

**An Empirical Study of Women and Politics: Towards Participatory Democracy in Ogun State,
South - Western Nigeria.**

FAYOMI, Oluyemi PhD

Covenant University, Department of Political Science and International Relations, School of Social Sciences, College of Development Studies,

ABSTRACT

At both the national and international levels, there is a growing academic interest in the level of participation of women in politics. The 'third wave' of globalisation emphasizes the issue of democratization, women and human rights which dominate world interests in Africa. African women, especially in Nigeria are exploited and marginalized. Despite the fact that women constitute about 49% of the total population, they are discriminated against in the political process. The marginalization of Nigerian women is more pronounced in the democratization processes. Women in Nigeria constitute more than two - thirds of the country's 70% adult non- literate population while they hold less than 5% of the important decision making positions. The present national assembly in Nigeria has low average of 0.05% of women in both lower and upper houses of the bicameral legislature. This limited conception of the political relevance of women is responsible for their political marginalization. While it is important to increase the number of women in public offices, the more fundamental question raised is about the character of democracy in Nigeria. Is it gender sensitive?

Against this backdrop, this study discusses the issue of women involvement in politics in Nigeria. It examines the extent to which, women participate in party politics in Nigeria as well as the extent (or otherwise) to which they are respected and accepted as equal stakeholders in the democratization process. The aim is to establish the continuities and changes obtainable in the struggles undertaken by women in the recent past targeted at altering the male - partisan political space. This was done through an empirical analysis of women's participation in decision making policies in different segments, sectors of the Southwest of the Nigerian state.

Introduction

Nigeria has a multi-party system, with about sixty- three registered political parties, where three parties are strong parties and these are Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), All Progressives Congress (APC) and Labour Party (LP). The situation in Nigerian political landscape calls for serious structural and institutional reforms. This is because Nigeria has deviated and, equally turns away from the path and tenets of representative democracy. Representative democracy is generally agreed, empowers the people, both men and women with the ability to control the decision-making process. The reality in Nigeria is that of getting a government that is truly democratic and inclusive of women at 30% participatory level. Therefore, since the advent of democratic dispensation in Nigeria, achieving at most 30% representation of women in decision-making process in Nigerian politics has remained a mirage. It is obvious that Nigerian women are very enthusiastic during election campaigns as clappers, cheerers, and supporters by singing and dancing, but the political class, that is being populated by mostly men who are desperados, has made it a do or die affair, creating fear in many Nigerian women and scaring them off the decision making positions in Ogun State which is the case study and Nigeria as a whole.

At the party level, issues of handpicking are dominant with the flagbearers been imposed on the people in violation of the rights of the people , both males and females for political equality and equity for all to stand for elective positions, and in addition vote for candidates of their choices into political offices. The result of this is that women who constitute the majority of the masses are held in political bondage. After the elections, they are easily forgotten and neglected.

Structure of Nigerian Political Landscape

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is modeled after the United States of America, with the executive power being exercised by the President. In addition, the Nigerian government is also influenced by the Westminster System model in the composition and management of the upper and lower houses of a bicameral legislature. The President of Nigeria is the head of state, head of government, and head of a [multi-party system]]. Nigerian politics takes place within a framework of a federal, presidential, representative democratic republic, in which executive power is exercised by the government. Legislative power is held by the government and the two chambers of the legislature which are the House of Representatives and the Senate. Together, the two chambers make up the law-making body in Nigeria, called the National Assembly, which serves as check and balances on the executive arm of government. The highest judiciary arm of government in Nigeria is the Supreme Court of Nigeria. Nigeria also practices Baron de Montesquieu's theory of the separation of powers. This is a system made up of interrelated parts functioning as a whole.

Nigeria is divided into 36 states and 1 territory which is the Federal Capital Territory called Abuja. The Nigerian states include: Abia, Adamawa, Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Bauchi, Bayelsa, Benue, Borno, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, Edo, Ekiti, Enugu, Gombe, Imo, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Lagos, Nasarawa, Niger, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Plateau, Rivers, Sokoto, Taraba, Yobe, and Zamfara

Each state is divided into Local Government Areas (LGAs). According to USAID (2004), Nigeria has 774 LGAs. Kano State has the largest number of LGAs at 44, and Bayelsa State has the fewest

at 9. The Federal Capital Territory of Abuja has 6 LGAs.[7] LGAs replaced the Districts that were the previous third-tier administrative unit under the British government.

Conceptualisation

According to Oyelaran-Oyeyinka (2014), inequality is a drag on growth and development and there is a strong relationship between inequality and slow growth in poor countries. He reiterates that there is a strong association between opportunity equality and human well-being reflected in better health and long life. Hence, the effect of inequality on growth can be seen as a rough indicator of inequality of opportunity and limited social mobility in a particular setting, a phenomenon sometimes also referred to as “destructive inequality”.

Empirical and analytical studies have shown that insufficient access to basic infrastructural facilities is more noticeable among the Nigerian women and this hinders their capability to participate effectively in politics. It widens the gap between Nigerian men and women in terms of standard of living. The results of this finding negate the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs) 3 which emphasizes the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment. In the political arena in Nigeria, gender gap is widening and it has become apparent because most of the programmes of the Nigerian governments have not been able to address the question of mainstreaming gender in politics. As a result the interests and concerns of women are subsumed within the context of Nigerian populace. The derivatives of this research show that gender bias in politics is likely to occur in an environment that is inclusive and participatory. UNDP Report (2004), states that development that is not engendered is endangered and this presupposes that policies that take into account the roles of women and men as partners in inclusive development process in politics, family and other sectors are bound to be beneficial to the Nigerian populace and the world at large.

Malpractice and corruptions are very feasible in the Nigerian political landscape. These are political misconduct or immoral behavior by some Nigerian male politicians and office holders which results in a failure to fulfill the duties or responsibilities associated with that position.

Research Objectives

- i) To examine the significant factors affecting women political participation in Nigeria
- ii) Evaluate the impact of women participation in politics in Nigeria
- iii) To determine the effect of education on Nigerian women political empowerment

Research Questions

- i) What are the factors that affect perception of Nigerian women on political participation?
- ii) What are the probable impacts of Nigerian women’s participation in politics?
- iii) Does education have any effect on the political empowerment of Nigerian women

Research Hypotheses

For the purpose of analysing the data generated for the study, the following hypotheses were tested;

H₀₁: There are no significant factors affecting Nigerian women participation in politics

H₀₂: High rate of Nigerian women's participation has no significant impact in democratic process

H₀₃: Education has no significant effect in Nigerian women political empowerment

Methodology

The method adopted in data collection involves direct interviews, observations and use of questionnaire instrument. Direct enquiries were also made by the researcher through a 'one on one' personal approach with the participants and use of audio tape recordings at field survey. The descriptive approach was utilised in the data analysis involving percentage distribution. Also bivariate and multivariate regression methods were employed in the empirical test of hypothesis.

Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

This study is majorly concerned with the empirical investigation of the extent of women participation in politics with special focus on some selected local government areas of Ogun State Southwest Nigeria. The study sample consists of three (3) randomly selected local governments within the state metropolis, and these are Ado-Odo Ota, Ifo and Ewekoro Local governments. In a bid to conduct a thorough investigation of the subject matter and the realisation of the main aim of the research, one hundred (100) respondents were randomly selected. These respondents comprise of a cross section of the surveyed local government constituencies within municipal areas.

Instrument

The Primary sources of data generation were utilised in obtaining the necessary information about the local participants within each community. These include well structured questionnaires, oral interviews and audio tape recordings conducted with the women residents in the target areas of the state. The questionnaire was structured into two sections. The first section captured the demographic characteristic of the respondents such as the sex classification, age grouping and marital status. The respondents were also required to indicate their citizenship of the state or otherwise before continuing with answering the questionnaire. The second section deals with open ended questions

designed to harness the divergent views of the women with respect to each specific items enumerated in the questionnaire.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The validity of the instrument is concerned with ensuring that the structured items of the questionnaire instrument measured what it meant to measure. It thus ensures the consistency and efficiency of the method employed in measurement evaluation. To obtain the validity in this study, the instrument was subjected to a critical appraisal of research experts in these areas. This was also complemented with focus group discussion (FGDs) that was organised by the researcher. The reliability of the instrument was determined by careful comparative assessment of oral interviews and audio recording with the responses as obtained from the administered instrument from the survey study. This becomes necessary to determine the consistency of the instrument and certainty in data collected. As stressed by (Kerlinger, 2000) a set of instruments should be consistent across multiple studies which are conducted under the same circumstances. As Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003) cited from Kazeem and Darrell (2012) have reported, the validity and reliability of the information a researcher collects, as well as the response rate achieved, depend to a large extent on the design and structure of the researcher's information.

Descriptive Statistics

This section presents the demographic variables of the respondents

Table 4.3.1 Sex of Respondents

| | Frequency | Percent |
|--------|-----------|---------|
| Male | 42 | 42.0 |
| Female | 58 | 58.0 |
| Total | 100 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 4.3.1 above shows the distribution of the respondents according to their gender, the result of the analysis indicates that 42 (42%) of the respondents are male while the rest 58 (58%) consists of female respondents. This shows that greater percentage of the sample were women.

Table 4.3.2 Age of Respondents

| | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------|-----------|---------|
| 18-25 | 10 | 10.0 |
| 26-35 | 72 | 72.0 |
| 36 and above | 18 | 18.0 |
| Total | 100 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Survey, 2013

In table 4.3.2 above, result shows that 10 (10%) of the respondent fall between the ages of 18-25 years, 72(72%) fall within the ages of 26-35 years, and 18(18%) fall within the age bracket of 36years and above. Hence many of the respondents are within the ages of 26- 35 years.

Table 4.3.3 Marital status

| | Frequency | Percent |
|----------|-----------|---------|
| Married | 74 | 74.0 |
| Divorced | 12 | 12.0 |
| Others | 14 | 14.0 |
| Total | 100 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 4.3.3 shows the distribution of the respondents by their marital status. The above table shows that 74(74%) of the staff are married, 12(12%) were divorcees while others 14(14%). This shows that many of the respondents were married.

Table 4.3.4 Are you a citizen of Ogun State

| | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|
| Yes | 86 | 86.0 |
| No | 14 | 14.0 |
| Total | 100 | 100.0 |

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 4.3.4 shows that 86(86%) of the respondents are indigenes of Ogun state while the remaining 17(14%) are not. This shows the majority of the respondents are from Ogun state.

Empirical Result and Discussions

Factors affecting women political participation

Hypothesis I

H₁: There are significant factors affecting women participation in politics

H₀: There are no significant factors affecting women participation in politics

The analysis of ANOVA (Appendix table1) above shows the statistical relevance of the model estimates to the study data. Given the significant F-value (3.721, Sig=0.032) at 5 percent level of significance, the data could be seen to be adequately fit for the analysis. In this case, the F-statistic is found to be significant enough, so the study can proceed with the co-efficient result in table 4. Below;

Coefficients

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
|-------|--|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | B | Std. Error |
| 1 | (Constant) | 1.216 | .615 | | 1.976 | .054 |
| | Women cannot change the ongoing political trends like malpractice, corruption etc. | .288 | .135 | .297 | 2.136 | .038 |
| | Cultural differences affect women and their participation in politics | .250 | .130 | .269 | 1.932 | .060 |

a Dependent Variable: The place of women is in the home and not politics and governance

The analysis of the result of in table 2 above provides empirical evidence in support for the existence of a statistically significant factors affecting women participation in politics in Nigeria. For instance, there is a perception among many women that women cannot change the ongoing political trends such political carpet crossing, corruption, Malpractice, God-fatherism and violence which suggest a significant relationship and support the perception that the place of women is in the home and not in politics and governance at 5 percent level of significance. Likewise, there is significant effect of cultural difference which affects Nigerian women and their participation in politics as confirmed by

the estimated response result from this study significant at 10 percent. The above empirical evidence emphasises the extent in which wrong perception on the political potentials of the women and cultural influences significantly affects women participation in Nigerian politics based on the results and scope of this study.

Impact of Nigerian women’s participation in politics

Hypothesis II

H₁: High rate of Nigerian women in political participation has a significant impact in democratic process

H₀: High rate of Nigerian women in political participation has no significant impact in democratic process

Given the statistical significance F-test of the ANOVA (see appendix table2) model at 5 percent with the F-value (3.903, Sig =0.054), the estimated result in table below could be seen as reliable and free from bias and estimation error.

Coefficients

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
|-------|---|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | B | Std. Error |
| 1 | (Constant) | 3.732 | .435 | | 8.576 | .000 |
| | The political empowerment of women can contribute to gender-friendly legislation ,thereby enhancing development | .197 | .100 | .277 | 1.976 | .054 |

a Dependent Variable: The political empowerment of women can contribute to gender-friendly legislation and hence bring about development

The result of the estimated coefficient establishes a significant direct relationship in political participation of Nigerian women and its contributions to decision making process that can bring about development. This implies that high rate of Nigerian women in political participation particularly in decision making process is being determined directly by the level of their political empowerment. The above empirical result is confirmed significant at 5 percent level. In other words,

the more politically the women are empowered, the higher their positive impact in the democratic process of decision making.

Hypothesis 111

Women Educational Attainment and political empowerment

H₁: Education has a significant effect in Nigerian women political empowerment

H₀: Education has no significant effect in Nigerian women political empowerment

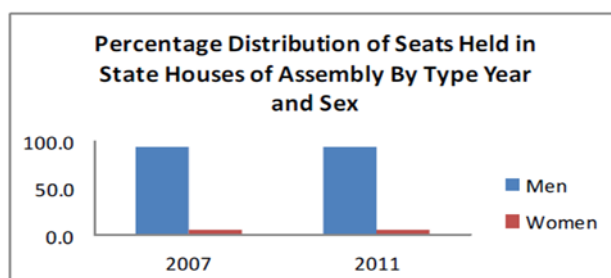
With the significance of the ANOVA result (as shown in appendix table 3) given the F-value of 13.681 (sig= 0.000) at a high significance level of 1 percent, this result provides empirical support of the reliability in the analysis of the coefficient estimates in table 6 below.

Coefficients

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|-------|---|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | B | Std. Error |
| 1 | (Constant) | .101 | 1.005 | | .101 | .920 |
| | High rate of women's political participation affects the decision making process of the state positively at the Ado-Odo Ota, Ifo and Ewekoro Local Governments. | .586 | .199 | .347 | 2.943 | .005 |
| | Education plays a major role in women's participation in politics | .385 | .085 | .535 | 4.538 | .000 |

a Dependent Variable: High rate of women's political participation will affect the decision making process of the Ogun State positively at Ado Odo, Ifo and Ewekoro Local Governments.

The result of the table above provides statistical evidence in confirmation of the fact that high rate of women political participation , women access to quality and reliable education and enlightenment will enhance empowerment for an effective and inclusive democracy, especially in terms of gender friendly legislative administration of policies. A critical investigation of this empirical support indicates that education, however, plays the most significant role in women participation in politics, thus , it could be conceived as a practically indispensable means of women empowerment for effective policy and development issues.



Source: INEC, 2011

Percentage Distribution of Seats Held In State Houses of Assembly by Year and SEX

| Honorable Member | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 2007 | 2011 |
| Men | 94.2 | 94.2 |
| Women | 5.8 | 5.8 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: INEC, 2011

Summary

It has been observed and empirically-proved that more men are in positions of power and authority in Nigeria than women; statistics show it. Of the 24 Ministers in the federal cabinet in 2011, 18 or 75 percent are men while only 6 or 25 per-cent makes up of women. Parliamentary seats at the National level are shared among the men and women in the ratio of 93.6 percent to 6.4 percent. At the state level, the trend is consistent with 94.5 for men and 5.5 for women. In the Civil service the factual account is the same. The share of Nigerian women in the permanent secretary's position is typical of what obtains there. Women are only 6.4 percent of the Permanent Secretaries and a despicable 9.2 percent of the number of Directors.

Will the table turn sooner or later? Women's low representation in positions of power and authority has been linked to many factors, including poor access to education arising from early marriage, traditional prejudices, poverty and lack of economic empowerment as well as biological factors.

Conclusion

In the Nigeria political terrain, education is an essential ingredient for Nigerian women for the purpose of improving standard of living of people, to exercise their rights and lend their voice in decision-making process. Hence, the result of this research reveals that in spite of the Ogun State government policies, gender disparity exists in the state, all the local governments and wards. Efforts should be made to ensure equal access of women, men, girls and boys to both formal and informal education so as to bridge the gender gap and entrench equity. A nationally-representative survey study is required in all regions of Nigeria which will form the basis for comparison, and also reveal the levels of political participation of women in these regions.

References

- Kazeem O. F and Darrell M. (2012). The Nigerian Budgetary Process, A frame work for increasing Employment Performance, *Mediterranean Journal of Social Science*, vol3(12).
- Kerlinger, Fred N. (2000). *Foundations of behavioral research* 4th ed. Fort Worth, Texas: Harcourt College Publishers.
- Independent National Election Commission, INEC (2011) Women in a Transforming Nigeria, *Gender Statistics Newsletter, Vol. 2, No.4*
- Oyelaran-Oyeyinka, B. (2014). Rich Country, Poor People: Nigeria's Story of Poverty in the Midst of Plenty, Ibadan: Techopol.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2003). *Research Methods for Business Students* 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall Pearson Education.
- UNDP (2004). <http://www/undpreport2004> . retrieved on 2/3/2014.
- USAID Nigeria Mission, (2004). "Nigeria administrative divisions" Retrieved from <http://www/usaidNigerianmission> October 2004, on 2/4/2014

Appendix

Table 1 ANOVA

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|---------|
| 1 | Regression | 8.867 | 2 | 4.434 | 3.721 | .032(a) |
| | Residual | 53.612 | 45 | 1.191 | | |
| | Total | 62.479 | 47 | | | |

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 2 ANOVA

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|---------|
| 1 | Regression | 1.687 | 1 | 1.687 | 3.903 | .054(a) |
| | Residual | 20.313 | 47 | .432 | | |
| | Total | 22.000 | 48 | | | |

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Table 3 ANOVA

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|----|-------------|--------|---------|
| 1 | Regression | 16.440 | 2 | 8.220 | 13.681 | .000(a) |
| | Residual | 27.039 | 45 | .601 | | |
| | Total | 43.479 | 47 | | | |

Source: Field Survey, 2012