

CrossRef DOI of original article:

1 The Cessation of Gender Inequality in Nigeria and Women's 2 Participation in Partisan Politics

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5 Received: 1 January 1970 Accepted: 1 January 1970 Published: 1 January 1970

6

7 **Abstract**

8 The study focuses on gender inequality and women participation in Nigerian politics, it was
9 discovered that traditional, socio-economic and political and cultural structures aid
10 discrimination against women lead to law of contribution of women to social development.

11 The finding shows that despite global effort to improve the poor condition of women through
12 conventions and conferences such as CEDAW, MDGs, among others, gender discrimination
13 has no abetted. Some of the main factors militating against women's effective participation in
14 politics are illiteracy, poverty, money politics, intimidation, harmful traditional practices,
15 violence, cultural and religious barriers.

16 TheCessationofGenderInequalityinNigeriaandWomensParticipationinPartisanPolitics

17

18 **Index terms—**

19 **1 Introduction**

20 Before the British colonization of what is today Nigeria, women's voice in the communities was rarely unheard-of
21 could not be ignored. Thus, women seldom participated in the decision-making and administrative processes of
22 their communities. Mba (1982) and ??we (1992) stated that despite this marginal participation as compared
23 with the men, their views were important and critical to community life. Their roles in the societies were
24 complementary to that of men, rather than being completely subordinated to them.

25 Colonialism and its practices altered this arrangement and reinforced indigenous gender hierarchies negatively
26 and thus pushing women to the background. In other words, colonialism exploited Africa's gender social division of
27 labour negatively to the disadvantage of women, thus increasing women's vulnerability to violence and exclusion
28 ??Mama, 1997; ??madiume, 1995). In effect, the exclusion of women from the public sphere resulted in an
29 unequal gender order, so that in wealth, power and status, women were in a disadvantaged position relative to
30 the men. At independence, Nigeria did not significantly reconstitute the inherited colonial patriarchal structures
31 that limited women's participation in the public sphere. Hence, women still had limited access to both tangible
32 and intangible societal resources.

33 The Nigerian women were still faced with various restrictions such as low participation in politics ??Aluko &
34 Ajani, 2006); widowhood rites and disinheritance ??Oyekanmi, 2008); female genital mutilation, poor access to
35 education, healthcare, jobs, land credit, early marriage, etc ??FMWA, 2006) during the first Republic and early
36 military regimes in the country.

37 However, in recent times, successive Nigerian governments, in reaction to the various International Conventions
38 and Covenant on women, have undertaken legislative and administrative reforms that would give women full access
39 to economic and productive resources. These have resulted in an improvement in the status of women who now
40 occupy ministerial positions and seats in the legislature. For example, during the Obasanjo administration, there
41 were six women ministers out of a total of thirty-four and ten women special advisers out of a total of thirty-five
42 as well as twenty-one female representatives out of a total of three hundred and sixty in the National Assembly
43 (Afolabi-Akiyode, & Arogudade, 2003). Women have also enjoyed an increased presence in the labour market

1 INTRODUCTION

44 and education. As of 2010, women's participation in the industrial sector stood at 11%. Similarly, women's
45 represented 87% of those employed in the service sector ??FMWA, 2006).

46 It was only during the first International year for Women in 1985 that Nigeria began to make deliberate efforts
47 to reckon with women in public affairs and nationbuilding.

48 The military government established a commission for women Affairs with the intent to remove duplication
49 of programmes and efforts to strengthen inter-agency linkages and complement similar programmes as well as
50 define sectoral responsibilities to promote the general welfare of Nigerian women. States were also instructed to
51 establish directorates of women affairs. This was in line with the United Nations (UN) Declaration of a decade
52 for women ??1975) ??1976) ??1977) ??1978) ??1979) ??1980) ??1981) ??1982) ??1983) ??1984) ??1985). The
53 evidence was the emergence of many women organizations that were formed by voluntary members of society.
54 In reality, some of these organizations were formed before the UN declaration. Interestingly, these organizations
55 were formed by women themselves to achieve their emancipation and improve their potentials. Examples of such
56 organizations, are the NCWS -National Council for Women's Societies, WIN -Women in Nigeria, FO MWAN
57 -Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria and OYUN Progressive Women Association.

58 However, attempts made to open up most of the rural areas where women are mostly based have been of
59 tremendous effect. Thus, even women in the villages have become aware of the change going on around them.
60 The regime under review and its concerted efforts have initiated and appointive positions were reserved for
61 women.

62 To further the participation of women in politics, the regime of Olusegun Obasanjo of the (PDP) People's
63 Democratic Party, scrapped all fees required of women political contestants to enable them to participate in the
64 future elections. The government also sent about 30 women to India to see and learn how to establish a small
65 scale industry to contribute meaningfully to the economic development of the country.

66 In recent times, development has made it possible for women to participate in those activities which were
67 the exclusive reserve of the men. Considerable attention has been focused on making women more prominent
68 in terms of contributing to the economy and development of their countries, hence their participation in politics
69 has been viewed to be a major factor of nation-building.

70 The Beijing conference of 1998 added impetus to the empowerment of women in Nigeria. The various
71 programmes embarked by the Nigerian government such as Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP)
72 and Family Support Programme (FSP) have assisted so much in advocating the development course of the
73 womenfolk ??Egwanwon, 2002).

74 The Better Life Programme in supporting the level of awareness given to women as to what their role should
75 be in regards to politics. The belief that information rules the world, has been emphasized because, without the
76 requisite information at the disposal of these women, the efforts of the government would be in futility (Ene,
77 1997).

78 However, women's progress has been painfully slow. These improvements notwithstanding, women in Nigeria
79 are still faced with enormous obstacles as the growing recognition of their contributions in recent times has
80 not translated significantly into improved access to resources or increased decision-making powers. Women
81 still hold only 3% representative in national government and still constitute the majority of the poor and the
82 illiterate. Women still constitute 65% of the 70% of Nigerians living below the poverty line with their income and
83 purchasing power being very low compared with US\$1,628. ??UNDP, 2006). Similarly, while males constitute
84 58% of Nigeria's adult literate, females constitute 41% (UN, 2005).

85 Lack of awareness by the rural women has prevented them from sending their girl child to school. The situation
86 leaves many girls untrained and unqualified to hold public positions.

87 Women's participation in politics is a contentious issue in Nigerian political life. The issue of inequality has
88 therefore been perceived by different people, especially the womenfolk, as an attempt to erode their fundamental
89 rights.

90 Despite the global efforts to improve the poor conditions of women through numerous conventions and
91 conferences such as the International Women's Year Conference in Mexico City ??1975), with several resolutions
92 to promote equality, development and peace in the world, the UN for women, which aimed at creating awareness
93 on the marginalization of women, Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
94 intended to guarantee women's equal rights with men in all spheres of life, including education, employment,
95 healthcare, suffrage, and marriage, as well as the International Safe Motherhood Initiative, in Kenya (1987),
96 and the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, that stressed the importance of gender equality,
97 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), 1994, the number of women in social and
98 public life remained unimpressive in so many countries of the world. This means that these policies have not
99 been translated to the anticipated equality and development. Many governments have assented to the numerous
100 treaties, conventions and covenants yet the implementation has not been effective, leading to little or no impact
101 on the set objectives.

102 Even though the State has embraced gender mainstreaming, it is evident that gender inequalities are still
103 persistent. This shows that the situation has not changed at all or much.

104 Given this development, what is gender inequality? does gender inequality limit the opportunity for women
105 to participate in politics, what measures can be adopted to improve women's participation in politics?

106 These studies seek to investigate the major problems of inequality that inhibits women participation in politics

107 and to proffers solution to enhance gender parity and women participation in politics. This study would bring
108 to the fore the various dimension of gender equality/inequality in the various spheres of Nigeria society such as
109 in the economy, education, politics, health, legal right, it will also highlight the reasons while the progress in
110 achieving gender equality in Nigeria has been painfully slow, the study will be of immense benefit to scholars and
111 students on gender parity and policymakers and fill a gap in the literature in the area.

112 **2 Conceptual Clarification (i) Gender Inequalities**

113 Gender inequality often stems from social structures that have institutionalized conceptions of gender differences.
114 Culture stereotypes are a possible explanation for gender inequality and the resulting gender disparity. According
115 to Margaret (1982), women have been traditionally designated to occupations that require low skills. While these
116 skills are culturally valued, they were typically associated with domesticity. Therefore, an occupation requiring
117 high skills is not economically valued. Men have been traditionally viewed as breadwinners or workers, so jobs
118 held by men have been historically and economically valued and paid higher wages.

119 Gender inequality can further be understood through the mechanism of sexism. Margaret (1982) opined
120 discrimination takes place in this manner as men and women are subjected to prejudicial treatment based on
121 gender alone, Sexism occurs when men and women are framed with two social cognition.

122 Benevolent sexism takes place when women are viewed as possessing a low degree of competency and a high
123 degree of warmth. Although this is the result of a more positive stereotype of women, this still contributes to
124 gender inequality as the stereotype is only applied to women who only conform to the caring and nurturing
125 stereotypes, making women still being discriminated against as they are not viewed in the positive light. In
126 addition, this form of sexism has negative effects or notions on women, which include the idea that women are
127 weak and in need of protection from men.

128 Hostile Sexism takes place when women are viewed as having a high level of competency but a low degree of
129 warmth. This form of sexism is framed as an antagonistic attitude towards women and occurs, as women are
130 perceived to be attempting to control men, either through sexual seduction or through feminist ideology.

131 Discrimination also plays out with networking and preferential treatment within the economic market. Men
132 typically occupy positions of power within the job economy. Due to taste or preference for other men, because
133 they share similar characteristics, men in the position of power are more likely to have and promote other men,
134 thus discrimination against women.

135 Kurts in Ebere (2003), believes that gender has to do with the social complex relationship between males and
136 females in the society as well as the power and economic differential associated with them. Inequality has to do
137 with social factors in society. It deals with activities that are appropriate for males and females and what rights,
138 resources and powers inequality has as a form of discrimination against the female folk. Which gives inadequate
139 participation of women in developmental issues and the decisionmaking process.

140 According to Bukoye (2007), discrimination is any distinction and exclusion made based on sex that has the
141 effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, employment or exercise of power by women irrespective
142 of their marital status.

143 According to Colemen (1987), Gender inequality or discrimination remains pervasive in many dimensions of
144 life worldwide. This is so, despite considerable advances in gender equality in recent decades. The nature and
145 extent of the discrimination vary considerably across countries and regions, but the patterns are striking.

146 In no region of the developing world are women equal to men in legal social and economic rights. Gender
147 gaps are widespread in access to and control of resources in economic opportunities, in power and political voice.
148 This has dealt a deadly blow to development. Women who are intelligent and resourceful are relegated to the
149 background simply because of age-long tradition and culture. What this means is that these women cannot
150 contribute their quota to development. This situation plays out in Nigeria where women's participation in the
151 economy and politics is less than 20% because of the deep inequality practised all over the country.

152 The study adopted the theory of sexism which is the attitude and institutions, often unconscious, that judge
153 human worth, on the ground of gender or sex roles. It could be prejudice or discrimination, against women based
154 on their genders. The proponents of this theory include Karl Marx, Peter Glick, Susan Fsick, Mary Anstell etc.

155 The theory emphasizes fundamental, physical and psychological differences between men and women, cultures
156 and societies are deciders of gender women oppression is in connection with the production.

157 Fundamental, physical and physiological/ biological, differences between men and women, in part, account for
158 the ascribed masculine supremacy, and patriarchy inevitability in societies. (Mariete S. 2005) Partriachism is the
159 most crucial form of feminine domination, the legitimacy of which ironical rests upon tradition.

160 Ann Oakley and Sherry have espoused the view that culture and society are the deciders of gender roles. In
161 their respective analysis, they opined that culture is the total of human societies accumulation of traditions,
162 values, norms prescription of behaviour, among other things, over the years of their existence (George, 1990).

163 Accordingly, these legacies are transmitted from generation to generation, and members of a culture determine
164 gender roles. Consequently, the universal subordinate status of women in politics is historical, having been
165 determined by culture and society, and which members think of as absolute and unchangeable. In essence, the
166 cultural order puts men above women.

167 Accordingly, the order bestows on man, the responsibility to guard the terms and the cultural foundation up
168 which the development of society and the home is founded, while the women guard the home unity and health

3 A) POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

169 as well as integration of society through rearing, including the nurturing of off-springs when they are young
170 (Abayomi, 2000). The Marxist analysis of the women question takes a different dimension. It examines the
171 status of women concerning the economic system, rather than the relationship between men and women. The
172 endpoint is that women's oppression is in connection with the production.

173 Marxist feminists, consequently focus on housework and its relations to capital arguing that house workers
174 directly under the capitalists, the men (husbands) act as the domestic capitalists or compradors, who subject
175 the housewives to exploitation and labour at home including providing services like laundry, cooking, cleaning
176 the environment and childrearing, are not subjected to economic evaluation or monetization and be so rewarded
177 accordingly.

178 Women's oppression will cease to exist, in the projection of George, when class oppression disappears as a result
179 of proletarian revolution, which will invariably emancipate both men and women from capitalist exploitation.
180 Unfortunately, the dream of women liberation and emancipation from men's oppression may not be attainable
181 because of the demise of communism, which had intended to provide the ideological framework and foundation
182 for such revolutionary Putsch by the oppressed workers. Gender theologists in their justifications' rationalize
183 religious injunction as the determining basis for gender inequalities in society.

184 These theoretical factors are assembly deterministic of the sex roles in the society, and by extension, decide
185 life opportunities and how far each sex can go in the societal scheme of things.

186 Ambivalent Sexism has two sub-components: hostile sexism and benevolent sexism which means "well-wishing
187 or friendly: Traditionally, only hostile sexism was considered relevant, but recently, a strong stream of research
188 has been conducted to show the detrimental effect of benevolent sexism.

189 Ambivalent Sexism offers a reconceptualization of the traditional view of sexism to include both subjectively
190 benevolent and hostile feelings towards women. The tradition of the benevolent component is a major
191 contribution because it addresses the interdependence that men and women share.

192 Benevolent and hostile sexism both reinforce traditional gender roles and preserve patriarchal social structures
193 by sharing the common assumption that women are the weaker sex, the two forms of sexism differ in their
194 expression. Benevolent sexism is defined as subjectively positive attitudes of production, idealization and affection
195 towards women in traditional roles while hostile sexism is defined as their negative equivalent of domination,
196 degradation, and hostility. Men can hold types of sexist beliefs without contradicting each other "women need
197 to be protected as they are deemed to be incompetent at work.

198 3 a) Political participation

199 Women participation in politics, according to Momodu (2003) the issues should be seen from four perspectives:
200 access, participation, representation and transformation. Access to political institutions, participation (which
201 includes control of power within such institutions), quantitative and qualitative representation and the result will
202 be a social and political transformation in the polity. Enhance Women's roles in politics and development, can
203 be achieved when these four conditions are fulfilled.

204 Women in politics are sustained for three reasons, firstly, politics is an important arena for decision making.
205 Individuals who hold official positions in government get to decide how to allocate scarce resources, such as tax
206 revenues. Public officials make decisions that may help some people at the expense of others. The decision by
207 public officials often affects people's individual choices by encouraging some behaviours and outlawing others.

208 Secondly, political power is a valuable good. Policymakers hold power over other social institutions, such as
209 the family. Third, holding a political position is 'to hold a position of authority (Paxton, 2010). Women in
210 positions of authority and power can influence decisions on issues that bother women and impact positively on
211 the lives of the female gender.

212 Political participation, according to Igwe (2002), is the degree of involvement of the people in governance and
213 related institutions of society, such as the economy and culture. It involves participation in political campaigns
214 and debates, attending caucus or strategy meetings of political parties, voting during elections, standing as
215 candidates for elections, and holding government and party positions. It also includes freedom of expression,
216 association, right to free flow of communication, influence on decision process, and right to social justice. It also
217 expresses such rights to demand better social and health services, better working conditions, and an increase in
218 wages, amongst others Okolie, 2004).

219 The essence of political participation in any society, whether civilized or primitive, is the participation,
220 acquisition and control of power and dispensing power to organize society, harness and distribute resources
221 and influence decision making in line with organized or individual interests (Arowolo and Abe, 2008). All groups,
222 including those of women, seek to influence the dispensation of power in line with their articulated interests as
223 a fundamental motive of political participation.

224 Today women increasingly seek power equality and distribution and redistribution of resources in their favour.
225 However, careful observations have indicated that the involvement of women in Nigerian politics is largely
226 noticeable at the level of voting and latent support. Adeniyi (2003) has identified violence and other forms of
227 electoral conflicts perpetrated by male and female youth as the major barriers confronting and inhibiting women
228 active participation in Nigerian politics. Arguments are on the increase on the specific role women should play in
229 society or women should engage in other socio-economic and political activities like their male counterparts. It
230 is, however, believed that while the natural relationship between mother and her child may compel and confine

231 her to sedentary activities, it is also important that such mother should contribute her quota to the development
232 of her family and that of her society at large.

233 The continuous marginalization of Nigerian women denies them the opportunity of performing these functions.
234 It is interesting to note that society recognizes the value of women as voters in a democratic process, yet they
235 are perceived as incapable of governing, thus limiting their ascendancy to the pinnacle of decisionmaking and
236 participation in the power structures. This explains why women take the risk of having their needs subsumed
237 under the interest associated with their membership of a particular class, ethnic group, or culture or women
238 organization.

239 **4 b) Causes of gender inequality**

240 The poor participation of women in politics and governance has been a major concern at the global level. In
241 Nigeria, the number of women participating in politics is not proportionate to that of men rising global focus
242 on issues of gender equality, aided by calls such as that of goal three of the Millennium Development Goals, is
243 bridging the gap created by long-term discrimination against women, and helping to make women more visible
244 in politics.

245 The following issues are the challenges facing women are enormous, researchers have shown that the under
246 listed are responsible for gender inequality and low participation of Nigerian women in politics. 1. Patriarchy: It
247 refers to a society ruled and dominated by men over women, which in turn has given to women being looked upon
248 as mere household wives and non-partisans in the decision making process in households not to talk of coming
249 out to vie for political positions. 2. Stigmatization: Following the way politics in Nigeria is played, it is being
250 perceived that it is for individuals that have no regard for human rights and are quick at compromising their
251 virtue for indecent gains. Therefore, women aspirants who venture into politics are looked upon as shameless
252 and promiscuous.

253 **5 Low Level of Education:**

254 The low participation of women in education is also part of the shortcomings. The National Adult Literacy Survey,
255 2010 published by the National Bureau of Statistics revealed that the adult. 4. Poor Financing: Competing for
256 political positions in Nigerian requires huge financial backup. Most Nigerian women who seek these positions
257 could not afford to meet the financial obligations therein, despite the waivers given to women aspirants by some
258 of the political parties. And so, they could do little or nothing to outweigh their male counterparts. 5. Political
259 Violence: Nigerian elections have always been characterized by one form of violence or another since the return
260 of democracy. Female aspirants to various political parties cannot withstand political violence; therefore, women
261 participation in politics is drastically reduced.

262 **6 Religious and Cultural barriers: Both Christianity and**

263 Islam do not accord women many roles in public life, and the same is obtainable in most cultural values, where
264 women are seen culturally as the sex who should be quite submissive and full of virtue. However, they are not to
265 be seen in the public domain. And so it is a challenge to women participation in politics, more so, women found
266 in the corridor of politics are not often religious in practice.

267 **7 Political Godfatherism is one of the concepts that**

268 open narrow doors when it comes to deciding who gets in the political scene. However, it affects women
269 participation in Nigerian politics. Literarily because Godfathers are seen in Nigeria to be men who have the power
270 personally to determine both who gets nominated to contest elections and who wins an election. Godfathers are
271 people of questionable wealth and influences who robbed political parties of their conventional and legitimate
272 functions of presenting clear and coherent programmes based on which the candidates presented by them are
273 chosen by the voters.

274 c) The causes of gender inequality in Nigeria 1. Improper Education "Knowledge is power". It might not be a
275 strong point, but this is pointing more towards some parts of Nigeria that are rejecting western views on women,
276 to stick to cultural ones. Education is nothing if you leave all you learn in school and still behave like a savage
277 when you get back home. In other words, it must be obvious that you are educated. There are two ways to
278 this, a community that's poorly educated can never know the worth of women and a woman that is not educated
279 cannot know her rights, talk less of the myriad of things she's capable of contributing to modern society. It has
280 also been noticed that parents don't usually encourage the education of their female children because they believe
281 it will be of no benefit to them, as any money or success she earns in the future, due to her education, will be of
282 her husband's, not theirs.

283 **8 Tradition and Culture**

284 Tradition is said to be the custom of a particular society, while culture is simply the way of life. Women are never
285 appointed traditional rulers because it is deemed an abomination on almost every ethnic group. Why should
286 a woman be leading when there are able men to that could lead?" such is the typical cultural dogma that has

11 II. THE CHALLENGES OF NIGERIA WOMEN IN SOCIOECONOMIC/POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

287 plagued many thrones and political seats in Nigeria. Don't even dare suggest female leadership to the elders of
288 the community, you might lose your head.

289 9 Mentality

290 It is hard to keep "mentality" as a standalone point, as it is largely influenced by culture and tradition. However,
291 if you look at it subjectively, from a women's view, it stands alone, how? Many women are not ambitious because
292 they believe top positions are not meant for men. Even some ladies complain about having a female boss simply
293 because are used to having a male boss. It almost seems clandestine for women to want to occupy a political
294 position or the hot sit in a company. such a mentality is usually created and forged by a woman's immediate
295 environment. If you have seen women lead, you would think that it is normal for women not to lead even if you
296 were not directly told.

297 10 Religion

298 It is not a secret that religion is one of the top contributors to gender inequality in the world. Religion is one of
299 the many things that guide the masses in living a good and peaceful life and is one of the biggest contributors
300 to peace on earth. However, some religions or religious practices restrict women to just domestic roles, making
301 it impossible for them to even think about holding a political post.

302 11 II. The Challenges of Nigeria Women in Socioeco- 303 nomic/Political Development

304 The international concern for women has gained serious recognition and ascendancy attracting various govern-
305 ments to the needs of women inclusion in their political and leadership positions. Egonmwan (2002) observed
306 that Nigeria's involvement of its womenfolk in developmental activities assumed a visible dimension when the
307 United Nations Organization declared the year 1975 as the international year of women and since then march
308 8th of every year have been set aside by the UN for celebrating the occasion.

309 In July 1980, an agreement was reached by all member states that every nation should recognize the need
310 for the involvement of women in nation-building. Consequently, Africa's collective appreciation of women's
311 participation in politics found concrete expression in the Lagos Plan of Action which was the policy voice of
312 African Heads of State and government in a meeting held in Lagos, April. 1980.

313 African states developed policies and strategies for women's full participation in politics and all other
314 developmental activities. Nigeria's response to this was the establishment of the National Commission on Women
315 Development (NCWD) at the national and state levels in the country.

316 The basic function of this commission committee was to promote awareness among women. The federal
317 government also signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against
318 Women.

319 This convention otherwise known as CEDAW (2009) as international organizations including the UN, AU and
320 ECOWAS were enjoined to compel African countries to ensure women have adequate representation in politics,
321 access to health care, ensuring proper education and access to credit and loan facilities. The Universal Declaration
322 of Human Rights also recognizes the radical equality of men and women in dignity.

323 Therefore, African women as indispensable transmitters of family values, need to be culturally, socially,
324 economically and politically empowered to enable them to attain their optimum goals in life. It is noteworthy to
325 mention some countries of the world that top the list of gender equality particularly women's full participation
326 in the politics such as According to World Economic Forum (2009) Iceland, Finland, Norway Sweden and
327 New Zealand. The developing countries including Nigeria are yet to institutionalize gender equality. ??World
328 Economic Forum, 2009). ??kirinade (1990) observed that women participation in politics in Nigeria dates back to
329 1929 during the Ikot Abasi women riot. Since then Nigerian women have delved into different aspects of partisan
330 politics first by campaigning for men or husbands as candidates of their choice. It is quite easy to use women as
331 campaign tools because they can be easily mobilized.

332 Through Queen Amina of Zaria, a new role was defined for women, because of her bravery and exemplary
333 leadership. Nigerian women became aware of the roles they could play by assisting the men in politics.

334 Nigerian women have continued to contribute significantly to the wellbeing of the human race, but about 60%
335 of the total population of women are yet to fully participate in politics even though they have made several efforts
336 to the progress of the nation. ??Dibia, 2004).

337 To improve a lot of women Nigerian government has started operating scholarship schemes for interested
338 candidates that do exceptionally well in science and other related subjects realizing the need for education in
339 supporting women's active participation in all spheres of life. (Buchanan, 1993).

340 For this reason, two technical colleges have been devoted to the enhancement of women development in the
341 country. Today federal and state ministries of education seek to encourage parents to send their female children
342 to school.

343 In support theory of a prominent monarch, Ashiru (2009) in Kaduna state, advised parents to see the girl
344 child education as a task to be achieved and a vital issue to the development of society. In his words "If you
345 educate a man, you educate a person, but if you educate a woman, you educate a society.

346 Of all the various policy instruments for ensuring women are not excluded from decision making. Legal Aid
347 Council and Legal Literacy Council according to Dibia (2004) are the most popular components of a government
348 effort to reduce family abuse, and the Family Law Centre offers advisory and legal advice on all family legal
349 problems free of charge to low-income people.

350 Akande and Kuye (1986) also pointed out that free publications are targeting school-age children in the hope
351 that they will read it to their mothers while also learning on their own. The legal Aid council has contributed to
352 the abrogation of the customs which was discriminatory against Nnewi women in the inheritance of the property
353 of their husbands which was repugnant to natural justice and the constitution.

354 Between 1999-2007, the then president Olusegun Obasanjo announced the establishment of a new ministry for
355 women's affairs in his 2000 budget speech as earlier earned led by General Sani Abacha's legacy of 1995.

356 The rationale for women's ministry was to encourage women to enter the labour force and supply a wide range
357 of talents and services demanded by the general public.

358 12 a) Nigerian Women in Governance

359 Democratic government has been observed to be an adequate and most enabling style of governance that enables
360 citizens active participation in their affairs. As quoted in Obi (2007) Aristotle explained that democracy exists
361 whenever those who are free and are well off but, being the majority are in control of the government.

362 It has been described as continuous responsiveness of government preferences of its citizens considered as
363 political equals. Nigeria experiencing the rule of democracy may have geared its actions towards encouraging
364 women in the participation of politics.

365 Even though there is diversity in culture and language of the units that made up Nigeria, yet the zeal to
366 participate in the affairs of the nation be it federal, state or local government is aroused in the of the citizens.
367 Obi (2007) Democracy accommodates different ethnic units, culture, sex and religions and guarantee individuals
368 rights. Therefore under democratic governance, Nigerian women have been advised to use the opportunity to
369 come forward and contribute their quota to nation-building. (Obi, 2007).

370 Women are therefore enjoined to take their proper position in governance without waiting for the men to offer
371 them an opportunity that may not be easy. The emphasis on the equality of persons which is the cardinal pursuit
372 in democracy should be an added advantage. It accords respect to every individual and emphasizes numerical
373 strength.

374 Nwafor and Ezegbe (1998) confirmed the necessity of involving women in democratic governance as an
375 imperative that should be given adequate attention. This is because democratic governance is an opportunity
376 for an individual to exercise his or her right, irrespective of age, sex, gender or class.

377 As observed by Mirya Zuniga (1995) giving women the opportunity to participate in politics through adequate
378 empowerment will be a fruitful effort, and not domination over others but an increased power of their self-esteem
379 and internal force, and according to Dighe (1995), an empowered woman is someone with a sense of self-worth and
380 self-confidence, someone who critically analyses their social and political environment and thus exercise control
381 over the decisions affecting her life. Women empowerment goes beyond all the cultural stereotypes that have
382 relegated women to the kitchen. It involved a conscious effort to equalize the power between men and women.
383 It also involves active political participation, sound educational opportunities, among others. ??Amujin, 2007).

384 Gender inequality is the reason behind greater poverty, slower economic growth, weaker governance and a
385 lower standard of living of people. There is a correlation between gender discrimination and underdevelopment.
386 A UNDP analysis confirmed a very strong correlation between its (UNDP's) gender-related development indices
387 and its "Human Development Index. ??World Bank) With the UN research and analysis, above Nigeria is still
388 found wanting on the extent it involves women folk in governance. Giving women the opportunity to participate
389 in politics has contributed immensely to governance and positive impact on the female rural dwellers.

390 Ijere (1992) women are known to form the backbone of rural development; a successful development without
391 the involvement of rural communities is a haphazard development. ??Ijere, 1992) Political participation starts in
392 the rural communities where the government is closer to the people and when women are allowed to start from
393 their local government.

394 For women to achieve this aim, their economic empowerment would ensure their active role in politics. Women
395 therefore should have access to the necessary tools and resources for their self-actualization.

396 The great opportunity given by the Obasanjo regime went a long way to ameliorate the poor conditions of
397 women and removed practices militating against their development and full participation and active politics.

398 To disabuse the minds of their male counterpart from Jeth joining gender stereotypes hinges on women's ability
399 to convince men that their new social space and new gender identities are non-threatening, mutually benefiting
400 and greater than a zero-sum game". ??Dibia, 2004).

401 The notion of women as homemakers and men as providers should be changed for the mutual understanding
402 that both men and women should participate in the labour market regardless of gender and domestic
403 responsibilities.

404 Women can therefore combine family and work based on the government's accommodative policies. ??kpoko

15 B) CONCLUSIONS

405 (2002) opined that women should forge a link between themselves both the literate and the illiterate, ones to
406 dialogue and share experiences and fully integrate themselves in the political affairs of the nation.

407 Emphasis has also been laid on functional skill building which will also assist greatly to empower women
408 in active participation in both productive and community development. Aboh (2009) observed that despite the
409 various programmes and conferences for women, Nigerian women continue to wriggle in the pains of relegation and
410 gender-based discrimination in the allocation of positions, (political, economic) and that no poverty alleviation
411 programme has ever been a target at women alone in Nigeria and despite the International Day for Rural Women
412 set aside to recognize the rural women, Nigerian rural women can still not reckon with. Women, in general, is
413 still classified as the poorest 70% of the world's poorest people are women. Convention on the Elimination of all
414 forms Discrimination against women has marked its 30th anniversary, yet the profile of women who participated
415 in development and nation-building activities is nothing to be compared with that of the menfolk.

416 The president of the National Association of Women Journalists (NAWoj) is of a counterview. There is hope
417 for the Nigerian woman, women are presently being trained and re-trained to fit into the job of politics as
418 well as entrepreneurial skills to build their capacity utilization. Although Nigerian women still have a long way
419 from achieving equality with their male counterparts, there is progress in women education as confirmed earlier
420 in this study. A good number of Nigerian women are now found in all sorts of training institutions all over the
421 country and outside the shores of Nigeria to improve their level of education which will thereafter pave way for
422 their involvement in politics.

423 Awareness is being created by various organizations calling on women to participate in partisan politics.
424 Nigerian women now occupy various positions as ministers members, senate members, house of representative
425 members of the state house of assembly. Deputy governors, commissioners and other political appointments. For
426 instance, the Obasanjo administration The result of our investigation proven that the regime under our focus
427 in its first term appointed about 7 women as members of the executive council while in his first term more
428 than seven women were appointed into the cabinet. Our findings in chapter four gave a detailed account of our
429 findings.

430 Unfortunately, the national literacy rate for females is 26% compared to 72% for males and in a certain state,
431 the female literacy enrolment and achievement rates are much lower, for example, girls net enrolment in Sokoto
432 state is 15% compared to 59% for boys. (UNICEP, 2002).

433 13 III.

434 14 Summary, Conclusion / Recommendation a) Summary of 435 findings

436 The study was designed to examine gender inequality and women participation in politics in Nigeria. Based on
437 the study, it was discovered that the problems of gender inequality in Nigeria have receded as modern society
438 has redefined the role of a woman, which is vastly different from what it used to be in the middle ages. However,
439 patriarchy and gender inequality engendered by religious beliefs, and diverse cultures are still prevalent. Women
440 are still largely considered to be inferior to men, as women are only deemed fit to be home keepers and child
441 bearers.

442 There exists gender imbalance. Several direct and related policies have not been implemented, leading to little
443 or no impact on the set objectives.

444 Most of these policies on poverty reduction, fertility reduction, maternal mortality reduction, can be more
445 effective if bold steps are been taken to improve the status of women checks against discrimination against
446 women. If there is a bottom-up approach, which encompasses grassroots participation in the decisionmaking
447 process, gender disparity issues might be less and its unintended consequences drastically minimized.

448 Poor child health maternal health, HIV infection, rural-urban residence, early marriage, household headship,
449 illiteracy, man-hours at work, wages, income, employment, means of production, senior positions, and
450 parliamentary seats are some of the development indications that have not been substantially addressed
451 for women. The overriding influence of custom and tradition are especially obvious. For instance, the
452 nondiscrimination clause in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is not taken into cognizance when
453 policies are being formulated. The gap in gender issues such as property inheritance rights, divorce, reproductive
454 health rights, discrimination against women and harmful cultural practices, if abridged can make a big difference
455 for gender concerns.

456 15 b) Conclusions

457 The problems of gender inequality should not be ignored by any society. Though usually viewed as a human
458 rights problem, gender equality is vital for attaining progressive and sustainable economic development and a
459 peaceful environment. This is because women are more than 50% of the population of Nigeria. According to
460 United Nations Population Fund, gender inequality hinders the growth of countries, development of individuals,
461 and progress of societies.

462 **16 c) Recommendation 1. Support Women for Local Elections**

463 Many career politicians gain their first experience in governance and through campaigning and running for local
464 office. Catherine Samba-Panza served as Mayor of Bangui.

465 Supporting women for local elections would reassure both potential female candidates and party leaders that
466 women can win competitive elections. Women should be encouraged to participate in grassroots politics and
467 development

468 **17 Diversify the pool of female candidate**

469 Women have a unique capacity to shed light on the often obscured needs of marginalized groups. AFRICAN
470 LEADERSHIP AND TENURE ELONGATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT
471 IN AFRICA he most vulnerable members, including children and ethnic and religious minorities. When
472 marginalized groups exist in government, society is more stable and less likely to experience armed conflict.
473 Women are advised or encouraged to actively participate in governance to bring their experience to bear an issue
474 to state concern.

475 **18 Raise Societal Awareness of women's leadership**

476 The contributions of women are waved by male colleagues as inferior at times of decision making.

477 Developing a curriculum for Civic Education that emphasizes women's leadership deemphasized cultural norms
478 against it will ensure that future generations are more receptive to female political participation.

479 Female office holders' should be trained on media that make them role models for African girls and boys.

480 **19 Create Cross-Party Women's Caucuses**

481 Most women lack the power and influence enjoyed by their male colleagues. Women public office holders should
482 be encouraged to form Cross-party caucuses as mediators in inter-party disputes and curb disagreements in civil
483 society.

484 A female cross-party caucus is made up of women from all ethnic groups, which enables legislators to find
485 common ground on various issues and leverage their collective power to push through important legislation.

486 **20 Build Capacity of Female Leaders**

487 However, concrete steps can be taken to immediately enhance women's political leadership. Through pieces of
488 training to build their capacity and knowledge around various issues and to connect them with civil society
489 activists who can be key allies in creating beneficial new policies.

490 While African women have made great strides in recent decades, there is still work to be done to ensure that
491 they have a primary role in their nation's government and wider society. By advocating for the above five steps,
492 international and regional organizations can provide valuable support to Africa's amazing women leaders. These
493 women can, in turn, model meaningful inclusion for governments around the world.

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