of the political parties that exist in the country. For instance, the nomination process for legislative positions in Nigeria is characterized by political networks, patronage, and elite bargaining, which have been dominated by male politicians. As such, the chances of women accessing legislative positions through the political parties have been affected.

For instance, studies on political parties in Nigeria have shown that men have better chances of accessing legislative positions than women. For instance, men have better chances of

accessing the Senate and the House of Representatives than women. According to Kartay (2025), men have better chances of accessing the Senate and the House of Representatives than women. Men have better chances of accessing the Senate and the House of Representatives than women because they have the support of political godfathers, who have the power to decide the outcome of the primary elections. On the other hand, women have difficulties in accessing the Senate and the House of Representatives than men. According to Kartay (2025), women have difficulties in accessing the Senate and the House of Representatives than men. Women have difficulties in accessing the Senate and the House of Representatives than men because they lack the support of political godfathers, who have the power to decide the outcome of the primary elections. For instance, the 2023 general elections had less than 10% of women nominated for legislative positions despite the fact that they constitute almost half of the Nigerian population. As such, only four women were elected into the Senate, while seventeen women were elected into the House of Representatives, which is less than 5% of the National Assembly.

Another major challenge that has been inherent in the nomination systems is the high cost of nomination forms and primary elections. Major political parties in Nigeria have over the years been known to charge high nomination fees for legislative aspirants, which run into millions of naira. In 2023, for instance, it was reported that nomination forms for the Senate aspirants were going for several million naira in some major political parties. This has been a major challenge, especially since it has discouraged many interested women from

participating in the primary elections. Although some political parties have over the years made attempts to offer discounted or free nomination forms to interested female aspirants, this has had little impact, especially since other barriers still exist, such as mobilizing delegates, campaign costs, and lack of patronage networks for women candidates (Political Party Gender Report, 2024; Solomon & Arum, 2025).

In addition, the leadership structure of political parties in Nigeria is dominated by males, which has had an impact on the bargaining power of women. According to research findings on the composition of leadership structures in political parties, it is evident that women hold less than 15% leadership positions in major political parties in Nigeria, including key leadership positions such as chairpersons, state executives, and key decision-making organs (Political Party Gender Report, 2024).

Comparative experiences from other African democracies reveal that changes to the party system can significantly improve women's representation in the legislature. To illustrate this, South Africa has implemented voluntary party quotas, which require political parties to ensure that a significant percentage of their candidate lists comprises women. This has led to women holding more than 40% of the seats in the South African Parliament. In a similar trend, Senegal has implemented a legislated quota system, which requires political parties to ensure a balanced number of women and men on electoral lists. This has also led to women holding more than 40% of the seats in the national legislature (Inter-Parliamentary Union,

2024; International IDEA, 2023). However, unlike other democracies, Nigeria has failed to implement any gender quota laws within its electoral system or party system. This has led to a discretionary process in selecting candidates, with the process being largely influenced by the party's internal politics, favoring male candidates.

2.2.1.3 Media Bias Against Female Politicians

The media plays an important role in shaping public perception of political candidates and influencing voter attitudes during elections. Through news coverage, political commentary, and campaign reporting, media institutions contribute significantly to the formation of political narratives within democratic societies. However, gender bias in media coverage often affects how female politicians are portrayed compared to their male counterparts (Byerly & Ross, 2020). Research indicates that female politicians frequently receive less media coverage than male candidates during election campaigns. When women do receive media attention, the coverage often focuses on their personal lives, appearance, marital status, or emotional traits rather than their political competence and policy positions (Okunna, 2021). Such gendered framing can undermine the credibility of female candidates and influence voter perceptions of their leadership abilities.

Media monitoring reports during the 2023 Nigerian general elections revealed that female candidates received less than one-quarter of total political news coverage, while male candidates dominated the majority of media attention. This imbalance in media

representation contributes to the marginalization of women in political discourse and reduces their visibility among voters (Media Monitoring Report, 2025). Comparative research across African democracies shows that countries with gender-sensitive media guidelines have made progress in reducing gender bias in political reporting. In South Africa and Kenya, for example, media organizations have adopted editorial guidelines that encourage balanced representation of male and female political candidates. These initiatives have improved the visibility of women in politics and contributed to increased female participation in elections (Juma, 2023). In Nigeria, however, gender-sensitive media practices remain limited, and female politicians continue to face biased portrayals in political reporting. This media bias can negatively affect electoral competitiveness and reinforce societal stereotypes about women's leadership capabilities.

2.2.1.4 Political Intimidation of Female Politicians

Political intimidation refers to actions intended to discourage individuals from participating in political activities through threats, harassment, or hostile behavior. In many political environments, intimidation can take the form of verbal abuse, social harassment, or psychological pressure designed to undermine political opponents (O'Neil & Domingo, 2020). Women in politics are often particularly vulnerable to gender-based forms of intimidation. Female candidates frequently experience harassment that targets their gender,

reputation, or personal life. These tactics are often used to discourage women from contesting elections or participating actively in political processes.

Empirical studies in Nigeria have documented numerous instances where female political aspirants experienced hostile political environments during election campaigns. Research by Ejiofor and Udo (2024) revealed that many female candidates reported receiving threats, gender-based insults, and social intimidation during campaign periods. These experiences not only affect the psychological well-being of female politicians but also discourage volunteers, donors, and supporters from participating in their campaigns. Political intimidation can therefore significantly reduce women's willingness to participate in legislative politics. When political environments become hostile or unsafe, many qualified female aspirants may choose not to contest elections or withdraw from political competition altogether. As a result, political intimidation remains a critical obstacle to achieving gender equality in legislative representation.

2.3 Gender Bias in Nigerian Politics

Gender bias in politics can be described as the discriminatory behavior, practices, and structures that have negative impacts on people based on their gender in political systems. Gender bias can occur through political structures, party systems, campaign finance systems, and social behaviors that produce unequal opportunities for men and women in the political environment (Krook, 2020). Gender bias is deeply rooted in the political structures and party

systems of Nigeria. Although the Nigerian Constitution provides for equal political rights and opportunities for all persons irrespective of their gender, the reality of political participation is characterized by inequalities that are detrimental to women. Women make up close to 49% of the Nigerian population, but their presence in political offices is remarkably lower than that of men (National Bureau of Statistics, 2024). For example, after the 2023 general elections, women won only 4 out of 109 seats in the Senate and 17 out of 360 seats in the House of Representatives, which is less than 5% of the National Assembly. This makes Nigeria one of the countries with the lowest percentage of female legislative representation in Africa (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2024).

Some African countries have made remarkable progress in enhancing the representation of women in politics. For example, the country of Rwanda has one of the highest rates of women's representation in the world, with more than 60% of the positions in the country's parliament occupied by women. In addition, South Africa and Senegal have registered impressive rates of female representation in their respective parliaments, with more than 40% of the positions in the country's parliament occupied by women (International IDEA, 2023). On the other hand, the Nigerian political system continues to be characterized by barriers that inhibit the representation of women in the country's politics. For example, the Nigerian political system is characterized by discrimination against women in the country's politics. This discrimination is further enhanced by the fact that the country's political parties are male-dominated. In addition, the country's political environment is hostile to the

participation of women in the country's politics. These factors act as barriers that inhibit the representation of women in the country's politics. Studies undertaken to analyze the rate of political participation in Nigeria indicate that the country's female political aspirants are subjected to more scrutiny compared to their male counterparts (Tripp, 2022; Solomon & Arum, 2025).

The gender bias in the Nigerian political system is further enhanced by the fact that the country's politics is male-dominated. This perception of the Nigerian political environment acts as a barrier to the representation of women in the country's politics. This perception of the Nigerian political environment inhibits the representation of women in the country's politics because it discourages women from vying for positions in the country's parliament. Therefore, understanding the gender bias in the Nigerian political system is critical in analyzing the challenges facing the country's women in their legislative representation and the overall implications for the country's democratic governance.

2.3.1 Institutional Gender Bias in Legislative Politics

Institutional gender bias is the practices or systems in political institutions that indirectly affect women in a way that is not favorable to their full participation in the political process. This type of bias is usually embedded in the processes of legislation, party hierarchies, and decision-making processes that are dominated by men in the political system (Krook, 2020). In Nigeria, the structure of the political system is not favorable to the full participation of

men in the political system. In the leadership positions in the political parties, such as the chairmanship positions, state party executives, committee leadership positions, among others, are dominated by men in the political system. According to the Political Party Gender Report (2024), women are not represented in more than 15% of the leadership positions in the political parties in the country, while men are in charge of more than 85% of the decision-making positions in the political parties in Nigeria.

Within the legislative chamber, gender bias also limits the power of women. For instance, women have limited opportunities for membership in powerful legislative committees, including the Appropriations Committee, Finance Committee, and the Defense Committee, which have the power to decide the direction of the country's policies (Solomon & Arum, 2025). According to a comparative analysis of gender-sensitive institutional reforms in African countries, the implementation of gender-sensitive institutional reforms in African countries has led to the achievement of gender equality in the representation of women in key positions. For instance, Rwanda, which has implemented institutional gender-sensitive reforms, has 61% women membership in the parliament, while South Africa also has 47% women representation in the parliament's leadership, unlike Nigeria, which has less than 5% women representation in the National Assembly (International IDEA, 2023; Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2024). The dominance of men in political institutions also affects the legislative outcomes. For instance, studies have shown that the underrepresentation of women in the legislative leadership and committees results in the underrepresentation of

issues that affect women, including gender-based violence, women's health, and welfare policies (Tripp, 2022). Therefore, the cumulative effect of gender biases limits the power of women to effectively represent the interests of their constituents. Therefore, the elimination of gender biases in Nigeria's political institutions requires the implementation of gender-sensitive institutional reforms, including the promotion of gender equality in the political parties' leadership, legislative committees, and the implementation of affirmative actions. Such reforms have also been implemented in Rwanda, South Africa, and Senegal, which have led to the increase of women's participation in the governance of their respective countries.

2.3.2 Financial Discrimination Against Female Political Candidates

Financial discrimination refers to unequal access to campaign funding, political donations, and economic resources necessary for electoral competition. Political campaigns require substantial financial resources for activities such as media advertising, voter mobilization, campaign logistics, and constituency outreach. In Nigeria, the cost of running for political office is extremely high, which creates significant barriers for candidates who lack financial resources. Female candidates are particularly disadvantaged because they often have limited access to political financing networks dominated by male elites (Solomon & Arum, 2025).

Furthermore, economic inequalities between men and women in terms of wealth ownership and access to financial networks also contribute to financial discrimination in politics. Many

women lack access to wealthy donors, business networks, or political sponsors that commonly support male candidates during elections (International IDEA, 2023). Comparative research suggests that countries that introduce gender-sensitive political finance policies tend to experience improvements in women's political participation. Policies such as reduced nomination fees for female candidates, public funding incentives for parties that nominate women, and campaign finance reforms have been shown to increase female representation in several democratic systems (Owusu, 2023).

2.2.4 Political Violence Against Women in Politics

Political violence refers to the use of force, threats, or intimidation to influence political processes or deter individuals from participating in politics. In many democracies, political violence has become a significant obstacle to electoral participation and democratic stability. In Nigeria, electoral violence has been a recurring feature of political competition, particularly during election periods. Female candidates often face unique forms of violence that include harassment, cyberbullying, and gender-based verbal attacks (Ejiofor & Udo, 2024).

Research indicates that women political candidates are more vulnerable to reputational attacks and character assassination during electoral contests. These tactics are often used to undermine female candidates' credibility and discourage them from pursuing political careers. Such forms of violence can also discourage other women from entering politics due

to concerns about personal safety and social reputation (Krook, 2020). Comparative studies across African democracies suggest that stronger legal protections and effective enforcement of electoral laws can significantly reduce political violence against women. Countries with clear institutional frameworks for addressing electoral violence tend to provide safer political environments for female candidates (Owusu, 2023).

In Nigeria, however, weak enforcement of electoral laws and the persistence of politically motivated violence continue to pose significant challenges to women's participation in politics. Addressing political violence therefore remains an important step toward improving gender equality and strengthening democratic representation within Nigeria's legislative institutions.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

2.4.1 Patriarchy Theory

This theory of patriarchy explains the dominance of men in politics, society, and the economy, and how this dominance is based on male authority and control. It explains that politics are dominated by male values, principles, and practices, which favor male leadership and disfavor female leadership and participation (Walby, 2018; Lerner, 2019). In patriarchal societies, male leadership is socially constructed, thus giving credence to the claim that males are best suited for leadership and public leadership positions.

In politics, patriarchy is manifested at two levels, culturally and institutionally. Culturally, patriarchy promotes gender stereotypes, where females are expected to perform female gender roles, and males are expected to perform male gender roles. Institutionally, patriarchy is manifested through male dominance in party structures, where male party leaders, male party networks, and male party informal structures limit female participation in politics (Krook, 2020). This explains the dominance of males in party leadership structures, despite the existence of gender equality provisions in the Nigerian Constitution. In Nigeria, patriarchal values play an essential role in influencing leadership and authority. Societal values, which are based on customary laws and religious beliefs, promote male dominance in politics, thus discouraging females from participating in politics and voting female candidates into public leadership positions (Solomon & Arum, 2025). This explains the dominance of males in party leadership structures, despite the high educational standards and gender awareness of females in Nigeria.

2.4.2 Feminist Political Theory

Feminist political theory is based on criticism of political institutions and structures and suggests political and structural reforms for achieving equality. According to feminist political theory, women are not underrepresented in political institutions due to a lack of competence and interest, but rather due to deeply ingrained political institutional biases and discrimination against them. This theory opposes traditional political theories and structures,

as they have ignored women's roles and decisions in political institutions and decision-making processes. In the case of Nigeria, feminist political theory suggests that political party structures, campaign finance structures, and cultural factors often work against female political aspirants. According to feminist political theory, political barriers and biases against women often lead to women's marginalization and underrepresentation in political institutions. Feminist political theory suggests political and structural reforms for increasing women's political participation and representation. Based on these principles, feminist political theory is considered a strong theory for promoting political participation and ensuring women's participation and engagement in political institutions and decision-making processes.

2.5 Empirical Review

Adabembe (2025) studied the relationship between patriarchy, religion, and the subjugation of women in the politics of Nigeria, with a case study of Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan. The author posits that while existing literature has examined the underrepresentation of women in elective and appointive positions in the politics of Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Nigeria, little literature has been devoted to the subjugation and harassment of women politicians. According to the author, the study employed the analytical method and used secondary data and the experiences of female politicians to expose the fact that female politicians face various forms of discrimination, including intimidation, lack of

opportunities, and sexual harassment. It is interesting to note that the study also revealed cases where female politicians have also been involved in the subjugation of their fellow female politicians. The study by Adabembe emphasizes the need for urgent reforms to address the subjugation of female politicians and urges scholars, researchers, and policymakers to address the issue of patriarchy and discrimination in the politics of Nigeria and the subjugation of female politicians at the hands of patriarchal and discriminatory societies (Adabembe, 2025).

Apata and Adelabu (2020) studied gender representation in political reporting in Nigerian newspapers, focusing on the 2019 governorship election in Kogi State. Using media framing theory, the authors analyzed 177 editions of three purposively sampled newspapers, namely *The Punch*, *Nigerian Tribune*, and *The Nation*, to assess the differences in media coverage based on gender. The content analysis was used to assess the prominence, placement, and media formats used in covering the candidates. The findings showed gender marginalization in media reporting on the 2019 Kogi governorship election. The female candidate, Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, was less prominent than the male candidates. The female candidate was only covered in 19.5% of the media reporting. Her media presence was only on the front page of *The Punch* newspaper once. Her media presence was only eight times in the sampled newspapers. Conversely, the media presence of the male candidates, namely Bello and Wada, was substantial. Bello was covered in 44.8% of the media reporting, while Wada was covered in 42.2% of the media reporting. The authors

concluded that gender bias was evident in media reporting on the 2019 Kogi governorship election. The media reporting was found to have underrepresented the female candidate. It was recommended that newspaper organizations, being the "conscience of society," should take a proactive role in promoting gender inclusiveness in media reporting. This can be done through increased media visibility and positive media reporting on female activities.

Yusuf, Alabi & Fagbadebo (2025) undertook an in-depth analysis of the scope and limits of parliamentary rules in Nigeria with respect to the suspension of Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, which was published in the *African Journal of Democracy and Election Research*. In their study, the authors critically analyzed the legal, institutional, and democratic tensions between parliamentary independence and constitutional accountability in Nigeria. In this respect, the authors drew on primary data from various sources, including public documents, archival materials, and literature to examine the following themes and their inter-linkages with respect to the scope and limits of parliamentary rules in Nigeria: the declining representation of women in the Nigerian legislature, the scope of parliamentary powers under the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and the limits of legislative supremacy in a constitutional democracy. The authors contended that the suspension of Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan underscored the scope and limits of legislative governance in Nigeria, particularly with respect to the exercise of parliamentary privilege in the absence of procedural checks and balances. In this respect, the authors contended that unchecked parliamentary privilege can undermine democratic consolidation and the political

representation framework in Nigeria. However, the authors contextualized this theme in terms of gender representation in the Nigerian legislature and the implications of punitive measures against female lawmakers such as Akpoti-Uduaghan on the overall political environment and representation of women in Nigerian politics. In this respect, the authors proposed that to effectively address the scope and limits of parliamentary rules in Nigeria with respect to the suspension of Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, there is a need to undertake procedural reforms in the National Assembly, judicial oversight to ensure constitutional accountability, and the development of structures that promote inclusion and representation in the political process despite gender, political affiliation, or dissenting opinion.

2.5.1 Suspension of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan and Reactions within the Senate

Among other issues, one of the controversial events involving the senator is her suspension from legislative duties in March 2025. The issue involved Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, who was elected into the Tenth Senate as the senator of the Kogi Central Senatorial District. She became the first-ever female senator from Kogi State and held the position of the chairperson of the Senate Committee on Local Content after her inauguration into the Tenth Senate under Senate President Godswill Akpabio. Prior to becoming a senator, she worked as an attorney and an entrepreneur, showing interest in promoting transparency and economic growth through legislation.

The controversy involving Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan came at a time when her relations with the leaders of the Senate started raising concerns among political analysts and members of civil society organizations. In early 2025, she was removed from the Senate Committee on Local Content and assigned to serve as a member of the Senate Committee on Diaspora and Non-Governmental Organizations. While changes in the committee assignments can be regarded as administrative decisions of Senate leaders, her move attracted much attention, with various political commentators referring to this step as a decrease in Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan's legislative influence. According to some analysts, committee membership has been recognized as an important criterion in evaluating legislative influence since many people view the Senate Committee on Local Content as one of the most strategically important bodies of the Senate given the role of its oversight in the oil and gas industries.

After her assignment to the new committee, Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan raised a number of concerns related to transparency and fairness, the concentration of strategically important committees among a few influential senators, and a low level of representation of women legislators in those committees. Meanwhile, leaders of the senate claimed that committee appointment decisions could be made independently of senators' views since such decisions belong to their administrative functions provided for in the Nigerian Constitution. This conflict led to her suspension from legislative work in March 2025 for six months, with several measures adopted to prevent her participation in legislative activity. Thus, she could not attend plenary and committee sessions, the temporary shutdown of her senate office took

place, legislative privileges were suspended, and she lost access to administrative support and official means of communication.

Based on the procedures, it should be understood that the decision was made following the recommendations offered by the committee on ethics, privileges, and public petitions in the Senate, having taken into account all the allegations against the senator. It should be understood that the academic community recognizes that legislative bodies have disciplinary tools required to maintain order. Nevertheless, this decision triggered very varied responses among jurists, members of civil society groups, gender-based interest organizations, and other political commentators. Some were trying to emphasize the legitimacy of the Senate's move, while others were challenging its fairness and questioning its consequences with regard to democratic representation of the interests of people. The significance of the event increased significantly because the question of power dynamics and the role of women in the male-dominated legislature came to the foreground. Hence, the case of Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan is one of the most controversial events discussed in the context of the Tenth Senate in Nigeria.

2.5.2 Media Coverage, Gender Bias Debates and Implications for Legislative Representation

The issue surrounding Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan received substantial coverage and debate in Nigeria, both within traditional media outlets, online media sites, political analysts,

and social media. The media coverage on the senator's case was heavily concentrated on her clashes with the senate leadership, committee reassignment, suspension, and issues about power allocation within the senate chamber.

It was highlighted in several cases by the media how she is well-known for her confrontational style in politics, especially her clashes with senate leadership, but in other instances, media focus has been on the legality of the actions leading to her suspension. It is also believed that at times media coverage of the senator's actions has been more of her personality rather than what she has accomplished within the senate chamber. Political communication scholars have shown that such framing of the politician by the media reinforces gender stereotypes that tend to depict female politicians in a negative manner.

The incident also raised debates surrounding the issue of gender discrimination within Nigeria's political landscape. Gender activists and civil societies viewed the conflict from a gender angle and posited that female senators working within male-dominated political institutions often receive more attention than their male counterparts. This is because women who oppose and challenge traditional practices within these male-dominated institutions are seen in a different light compared to men engaging in the same behaviors.

Apart from issues regarding gender discrimination, this case is instrumental in shedding light on the workings of legislative institutions in Nigeria. For one thing, it helps illustrate the importance of committee appointments as mechanisms through which legislatures wield

their political power. For another, it shows how the process of discipline influences relationships between legislators and legislative leaders. Lastly, it shows the continued dominance of male politicians in strategic positions in the Senate and the difficulties associated with achieving gender equality in legislative governance.

The case also highlights how informal political relationships interact with formal institutional rules in practice. While parliamentary procedures form the legal basis for activities in the Senate, other factors such as political relationships, elite politics, and power relations often inform how these procedures are applied in practice. In this regard, the case involving Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan can be used to gain insight into the issue of gender discrimination in legislative politics in Nigeria. Overall, the controversy surrounding Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan and Senate President Godswill Akpabio is a significant example of gender discrimination in Nigerian legislature. This is so because it demonstrates some of the difficulties that female politicians are likely to face in accessing political power and maintaining visibility in Nigeria's democratic system.

2.6 Research Gap

Although existing literature has extensively examined women's underrepresentation in Nigerian politics, most studies address socio-cultural bias, party nomination discrimination, media bias, financial constraints, political intimidation, and political violence as separate issues. Few studies provide an integrated analysis of how these factors collectively shape the

legislative trajectories of female politicians within the Tenth Senate. Moreover, limited research adopts a detailed case-study approach that situates contemporary female legislators, such as Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, alongside influential male counterparts like Senate President Akpabio, to contextualize gender dynamics within legislative representation. The political experiences of these legislators highlight both the systemic barriers faced by women and the structural advantages often available to male leaders. Examining how socio-cultural norms, party nomination processes, media coverage, financial disparities, political intimidation, and institutional bias converge in the careers of these politicians offers a holistic understanding of gender bias and legislative representation in Nigeria. This study, therefore, fills a critical gap by providing an integrative and context-specific analysis of gendered political dynamics in the Tenth Senate.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology adopted for investigating gender bias and legislative representation in Nigeria, focusing on the experiences of female and male legislators in the Tenth Senate. It explains the research design, data collection methods, sample size determination, sampling technique, and data analysis procedures. The chapter also outlines the model specification and operationalization of variables, including party-level discrimination, media bias, financial discrimination, and political violence, and their implications for female legislative representation.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopts a quantitative survey research design supported by qualitative insights. This design allows for the collection of primary data from Senators and legislative staff on their experiences with gender bias and its impact on legislative representation. The approach enables the measurement of associations between party-level discrimination, media bias, financial discrimination, political violence, and female legislative representation. An ex-post

facto component is also employed, since the experiences under study relate to political processes and events that have already occurred in the Tenth Senate.

3.3 Data Collection

Data for this study will be collected primarily from primary sources, complemented by secondary data. Primary data will be obtained through structured questionnaires administered to selected members of the Tenth Senate, legislative aides, and political analysts' familiar with the experiences of female legislators. These questionnaires are designed to capture information on the study's key variables: party-level discrimination, media bias, financial discrimination, political violence, and female legislative representation.

Secondary data sources will include National Assembly records, political party documents, media content, scholarly journal articles, reports from election observer missions, and publications from political research institutions. The combination of primary and secondary data ensures reliability and provides a contextual understanding of gender bias within Nigeria's legislative system.

3.4 Population Size

The population of this study consists of all members of the Tenth Senate of Nigeria, comprising 109 Senators. These individuals constitute the study population for assessing

gender bias and legislative representation, including the experiences of prominent figures such as Senate President Akpabio and Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan.

3.5 Sample Size Determination and Selection

The sample size is determined using Taro Yamane's formula (1967):

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size (109 Senators)

 e = level of precision (0.10 or 10%)

$$n = \frac{109}{1 + 109(0.10)^2}$$

$$\approx 52$$

Thus, a sample of 52 respondents will be selected.

Sampling Technique: A purposive and stratified sampling technique will be used to ensure that female legislators, male legislators, and key stakeholders in the Tenth Senate are adequately represented. Particular attention will be given to the inclusion of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan and Senate President Akpabio to capture key insights.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data collected for this study will be analyzed using a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques in order to effectively examine the relationship between gender bias and legislative representation in Nigeria. Descriptive statistical tools such as frequencies, percentages, means, and charts will be used to summarize and present the responses obtained from participants. These techniques will provide a clear overview of the prevalence and patterns of party-level discrimination, media bias, financial discrimination, and political violence, as well as their influence on female legislative representation in the Tenth Senate.

In addition to descriptive analysis, inferential statistical methods will be employed to test the relationships between the study variables. Specifically, multiple regression analysis will be used to examine the extent to which the independent variables party-level discrimination,

media bias, financial discrimination, and political violence affect the dependent variable, female legislative representation. This analytical approach will help determine the magnitude and statistical significance of the influence of each independent variable on the level of representation of female legislators.

Furthermore, qualitative data obtained from open-ended questionnaire responses and relevant secondary sources will be analyzed using thematic analysis. This approach will allow the researcher to identify recurring patterns, themes, and insights related to gender bias within the legislative environment. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative analysis will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of gender bias in legislative representation. All statistical analyses will be conducted using statistical software such as SPSS or STATA to ensure accuracy, reliability, and consistency in the interpretation of the research findings.

3.7 Model Specification

The relationship between gender bias factors and female legislative representation is modeled as follows:

$$FLR_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PLD_i + \beta_2 MB_i + \beta_3 FD_i + \beta_4 PV_i + \epsilon$$

Where:

FLR_i = Female Legislative Representation (dependent variable)

PLD_i = Party-Level Discrimination

MB_i = Media Bias

FD_i = Financial Discrimination

PV_i = Political Violence

β_0 = Constant

$\beta_1\text{--}\beta_4$ = Coefficients of independent variables

ϵ_i = Error term

This model allows the study to test the magnitude and significance of the effects of each gender bias factor on female legislative representation in the Tenth Senate.

3.8 Operationalization of Variables

S/N	Variable	Type	Measurement	Source
1	Female Legislative Representation (FLR)	Dependent	Number of bills sponsored, committee leadership, electoral success	National Assembly records; interviews
2	Party-Level Discrimination (PLD)	Independent	Access to nomination, delegate support, party endorsement (Likert scale)	Questionnaire; party documents
3	Media Bias (MB)	Independent	Frequency and tone of negative coverage, gendered portrayal (scale)	Media content analysis; questionnaire
4	Financial Discrimination (FD)	Independent	Campaign fund access, expenditure inequalities (scale)	Party records; interviews

S/N	Variable	Type	Measurement	Source
5	Political Violence (PV)	Independent	Reports of threats, harassment, intimidation (scale)	Questionnaire; observation reports
6	Control Variables	Independent	Age, gender, political experience, education	Questionnaire

This operationalization ensures precise measurement of each variable, allowing the study to comprehensively assess the impact of gender bias on female legislative representation in the Tenth Senate.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study on gender bias and legislative representation in Nigeria, with particular focus on the experiences of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan within the Tenth Senate under the leadership of Senate President Godswill Akpabio. The chapter examines the major events surrounding the senator's legislative experience and evaluates them within the broader context of gender bias, institutional power relations, and legislative representation in Nigeria.

4.2 Overview of Female Representation in the Tenth Senate

The findings show that the number of women in the Tenth Senate is still pretty low. Even with lots of push for gender equality and more inclusiveness in politics, there hasn't been much progress. In the 2023 election, only four women got into the Senate from a total of 109 spots – that's about 3.7%. These senators are Irete Kingibe, Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, Onyeka Nwebonyi, and Idiat Adebule (Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU], 2024; Solomon & Arum, 2025). Sadly, this percentage is one of the lowest recorded since Nigeria's democratic comeback in 1999 (IPU, 2024).

This really highlights how big the gender imbalance is in Nigeria's main law-making groups. While women make up almost half of Nigeria's population, their numbers in the top legislative positions are way lower (National Population Commission, 2023). It's surprising because many places have boosted women's roles in government by putting in place special gender inclusion rules. Around the world, women now hold more than a quarter of all parliamentary seats. Some African nations even have extremely high levels of women lawmakers thanks to positive action policies and reserved slots (IPU, 2024; International IDEA, 2023).

A comparison with other African countries shows how big the gender gap is in Nigeria's legislature. Rwanda, for instance, leads globally in having over 60% women in parliament. South Africa and Senegal are doing well too, with more than 40% female representation - all because of gender-sensitive electoral reforms and quota systems (IPU, 2024; International IDEA, 2023). Nigeria hasn't implemented effective legislative quotas or affirmative action methods to boost women's presence in political offices though. Because of this, the country fares pretty poorly in female legislative representation across Africa (International IDEA, 2023; UN Women, 2024).

Lower numbers of women in the Tenth Senate aren't just from election results; they reflect bigger problems in the Nigerian political system. Things like cultural views that see men as

the natural fit for political roles, unfair treatment when women try to get on the ballot, and difficulties raising funds for campaigns hold women back. Stereotypes and threats in the media target women candidates too. All of these things make it harder for women to run and win (Afolabi & Arowolo, 2022; International IDEA, 2023; Nwagwu, Iwuala, & Ebeh, 2024).

Beyond just showing up, having fewer women means less female influence over what laws get made. Leadership positions, key committee assignments, and spots at decision-making tables aren't always filled by women due to their lack of numbers. This hampers their ability to push for legislation that promotes gender equality and speaks to women's concerns, as well as those of other marginalized folks. The result? Laws might not address everyone's needs (Krook & Zetterberg, 2021; Tripp, 2022).

Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan is special in this context - she's one of the few women in the Tenth Senate. Her time there highlights both her personal journey and the wider struggles women encounter in legislative settings. From gaining access to influential roles to facing down sexism, she embodies the battles many women face post-election. Ultimately, studying Natasha's experience helps shed light on the ongoing issue of gender imbalance in Nigerian politics (Solomon & Arum, 2025; Kartay, 2025).

4.3 Committee Reassignment and Perceptions of Institutional Marginalization

This study found that Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan got reassigned from the Senate Committee on Local Content to the Senate Committee on Diaspora and Non-Governmental Organizations in 2025 (National Assembly of Nigeria, 2025). This move made waves in politics, the press, and with groups pushing for more gender inclusivity in government (Centre for Democracy and Development [CDD], 2025; Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre [PLAC], 2025). It turned out to be one of the top talked-about issues regarding the Tenth Senate because it sparked debate over power, influence, and opportunities inside Nigeria's law-making bodies (PLAC, 2025).

Before the switch, she was the Chair of the Senate Committee on Local Content, seen as one of the most powerful watchdog panels in the Senate (National Assembly of Nigeria, 2024). This group oversees how local content policies are carried out in Nigeria's oil and gas business, which is still the lifeblood of the nation's economy (Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board [NCDMB], 2024). Because of how crucial the oil industry is, these types of committees usually give lawmakers like Akpoti-Uduaghan more visibility and say in shaping policy (PLAC, 2025).

When the senator switched committees, people had varied responses. The Senate leadership defended the decision, saying reassigning committee members is a regular practice left to

the Senate President and the Senate's higher-ups (National Assembly of Nigeria, 2025). They believe changing things around helps make laws better, balances political needs, and lets them address new priorities. So, even though there was a big fuss, they insisted it was just part of normal parliamentary procedures (National Assembly of Nigeria, 2025).

Despite these explanations, many political observers saw the reassignment differently (CDD, 2025; PLAC, 2025). Critics argued that shifting the senator from a powerful committee to one seen as less strategic minimized her visibility and influence in the legislative process. Even though the Diaspora and NGO Committee handles important tasks related to Nigerians overseas and civil society, it's generally less influential than committees for big economic sectors like oil and gas (PLAC, 2025). As a result, some folks labeled the move as institutional marginalization (Tripp, 2022).

This incident also stirred talks about gender representation in the Senate's leadership structure. Lots of strategic committees and key roles were mostly filled by men, according to several commentators (Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU], 2024; Solomon & Arum, 2025). For this reason, some gender advocates questioned whether female legislators get the same shot at influential posts as their male counterparts (UN Women, 2024). To these groups, this shuffling around symbolized the hurdles women face in legislative politics (Krook, 2020).

It's also worth noting that how things are perceived matters just as much as following the rules in political institutions. While Senate leadership said the decision was fair by their procedures, the public largely saw it through the lens of gender and power dynamics (CDD, 2025; PLAC, 2025). So, despite starting as just an admin issue, the whole scenario ended up sparking a bigger debate about inclusion, fairness, and representation in Nigeria's democratic system (Tripp, 2022).

The findings suggest that the incident showed how vulnerable minority groups are in legislative institutions. Since women were just four out of the 109 Senate members, people started wondering if female lawmakers could really protect their own interests in such a male-dominated setting (IPU, 2024; Solomon & Arum, 2025). With so few women in the Senate, they typically don't have enough collective strength to oppose choices that might harm them (Krook & Zetterberg, 2021).

The reassignment also backs up arguments from scholars saying that measuring representation by just the number of women in parliament isn't enough. True representation requires having a say in crucial decisions, participating in powerful committees, and getting chances to influence what laws are made (Pitkin, 1967; Krook & Zetterberg, 2021). This means even when women join legislative bodies, their meaningful involvement can still be restricted if they're kept away from key roles (Tripp, 2022).

All in all, the research shows that reassigning Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan was seen as more than a simple move. It turned into a major lesson on broader problems like gender bias, power sharing, leadership rights, and how well women are represented in the Tenth Senate (Krook, 2020; Solomon & Arum, 2025). The situation highlighted how decisions inside parliament can spark big discussions about democracy, inclusivity, and gender equality in Nigeria's political system (International IDEA, 2023).

4.4 Relationship Between Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan and Senate Leadership

The findings show that Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan and the Senate leadership didn't see eye to eye after clashing over committee jobs, seating places, how bills got passed, and punishments inside the Tenth Senate (National Assembly of Nigeria, 2025; PLAC, 2025). Stuff that seemed like basic admin stuff turned into a big political deal, sparking national talks about who controls what, how guys and girls get treated in politics, and whether things are fair (CDD, 2025; International IDEA, 2023).

Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan wasn't shy about speaking up against certain choices made by the Senate leaders, especially how committees were picked and how females were treated in Senate meetings (National Assembly of Nigeria, 2025). She pushed hard for things to run transparently, fairly, and with people held responsible for their actions. On the flip side, Senator Godswill Akpabio and his crew stuck to their guns, saying every decision fit right

within the parliamentary rules, what the constitution allows, and standard procedures (National Assembly of Nigeria, 2025).

When the two sides had it out in the public eye, it led to her getting disciplined and booted from taking part in legislative activities (National Assembly of Nigeria, 2025). This didn't just blow over; it made waves among political insiders, law gurus, group advocates, ladies' clubs, and common folks (CDD, 2025; UN Women, 2024). Supporters of the leadership claim keeping order is key to running a smooth parliament. Yet many doubt the punishment fit the crime (PLAC, 2025).

An important aspect of the findings is that the dispute rapidly escalated from just procedural issues into a discussion about gender representation in Nigeria's legislative bodies (UN Women, 2024; International IDEA, 2023). Lots of people thought the whole situation showed the struggles women encounter when challenging the status quo in a male-dominated political scene (Tripp, 2022; Krook, 2020). On top of that, some advocacy groups believed that women lawmakers who challenge authority are more closely watched than their male colleagues. This can strengthen the idea of gender bias in institutions (Krook, 2020; UN Women, 2024).

Additionally, the disagreement seemed to unearth deeper problems about how power is distributed in the Senate. While there are official rules for parliament, these bodies are also

swayed by unofficial networks, alliances, and power games (Pitkin, 1967; Tripp, 2022). So, the clash between Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan and the Senate leadership actually showcased how formal procedures connect with informal power plays inside the National Assembly (PLAC, 2025; CDD, 2025).

This case got a huge amount of media coverage and sparked tons of public discussion (Media Monitoring Report, 2025). It was pretty much the most talked-about argument in the Tenth Senate (Media Monitoring Report, 2025; PLAC, 2025). As a result, the showdown between Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan and the Senate leaders became a key example of how authority, responsibility, gender, and representation intertwine in Nigeria's legislative world (International IDEA, 2023; Solomon & Arum, 2025). In essence, the spat went beyond being personal; it highlighted major institutional issues impacting legislative rep and gender inclusion in Nigeria's democracy (Tripp, 2022; UN Women, 2024).

4.5 Suspension of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan

The Senate suspended Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan for six months in March 2025. They said she broke parliamentary rules, backing this up with the ethics committee's recommendation. During her suspension, Akpoti-Uduaghan couldn't join plenary sessions, committee meetings, or other official legislative stuff. People had mixed feelings about it. Some saw it as necessary disciplinary action, while others thought it was way too harsh and

questioned its fairness. This led to big debates about accountability, the rules of the legislature, and the dynamics between genders in the National Assembly.

4.6 Media Coverage and Gender Bias Debates

The study showed that media coverage really shaped how the public viewed the conflict between Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan and the Senate leadership. During the controversy, all types of media—from TV and online news to social media—talked a lot about the situation, making it super popular in Nigeria at the time (UN Women, 2024; International IDEA, 2023). Most media reports zeroed in on Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan's clashes with Senate leaders, her reassignment from committees, and even personal stuff like her personality and communication style (Krook, 2020; Ross & Carter, 2011). So while some covered the legal procedures and arguments, others focused way more on gossip and personal attacks. Because of this, public talks usually ended up focusing less on actual legislative issues and more on what was said about the people involved (Campus, 2013; Harmer & Wring, 2013).

The study found that the media really ramped up coverage after Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan and Senate President Godswill Akpabio started trading accusations. It got a lot of people talking nationally and internationally, leading to tons of articles and talks on various topics (Premium Times, 2025; BBC News Africa, 2025). This spat didn't stay contained; it

grew into bigger debates about gender issues, accountability, and leadership in Nigeria. In addition, there was a strong focus on gender dynamics in all of this. Many groups, like CSOs, women's rights activists, and gender advocates, stated that women politicians face harsher judgment from the public compared to men (UN Women, 2024; Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2024). Issues that might slide for a guy can be blown wide open if a woman's involved. So, a lot of folks saw Senator Uduaghan's situation as a chance to highlight stereotypes and difficulties women encounter in top roles (Krook & Restrepo Sanín, 2020).

Furthermore, social media was a key factor in blowing this whole thing wide open. Platforms like Twitter and Facebook were flooded with discussions from all sides. Supporters and naysayers duked it out online over what the issue really represented (OECD, 2024). Some folks thought it illustrated gender discrimination within institutions, while others said it boiled down to following rules and protocol in parliament. These conversations made the incident much more visible and shaped how people grasped what was going on, spreading way past just those inside the assembly (UNESCO, 2023; OECD, 2024).

The research shows that how the media presented this controversy really stirred up bigger talks about women in Nigerian politics and their place in legislative roles. It wasn't just seen as a spat between a senator and the leaders. The story stood for greater worries about women being treated fairly in political places. Media folks gave it a lot of airtime, pushing people to

ponder topics like balance in leadership chances, women in key spots, and the hurdles they face in Nigeria's political sphere (Tripp, 2022; Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2024). In essence, the report stresses how crucial media played in forming public views and sparking debates. They did more than tell what happened; they shaped how folks understood it. Because of this, people began talking about deeper issues like gender bias, inclusion in politics, how accountable our democracy is, and whether there's true equality for women working in legislative bodies (Krook, 2020; UN Women, 2024).

4.7 Implications for Legislative Representation in Nigeria

The findings demonstrate that legislative representation extends beyond the numerical presence of women within legislative institutions. Effective representation also involves access to leadership positions, committee influence, participation in legislative decision-making, and fair treatment within institutional processes. The experiences of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan reveal that female legislators may continue to encounter structural and institutional challenges even after successfully securing electoral victory. These challenges may affect their ability to exercise legislative influence and contribute fully to governance processes.

The study further reveals that gender bias within legislative institutions can manifest through formal and informal mechanisms, including leadership dynamics, committee allocations, media narratives, and disciplinary procedures.

4.8 Discussion of Findings

This study supports what we already know about Nigerian politics—that women struggle against big institutional, structural, and socio-political barriers, despite official promises of equality. Even though the Nigerian Constitution says everyone has the same political rights, no matter their gender, women still struggle to participate politically (Akiyode-Afolabi & Arogundade, 2020; Ogbogu, 2021). Take Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan’s experience in the Tenth Senate, for example. It shows how gender bias can complicate things for her when dealing with legislative power, procedures, and political relationships (Bauer, 2012; Childs & Krook, 2009).

The research finds that getting women represented in Nigeria isn't just about winning elections. Of course, electing women to legislative offices is a step forward. But, simply having those positions doesn't mean they get treated equally inside the institution. Look at the issues with committee reassignments, conflicts with Senate leaders, and disciplinary problems faced by some female senators. These stories match up with studies saying that after beating electoral hurdles, women can run into further obstacles within legislative

bodies, leading to less access to power, influence, and decision-making (Franceschet & Piscopo, 2008; Goetz, 2003). So while there's progress, female lawmakers still battle significant challenges post-election, reinforcing how complex and layered this issue really is.

The findings also back up earlier studies pointing out that institutional discrimination, media bias, lack of political clout for some folks, and male-dominated systems hold women back politically (Waylen, 2014; Paxton, Hughes, & Barnes, 2021). Before now, lots of research said that political bodies usually run in ways that benefit male leaders. This current study looks at how those benefits for men show up in lawmaking places—in group meetings, who gets top roles, standing in key spots, and part of big decisions (Mackay, Kenny, & Chappell, 2010; Dahlerup, 2006).

With most men holding main posts and critical committees in the Tenth Senate, this reinforces worries about uneven playing fields in politics (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2024; National Democratic Institute, 2023). One really important thing the study uncovered is how media people talk about Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan. Her stories typically involve more than just laws and rules; they dive into her personal life and how she behaves, plus there's a lot of extra checking on her. These descriptions and judgments about women lawmakers often come from standards that don't apply to men (Van Zoonen, 2006; Heldman, Carroll, & Olson, 2005). Thus, this type of media portrayal just adds to gender stereotypes

and skews the way the general public views women in politics when fights break out (Byerly & Ross, 2006).

On top of everything, this study drives home the point that simply having a good number of women sitting in political halls doesn't guarantee they'll make real changes or have a true say. Just having women there is step one, but for substantive impact—actually shaping policies, leading, and really making governance reflect women's needs and ideas—that requires equal chances to take part fully in all discussions, be in vital spots, and affect decisions fairly (Pitkin, 1967; Phillips, 1995). Moreover, the results bring attention to Nigeria's ongoing issues with patriarchal thinking in its political sphere (Okeke-Ihejirika & Franceschet, 2022). Reactions from the public regarding the situation with Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan varied; some thought it was just regular parliamentary stuff, while others saw it as proof of gender problems in the legislature. These different views mirror society's wider discussion on gender equality and women's place in leadership positions (UNDP, 2024; African Union Commission, 2023).

The research also stresses that power dynamics are key to grasping the political ins and outs of Nigeria's legislative body. The back-and-forth between Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan and the senate leaders show how official protocols and less formal political moves both affect how

lawmakers experience their roles. Power, hierarchy, and control all play major parts in shaping those experiences inside the parliament (Lovenduski, 2005; Rai & Spary, 2019).

To sum up, the study concludes that what happened to Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan tells us a lot about the bigger picture of women's political involvement in Nigeria. Her case highlights where gender bias and control issues meet, making things tough for female politicians. It points to the need for changes that promote more inclusive practices and give women better chances to fully join in and effectively shape democratic processes. Her experiences definitely add to our understanding of the push for gender equality in Nigeria's government structures (Ballington, 2018; UN Women, 2024).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study took a look at gender bias and how laws are made in Nigeria, focusing on the Tenth Senate and the interactions between Senate President Godswill Akpabio and Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan. It was inspired by the fact that even though there are rules guaranteeing equality, women are still underrepresented in Nigeria's legislative bodies. The results showed that women's presence in the Tenth Senate is really low. From the 109 senators chosen in the 2023 elections, only four were women – just 3.7% of the group. Compared to what you see worldwide and on the African continent, this figure is embarrassingly low, showing that women's voices are hardly heard in the country's law-making bodies.

Another big issue uncovered was how social norms and old-fashioned ideas hold women back from taking up leadership roles. Lots of folks think politics is a man's game, which means women who try to get into office don't get much backing. That limits their chances to move forward and make their mark in the political world. Moreover, women find it tough to even become candidates because parties play a huge role in deciding who runs. Since most

party officials are men, women frequently struggle just to be nominated and to find allies within those systems. All these obstacles keep the number of female legislators down.

Women in legislative bodies often face unequal access to key leadership roles and important committee spots, according to a study on institutional gender bias. Take Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan's switch from the Senate Committee on Local Content to the Senate Committee on Diaspora and Non-Governmental Organizations. It sparked a lot of discussion about the sway female legislators have in the Senate. This event also highlighted bigger worries about power dynamics and decisions inside the Senate. Sure, Senate leaders claimed their moves followed parliamentary rules. But, many saw it as a reflection of deep-seated problems that affect women lawmakers. Another controversial move was when Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan got suspended. The Senate cited procedural reasons for her benching, but this was super divisive. Folks questioned whether it was fair, necessary, and proportional. Plus, there was debate around gender biases in how legislatures handle discipline.

Media coverage really ramped up the public debate too. Reporters covered both sides—parliamentary procedures and harsh conflicts involving the senator. Some felt the narrative unfairly fixated on personal aspects and aggressive storylines more than facts. In sum, gender bias isn't just an election issue; it hits hard when women work within legislative halls. The saga with Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan shows how official practices, power plays, the

press, and stereotypes can seriously limit how women participate and are represented in lawmaking processes.

5.2 Conclusion

According to this study, gender bias still really stands out as a big problem for effective legislative representation in Nigeria. Though women legally can be fully involved in politics and legislative stuff, they face some serious structural and institutional hurdles that stop them from truly having an impact. The research finds that the small number of women in the Tenth Senate isn't just because of how elections turned out; it's also thanks to wider political, cultural, and institutional factors that make things harder for female politicians. Parties, institutions, the media – they all team up to keep women on the sidelines through nomination biases, unfair practices, stereotypes, and lack of influential spots.

For instance, even when Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan got elected, she likely faced additional Senate stuff holding her back. From joining key committees to getting a say in crucial decisions, dealing with the Senate leadership, and how the media portrays them – all those aspects affect how well female lawmakers can represent their constituents. So, to actually bring about real gender inclusivity in Nigeria's legislative places, it's not enough to just boost the numbers of women there. We need to ensure these women have fair chances and an equitable environment. Until we aim for reforms tackling gender bias head-on in our

political and legislative setups, ladies' involvement and sway in Nigeria's democratic bodies might stay weak.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

Political parties need to be more inclusive when picking candidates for legislative roles. One way to do this is by cutting nomination fees and putting in place clear rules for choosing who gets nominated. They could also use affirmative action. We need the National Assembly to help too. By making sure there's a good mix of men and women in committee work and key posts, female legislators get fair chances to be part of big decisions.

To keep things fair, the legislative institutions ought to boost transparency in how they assign people to committees and deal with any misconduct. This makes sure everyone's accountable and helps build trust with the public.

Policymakers and election groups shouldn't wait either. They should aim to raise the number of women in elected jobs, like looking into gender quotas—something that's worked well in other parts of Africa. Finally, media folks have a role here. They can stop focusing just on

looks and old stereotypes of women politicians. Instead, let's see more stories about their skills, policies, and results in office.

To challenge cultural stereotypes that hold women back from politics and leadership, civil society groups and women's advocates need to up their public awareness campaigns. We also ought to provide female politicians and up-and-comers with training that boosts their political smarts, leadership, and connections. Plus, the Senate and similar bodies should create ways to keep track of gender issues during parliamentary activities, ensuring fair play for everyone, no matter their gender. Looking ahead, researchers could help a lot by exploring how gender bias affects legislative representation in Nigeria through wide-reaching studies. Lastly, to truly make an impact, government groups, political parties, and democratic institutions must join forces to build a space where women aren't held back or overlooked; they should be able to dive into legislative roles fully and fairly.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This study adds to what we know about gender and politics by looking at gender bias in Nigeria's legislative bodies, focusing on the Tenth Senate. While lots of earlier research is centered around women's involvement in elections, this project looks at their experiences once they've secured office. We explore how rules inside institutions, leader behaviors, media talk, and beliefs about gender all blend together to affect how legislators represent

their folks in Nigeria. By diving into the story of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, the study uncovers key issues and hopeful moments for making government more inclusive regarding gender in Nigeria's democracy.

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