

POLITICAL INCLUSIVENESS AND UNDER-REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN NIGERIAN POLITICS, 1999 – 2015

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Abstract

The study investigates the factors responsible for women underrepresentation in Nigerian politics, In the process it also highlights the role of women in good governance, communal conflict resolution missions and inter-group conflicts. Marxist-Feminism theory was adopted as the framework of analysis. The study hinged largely on survey research design. Questionnaire instrument was used to collect information from respondents while qualitative method of data collection was also employed in the generation of relevant data from secondary sources and to secure reliable results. The paper took advantage of both quantitative and qualitative methods in data analysis. The investigation reveals that socio-cultural barriers and economic deprivations factors are responsible for women underrepresentation in Nigerian politics.

Keywords: Discrimination, Domination, Inclusive Politics, Inequality, Marginalization, Underrepresentation of Women.

Introduction

Nigeria Women's dilemma in politics predates colonialism as their subjugation emanated from antiquity. Historical records revealed that in various autonomous kingdoms of African origin, women were considered to be naturally and physically inferior to men. In Africa, traditional political issues relating to intercommunity or inter-kingdom conflicts or war, and decision-making on matters of public interest were exclusively preserved for adult male-folk. Africa practiced patriarchal system of traditional governance. Men were on the average, heavier, taller and physically stronger than women. Men were always considered as warriors, protectors and providers, while women worked in the home rearing children and performing other domestic functions, which further enhanced their vulnerability (Enemuo, 1999).

According to Enemuo (1999:226), women have contributed significantly to the wellbeing of the human race; and have always played five key roles – mother, producer, home manager, community organizer, and social, cultural and political activist. Despite their large number and crucial functions, the division of roles between the male and female, as prescribed by most cultures, assigned the subordinate position to women. As a consequence, women have for long suffered various forms of discrimination, inequality, exclusion and violence. He stresses that women were excluded from decision-making pertaining to governance or leadership. They were not allowed to sit close to the arena where political issues were being discussed. He notes that women had their peculiar roles to play in the homes as culture allotted. Their participation in governance was largely restricted to issues concerning womenfolk alone; and was therefore expected to play secondary roles as they were perceived as subordinates. Culturally, women were marginalized and subjugated on all socio-political and economic matters like selection of titled men for the king's cabinet, selection and coronation of traditional rulers, and involvement in economic activities.

Adereti (2007:213) observes that the assertion that women in most countries of the world are educationally, politically, economically and socially disadvantaged is universal. Women, especially in African societies, are subjugated, exploited and marginalized. The marginalization of African women is more pronounced in the governance and democratization processes. There has been unequal opportunity between man and woman; whereby men are given better political and economic opportunities than their female counterparts. Esidene and Abdul (2013) note that this informed why Karl Marx asserted that the inferiority complex of women generally was a function of chauvinistic disposition of men to perpetuate their domination over women in all spheres of human endeavour.

Sir Hugh Clifford's Constitution of 1922 introduced elective principles in Nigeria politics with 46 membership of the legislative council and the composition was made up of male-folk, out of which four representatives were allotted to Nigerians on the ratio of 3:1 to represent Lagos and Calabar respectively. Only educated rich-men from the elite-class were allowed to contest for the seats. Although there was inequality in the pre-colonial traditional society, the 1922 Constitution grossly disenfranchised women and limited political participation to wealthy men. This development further discriminated against women and profoundly exacerbated their precarious situation. The ascription of political powers and arrogation of governance to men is unhealthy for political development in any democratic country. THEWILL (2016) argues that the development of any country requires the participation of both men and women. There is global recognition that gender equality in political participation is a fundamental aspect of modern democratic governance. It is expected that both men and women should have equal rights and opportunities to participate fully in all aspects and at all levels of political processes.

But in practice, women face challenges and the number of women in leadership and decision-making positions is abysmally low.

In Africa, as culture assigned functions and responsibilities to men and women, the advent of colonialism did not distort the structural subjugation and marginalization of women in traditional governance. Rather, women were further relegated to the cultural background. Assie-Lumuba (1996) cited in Awofeso and Odeyemi (2014) corroborates the claim that colonial policies fostered patriarchy in Nigeria politics as only men were considered to be active in the public sphere to earn a living to support their families. Consequently, few educational assistance programmes under the colonial administration were reserved for only African male who were later recruited into colonial civil service and merchant houses. This practice gave African male folk undue advantage over their female counterparts, and thus marked the beginning of women underrepresentation in formal government agencies.

Mutunga (2006:365) argues that society is structured with attributes invariably acquired or assigned to men and women according to their culture. These social attributes acquired or learned during socialization, defined activities, responsibilities and needs connected to being male or female and not to biological identity associated with masculinity and femininity inherent in human relations. Such learnt or acquired attributes are expressed as power, roles, resource control and privileges of men and women. Gender is therefore a socially constructed identity through which roles are assigned at different levels and which can differ according to culture, and can be changed by circumstances. Gender mainstreaming is a term used to refer to a strategy to strengthen gender equality through policy and resource allocation that reflect to the interests of both men and women. Gender equality varies according to society and culture.

Traditionally men have had a stronger position than women in every society. The existing gap in gender equality is very large and had left women disadvantaged in most aspects of life. THEWILL (2016) argues that gender relations are part of social relations, referring to the ways in which the social categories of men and women, male and female, relate over the whole range of social organization, not just to interactions between individual men and women in the sphere of personal relationships, or in terms of biological reproduction. In all aspects of social activity, including access to resources for production, rewards or remuneration for work, distribution of consumption, income or goods, exercise of authority and power, and participation in cultural, political and religious activity, gender is important in establishing people's behaviour and the outcome of any social interaction. As well as institutions between individual men and women, gender relations describe the social meaning of being male and female, and thus what is considered appropriate behaviour or activity for men and women.

It is acknowledged that struggle for state power and conflict resolution, like most other decision-making roles, have traditionally been the domain of men and thus looks at the unique effects conflicts have on women, the role of women in politics and factors that

hinder more participation by women in modern societies. Politics, after the Second World War, was seen as the business of decision-making elite, and participation by the masses was discouraged. Liberal democracy involves both direct participation and representation; and representation needs to be based on a sense that the representatives can empathize with the problems of their constituents (Hoffman and Graham, 2009:101). Considering the different roles of women and the different ways that political conflicts affect women than men and also in view of the limited participation and underrepresentation of women in electoral processes, the need for considering the critical-mass theory becomes imperative. The critical-mass theory, according to Mutunga (2006), assumed women who serve in skewed legislature, that is, legislatures where they make up less than 15% of the membership, are marginalized and avoid addressing women issues. If indeed the theory holds, women should not be contented by just being represented in politics or peace talks unless the representation equals or exceeds the quantity that renders them effective in articulating women issues.

This is important given that women make up approximately 60% of the population. Traditionally, women are grossly marginalized and discriminated against at home and in public spheres. This reasons why Nigerian women have not fared well in politics and governance as they appear to be apathetic to political activities. Notwithstanding the numerous achievements of female folk in governance, the society is skewed by Plutocrats against women in providing political space to prove their prowess in governance. Globally, there is on-going debate amongst scholars as to what to do to improve women participation in political activities and being involved also in elective public offices. This article is a contribution to the debate.

Against this backdrop, the objectives of the study are: (i) to investigate whether socio-cultural barriers inhibit women participation in politics; and to ascertain whether economic deprivations undermine women political representation. The study focused to unveil why the underrepresentation of women in Nigeria politics from 1999 to 2015.

Concept Clarifications and Theoretical Framework

The excitement of politics is the disagreement about how people should live, how power and other resources should be distributed, who gets what and how should collective decisions of general interest be made. Politics is the struggle for power, exercise of influence over distribution of resources. This struggle for and exercise of political power and influence in society is what politics is all about. In politics, who wields influence, and who exercises power to authoritatively allocate resources inextricably link politics to the phenomena of conflict and cooperation.

The study adopted Marxist Feminism theory as its framework of analysis. The theory developed a more sophisticated analysis of the relationship between capitalism, the prevailing sexual division of labour and women's inequality (Steans and Pettiford, 2005 cited in Ezeani 2009:106). Marxist Feminism theory holds that the private property, which

gives rise to economic inequality, dependence, political confusion and ultimately unhealthy social relations between men and women, is the major root of women's oppressive underrepresentation in contemporary social context. The etymology of the theory is traced to Marx and Engels analysis of gender oppression in the origins of the family, private property and the state. The protagonists contended that women's subordination is not as a result of their biological disposition, but from social relations. The family unit as an institution is a complex system in which men command women's services.

Marxist theory argues that the individual is heavily influenced by the structure of the society, which translates in contemporary societies as class structure; which means the people's opportunities, wants and interests are seen to be shaped by the mode of production that characterizes the society they inhabit. Steans and Pettiford (2005) quoted in Ezeani (2009:45), are of the view that:

The gist from the Marxist-Feminist position was that the emergence of capitalism as a social and economic system brought about a clear distinction between the public world of work and the private realm of the home and the family. This led to particular ideas about what constituted 'work' and 'production' and in this process 'women's work', came to be denigrated and undervalued. Marxist analysis showed how the home and the family had come to be viewed as 'private' areas of human life; clearly separate and distinct from the public realm... this idealized view of the family disguised the reality of power relations and inequality that permeated both the public and private realms. The construction of a public/private division effectively served to reduce women and children, to the private property of men. It also rendered invisible the vital role that women's unpaid labour in the home made to the capitalist economy.

Marxist-Feminism theory sees modern gender inequality as determined ultimately by the capitalist mode of production. Gender relation is similar to class relation. In other words, the relationship between a man and a woman is similar to the relations between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Women's subordination is seemingly a form of class oppression, which is maintained (like racism) because it serves the interests of capitalists and the ruling class. The theory of Marxist-Feminism believes that elimination of the capitalist system is the solution to gender inequality and other forms of oppression. In essence, the liberation of women can only be achieved through socialist revolution and economic empowerment which will lead to materially changing the conditions of women for the better (Ezeani).

This framework of analysis is a veritable tool to explaining and comprehending gender inequality in Nigeria political representation, especially as it concerns women representation in the parliament. The dichotomy under capitalism between the public

world of work and the private realm of the home and the family not only serves to reduce women to the private property of men, it also serves to support and legitimize male dominance in politics. Women's specially designated responsibilities are confined to the private sphere of the home and the family which is dominated by men. The public world of work and politics is equally dominated by men. Women are, therefore, naturally vulnerable to subjugation in all spheres of human endeavour. It is so because this state of affairs has further exacerbated by the prevalent ideas about the 'naturalness' of the sexual division of labour. Perhaps, it is within the context of the public/private division and sexual division of labour under capitalism that we can understand gender inequality in political representation in Nigeria's parliament, as politics belongs to the public sphere which, from the Marxist perspective, is male dominated.

Methodology

The researcher adopted a survey research design to elicit data on inclusive politics to ascertain the degree of women involvement. Given that Survey research is a method for studying behaviour that cannot be observed or experimented on directly (McNabb 2004). The instrument used to generate information from respondents is questionnaire. In this light, Alford (2011) notes that research design is measurement process that involves asking questions of respondents and collecting information from a small number of people to be representative of a larger population. Qualitative method of data collection was used to obtain data from documentary evidence of secondary source, as qualitative studies can be added to quantitative to gain better understanding of the meaning and implications of the findings (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The scope of the study is South-East Nigeria comprising five states. The population of the study is 7,665,859 registered voters in the zone in 2015 election. Chi-square was applied for the analysis. Two research questions were posed. (i) Do socio-cultural barriers inhibit women representation in Nigeria politics? (ii) Does economic deprivation undermine women representation in Nigeria politics? Two hypotheses guided the study: (i) Socio-cultural barriers inhibit women representation in Nigeria politics. (ii) Economic deprivation undermines women representation in Nigeria politics.

Plutocracy and Nigeria Women in Politics

Liberal democracy does not flourish in a plutocratic society because the governed are not considered in political spheres. The concept "plutocracy" originated from Greek. "Ploutos" means wealth and "kratos" means power, dominion, and rule. It is a form of oligarchy and defines as a society ruled or controlled by the wealthiest. This is a common scene in developed and developing countries. It is the wealthy social class that controls or greatly influences the government. The rich funds the campaign of politicians they sponsor; and vote buying is feasible, easy and widespread, as other forms of electoral fraud such as ballot-box stuffing and intimidation of opponents. Plutocrats are not genuine

representatives of the people. Plutocratic mechanism dominates the character of politics in Nigeria and other developing countries. Wealth as a pre-determinant factor, weighs against women in politics (Krugman n.d).

Marxist scholars argue that inclusive democratic practice under capitalist ideology is constitutively class-based and therefore can never be democratic or participatory. It is referred to as bourgeois democracy because it protects only interest of the rich. Representation of interests of different classes is proportional to the influence which a particular class can purchase (through bribes, transmission of propaganda through mass media, economic blackmail, donations for political parties and their campaign). Thus, the public interest is corrupted by the wealth of those rich enough to garner representation.

The Role of Women in Pre-Colonial and Colonial Era

Despite the social barriers against women, their contributions to resolving conflicts or winning wars are overwhelming. Women have played significant roles in state affairs, and have contributed immensely in shaping Nigeria politics in pre-colonial and colonial era. It is a disservice to brush their efforts under historical carpet. Esidene and Abdul (2013) observe that history recorded veteran women who gained their authority and influence on courageousness. Moyo (2002:2) observes that “women have a long history of dispersed struggle against colonial and post-colonial political repression and economic exploitation ...” The achievements of women should not be swept under historical carpet, given the evidence of their utilization both in progressive and retrogressive struggle and armed rebellions, their importance cannot be under-estimated. Women must be remembered for the leading roles they have played in various struggles. These include the roles they played in the liberation and resistance struggles amongst kingdoms and empires in Nigeria.

Despite the fact that women were marginalized during the colonial era, they had strong and powerful associations through which they organized and acted collectively on issues affecting their interests. Such associations equipped them to build formidable fronts to express approval or disapproval on public matters. Under the platform of the informal associations, some brave women gallantly rose above the social barriers and created indelible legacies in Nigeria political history. They were resolute in their determination, under the umbrella of the famous Aba Women Association in 1929 riots, in resisting the colonial obnoxious taxation policy imposed on women (Gonyok, n.d). Also, women, under the umbrella of Abeokuta Women Union of 1948, opposed women suppression and fearlessly challenged the authority of the traditional ruler of Abeokuta. Their dynamism brought about their nomination as members of a political party - National Council for Nigeria Citizen. Women advocated for the reduction of powers of the monarch, and acted as vanguard to women course in the South-Western Region (Nwagwu and Ezeibe, 2011).

Challenges of Nigeria Women in Politics

In most democratic societies where gender equality is seemingly legally mandatory, gender discrimination occurs in politics. The presumptions about political allegiances that fall along gender lines and disparate gender representation within representative democracies are bias against women inclusiveness. History revealed that this was true when women were neither considered full citizens nor the right to vote. However, Nigerian women are undaunted by the gender oppressive scenario, as they have boldly ventured into the game of politics to participate in governance, notwithstanding that they neither receive any sponsorship nor encouragement from the men or family unit to vie for elective or appointive public offices. Although finance is perceived as one of the major factors militating against women effective involvement in politics, the political environment is very hostile, not warmly disposed towards female politicians. Poverty short changes women from competing effectively in political activities like obtaining nomination forms, funding campaigns and elections, as political parties hike nomination form fees beyond the reach of the moderate politicians.

Cost of Party Nomination Form

Poverty is responsible for women vulnerability in politics. One of the major causes of poverty amongst women is the inability to have access to critical factors of production. Women are discriminated against in granting of loan facilities by banks and other financial institutions due to lack of collaterals and gender bias (Enemuo, 1999: 229). Therefore, women are drastically marginalized in party politics as indication of interest to contend for elective positions in political party primaries is seen as a serious business, and interested party members are expected by the Party Constitution to express commitment in monetary term, so as to qualify for picking nomination form. Inasmuch as the exercise is an internal process of generating funds for political party activities, the costs of expression of interest and obtaining the nomination form should not only be made to be moderate, but must be seen publicly to be temperate to ensure inclusiveness in participation. The costs of indication of willingness and subsequent purchase of nomination form have no direct bearing to what constitutes the limitless spending in elections. This exercise is patterned exclusively for the rich due to the high cost of these requirements, and to skew the poor women and other moderates out of the race. Most often, prospective candidates mortgage their assets, obtain loan facilities from the banks or sell their properties to contest in an election (Nwagwu, 2016). Oladimeji (2014) cited in Olorunmola (n.d) notes that in 2015 general election, All Progressive Congress (APC) presidential candidates had to pay two million, five hundred thousand naira (N2,500,000.00) to indicate interest; and twenty-five million naira (N25,000,000.00) for obtaining the form.

The prospective presidential candidates in the People's Democratic Party (PDP) were required to remit two million naira (N2,000,000.00) for expression of interest, and twenty

million naira (N20,000,000.00) for the purchase of the nomination form. All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) did not fill candidate for presidential election. The requirements for other categories of aspirants are illustrated below.

Table 1 Cost of Aspirants' Expression of Interest and Nomination Form

Party	Office in View	Expression of Interest (₦)	Nomination Form (₦)	Total (₦)
APC	Presidency	2,500,000.00	25,000,000.00	27,500,000.00
	Governorship	500,000.00	5,000,000.00	5,500,000.00
	Senate	300,000.00	3,000,000.00	3,300,000.00
	House of Rep	200,000.00	2,000,000.00	2,200,000.00
PDP	Presidency	2,000,000.00	20,000,000.00	22,000,000.00
	Governorship	1,000,000.00	10,000,000.00	11,000,000.00
	Senate	500,000.00	4,000,000.00	4,500,000.00
	House of Rep	400,000.00	2,000,000.00	2,400,000.00
APGA	Presidency	-	-	-
	Governorship	2,000,000.00	10,000,000.00	12,000,000.00
	Senate	500,000.00	3,000,000.00	3,500,000.00
	House of Rep	500,000.00	2,000,000.00	2,500,000.00

Source: Olorunmola, A. (nd). Cost of Politics in Nigeria

<http://www.wfd.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Nigeria-Cost-of-Politics.pdf>

The quantum of cash requirement in indicating interest to contest for elective offices and payment for nomination of aspirant's form for each position by the political parties is above the reach of average politician, and women are completely marginalized because their financial status is weak.

Cost of Media Campaign Expenses

Besides, the cost of campaigning is too exorbitant for women to cope with coupled with their weak financial base. Table 2 shows how expensive media campaigns were in 2015 general election. PDP campaign engulfed N8,749,685,305.00, while APC incurred N2,915,846,737.00. Campaign financing is a lucrative business for political entrepreneurs who hijack party activities and invest heavily therein, and such parties serve as collateral until the investors recoup their investment costs and accruing interest. As a result, service delivery to the populace is a secondary issue as the irresponsible government alienates the governed and impoverishes them more. The power eludes the people as investors capture it and toy with 'puppet politicians'. Political parties, with their massive dependency strategy on heavy donors, Governments become responsible to the entrepreneurs.

Table 2 Media Expenses for 2015 Presidential Election

Description of Media Expenses	People's Democratic Party (₦)	All Progressive Congress (₦)
Campaigns and Rallies	1,280,374,879.00	671,062,200.00
Billboards	473,160,000.00	190,380,000.00
Electronic Media Campaign	532,100,000.00	410,050,000.00
Electronic Media Advertisement	3,988,822,125.00	1,064,706,850.00
Print Media Campaign	2,475,228,301.00	579,647,687.00
Total	8,749,685,305.00	2,915,846,737.00

Source: Centre for Social Justice, 2015

The intimidating quantum of money expended by each candidate to indicate interest and collection of nomination forms, and political party's expenses incurred in media campaigns are beyond the reach of women, as the highest bidder takes control of party affairs to dictate who takes what position. The campaign expenses above can only be afforded by political parties and candidates with resourceful contacts, corporate sponsorship, and abuse of public funds by political party in government and corrupt public officials. Women are financially inferior to compete with men in party politics. The total expenses incurred by each political party on campaigns alone are outrageous and quite intimidating.

Women and Politics

Women's outing in 2011 elections in comparison with men showed that Nigeria's political landscape is really dominated by men as illustrated below and corroborated with election results in table 5.

Table 3 Gender Participation in Elective Positions in 2011 Elections

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

INEC Report, 2012

In spite of the ugly scenario painted above, women have made concerted efforts to bringing marginal positive change in female representation in governance. They have played prominent roles in public services and have inspired other younger women for

excellent public service. Their success is not encouraging, after all, considering their numerical strength, degree of participation in political parties' rallies, and the number of the ministerial positions in each dispensation. The 2011-2014 ministerial appointment fairly represented women, followed by 2003–2007. 1999-2003 recorded slight increase, but 2007-2011 and 2015 appointments truncated their achievement as shown below.

Table 4 Women Representation in Ministerial Appointments, 1999 – 2015

Tenure	No of Ministers	Women Representation	Percentage (%)
1999-03	36	8	22.2
2003-07	36	14	38.9
2007-11	36	3	8.3
2011-14	36	21	58.3
2015	36	6	16.7

Source: <http://www.guide2womenleaders.com/Nigeria.htm>; <http://dawodu.com/minister.htm>

Women have advanced beyond rhetoric politics, from campaigning and voting male-folks into positions of power and authority to political consciousness and progressive participation in elective positions. Over time, women recorded remarkable advancement in politics when compared with the degree of their involvement in canvassing for votes in favour of men and the number of appointive and elective positions they were denied to occupy by men in the society. Emancipation of women from the clutches of discrimination and subjugation was guaranteed by the Beijing Affirmative Action Conference of 1995 which provides for 35% women elective representation. According to Adereti, women feature prominently as executive members of political parties. Unfortunately, the few women party executives occupied positions that could not be described as influential. This underrepresentation in executive capacities led to women's limited participation in decision-making processes of the parties, hence their inability to be part of decisions for the selection of candidates for elections. This limited conception of the political relevance of women is responsible for their political marginalization. The extent to which women participation in party politics vis-à-vis the position, influence and control they exercise in these parties is always neglected in time of nomination of candidates for elective positions, hence their poor outing in elections.

Close examination of women's political participation since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999 reveals slow trend in skewed politics. For instance, in 1999, the National Assembly had 2.8% female Senators (FSs) and 3.3% in the House of Representatives (HRs), and 2.4% in States House of Assembly (SHA). Out of 36 Special Advisers, women had 10 slots. In 2003, women had 3.7% Senators and 5.8% in the HRs, and 3.9% in SHA. The 2007 elections produced 8.3% FSs and 7.2% in the HRs, and 5.8% in SHA. The 2011 elections

produced 7.3% FSs and 6.9% in the HRs, and 6.9% in SHA. In the 2015 elections, the result revealed 6.4% FSs, 5.2% in the HRs, and 4% in the 36 SHA. Table 5 and Figure 1 captured the detailed illustration. Some States do not have any female legislative member in the State House of Assembly.

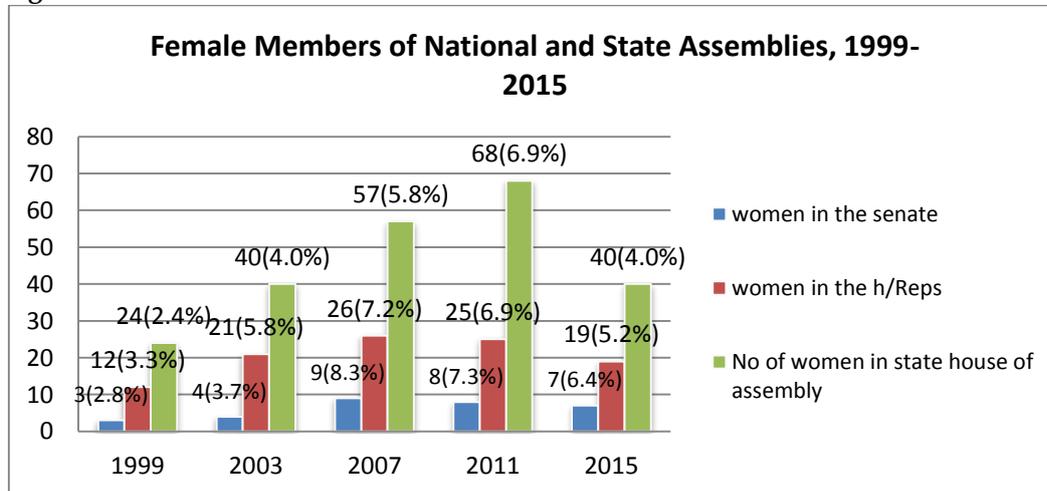
Table 5 Women Representation in Nigeria's National Assembly and 36 States House of Assemblies, 1999-2015

Year of election	No of Seats in Senate	Women in Senate	No of Seats in House of Reps	Women in House of Representatives	No of Seats in 36 States House of Assembly	No of Women in States House of Assembly
1999	109	3(2.8%)	360	12(3.3%)	990	24(2.4%)
2003	109	4(3.7%)	360	21(5.8%)	990	40(4.0%)
2007	109	9(8.3%)	360	26(7.2%)	990	57(5.8%)
2011	109	8(7.3%)	360	25(6.9%)	990	68(6.9%)
2015	109	7(6.4%)	360	19(5.2%)	990	40(4.0%)

Source: INEC, 2015

Women were grossly underrepresented in the national assembly and the thirty-six states house of assemblies for the period under study. The women were not given equal opportunity to compete for the positions in the elections; they were marginalized and financially intimidated.

Figure 1



The 2015 SHA election was gloomy as women were completely marginalized in some states where women representation was zero. In 2011 election, women were fairly represented in the SHA. Generally, the 2015 election, with poor representation, was unfavourable to women. They have not fared well in elective positions in the executive arm of government since 1999. In 2015, a woman contested for the presidential election under the platform of KOWA Party. Out of the 14 presidential aspirants that contested, she took the 12th position. Most women aspired for elective positions under the platform of minor parties as they are being marginalized in the giant parties. These minor parties hardly win local council election due to unfriendly political climate. The positions of President and Vice-President are filled by men.

Table 6 Women in Presidential and Governorship Elections, 1999 – 2015

Elective Office	Seat	1999-03	2003-07	2007-11	2011-15	2015
President	1	0	0	0	0	0
Vice-President	1	0	0	0	0	0
Governor	36	0	0	1(2.8%)	0	0
Deputy-Governor	36	1(2.8%)	2(5.5%)	6(16.6%)	1(2.8%)	4(11%)

Source: Independent National Electoral Commission, 2015.

The impeachment of Anambra State Governor by the SHA in 2007, gave a woman Deputy-Governor (DG) the opportunity to become the first female Governor in Nigeria. Although, she later reassumed her DG position when the Supreme Court nullified the impeachment and reinstated the Governor. Fourteen (14) women had served as DGs at different times in 8 states out of 180 DGs seats in 36 states of the Federation within five different election years from 1999 to 2015 as shown in Table 6 above.

Despite the seemingly impressive picture of women participation in Nigeria political activities, there are evidences of women being discriminated against, underrepresented and subjugated as illustrated in table 5. It is not surprising that Nigeria lags behind many African countries in the struggle to liberate women from the clutches of discrimination and under-representation. A pleasant development in African politics is the increase in women's political participation and representation. This is evident with the number of women parliamentarians in some African countries like Rwanda with 64% in the House of Representatives, and 39% in the Senate, the highest number of women parliamentarians in Africa. Other countries are illustrated in table 7 and figure 2 below.

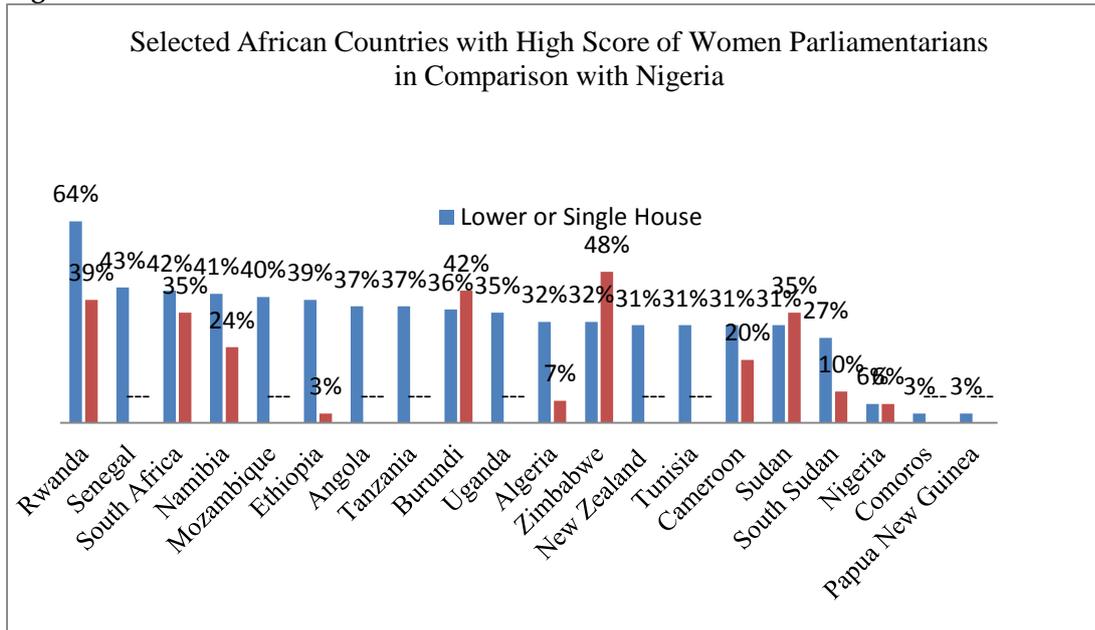
Table 7 African Countries with High Score of Women Parliamentarians in Comparison with Nigeria

Rank in Africa	Country	Date of Election	Lower or Single House			Upper House or Senate		
			Seats	Women	%	Seats	Women	%
1	Rwanda	9/2013	80	51	64	26	10	39
2	Senegal	7/2012	150	64	43	---	---	---
3	South Africa	5/2014	399	168	42	54	19	35
4	Namibia	11/2014	104	43	41	42	10	24
5	Mozambique	10/2014	250	99	40	---	---	---
6	Ethiopia	5/2015	547	212	39	153	49	32
7	Angola	8/2012	220	81	37	---	---	---
8	Tanzania	10/2015	372	136	37	---	---	---
9	Burundi	6/2015	121	44	36	43	18	42
10	Uganda	2/2011	386	135	35	---	---	---
11	Algeria	5/2012	462	146	32	143	10	7
12	Zimbabwe	7/2013	270	85	32	80	38	48
13	New Zealand	9/2014	121	38	31	---	---	---
14	Tunisia	10/2014	217	68	31	---	---	---
15	Cameroon	9/2013	180	56	31	100	20	20
16	Sudan	4/2015	426	130	31	54	19	35
17	South Sudan	8/2011	332	88	27	50	5	10
52	Nigeria	3/2015	360	20	6	109	7	6
53	Comoros	1/2015	33	1	3	---	---	---
54	Papua New Guinea	6/2012	111	3	3	---	---	---

Source: <http://www.data.worldbank.org/indicator/sg.gen.parl.zs>

NB: --- Countries that operate unicameral legislature

Figure 2



Out of 54 countries in Africa, Nigeria is the 52nd country in the hierarchy, but among those who have not created political space for women. Ironically, Nigeria is “Giant of Africa”. Although some African countries recorded significant women parliamentarians, a source of pride for Africa in world’s comparative politics, it is however evident that some of the world’s worst political performers are also found in the continent.

Sample Size of the Study:

The study adopted Neyman (1934) Finite Population Correction factor approach, quoted in Montaquila and Kalton (2010), to determine the sample size (n) of the population. The sample size is calculated by using the formula:

$$no = \frac{Z^2 p (1-p)}{e}$$

Where Z is the tabulated value of the level of confidence, P is the population proportion usually assumed to be P = 0.5 so as to give equal (unbiased) chances to responses and no responses, and e is the sampling (margin or tolerable) error. Using the industry standard for research (that is confidence level = 95% (1.96) and margin of error = 5% (0.05), we have the sample size to be:

$$no = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.5) (1-0.5)}{(0.05)} = 384.16 = 384$$

In calculating the finite population correction factor, the true sample size was established to be:

$$N = \frac{no}{N}$$

no + (N-1) Where the total population

$$N = 7,665,859 \text{ and } no = 384$$

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{384 (7,665,859)}{384 + (7,665,859-1)} \\ &= \frac{2,943,689,856}{7,666,242} = 383.98 = 384 \end{aligned}$$

On the strength of the above calculation, 384 were derived as the sample size. To determine the number of questionnaire to be administered in each of the five states, the percentage contribution of each of the states to the total population under study was firstly considered, subsequently, the number of questionnaire retrieved from respondents is illustrated below.

Table 8 Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval

State	Registered Voters	Percentage of Registered Voters (%)	Distributed by Derived Percentage	Retrieved Questionnaire
Abia	1,396,162	18.2	70	68
Anambra	1,963,173	25.6	98	93
Ebonyi	1,074,273	14.1	54	54
Enugu	1,429,221	18.6	72	70
Imo	1,803,030	23.5	90	85
Total	7,665,859	100	384	370

The percentage on the third column was derived by dividing the registered voters in each state by the total registered voters in the South-East according to Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) record, after the division, one hundred (100) was used to multiply the outcome, out of which 384 questionnaire were distributed, 370 respondents returned their completed copies.

Simple random sampling technique was employed to select the population elements for the study. Montaquila and Kalton (2010) define simple random sample as a sample design in which every possible sample of size n from the population of N elements has an equal probability of selection. It may be selected by taking random draws from the set of numbers {1, 2... N}. Based on simple random sample, elements have equal probabilities of

selection and simple random sampling is therefore an equal probability selection method appropriate for the research.

Analysis

This section analyzed the data gathered from the survey to establish the factors militating against women representation in politics. The analysis is based on the 370 questionnaire retrieved from respondents out of the 384 copies administered.

Table 9 Gender Distribution of Respondents

Respondent	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	195	52.7	52.7	52.7
Female	175	47.3	47.3	100.0
Total	370	100.0	100.0	

The above showed that male respondents with 52% are higher than 47.3% of female.

Table 10 Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20-40	237	64.1	64.1	64.1
41-59	106	28.6	28.6	92.7
60 and above	27	7.3	7.3	100.0
Total	370	100.0	100.0	

Table 10 shows the age bracket of respondents 20-40 was higher, followed by 41-59, while 60 and above was the least.

Table 11 Level of Education of Respondents

Qualification Bracket	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
WASC/NCE	121	32.7	32.7	32.7
HND/B.Sc	190	51.4	51.4	84.1
M.Sc/Ph.D	59	15.9	15.9	100.0
Total	370	100.0	100.0	

WASC/NCE holders are higher in number, followed by HND/B.Sc, and M.Sc/PhD. The level of education of the respondents indicated that they were knowledgeable to understand the variables in the questionnaire.

Table 12 Degree of Gender Agreement on Preliminary Interrogation

Itemized Questions	Sex				Total Yes	Total No
	Male		Female			
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)		
Do you have interest in politics	155 (75.5)	100 (62.9)	40 (20.5)	65 (37.1)	255 (68.9)	105 (28.4)
Do you belong to any political party	91 (46.7)	68 (38.9)	104 ((53.3)	107 (61.1)	159 (43.0)	211 (57.0)
Have you contested for any elective position	85 (43.6)	59 (33.7)	110 (56.4)	116 (66.3)	144 (38.9)	226 (61.1)
Do you intend to contest for any elective position in future	134 (68.7)	99 (56.6)	61 (31.3)	76 (43.4)	233 (63.0)	137 (37.0)
Do you believe that women are discriminated against and marginalized in Nigeria politics	128 (65.6)	140 (80.0)	67 (34.4)	35 (20.0)	268 (72.4)	102 (27.6)
What is your assessment of politics in Nigeria (a nice game or a dirty game)	87 (44.6)	77 (44.0)	108 (55.4)	98 (56.0)	164 (44.3)	206 (55.7)

More men have interest in politics than women, and a higher percentage of men belonged to political parties than women, while more men had contested for elective positions than women. Higher percentage of male had the intention to contest for future elective offices than female. Very high percentage of women than men agreed that women were being discriminated against and marginalized in Nigeria politics. Approximately, fewer male and female assessed politics in Nigeria as a nice game, while majority of both sex (almost at par) adjudged it a dirty game as shown above. Table 13 illustrated the data generated in the fieldwork and the level of agreement of the respondents on each variable.

Table 13 Level of agreement with the statement that socio-cultural barriers inhibit Women representation in Nigeria politics

S/No	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD
		(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)		
1.	Religious doctrine creates barrier	196 (53.0)	98 (26.5)	50 (13.5)	26 (7.0)	3.25	.940
2.	Cultural barrier	159 (43.0)	150 (40.5)	51 (13.8)	10 (2.7)	3.24	.788
3.	Political violence hinders participation	148 (40.0)	174 (47.0)	36 (9.7)	12 (3.2)	3.24	.756
4.	Political party intrigues jeopardize participation	117 (31.6)	171 (46.2)	63 (17.0)	19 (5.1)	3.04	.832
5.	Absence of internal democracy in political parties	132 (35.7)	159 (43.0)	57 (15.4)	22 (5.9)	3.08	.862
6.	Male domination of executive positions of political parties	161 (43.5)	131 (35.4)	55 (14.9)	23 (6.2)	3.16	.899
7.	Discriminatory laws against women	104 (28.1)	128 (34.6)	92 (24.9)	46 (12.4)	2.78	.991
8.	Institutional defect impedes women participation	101 (27.3)	152 (41.1)	97 (26.2)	20 (5.4)	2.90	.862
9.	Women need political education to equip themselves properly	130 (35.1)	168 (45.4)	52 (14.1)	20 (5.4)	3.10	.836
10.	Inferiority complex of women undermines their disposition	159 (43.0)	131 (35.4)	58 (15.7)	22 (5.9)	3.15	.896
11.	Child-rearing and domestic responsibilities	129 (34.9)	147 (39.7)	56 (15.1)	38 (10.3)	2.99	.956
12.	Nigeria Constitution is biased against women citizenship rights	92 (24.9)	99 (26.8)	120 (32.4)	59 (15.9)	2.61	1.029
13.	Political corruption	105 (28.4)	182 (49.2)	63 (17.0)	20 (5.4)	3.01	.820

14.	Husbands/Family fear of women infidelity	142 (38.4)	148 (40.0)	57 (15.4)	23 (6.2)	3.11	.882
15.	Gender stereotype in the society	132 (35.7)	147 (39.7)	61 (16.5)	30 (8.1)	3.03	.921
16.	Women are ignorant of political agenda	81 (21.9)	107 (28.9)	120 (32.4)	62 (16.8)	2.56	1.011
17.	Women prefer managing their homes to politics	86 (23.2)	135 (36.5)	83 (22.4)	66 (17.8)	2.65	1.025
18.	Discriminatory practices against women	119 (32.2)	149 (40.3)	74 (20.0)	28 (7.6)	2.97	.909
19.	Suppression of women by husbands or households	126 (34.1)	174 (47.0)	49 (13.2)	21 (5.7)	3.09	.832

The respondents agreed on all the variables in the table 13 above. All the religious, socio-cultural and political indicators corroborate the pathetic situation of women in Nigeria politics as the variables were all against women political development from the family unit to the wider society. These accounted for the underrepresentation or apathy of women in Nigeria politics.

Test of Hypothesis 1

H₁: Socio-cultural barriers inhibit women participation in Nigeria politics

Calculations:

$$\text{Chi-Sq} = \sum_{ij}^{mn} \frac{(O_{ij} - E_{ij})^2}{E_{ij}} = 4.732 + 5.693 + 1.397 + \dots + 4.448 = 150.383$$

$$\text{Degree of freedom} = (m - 1)(n - 1) = (4 - 1)(5 - 1) = 12$$

At 5% level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$) and 12 degree of freedom, the chi-square tabulated (critical).

$$\text{Chi-Sq.} = 150.383, \text{DF} = 12, \text{P-Value} = 0.000$$

Result:

Since the chi-square calculated value (150.383) is greater than the chi-square tabulated value (5.23), the hypothesis is validated with 95% confidence (level of agreement), that socio-cultural barriers inhibit women participation in Nigeria politics.

Table 14 Level of agreement with the statement that economic deprivations undermine Women participation in Nigeria politics

S/No	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	SD (%)	D (%)	Mean	STD
1.	Inability to woe voters with money	153 (41.4)	110 (29.7)	53 (14.3)	54 (14.6)	2.98	1.069
2.	Poverty is a major barrier against women	102 (27.6)	131 (35.4)	75 (20.3)	62 (16.8)	2.74	1.041
3.	Lack of education	97 (26.2)	139 (37.6)	69 (18.6)	65 (17.6)	2.72	1.038
4.	Access to good healthcare services	69 (18.6)	134 (36.2)	81 (21.9)	86 (23.2)	2.50	1.044
5.	Lack of job	96 (25.9)	149 (40.3)	56 (15.1)	69 (18.6)	2.74	1.044
6.	Income inequality	118 (31.9)	150 (40.5)	53 (14.3)	49 (13.2)	2.91	.993
7.	Lack of corporate sponsorship	122 (33.0)	158 (42.7)	54 (14.6)	36 (9.7)	2.99	.931
8.	Godfatherism sponsorship does not favour women	117 (31.6)	145 (39.2)	56 (15.1)	52 (14.1)	2.88	1.009
9.	Gender inequality in economic institutions	128 (34.6)	131 (35.4)	60 (16.2)	51 (13.8)	2.91	1.027
10.	Lack of economic resources for effective participation	113 (30.5)	167 (45.1)	47 (12.7)	43 (11.6)	2.95	.947
11.	Inability to make resourceful contacts	100 (27.0)	139 (37.6)	74 (20.0)	57 (15.4)	2.76	1.016
12.	Uneven playing ground in all endeavour	124 (33.5)	146 (39.5)	65 (17.6)	35 (9.5)	2.97	.944

The respondents agreed on all the variables in the table 14 that economic deprivation accounts for women underrepresentation in Nigeria politics. Poverty and lack of corporate sponsorship or Godfatherism are the major hindrances in women participation in politics.

Test of Hypothesis 2

H₂: Economic deprivations undermine women participation in Nigeria politics

Calculations:

$$\text{Chi-Sq} = \sum_{ij}^{mn} \frac{(O_{ij} - E_{ij})^2}{E_{ij}} = 5.207 + 0.173 + 0.536 + \dots + 5.628 = 111.870$$

$$\text{Degree of freedom} = (m - 1)(n - 1) = (4 - 1)(5 - 1) = 12$$

At 5% level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$) and 12 degree of freedom, the chi-square tabulated (critical) value of the test is 5.23.

Chi-Sq = 111.870, DF = 12, P-Value = 0.000

Result:

Since the chi-square calculated value (111.870) is greater than the chi-square tabulated value (5.23), the hypothesis is validated with 95% confidence (level of agreement) that economic deprivations undermine women representation in Nigeria politics.

Discussion on Findings

Table 12 shows apparent willingness of 56.6% of the women to participate in politics, and 62.9% of the female has interest in politics, but 61.1% of them do not belong to any political party. 66.3% of women and 56.4 of men have not contested for any elective office. The political scenario depicts apathy on the part of the women in a skewed terrain. This was given credence with 80% of female and 65.6% of male agreement that women were being discriminated against and marginalized in politics. With 56.6% of female and 55.4% of male assessment, politics in Nigeria is adjudged a dirty game. The application of crude tools, primitive and primordial political ideologies co-modified the electoral processes and misconstrued for primitive accumulation of wealth.

The respondents agreed in table 13 that religion and culture are the fundamental barriers inhibiting women participation in politics. Nigeria politics is characterized by violence, political intrigues, and lack of intra-party democracy and male domination of executive positions of political parties. The study revealed evidence of institutional defects on discriminatory laws against women, also absence of political education and ignorance of political agenda, child-rearing and domestic responsibilities as impediments on women participation in politics. Nigeria Constitution does not protect women citizenship rights as they lose their rights on marrying foreigners. Political corruption scares women as they are incorruptible; worse still, the gender stereotype in the society about women unfit to shoulder political responsibilities, coupled with husbands and/or family fear of infidelity if allowed to mingle around with male politicians, hamper their participation in politics. For fear of political rancour, illicit electoral transactions, and death, women prefer managing their homes to politics. As explicitly expressed (in table 13) by the respondents on all the variables, women are discriminated against by the society; husbands and households suppress women in all ramifications.

The result expresses political naivety, relative-poverty and illiteracy as some of the main barriers against women participation in politics. Lack of access to good healthcare services, uneven playing ground, absence of corporate and godfathers' sponsorship, and inequality in economic institutions inhibit effective representation of women in politics.

Limitations in making resourceful contacts to sponsor election expenses, particularly the campaign activities contribute to women political apathy.

Conclusion

Women marginalization from political activities originated from antiquity. The society was skewed in those olden days, in spite of the seemingly insurmountable barriers, women proved their political prowess in conflict resolutions. Discrimination and marginalization against women transcended the ancient era to colonized society, still women maintained their feat. The women's audacity to challenging colonial government on their rights and the victory recorded by them in their struggle against adverse colonial policies, and in inter-tribal wars were the epoch of female struggle for political emancipation. Contemporary society does not create political space or electoral ventilation for women participation in electoral processes and political appointive positions, despite their immeasurable contributions in governance in developing countries like Nigeria. The rhetoric 35% affirmative action plan to actualize women liberation in modern democratic governance is a myth in Nigeria and in some African nations as their efforts is being truncated by political corruption and plutocracy.

The incidence of women discrimination in politics from the family unit to larger society in Nigeria is explicitly expressed in the study. Women are proving their mettle in parliaments in other African countries, while Nigeria is narrowing its political space against them, fostering electoral fraud and intrigues to edge women out of competition. Nigeria should borrow a leaf from other African countries like Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, and other democratic progressive states in placing women on their rightful political positions in parliament and governance. The political apathy recorded against women in the study was due to the fact that they were seriously impoverished, alienated from their own government projects, neglected in the distribution of society benefits and subjugated by the society. The domineering nature and masculine disposition of men dwarfs and intimidates women in politics. The need to integrate the female folk into the political processes from the party level to the parliament and executive arm of the government cannot be overemphasized as a panacea in consolidating inclusive democracy.

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