

WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN NIGERIA. CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL IMPACT IN NIGERIAN DEMOCRACY

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Abstract

This study examined women political participation in Nigeria with focus on the analysis of the socio-economic and political impact in Nigeria democracy. The study becomes imperative in order to update the current status of women political participation in Nigerian democracy. The study evaluated the current status of women challenges posed by non-full political participation in Nigeria democracy. The study employed qualitative method to collect data such as published materials, documentaries, textbooks, library, journals and internet materials etc. The historical design was also adopted for the study. The study applied content analysis as a method of data analysis. Theory of political Behavior was adopted. It was discovered that failure of gender policies in Nigeria as a result of exclusion methods by Nigerian politicians among other things caused the dilemma. The study recommended cultural, governance and political reforms to be blended with modern political trends and change of political attitude as a panacea to change the ugly trends positively.

Keywords: Women, Political Participation Socio-Economic, Nigeria and Democracy

Introduction

The participation of women in political decision making positions was recognized as a political right after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of (UDHR) in 1948. UDHR Articles 2 and 21 stipulate equal enjoyment of political rights without discrimination on the basis of one's sex or any other ground. Even in most of western states women franchise right is not recognized in the first wave of democratization except in USA, Britain and some European countries. Like many world countries, the majority of women in Ethiopia has also deprived of social, economic and political rights and hold low status in the society for much history of the country. They have been denied equal access to education, training and gainful employment opportunities and their involvement in policy formulation and decision making processes have been minimal. While Ethiopia's government has made significant strides over the recent years in setting the corner stones of a women's machinery in government.

Truly speaking, the effort for all citizens to participate in the management of public affairs is at the very heart of democracy. Again, full and equal participation of both women and men in political decision making provides a balance that reflects the composition of the society, which enhances the legitimacy of political processes by making these processes more democratic and responsive to the concerns and welfare of the people in the polity.

Frankly, the poor condition of socio-economic engagements of women and marginalization of Nigerian women in politics and decision making is as old as the Nigerian society. It actually predates the advent of colonialism in Nigeria. The marginalization process of women is reinforced by the socio-economic challenges faced by the women folk in Nigeria. These challenges such as patriarchy, poverty, illiteracy, religious and cultural norms etc. and marginalization is widely notice politically, socially, economically, physically and psychologically by their men counter parts. The long years of military rule in Nigeria

further worsened the position of women in political participation deteriorates their access to political participation. It is widely believed that the socio-economic condition gave birth to marginalization of women in political participation and decision making processes which has been responsible for the exclusion of the interests of women in governance and development paradigms in the country. Yet, the development of any country requires the participation of both men and women..

Lack of Resources: Economic, Material and Human; feminisation of poverty. Political space appears to be opened to those with strong political affiliations. Discriminatory laws and gender blind policies, lack of political will, when the Yar'Adua administration came into office, it promised to give 30 percent of political appointment to women (less than the 35 percent in the National Gender Policy). But an assessment conducted by Action Aid after one year indicated that women appointment was only 11 percent. President Goodluck Jonathan increased it to 32%. The past and present government has given priority to the speeding up of equality between men and women but all no avail as the situation still remains on called for in Nigeria political atmosphere..

Historically speaking, the Nigerian women participation in politics dates back to the Pre-colonial period. Women such as Queen Amina of Zaria, Princess Moremi of Ife, Princess Inikpi of Igala, Iyalode Efunsetan Amwura of Ibadan and Emotan of Benin contributed immensely to politics by organizing, founded cities, led migrations and even conquered kingdoms (Awe, 2014). According to Afolabi (2013), women in this period held powerful positions and were part of decision making in their societies such as Umu-ada of Igbo land and in Western Nigeria (Yoruba) the Iyalode, a title for the leader of women group who were members of the leadership that represented women as members of the Council of State till 1874. This was a period when women were seen as an instrument of social cohesion and mobilization as they fully participated in the governance of their societies that led to the growth and development of their cities. During the colonial period of 1860 - 1960 in Nigeria, women formed modern pressure groups and political parties, for example, the Lagos Women's League for better sanitary condition and women education, Women's Party in 1944 which agitated for women's welfare and the equality of sexes. Others were Abeokuta Ladies Club which metamorphosed into Abeokuta Women's Union in 1946. In 1949, its scope was extended and its name was changed to the Nigerian Women's Union, (Mba, 2012). Women also contested for elective offices. Such women were Margaret Ekpo, who won the election on her own merit into the Eastern House of Assembly in 1953/1954 elections and attended constitutional conferences. Other women included Lady Aboyomi, Mrs Kuti, Miss Young and Mrs Femi Pearse; (Gonyolk, 2015). These women organizations helped to push women's welfare matters in an organized manner, to the attention of the colonial government and the public.

Statement of the Problem

In line with global trend, Nigerian women constitute nearly half of the population of the country. But despite the major roles they play with their population, women roles in the society are yet to be given recognition. This is due to some cultural stereotypes, poverty, illiteracy, abuse of religion, traditional practices and patriarchal societal structures. In Nigeria the awareness about the role of women in development of a nation came up in 1980s. The International Conference on women in Beijing in 1995 enhanced the effective participation of women in politics in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, about 51 percent of women are involved in voting during elections. Despite these, women are still under represented in both elective and appointive positions. Available statistics revealed that overall political representation of women in government of Nigeria is less than 7 percent (Agbalajobi, 2010).

This shows that Nigeria has not attained 35 percent affirmative as prescribed by the Beijing Platform of Action.

Nigeria has been recording low participation of women in both elective and appointive positions this is a growing concern to many Nigerians. However, concerted efforts have been made by government and non-governmental organizations to increase the level of participation of women in politics, in line, with the declaration made at the fourth World Conference on women in Beijing, which advocated 35% affirmative action. However, in Nigeria, the extant National Gender Policy (NGP) recommended 35% affirmative action instead and sought for a more inclusive representation of women with at least 35% of both elective political and appointive public service positions respectively. The under representation of women in political participation gained root due to the patriarchal practice inherent in our society, much of which were obvious from pre-colonial era till date.

Awolowo and Aluko, (2010) expressed that the low level of political participation of the Nigerian women is becoming alarming and disturbing. Since the emergence of political independence in 1960, the Nigerian women have remained invisible in the political process. In Nigeria there is a continuing trend of male domination of political and other public positions (Oloyede, 2004; Adelekan, 2010). This study therefore, x-rays the socio-economic women vis-à-vis participation in Nigerian politics.

1. How do culture affects women political participation in Nigeria
2. Does poverty affects women political participation in Nigeria

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to examine how socio-economic affect women political participation in Nigeria: The specific includes;

- 1 To investigate how culture affects women political participation in Nigeria
- 2 To x-ray how poverty affects women political participation in Nigeria

Significance of the Study

The work will serve as a rich source of secondary data on the subject matter for subsequent researchers and students. It will serve also as an eye opener to those who do not know about women participation in politics in Nigeria from the pre- colonial period to our present time.

The findings of this study will educate the government agencies and inform the policy makers on the need for effective implementation of reform of customary justice, in order to give women their rightful place in Nigeria politics. It shall state the limits for state interferences on the rights and duties of women political participation in Nigeria. Moreover, it will serve as a reference document for those who may have the intent to study similar topic in future in their various felid of endeavour.

Conceptual Clarifications

Political Participation

On the concept of Political participation scholars and commentators have attempted to conceptualize the meaning of political participation in different ways. Falade (2014) describes political participation as an aspect of political behaviour which focuses on the way individuals take part in politics. It encompasses a wide range of political activities such as voting, contesting elective post, belonging to a political party, holding public office, attending political rallies and meetings and so on.

Falade further noted that the extent to which people participate in the political system differ from person to person. In literal terms, political participation is the involvement of every member, organization and groups in a nation in the entire political process. Political participation is the process through which the individual plays a role in the political life of his society and has the opportunity to take part in deciding what common goals of the society are and the best way of achieving these goals (Adelekan, 2010). The individual is central in this system and can exist as a sole entity or part of a group. The political set up is not complete with leaders in governance. The people are the core aspect of the society in any political system especially democracy. The leaders do not decide what the people want, it is the people that decide what they need at any given point in time.

Thus, the people do not only decide the national values but decides who should govern them. Akamare, (2003) clearly defined political participation as an aspect of political behaviour and it focuses on the way in which individuals take part in politics. It is a voluntary activity and one may participate directly or indirectly. In another perspective, Arolowo and Aluko, (2010) stressed that the essence of political participation in any society, either civilised or primitive is to seek control of power, acquisition of power and to influence decision making. Political participation is a means of contributing ones quota to the political system and overall development of the nation. It involves wanting to lead or govern the people.

The perspective and scope of political participation is wide and can be viewed from two ends, the desire of the individual. In the later, the focus is to seek to control of power which may be bent on some social, political, personal or ideological motives and in away influence decision making. Approaching political participation from the stand point of the group, Awoleso, (2014) defines political participation as voluntary activities shared by members of a society in the selection of their rulers and directly or indirectly involves in the formation of public policies. Political participation involves the citizens taking in their political system thereby contributing their quota in the political system and the overall development of the nation.

The communalist, these are those who get engaged in voting regularly, they also get involved in community affairs but they are not involved in political campaign activities. The campaigners: They are actively involved in political campaign but inactive in other community affairs. Complete activists: They are highly involved in all political activities. They actively participate in voting, political campaign, community activities and make contact with public officials. Some of the factors that determine political participation are: cultural, economic, political, religious and educational backgrounds of individuals. Also, the level of political awareness as well as the measure of confidence in the political process determines the extent to which the citizens participate in the political system.

Falade (2014) also held that in Nigeria, politics is influenced by money, ethnic and religious factors. Since independence in 1960, religious and ethnic politics characterize electioneering process in Nigeria. This is the reason why Albert Legogie, former deputy Senate President, pointed out that it was clear from the trend of the election that there was a big gulf, a dichotomy between the north and the south and between

Christians and Muslims (Adeyemo, 2011). For instance, during the post-presidential election violence in the Muslim dominated northern part of Nigeria, southerners and Christians were attacked and killed while many churches were burnt. Politics in Nigeria is regarded as a dirty game and it is practiced with bitterness, hatred, rancor and other associated evils. The outcome of this is that Nigeria is in vicious cycle of political crises and instability.

The 1985 Beijing declaration to which Nigeria is a signatory provides that 30% of all positions in government should be given to women. This policy is yet to be implemented in Nigeria because there is a continuing trend of male domination of political and other public positions (Oloyede, 2004; Adelekan, 2010). The marginal involvement of African women in the political process results from the lingering inhibitive cultural and patriarchal forces against women's engagement in politics that characterized African traditional societies (Chuku, 2009). This requires practical effort to end the situation. Political participation is therefore one of the fundamental requirements of democratic governance. Every true democratic system is centered on the power, will and demands of the people as the conventional definition of democracy defined it as government of the people, by the people and for the people.

Culture

The system of beliefs including ethnic, religious, cultural values and norms contribute to marginalization of women in Nigeria especially in the area of politics. The sex role socialization that exists in the country allows for distinct and disproportionate work including political positions to be allocated by biological sexes and this creates a socially distinct gender division of labor (Agbalajobi, 2010). Currently, this concept known as, the sexual division of labor, where sexes are assigned different complementary tasks appears to be the foundation of both the labor and political sectors in Nigeria.

Commenting on the extent of women participation in Nigeria Arwolo and Aluko, (2010) is of the view that Nigeria is patriarchy society and women are expected to conform and confine to the "male dominance and female subservience. They further held that Men have played a significant role in the political administration of Nigeria. For instance, in 1992, under President Babangida's administration, out of the 300 gubernatorial aspirants, there were only 8 and none of the women were elected as governor. Men form the political parties and women are invited to join at a much later stage after the party structures have been put in place. Therefore, typically, men are political party executives and this contributes to the marginalization of women especially during the party nomination process. Their participation in elective positions has over the years not been encouraging. This creates a situation which narrows the women's chances of participating more in decision making positions. Women have proved their strength and competence even in the male dominated professions and shall prove their competence in elective positions if given a chance. Although women have been playing crucial roles in politics in the country, they have not been adequately put in the decision making positions.

Fatile, O.J., Akhakpe, I., Igbokwe-Ibeto and Chinyeaka J. (2012). In their studies titled "Feminism and Political Participation in Nigeria: An Empirical Analysis" the paper examines women political participation in Nigeria and the challenges facing them. In analyzing the issues raised, the paper utilizes the nature of society, political, socio-cultural, and economic approach to feminism. To scientifically investigate the issues of feminism and political participation in Nigerian, the descriptive surveys as well as direct observation were employed. Combinations of clustered and simple random sampling method were used to draw a sample of seven hundred and twenty (720) respondents from the six geo-political zones of the country. The study observes among others, that lack of adequate finance is a crucial hindrance

to effective female participation in Nigerian politics. Large portions of the Nigerian female population are not as financially strong as their male counterparts. Yet, family responsibilities and childbearing also hinder women from participating effectively in partisan politics. The paper submits that the prospects of Nigerian women in politics are bright as some of the obstacles highlighted above are already being removed. However, a quiet but significant social revolution is necessary among women if they are to attain the desired position in Nigerian politics. It concludes that the need to educate women and their female children which is invariably a source of political, economic and social power cannot be over emphasized.

Fullerton (2009) defined democratic culture as a culture in which all citizens can participate and feel that they have a stake, social privileges in political process. Democratic culture is about individual liberty as well as collective self-governance. Suppression democratic culture that limits women participation in politics is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria. Fubara (1995) observes that the first republic political parties in Nigeria were dominated by men. For instance, membership of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon and the Northern Element Progressive Congress recorded 64 males and 7 females for NCNC and 57 males and 5 females for NPC respectively. In the legislative assembly, out of 53 people only 1 was a female.

Fubara (1995) also contended that the role of women in the political organization of Nigeria illustrates that women have been deprived of responsibilities that ought to be largely theirs which prohibits democratic culture. In the second republic, there was also one woman senator (Ugwu, 2001). Ogbe (2008) contends that over 98% of elective offices in Nigeria are occupied by men. Thus the United Nation's recommended that at least 30% of political office should be occupied by women is not yet attained in Nigeria. This arrangement does not promote democratic culture in Nigeria.

Although women in Nigeria do not enjoy full equal rights, the proportion of the women to men in Nigeria is split in half. According to the 1991 census, women represented about 50% of Nigeria's population and in the 2006 Census constitute about 47% (Okpara, 2006, NPC, 2006)). Yet, women in Nigeria are marginalized in all spheres of life, especially in the political administration of the country. Women represent about the half of the population in the world and generally, could make some crucial contributions to societal development. In many societies, women play the following vital five roles: mother, producer, home manager, community organizer, and socio-cultural and political activists (Agbalajobi, 2010). Due to past discrimination and inequality the emergence of women movements has affected the role of women when it comes to being political activists. Agbalajobi (2010) stated that gender roles were divided among male and female sexes, before the women movements came into existence. In Nigeria, women suffer from different types of gender discrimination, inequality, and exclusions especially concerning their participation in the political process because some activities are typically considered to be "exclusively or predominantly male and therefore overwhelming and morally important".

Poverty

Prior to this, in 1979, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Agbalajobi, (2010) held that the Convention "reflects the depth of the exclusion and restriction practiced against women solely on the basis of their sex by calling for equal rights for women, regardless of their marital status in all fields – political, economic, social, cultural and civil. It calls for national legislations

to ban discrimination, recommends temporary special measures to speed equality in fact between men and women” (UNESCO, 1999). The 1999 Constitution provided somewhat similar affirmative action to supplement non-discrimination of contending parties.

Sanusi A. and Muddassir A. G. (2017) carried out a study on Cross-Sectional Analyses of Women Political Participation for Development in Northwestern Nigeria in Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara State. According to him achieving gender equity in political participation requires access to equal opportunities. This paper, through the use of descriptive survey, take a cross-sectional analyses of gender inequality and political participation in Northwestern Nigeria, using Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara states as a study area. The paper discovered that despite democratic waves experienced by Nigerians since 1999-2011, none of the Northwestern state has ever produced a female presidential candidate neither for the seat of vice president. It also discovered that none of the state has ever produced a female senatorial candidate, while only Kebbi state in 2007 produced a female representative. The paper also discovered that none of the Northwestern state has ever produced a gubernatorial candidate, or chairperson. However, this monumental marginalization can not augur well for the smooth flourishing of nascent democracy. This without much doubt will also go a long way in militating the actualization of the gender and millennium development goal beyond 2015. In view of the above; the paper proffers the following recommendations: That woman subordination must be set off the record from the women themselves. Women must recognized that the ideology that male are superior to women is nothing but a mere statement. This recognition reverses both the attitudes and values and indeed the world view that most men have internalized since earliest childhood. Expanding educational opportunities for women is also suggested for solving the women marginalization.

Adeleke J. O. (2014) conducted a study titled: “women's political participation at the local government level in Akoko South West Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria” Local government, being the nearest to the grass-root (or rural dwellers) has been described as the basic type of political arena where participatory democracy is characteristic of good governance can be achieved. But at this level of governance, women are considerably marginalized; instead, they enjoy mere tokenism at the higher level of governance and political arena where merely appointed then elected into positions such that the society is denied the advantage of their full potential as they are made to play a second fiddle to their male counterparts. Field work was conducted in relation to the importance of women's political participation at the grass roots, factors hindering women's political participation, and measures that can enhance women's political participation, in Oka and Akungba in Akoko South-West Local Government Area of Ondo State Nigeria. 180 questionnaire were administered on randomly selected respondents, and the study shows that women can gain more political experience at the local level; thus enhancing their effectiveness at a higher level of decision-making, if given a chance. The study also identifies factors hindering women's local political participation, most especially patriarchy. It finally suggests that women should be more empowered to participate at the local level to enhance their political experience for good governance and national development.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the Theory of political Behavior. It was propounded by Karl Deutsch and Theodor Adorno in 1977 as cited in Clark (2013). The theory states that Political behavior is the subset of human behavior that involves politics and powers when individuals or groups try to influence or escape the influence of others. The theory quantifies and explains the influences that define a person's ideology, political views, and levels of political participation. The theory has it that certain factors influence and

shape political orientation which creates long-term effects. The men use the political influences to undermine the women folk and have weak relationship full deceit to create more opportunity to acquire stronger power that power is not given rather acquired.

Eric L. Dey has argued that socialisation is the process through which individuals acquire knowledge, habits, and value orientations that will be useful in the future. Women participate in this to form a rallying point for common action; politically, economically and socially and agitate for better conditions for women and for drawing attention to gender issues in politics as they affect women. This relationship between this theory and this topic inform the choice of this theory.

Methodology

The study adopted historical research design. The adaption of this design is justified as follows. First, the design assisted the researchers to trace the past record of events or experiences of socio-economic and women political participation in Nigeria.

Second, the design allowed the researcher to evaluate historical impacts of record of events or experiences of socio-economic and women political participation in Nigeria. Third, the past events were used to give explanation on the units of measurement from the indicators such as poverty and culture of the study as a result of its importance of the questions raised to address in the study.

The study is carried out in Nigeria. The study concentrated on the affects of socio-economic and women participation in Nigeria. The study used the instrument of poverty and culture as tools of investigations.

The study sourced data from secondary sources. The secondary sources included the followings; the published materials that are very important to historical events, archives, textbooks, library materials, journals, magazines, newspapers, legal documents and government official documents. Moreover, the scholarly research studies and other relevant national and international agencies reports etc.

In addition, the researcher browsed and access relevant data from internet to get necessary materials or empirical studies from reputable scholars written within and outside the country. These materials were downloaded, printed and also used for the analyses, discussion and conclusion of the study. The researcher adopted qualitative method to carry out its investigations in this study. The study concentrated solely on the use of secondary sources such as documentary and internet methods of data collection as discussed below..

The study on the method of analyses will employ the content analytical techniques for the core analysis of the data collected. The data to be use for the analysis were carefully extracted from the existing logical chains of evidences in other related empirical studies. The information gathered from the logical evidence were used as presented in various conferences, journal and periodic accepted papers, edited books, and relevant documentary materials from internet etc.

The researcher applied the technique of data reduction from the documentaries and reports for easy interpretation. The information collected from documentaries will be quoted during data analysis to support or disprove hypotheses/objectives of the study. The processed data in the study were structured in line with themes and sub-theme according to the research hypotheses/objectives of the study.

Benefits of Socio-Economic and Political impact of Women Political Participation in Nigeria

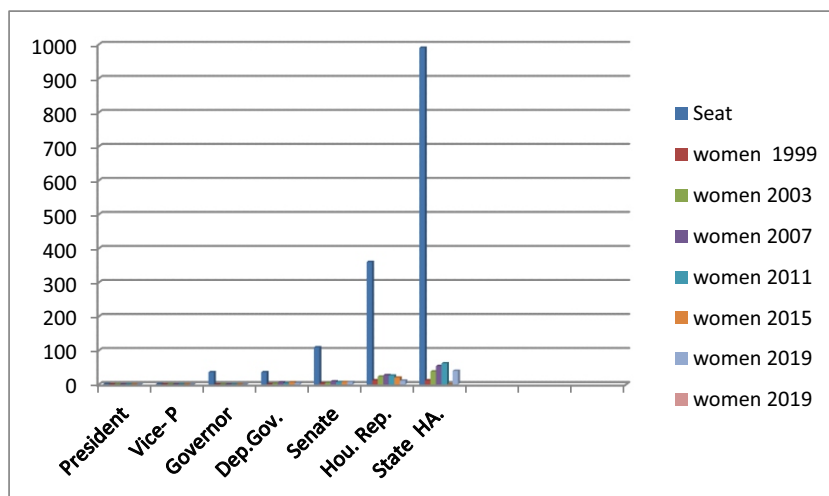
- 1. Increase of interest Representation.** Full political participation of women in politics in Nigeria is an ample opportunity to involve them to take part in decision making which is the hallmark of democracy. It will create room for the women to influence the government policies, programmes and agencies concerning their interests, empowerment and occupying political positions in the polity.
- 2. Improved Good Governance.** Women's political participation is another dimension to bring diverse leadership experiences and people oriented perspectives to more interest informed decision making during debates and conversations in peoples aspirations and interests in the society.
- 3. Enhanced value of democracy.** Unlocking reasonable political participation for women in Nigeria will add value to Nigerian democracy as their potentialities shall be fully utilized. The current challenges such as linkages on accountability, transparency and inclusiveness and cultural barriers shall be fundamentally addressed.
- 4. Reduction in political violence.** Statistics of violence show that women, girls and children are more victims of violence. The women potentials anchored on natural influence of peace disposition shall reduce violence and champion peaceful society to strengthen democratic ideals and good governance.
- 5. Change of political mobilization strategy.** The present scenario during political campaign and voting in Nigeria regards women and girls as clappers, squads of cheerleaders, supporters clubs, beggars clubs and Asbi women and girls with various uniforms to fight opposition parties will definitely change. The mobilisation strategy where women and girls become political tools to win election and achieve political success for men will automatically change for their good and modesty outing during will shift to reality, if they fully participate in decision making in Nigeria politics. Hence, women's modesty during elections does not help them during the political confrontation (Agbalajobi, 2010).
- 6. Access to Economic Resources.** Poverty, as one of the key challenges of women political participation shall be drastically reduced. The narrative of poverty and economic dependence on husband, cousin, brother etc. to sustain families will improve as access to financial capital resources such as microcredit programs, large-scale investment, engaging in modern farming will increase as enlightenment for entrepreneurship, empowerment, participating in digital advancing technologies, it will also foster development of small, medium, and large-scale businesses, the 30% and 35% affirmative action offered to women in the National Gender Policy (2006) and the National Women Policy (2000) will be achieved, school enrollment and with improved health care among others including Economic growth and development, and cultural barriers etc.

Factors responsible for Negative Impacts of Women not fully Participating in Nigeria Politics

1. **Preference on patriarchal community norms.** The nature of discriminatory tendencies of beliefs of traditions, customs and culture of the people is impediment to women political participation in Nigeria politics. gender stereotyping therefore promote inferiority complex, for instance educating boy child against girl child by culturally devaluing women which is a constrain to viable political participation, the gap breed illiterates and second class citizens in the polity.
2. **Low political interest of women.** Many women as a result of illiteracy have low interests and high phobia for political engagement caused by high social stigma, religious beliefs, political violence, political competition , lack of proper socialisation, fear of divorce and death.
3. **Risk management and Political Confrontation.** Women kind broad consensus perception and belief of politics however, favours men that women. They see men counterpart as having more power to lead which disadvantage themselves in political arena. The nature of selfish, parochial, group, ethnic and tribal interests promote political tensions and confrontations among politicians to the detriment of women participation. The political environment are not suitable for women to participate and surcease the talent, skills, and potentialities. The force syndrome and it is turn ideology worsen the political environment for Nigerian women to harvest their interests and concerns and they remain alienated in the political game.
4. **Sexual harassment by men.** There is a deep social idea which put women in fear and danger that for men to favour women with reasonable political position there is demand for canal knowledge by men. The love advances and acts have put many families in disarray, no more trust and confidence family married life. The misnomer result to divorce and separation breeding single mothers, separations, fights and lost of family care and unity.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Figure 1. Number of women in elected positions from 1999-May, 2023.

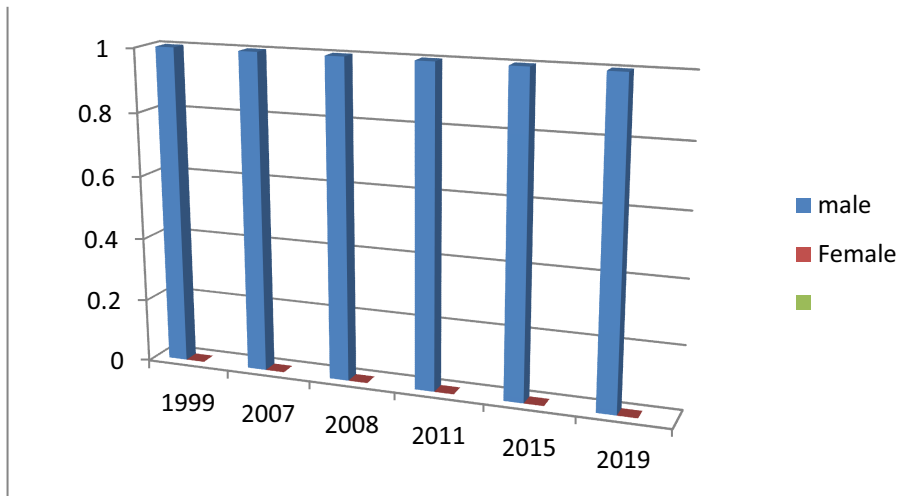


The above histogram shows how women have been elected in the positions of authority from 1999 to May 2023. President position recorded zero, Vice President zero, Senate 37 persons in 25 years for six different elections of 4 year each. House of Representatives 109 persons in 25 years for six different elections of 4 year each, Governor zero, Deputy Governor 22 persons and State Houses of Assembly, 170 all in 25 years for six different elections of 4 year each. The result indicates that three apex positions namely; President, recorded zero, vice president and Governors seats also recorded zero.

However, at the federal level 37 women occupied senatorial seats, and 109 women occupied House of Representatives seats totaling 146 women at federal level and 22 women in the state Houses of Assembly for state level all in 25 years for six different elections of 4 year each of periodic elections in Nigeria.

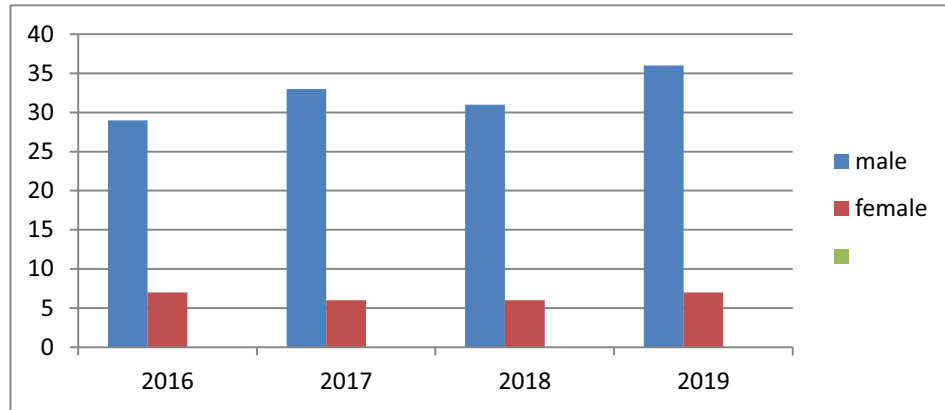
Hence, the result indicates low level of women political participation which effects their socio-economic and political well being of the women gender negatively in the political history and environment of Nigeria till date.

Figure 2. Appointive Position. Distribution of Secretaries to the Government of the Federation from 1999 – May, 2023.



Complied by the authors Nwoba et al (2024).

The disparity in the appointments of both ministerial positions and to the office of the secretary to the federation is a clear manifestation of under representation of the women counterpart to men in Nigeria governance and politics. The above pie chart shows that there is no chance for female till date for the position of Secretary to the Government of the Federation from 1999 – May, 2023. The summary of this analysis is that no women have been appointed the secretary to the Federation since independence till the current administration.

Figure 3. Ministerial Appointment

Nwoba et al (2024)

From the histogram the justification of underrepresentation is very clear as in 2016 only 7 women were appointed ministers, with 29 men, 2017, 33 were men with 6 women, 2018, 31 men with 6 women and in 2019 36 men and 6 were women. The current status quo shows that males are the major political actors and in turn females are underrepresented for no just course in Nigeria politics. Therefore, it is now a norm to ignore gender parity in Nigeria political environment.

Conclusion

The study investigated the issue of women and political participation in Nigeria with a focus on the impact of socio-economic and political challenges on the Nigerian democracy. The statistical data collected from baseline data of reputable organizations both internationally and domestically show a failure of implementation of gender policies and programmes. As men are the major actors and reserve seats such as President, Vice-President, Governors, Secretary to the Federation to mention but a few to themselves as analysed in the study.

The study noted with dismay that socio-economic and political challenges of women will continue to deteriorate which poses a big danger to Nigeria democracy until parity is highly recognised in the country's polity. As a result under representation will continue to create vacuum for lack of transparency, and accountability which is the hallmark of democracy. Therefore women full political participation in Nigerians should not be seen as modesty for women and girls during political campaigns rather a fundamental way to enthrone participation in decision making to change their present status quo, empower them and encourage economic growth and development in Nigeria by strengthening Nigeria democracy. .

5.3 Recommendations

1. For socio-economic challenges of women to be overcome in Nigeria there is need to reform the act of governance where the political will should supersede the greed and family interest of our elected leaders to accommodate women interests and concerns.
2. The culture of the people should be fundamental reformed by the custodian of culture to ensure customary justice which shall be blended with the state legal justice system. to open new widow for women political participation in Nigerian politics through tradition/custom education in various communities.

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