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Department of Political Science and Public Administration

GENDER INEQUALITY AND WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN NIGERIAN POLITICS (2011-2019)

Master Thesis

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Supervisor

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that in the preparation of this thesis, scientific ethical rules have been followed, the works of other persons have been referenced in accordance with the scientific norms if used, there is no falsification in the used data, any part of the thesis has not been submitted to this university or any other university as another thesis.

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SUMMARY

In Nigeria, the integration of women into Nigeria's political framework began with the federal government decree No.30 of 1989 which established the National Commission for Women. Following the inauguration of the International Year for women in 1958 to calibrate the institutionalization of women's participation in public affairs and national planning. Despite this stride, the fact that Nigerian women make up of 49% of the population which is 201 million according to the 2019 population census, but with only 4% of lawmakers means there is relatively low participation of women in Nigerian politics. Gender divide, religion, economic constraints, belief system and male chauvinism account for the reasons. This study makes a critical assessment of gender inequality and women participation in Nigerian politics from 2011 – 2019. The aim is to find the factors and government reforms in areas of policies and practices that can best improve on women partcipation in Nigerian politics. This study argues that absence of distinctive legal framework for gender equality exists at the expense of women political participation in Nigeria. In addition gender inequality in form of sex-preference, economic constraints and male chauvinism impact on women political participation in Nigeria.

Key Words: Politics, democracy, feminism, electoral system, gender inequalities

ÖZET

Nijerya'da kadınların Nijerya'nın siyasi çerçevesine entegrasyonu, Ulusal Kadın Komisyonunu kuran 1989 tarihli 30 sayılı federal hükümet kararnamesi ile başladı. Kadınların kamu işlerine ve ulusal planlamaya katılımının kurumsallaşmasını ayarlamak için 1958'de Uluslararası Kadın Yılı'nın açılışının ardından, bu atılıma rağmen, 2019 nüfus sayımına göre 201 milyon olan nüfusun %49'unu Nijeryalı kadınların oluşturması, ancak milletvekillerinin sadece %4'ünü oluşturması, kadınların Nijerya siyasetine nispeten düşük katılımının olduğu anlamına gelmektedir. Cinsiyet ayrımı, din, ekonomik kısıtlamalar, inanç sistemi ve erkek şovenizmi nedenleri açıklar. Bu çalışma, 2011 – 2019 yılları arasında Nijerya siyasetine toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliği ve kadınların katılımı hakkında eleştirel bir değerlendirme yapmaktadır. Amaç, Nijerya siyasetine kadınların katılımını en iyi şekilde iyileştirebilecek politika ve uygulama alanlarındaki faktörleri ve hükümet reformlarını bulmaktır. Bu çalışma, cinsiyet eşitliği için ayırt edici yasal çerçevenin yokluğunun Nijerya'da kadınların siyasi katılımı pahasına var olduğunu savunuyor. Ayrıca cinsiyet tercihi biçimindeki cinsiyet eşitsizliği, ekonomik kısıtlamalar ve erkek şovenizmi Nijerya'da kadınların siyasi katılımını etkiliyor.

Anahtar kelimeler: Siyaset, demokrasi, feminizm, seçim sistemi, cinsiyet eşitsizlikleri

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ABBREDIVATIONS

ACGCRW	**:**	American Convention on the Granting of Civil Rights to Women
APC	**:**	Alliance for Progressive Change
BLP	**:**	Building Learning Power
CNW	**:**	Convention on the Nationality of Women
EIU	**:**	Economic Intelligence Unit
ERAGRP	**:**	Equal Rights Amendment for Gender Equality Rights Promotion
FCC	**:**	Federal Character Commission
HRC	**:**	Human Rights Commission
INEC	**:**	Independent National Electoral Commission
LGBT	**:**	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
MDGs	**:**	Millennium Development Goal
NAWOJ	**:**	National Association of Women Journalists
NBA	**:**	Nigeria Bar Association
NCWS	**:**	National Council of Women Society
NPC	**:**	Nigerian Population Commission
NWG	**:**	Nigerian Women Group
OECD	**:**	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDP	**:**	People's Democratic Party
SDGs	**:**	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	**:**	United Nations
UNDP	**:**	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	**:**	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNGA	**:**	United Nations General Association
UNSC	**:**	United Nations Security Council

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

1.1. Introduction

Gender equality is connected to a major area of disagreement in societal functioning. Countries that are considered bad countries in terms of gender imbalance are believed to consistently malfunction because they do not give women equal opportunities as men are given. The World Economic Forum ranks Nigeria as the tenth most equitable country in the world (WEF, 2013) based on certain key factors that do not include gender equality. There was also the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap report (2013) which estimated that the variations between men and women in 136 countries were increasing, and Nigeria falls into the category.

Nigeria scoredan exceedingly alarming points in the areas of gender gap in that report. The cause was traced to lack of economic and educational opportunities for women which reflect in their lack of political empowerment and participation. The report was clear that political representation and economic chances and health outcomes were far worse for women than for men in Nigeria. Based on a Global Gap Report (2016), Iceland (0.874) had 1.6 times the number of women over who attain education at tertiary level in the country, represented the best country for gender equality in the world. In the same report, Yemen with (0.516) was the worst country in that regard. If the gap between men and women is too much, countries in that category do worse on that order (Pappas, 2013).

Inequality in terms of economy, politics, education and health between men and women, has been a big challenge for women in recent years not just in Nigeria but all over the world. Gender inequality specifically throughout the world, and for ages has been a major challenge.

The challenge goes far even before colonialism. Based on history and literature, that have always been fewer women in positions of power and authority. There was the Queen of Daura, the Sarauniya of Zazzau before the jihad era, the Angwu Tsi, whose power was almost considered to be equal to that of the King, because of the power related to her own Palace in the middle belt region of Nigeria, and Iyayun who

was the Queen that ruled in Oyo after her husband passed on during the 15th century, are the major examples of women who had power and authority (Modupe, 2001).

It is a well-known fact that only very few women have had real leadership or political position, in Nigeria. Women have always been considered for mothering roles that relate to child-bearing, house management, and care for the sick and old. Community organizers as well as some social and political activists have taken up roles that lead to women political empowerment in most countries. All of the mentioned tasks associated with women and several jobs are what spawned women's movement toward political recognition. Nigerian women population is around half of the country's population (Kolawole, Adeigbe, Adebayo & Abubakar, 2013). In the political process, they are always put forward to vote in the processes. Approximately 51% of women in Nigeria participate actively in election in terms of voting. The indication is that states that desire democracy is required to consider inclusiveness and wider political participation. Women's political commitment has been huge especially in voting turn out. However, this has not been replicated in terms of leadership positions. The Nigerian women population continue is underrepresented in elected and appointed political positions. Based on data, Nigeria's whole women political representation in government is still not up to 7%. (Agbalajobi, 2019). This low representation shows that Nigeria is yet to meet the Beijing Platform of Action's requirement which set the minimum of 30% affirmative votes for women representation. Due to the fact that women's political participation in elective positions has been relatively low, concerns among many Nigerian women have grown and they are seeking gender equality and increased political participation. The impact of gender inequality and lack of women political participation in Nigeria is reflected in the level of national cohesion and development. Nigeria's low participation of women in both elective and appointive positions has gathered much attention in the last decade. The growing concern, has influenced the growth in the number of rights groups. The rights groups assume that the problem can create limitations for democracy and democratization in the country.

Despite the important roles that women play in the Nigerian society, they are still relegated in the areas of political appointments and elections. This poses serious challenge for women especially as the inequality goes far beyond gender and politics

to the challenge of educational deficiency, religious abuse, and stereotypes. Political participation is a vital part of politics and it is important and key for keeping the stability and legitimacy of the political order and functioning. According to Agbaje (1999), political participation is a fundamental element of democracy. This is because, democracy relates to commitment to processes of rights and liberties. In this case, it is about creating equal opportunity for men and women so that they can develop equally and be able to have equal grounds for competition (Anifowose, 2004). According to Pateman (1970), the participation of citizens in politics is crucial since that determines level of checks and balance in terms of how power is shared and controlled. Kumari & Kidwai (1999), assumed that political participation ensures political fairness and improve development. In his view, this participation is not just by the people, but different aspects of the different people.

Under this context, political participation explains the degree in which individual members of a particular society aspire for, compete for, share, and take part in the general life of the particular society (Agbaje, 1999, p.193). Participation is a key part of politics which is why Kumari & Kidwai (1999, p. 13) assumed that the deprivation of the participation leads to total chaos. In Nigeria, the political representation that women are seeking stems from the recognition of their place and role in the country. This also has a link which is directly connected to the degree of their relevance in the political process of Nigeria in terms of voting (Lewu, 2005).

In terms of theory, political participation has a deep root. The concept like all concepts keep unfolding. Participatory politics is what political participation drives at. The idea is to create inclusiveness for sustainable growth. Participation cuts across all political structures. However, there is a related normative question about how much participation is seen of people considered ordinary, or of a population considered naturally unfit for elective participation. So, the normative question is which people should participate in elective politics, what kind of popular participation is required or allotted, and or desirable (Bruce, 2004, p. 106).

According to Steiner (1988), there should also be the question of what is required to participate in elective politics. The author argued that political participation is a complex concept that should go beyond the question of taking part. The author also asserted that while any form of activity within a political party or not could be

considered as political participation, as a pressure group should count as political participation, activity in other sorts of organization, such activities must show the place, role and area of participation. Nigeria's political participation in connection to women has no real context (Daniel and Faith, 2013).

Around the world, politics shape the social, economic and cultural life of the society. In Nigeria, due to the prevention of women from active political participation, women are almost endangered (Waylen, 1996). The world's average political representation for women is 5%. This is apart from Nordic countries, Costa Rica, South Africa and Uganda. In the places mentioned above, there is close to proportionality (Lewu, 2005, p. 62; IPU Report, 2007). Women have become increasingly dedicated to running for political offices now in Nigeria. They are now challenging the status quo that has hindered their political realities for very many years. The government dominated by men is now seeing women reach positions of power in recent years. They continue to press against under-representation in every arm of government: executive, legislature, judiciary, the media, and even the electoral arena.

The key areas being looked upon now is the constitution where women still face significant challenges. Full and equal participation is difficult. What they can begin with is increased participation. From there, they can perform roles within the structures and institutions to expand their chances and leverages (Omotola, 2007). The first women rights convention witnessed over one hundred women in attendance in 1948 at Seneca falls. Since then, women such as Lacretia Moth and Elizabeth Candy Stanton have set the stage for other. Nigeria too can learn from New Zealand which became the first country to allow women to vote in 1893, to become the first in on the continent of Africa to experience proportional representation for women.

The representation of women in Nigeria's elective politics is 6.7 percent. This level of women repesentaion is not close to the global average of 22.5 percent, and therefore it calls to mind the place and role of women in Nigeria's politics. In Africa, the average of women representation is 23.4 percent. When put into perspective, there is a clear indication of women under-representation which puts the question of gender forward. In Nigeria, only 6 of the 36 ministerial appointments comprised of women. This figure represents only 16.7 percent of the total. This is important for consideration given that women comprises of 5.6 percent of the House of Representatives members,

while 6.5% of the senators in the National Assembly are women. There have been seventeen years of uninterrupted democracy in Nigeria from 1999-2022, so it is a question requiring answer as to why Nigeria is yet to produce a female governor in any of the 36 states of the Federation (National Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

At the global level, the poor representation of women in politics and governance has been a major concern. The number of women engaged in politics in Nigeria is not proportionate to the 50 percent of the population of the nation they represent, and has not translated into fair representation in political leadership positions. Part of the cause of this woeful representation is cultural, and NGOs' involvement in the cultural transformation of this kind can make significant difference in Nigeria's development, (Zainab, 2018). Rising global attention to gender equality issues, backed by calls such as Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals, fills the gap created by long-term discrimination against women and helps make women more prominent in politics. In this context, Nigeria has recognized women in the political sphere, and included them in both appointive and elective positions (Uwa, 2018).

To much attention has been paid to patriarchy (Sadiqi, 2011). Patriarchy refers to a society controlled and dominated by men over women, which in turn has given rise to women being seen as mere household wives and non-partisans not to speak of coming out for political roles in the decision-making process in households. This type of discrimination is a global one, not just an African or Nigerian phenomenon. The only difference is that in this part of the world, when other developed nations of the world are moving towards gender equality and justice, it has continued for too long. In certain cases, women are unjustifiably discriminated towards. Discrimination toward women is ingrained in the essence of our cultures that honor men as distinctive, stronger and fit for public space, whereas women are frail and weak, and are supposed to remain within the private space's confluence. This has influenced the view of women in politics for a long time and hence has contributed to a very low level of women's political participation, awareness and activity in politics. While women make up about 50 percent of the Nigerian population, Nigeria still has the lowest number of women in active politics, with a moderate 4 percent in politics and ranked 133rd in the world survey of women political representatives (LSE Reviews, 2016). 2.3.2 Virility deficiency: Women's Conception of politics. The compelling numerical strength of

women in Nigeria and the question of gender equality necessitates the 'extent question' of women participation in Nigerian politics (Babangida, 1992).

Gender equality crusade around the world began in the late-19th century. The aim was to grant and increase women's right to vote, and right to hold elected offices in order to participate in decision making (Hughes, 2011). To achieve this aim, reforms were made. There was the reform on the 1923 Equal Rights Amendment aim to increase women's participation. Another reforms followed in 1933 called the Convention on the Nationality of Women which was meant to grant women more positions. After the WW11 in 1945, in1948, another reform was made called the Inter-American Convention which was meant to grant civil rights to women. The above mentioned reforms represent some of the key efforts made to arrive at a legal framework to solve gender equality problems (Osward, 2010).

The reforms above have helped to introduce significant changes in the dimension that also gave women the right to own property. The reforms have also granted LGBT rights, while re-shaping women identity. The idea of gender equality and the question of women recognition is fundamental to the discussion on human right (Clifford, 1994). There are gender equality problems around the world steming from policy crisis, religious beliefs, cultural problems, and sterotypes. As part of the solution, advocacy, increased funding and policy reforms have been identified. The case of gender equality has become so important that it has been made the 5th of the 17th Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5) of the UN since the dawn of 2017. That importance stems also to why the subject has remained as one of the Millennium Development Goals of the UN since 2019 (Zngur, 2019).

In Nigeria, the integration of women into Nigeria's political framework began with the federal government decree No.30 of1989 which established theNational CommissionforWomen, following the inauguration of International Year for women in 1958 to calibrate the institutionalization of women's participation in public affairs and national planning. Despite this stride, the fact that Nigerian women make up of 49% of the population which is 201 million according to the 2019 population census, but with only 4% of lawmakers means there is relatively low partcicipation of women in Nigerian politics. Gender divide, religion, economic constraints, belief system and male chauvinism account for the reasons (Uwa et al., 2018). This study will assess the

causes and impact of gender inequality on women participation in Nigerian politics from 2011 – 2019 with the aim of finding the indicators and government reforms in areas of policies and practices that can best improve on women 7articipation in Nigerian politics (Turva, 2007).

Nigerian women political participation is challenged by constraining factors along traditional, religious, economic and social beliefs and practices (Adegboye, 2017). The Obasanjo administration in its first tenure from 1999-2003 was lack luster on gender equality. While the Federal Character Commission lost connections with gender equity from 1999- 2003 during his first tenure, the second tenure (2003-2007) was greeted by the impact of gender equality movements across Europe and America, and some few women were considered by his regime from 2003- 2007 (Nwokocha, 2007). Following this mustard seed president Obasanjo's gender equality consideration foundation, was the relatively impactful regimes of the Goodluck Jonathan's administration in which eight (8) women held strategic ministerial roles: Prof. Dora Akunyili (Min. for Information), Mrs. Felicia Njeze (Min. of State), Mrs. Dlazani Madueke (Defence), Mrs. Agata Jerry (Transport), Mrs. Aishatu Dikku (Min. of State), Mrs. Grace Ekpiwhre (Science and Technology), Fatima Ibrahim (Min. of Energy and Power) and Mrs. Bingudu (Min. of State) (Min. of women Affairs).

Sharon Ikeazor (Minister of State Environment), Maryam Katagun (Minister of State Industry), Zainab Ahmed (Minister of Finance), Ramatu Tijjani (Minister of State, Federal Capital Territory), Gbemisola Saraki (Minister of State Transportation), Paulen Tallen (Minister of Women's Affairs), Sadiya Umar Faruk, Ramatu Tijjani (Minister of State, Federal Capital Territory), Sadiya Umar Faruk, Gbemisola Saraki (Minister of State Transportation), Paulen Tallen (Minister of Women's Affairs), Sadiya Umar Faruk (Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster management).

The president Goodluck Jonathan's administration from 2007- 2015 sponsored signifcant increase in the number of positions manned by women in Nigerian political affairs- a far cry from what persisted in the 1950s. This has been made possible due to the quota allocation system as approved by the UN to be implemented in global politics (Margaret, 2011) The impact of these 'political women' further increased Nigerian women political participation as they engaged fellow women in the political stakes of their jurisdiction (Garuba, 2007).

The current renewed campaign by liberal states, organizations and advocate groups for gender equality and equity is furthering the prospects of a more sustainable human society in Nigeria, but without reforms in policy and practices, the Nigerian society is far from being on the right track to increasing women political participation as constraints: cultural, religious, economic, political etc loom (Omoruyi, 2008).

The argument is that, culture is generally the reason for ignoring women's rights and perpetuating gender discrimination in Nigeria more often than not. Some of these negative cultural practices pervasively facilitate crimes against Nigerian women, including female genital mutilation (FGM), domestic violence, child brides or forced marriages, denial of inheritance through rape, and many other cases of female abuse.

Many researchers have identified lack of education for women as a barrier to political participation in Nigeria. They are now working against illiteracy which has been described as one of Nigerian women's biggest problems that if solved could deliver in the area of development. It may also be true that in the last decade, women's educational needs in Nigeria have been vigorously addressed, especially in areas such as engineering, accounting, management, and research. According to Okediran et al. (2006), while the efforts have benefited women in Nigeria, the issue is that adult education has been streamlined since 1947 along the lines of mass literacy initiatives, vocational training, community growth, social welfare, and industrial work as a decisive factor in promoting women as entrepreneurs to become important in society. If women in Nigeria are to contribute to the country's growth, their educational needs must be addressed appropriately (Okediran et al., 2006).

The Boko Haram version of the Sharia Act affects girls' education because it limits women to tending to their families at home and not at school where they can be trained ('The Danger,' 2014). Reinvesting in programs for adults and mass literacy could help to eliminate disparities in job opportunities, religious convictions that bind women to their homes, and cultural barriers that limit the social life of women. These programs could be used to empower and provide women with the required abilities that would enable them to participate effectively in Nigeria's political leadership. The purpose of the programs should be to ensure that women are healthy, self-reliant and self-confident as their fields of work, home life and personal growth shift in society (Okediran et al., 2006).

An example is the Nigerian Women in Politics Forum (FONWIP), whose main goal is to promote the empowerment of women and the eradication of all forms of violence and discrimination against women. It helps women, both in the public and private sectors, in decision making. Amongst other things, the organization organizes workshops on empowerment and injustice. In its agenda, it is influential; it called for government to give 30 percent female representation in government appointments; made several attempts to raise official awareness of gender problems in public policies and hold workshops for women who wish to run for public offices (Faseke, 2001). In Nigerian politics, the values, strategies and actions to end gender discrimination have been advanced and undertaken by both government and non-governmental organizations with the influence of international organizations.

The United Nations (UN) has, for its part, promoted many declarations and conventions aimed at putting an end to all forms of political discrimination against women. Women's involvement in development has become a recurrent issue following conferences in Copenhagen, Nairobi, Vienna, Cairo and Beijing, as women have access to decision-making and full participation in public affairs is now recognized as a fundamental prerequisite for democracy and for achieving sustainable development, as true democracy is defined by women's full and equal participation in books. And no state can claim democracy if half its population is excluded from the systems of decision-making (Abayomi, 2000).

1.2. Purpose of Study

1. To study the causes and impacts of gender inequality in Nigeria
2. To examine the impact of gender inequality on women political participation in Nigeria
3. To study the extent of women participation in Nigerian politics
4. To examine the challenges and consequences of low women partcipation in Nigerian politics
5. To study the indicators that have the potentials to increase women participation in Nigerian politics.

1.3. Importance of Study

1. The result of findings can set the academic background for understanding gender inequality problems in Nigeria.
2. The result of this study provides a policy framework for gender equality policy reforms.
3. The research contribute to knowledge and also relevant to future researchers.
4. Gender rights groups can improve on their operational framework and approach through the significance of this study.

1.4. Research Questions

1. What gender equality legal framework does Nigeria operate?
2. How does women descrimination and stereotype shape voters' preferences in Nigerian electoral processes?
3. What are the limitations and challenges of gender rights groups in Nigeria?

1.5. Hypothesis

1. Absence of distinctive legal framework for gender equality exists at the expense of women political participation in Nigeria
2. Gender inequality in form of sex-preference, economic constraints and male chauvinism impact on women political participation in Nigeria
3. Insufficient advocacy funding and unfavourable government policies are the limitations and challenges of gender rights groups in Nigeria

1.6. Scope And Limitation of Study

The scope of this study is limited to Nigerian women political participation from 2011 – 2019 under the president Muhammadu Buhari.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Feminist Theory

The focus of Feminist theory is to understand gender inequality, gender politics, power relations and human sexuality. Feminist theory critiques some social and political norms while focusing on the promotion of women's rights and interests: social, economic, political and cultural. Ti-Grace Atkinson's radical feminist theory is founded on the attitude that the society is constructed on a patriarchal foundation at the expense of women's overall satisfaction (Atkinson, 1969). Sex-preferences, male chauvinism and economic constraints are offshoots of the patriarchal constituents of political structure as Atkinson puts it. A great proponent and founder of radical feminist Ti-Grace Atkinson in her foundational piece titled "Radical Feminism" (1969), theorized that the subjugation and relegation of women to the background is the most harmful form of women oppression, consisting of the stereotypic view of male gender superiority. This stereotype is reflected in the Nigerian political structure as many other political structures across the world where women political representations are negatively low (Anita, 2016) Women political representation stand at only 4% percent in the Nigerian legislature, meaning that women are comprehensively underrepresented in the decision-making aspect of the country, and this reflects negatively in Nigerian people's perspectives of the political role of women and the way in which women understand their sociopolitical positioning in a complex gender-conscious society (Chukwudinma, 2017).

Sexism is the behavior of individual sex or institutions that judge people based on gender or their sexual roles. This is often considered to be prejudice or discrimination against the other gender. There are Scholars such as Karl Marx, Susan Fsike, Mary Anstell, Peter Glick, etc who have extensively addressed the theory of sexism. Sexiest as a theory has the assumptions that:

1. There are differences between men and women which make the male gender superior in a paternity-centered society.
2. Cultures and the society often are determine the roles of each gender.

3. The women gender oppression sees child-bearing as their primary role.

In the views of proponents, culture is a total representation of the sum of human traditions, norms and values (George, 1990). The transition from such cultures have been considered important for cohesion and development. This is because, from generation to generation before now, members of culture determine gender roles and restricted women dangerously. This led to a kind of universal subordination of the female gender. It made their political and economic status bad. Women in politics today have been considered from the point of reforms toward rights and liberties. This is historical, considering that women are a significant part of the human society. Their political and economic position should not be determined by cultural position but the question what roles they can play and their physical and mental eligibility for those political positions, and which members think of as absolute and unchangeable. In essence, the cultural order put. Therefore, the question over their child-bearing perceptions that have often limited their political participation in Nigeria should be replace with the question of physical and mental eligibility. Their contributions as important part of the human society should be allowed constitutionally to step beyond the line on domestic responsibility upon which so many cultural foundations have determined their social, economic, religious and political functioning (Abayomi, 2000).

In Nigeria, women have faced intense political, economic and religious oppression. Marxist feminist theory has often played significant roles in defining the focus on housework associated to women and how it is related to the argument that house workers are automatically under the control of capitalists. The capitalists in this case are the men who are husbands, playing the domestic capitalists, by subjugating the wives (women) who are housewives. This economic form of exploitation has extended to the political arena where women are also being exploited, made to labour in the house in the areas of child-bearing, cooking, laundry, and cleaning. This subjection of women require re-evaluation and reforms for increased political participation. This re-evaluation and reforms will minimize women's political oppression and deliver wider development. If there is to gender inequality, class oppression will reduce and the result will be national growth for Nigeria. This has been proven through proletarian revolution.

The struggle for women political liberation and emancipation for increased political participation has not been significantly fruitful. There are still issues of ambivalent sexism, in which hostility towards women taking roles in religious practices and certain political offices linger. There are two sides such as the side of hostile sexism and the other side of benevolent sexism.

2.2. Definition of Concepts

According to Alapiki (2004), the concept of political participation involves those essential activities through which society members contribute through participation in the determination of leaders. The concept of political participation therefore is an encompassing social behavior and process, and it cuts across political systems and processes. It does not matter whether the society is a liberal society or an autocratic one. There is always a place for politics. This is why political decisions must be made by citizens who should also participate in the political functioning of the state either in a direct way or an indirect way.

The level of political participation varies from country to country. Key factors determine active the level of women political participation; interest, orientation, education, culture, gender, age, and government policies and practices. The factors mentioned above contribute to the level of political participation in every political system and society. In Nigeria, the gender factor is a major determining factor of political participation. Different factors impede women participation in politics in Nigeria, and the core is on belief systems that women are made for family building and not for politics. Some of the factors working against women political participation in Nigeria are not policy-based, and therefore can be solved. Women political participation is necessary for a democratic state and vice versa. Democracy requires a certain level of capability, rationality, character, and activity in governance Apadorai (2004).

According to Falade (2014), in a political system, citizens participate in politics and decision making process through various media that include political party membership, voting during election, participation in electoral campaigns and other political activities. This implies that political participation involves different variables and levels of involvement in a state operations; voting in elections, contesting elective

offices, participating in decision making process and public opinion polls, and most importantly, representation. Representation on the other hand refers to elective or public offices that are held in relation to state responsibilities. Every institution of the society and associations that are related to politics are political in nature. The next question then is what constitute politics? Politics is dominated by interest and competition. The competition here is about individuals' desire and approach towards self-satisfaction with the resources of the state.

According to Ndu (1998). There are different areas of political participation. Apart from political party membership, voting during election, participation in electoral campaigns and other political activities, citizens take part in governance by canvassing for votes, registration of voters, desire for public offices, striving to influence government policies, and election campaigns. According to Williams (2018), citizens again on the other side can be resolutely indifferent to political participation.

Gender equality on the other hand is when people of all genders enjoy equal rights, have equal responsibilities and also share equal opportunities (Maxwell, 2012). According to Maxwell (2012), everyone is suffers one form of gender inequality or the other. The United Nations finds gender equality as a crucial part of its human rights objectives and strategies (Youngs, 2016). In Nigeria, the contributions of Women to National Development is glaring. These contributions to national development which can be traced to the pre-colonial period has remained till date.

2.3. The Level of Women Participation in Nigerian Politics

The level of political participation by Nigerian women is summarisable with restraints and constraints springing from factors that are based on belief systems, culture, economy, gender and stereotypes. Consequently, Nigerian politics experiences only a handful of women. There is a general belief that women are under-represented in Nigerian government structures. Since independence in 1960, Nigeria has experienced both democracy and autocracy as forms of government. In both forms since independence, there is a consensus that women have been relegated. There was the government of former president Obasanjo from 1999 to 2007 which did not set a good stage for gender equality at the time the country started democracy in 1999. The

government of Olusegun Obasanjo formed what was called the Federal Character Commission to increase political inclusiveness, but the inclusiveness did not extend to the area of gender inclusiveness. Many argue in support of gender inclusiveness given that the Nigerian population is about 50% male and 50% female (Nwokocha, 2007).

The trend continues till date in terms of exclusion of women in national politics. However, there has been a relative improvement following the administration of former president Goodluck Jonathan. This however does not debunk the fact that elective positions and appointments in Nigeria still do not have equilibrium as gender gap persists. The struggle for Nigeria's transformation require the active role of women from political perspective. Margaret Ekpo was one woman politician who stood out during pre-independence constitutional conference. Her contribution is an indication that Nigerian women can contribute immensely to nation building. This indication has a long standing beginning from independence era when Nigerian women took part in the struggle for self-determination. The resounding question has been why after 64 years of Nigerian independence, gender equality and the case of women political under-representation linger.

2.3.1. The evolution of women political participation in Nigeria

Nigeria became independent on October 1, 1960. Since then, the country has had a mixture of military and civilian presidents. Non political dispensation in Nigeria has produced a female president or vice. At the state level, there has not being a female directly elected as a governor too. However, the country has female law makers at the Senate and House of Representative levels. In these places, the women are either daughters of powerful governors, senators or formal presidents who use their influence. In Ananmbra state, Mrs Ettiaba was a governor briefly, but not under direct electoral process but impeacgment.

According to Oroegbu (2019), the fourth republic is the evolution of women political participation in Nigeria. Notable among these women are –

Mrs. Dora Akunyili, Mrs. Obubumi Etteh, Mrs. Ebele Okeke, Ms. Julie Okah-Donli, Mrs. Dozieni Allison Madueke, Mrs. Farida Waziri, Mrs. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, Mrs. Nenade Usman and Mrs. Oby Ezekwesili. There are still other women serving in governance competently. Their relevance and contribution to nation building have

been far more than the household level. According to Olurin and Agboola (1996), and the work of Mabogunge (1991), women are significant part of the country's political scheme and therefore should be given more public offices. The authors argued that the status of women in the Nigerian political setting requires reforms. The reforms they argued can step up women political participation and increase Nigeria's development.

Statistics show that women active in Nigerian politics live above expectation in terms of delivery. Given that women represent 50% of the population, fairer representation will serve nation builidng given their contribution. According to Uwa (2018), the rising global attention to the increasing challenges of gender inequality have been brougth into timelime as the 3rd Goal of the Millennium Development Goals. Nigeria can therefore take its posiiton in filling the gap created by discrimination against women in order to improve women political participation in Nigeria. In this principle, Nigeria's government recognizes women, however, the question of representation in elective offices remain an unanswered one (Uwa, 2018). According to the author, one of the key issues affecting women political participation is the issue of patriarchy.

According to Aromona (2015), Nigeria's politics has been based on political virility. The author categorizes women under-representation into citizens who have the economic and influence power to compete, politicians who have the resources of force to grab power, and those who are put in offices regardless of their economic and mental condition. The challeng according to the author is the massive idea that men are naturally meant to rule and dominate women. There is therefore less competitiveness in terms of gender struggle for elective positions (Olag and Afolabi, 2016). This question is based on certain African cultures that point to biological differences in cases of leadership, and appear to have been made firm across cultures in Africa. This belife has led to the grave alienation of women from active governance. Women are often told that politics as a dirty game requires men not women (Achi, 2018). The understanding that politics knows no difference in terms of gender eligibility is missing in Nigeria. This takes the focus from credibility and meritocracy to gender and tradition. The result is the numerical limitation of women in Nigerian government. The political difficulty faced by women is translated in the level of representtaion. This is alos reflected in the nation's achievemen level.

The sexism in Nigeria places women at economic disadvantage and makes them economically insufficient for political participation. Women political participation has been identified as having the potential to create economic indepence for women. Such economic independence is a serious criteria for political success in Nigeria. National development can only be achieved through inclussive governance (Kunle, 2019). The author argued that sexual division is problematic, not only national unity and progress, but to also the question of national development. Statistics show that the Nigerian labor market is composed of 75% of men labor. This is not just an economic inequality, but an imbalanced labor structure that continues to harm or slow national economic growth (Kayuni, 2016).

The societal belief assuming that political activities are male in nature, problematizes national cohesion and progress. What is required according to Harris (2019) is an electoral system that provides for their expansive inclusion and stake. Measures stop discrimination and systemic limitation of women's voting rights should be taken dratsically. Another area is a legislative mechanism to maximize women economic and social opportunities. This can happen through conventions that can look like the "Women's International Bill of Rights." Such measures will be pointers for the women demanding increased political participation. According to the constitution, the composition of the federal government should consider inclusiveness in order to provide equal representation, however, the Constitution does not mention clearly whether this inclussiveness is along the line of gender.

Although, women's education in Nigeria has increased and improved, especially in the fields of science and technology, engineering, accounting, management, and research, however, the rise is not replicated in political governance. According to Okediran et al. (2006), although the rise profits women in Nigeria, the real challenge is the lack of attention to adult education. What increased political participation will improve on are: mass literacy for women, vocational training for more wmen, and more social welfare for more women. Educational and economic incentives for women can step up mass literacy among the population and can completly remove the disparities in employment places. It will also reduce the religious beliefs that restrict women to homes affairs. This way, existing cultural barriers will also be less

considerate. The incentives and their objectives should be directed towards the political emancipation of Nigerian women (Williams, 2006).

2.3.2. Gender equality as an issue in women political participation in Nigeria

According to Igwe (2019), the problem of gender equality and sex preference is the real cog in the wheel of women political participation in Nigeria. The author argues that women are considered house wives, primarilly and naturally wired to home and childcare than partisan political engagement. The author like many others view women domestic restrictions as huge economic constraints on their political participation. Solutions recommended by Igwe (2019) are within the broader scale of women sensitization, abolition of early child marriage and male-child traditional preferences.

The government of Nigeria is yet to find answers to question of development in th country. Poor health infrastructure, economic inequality and escalating unemployment crisis linger. The country's 206 million population is unhappy with the government structure according to opinion polls (Bentway Report, 2018). Different right groups have voiced their request for inclusive government based on women political participation (Ogundayo, 2017). The author highlighted areas that are required to consider through reforms: inclusive employment scheme, inclusive health care system, and inclusive education system. The author argued that through technology, Nigeria's economy can be grown for all, as women participation can pave way for functional institutions of democracy, that can allow national cohesion and development.

2.3.3. Women education and sensitization for gender equality and political participation

Women can increase their political participation to cut down gender gap through increased education and sensitization. However, government policy should iclude the incorporation of gender equality education and sensitization curriculums. The level of education and awareness determine the level of political interests and participation, and therefore Nigeria's educational system and the operating curriculums can be reform to curb to eliminate gender stereotypes (West, 2018).

2.3.4. Elimination of early girl marital belief and culture

There is no legal framework in Nigeria regarding the issues of early girl marriage. If there were, women domestication and the challenge in the beliefs that women are meant to be child bearers not politicians will reduce. The governments can play significant role in the protection of the future of women and girls with a legal framework. This legal framework and the protection of women can translate into women recognition in political affairs (Ibru, 2018).

There is a rising political aspiration from the female gender population. The obstruction has been the belief in early girl marriage in some cultures of the country. This belief has reduced or eliminated the independence of women. Many girl children are forced to marry earlier than they become psychologically and even physically ready. This is a challenge that adds to the problem of sexism in Nigeria. The impact is felt in women's political representation (Henderson, 2011, p. 23). Apart from the emotional trauma faced by most women, there is still the economic and political incapacitation that follows their lack of political participation and decision-making in Nigeria's political affairs (Peterson, 2018). While the provision of economic empowerment for mothers, can reduce early girl child marriage, a legal framework is required for complete operationalization. It is a consensus belief that economic empowerment for mothers who give out their girl child for marriage, unavailability of educational etc are the primary reasons or causes for early girl child marriage (UNICEF, 2011).

2.4. Women Political Participation in Nigeria

Women political participation in Nigeria has not improved because of factors based on culture, economy, security, belief systems and interest. The country's constitution too does not provide clear conditions for understanding the place and role of women in the country's governing structure. Due to this fact, there is little or no point of appreciation in terms of the contributions of women to nation building. Women are instead believed to be meant for household chores, providing children care, helping the sick and elderly, and taking care of domestic affairs. Such idea of the role of women reduces their political and economic opportunities and potentialities (Udo, 2019). The author argued that Nigeria under this state of affairs is considered to be low

on gender equality grading. Nigerian women have lesser access upper education, properties, and employment. There is therefore a gender gap in the areas mentioned above.

Developmental problems such as economic gap that results into poverty; political instability, and social justice problems are mostly faced by women because of lack of political representation. Actor (2016) linked the cause of these developmental problems Nigeria's consitutional weakness in terms of policy implimentation. While the problems have been there since independence in 1960, the 1967 civil war led to increase (Gimba et al., 2018). The Post-1967 civil war period was expected to be better following democracy in 1999, however, the situation has not changed well enough (Femi, 2017).

Since the last decade, pressure groups committed to gender equality and increased political participation for women have step up the crusade to develop women for political representation using human rights, calls for education, creation of employment for women, programmes for entrepreneurial skill for women etc. (Hussein, 2016). The crusade has yeilded as more women have been elected into legislative offices in the last decade than from independence time in 1960 to 1999 (Harrison, 2015). According to Banks and Hulms (2017), an examination of the issues of women under-representation have led Nigeria into gender disparity. Gender disparity can create developmental problems since all belong to same nation and must be engaged (Campbell, 2007). Thefailureofstate-leddevelopment in terms of policies and actions directed towards women political participation can be corrected through increased women political participation (Humphrey, 2018).

2.4.1. Legal framework for gender equality and women political participation in Nigeria

No Nigeria's constitutions clearly mentions gender equality, but many sections of its human rights provisions are often interpreted to mean (Wilson, 2015). From this vantage point (Davies 2008), in support of pressure groups as it has been doing since the 19th Century, to promote gender equality. The emergence of anti-slavery advocacies through Frederick Douglass could be said to explain the fondation for understanding women place and role in politics (Page, 2014). The Anti-Slavery

Society worked as a volunteering framework for women economic and political emancipation (Davies, 2008). The framework was the first of its kind, solving problems in all social areas, including the elimination of slavery and slave trade, health care challenges, problems of security, justice and fairness, educational issues and issues connected to women empowerment (Wendt, 2000).

Despite the rising call for women rights, and the increasing number of rights support groups, not much was realized until the emergence the Red Cross (Pinkney, 2009). The author argued that Red Cross organization was primarily concerned with providing health care for wounded soldiers, during its creation in the1800s, it also paid attention to women rights issues. Sandoz (2007) and Crossland (2010) also argued that the Red Cross is arguably the first to address the issues of women rights. The creation of the Red Cross in the 19th century, opened activities that aroused interest in women rights. There was an expansion in the Red Cross later on to be open to other social problems connected to accident. Since the 2000s, many other rights groups have alligned with the MDGs and SDGs to solve women challenges in all areas (Oswald, 2018). All of this effort to solve issues related to women rights in terms of politics, economics, education and security have their roots in the crusade for a better world (Midathada, 2014). It is not enough however, to call for reforms along women political participation, but to provide mechanisms for the implimentation of the reforms and policies (McDonagh, 2002).

2.4.2. Issues of gender equality and women political participation in Nigeria

Nigeria as a state is experiencing a new turn on women political participation. According to Maxwell (2018), women political participation depends on the principle of human rights within gender rights. He asserted that until there is a framework for gender equality, women political participation will remain at the bottom. The author cites the coception of women as house wives and natural home keeper as the key issue affecting women political participation in Nigeria. It is evident in the elective positions in Nigeria since 1999 that women have not achieved 10% representation. No woman has been Nigeria's vice president from 1999 to date and not to speak about the president. In 2011, under the People’s Democratic Party's platform, only one woman contested for the office of president in Nigeria and did not survive the primary election.

If NGOs take up the women political participation apostolate, development will rain in (Amadu, 2019). How could she survive the primaries because, considering the vast number of women who attended the primary election but declined to vote for her even on the grounds of sympathy, she got only one vote? Five women out of 14 people contested the vice presidential seat in 2015, while 14 men contested the presidential position. Aiyede (2006) acknowledged that the number of women in political offices has increased over the years and is expected to rise in the future, but the fact remains that there is only a marginal degree of change.

In the discussion on the importance of electoral system transformation, participants of the 2017 Conference on Election Credibility mostly argued that for "true" political participation of all, digitalization though does not guarantee full credibility, it offers more reliability than the manual voting system. "False participation", argued some participants "has been used by many Nigerian politicians to project an image that Nigerian's franchise is limitless. Critics of the government have always been intimidated or absorbed to silence transparency and accountability. The significance of transforming the electoral system in line with electronic standard involves transparency and accountability. The outcome of the examination of the existing electoral system of ballot show that INEC are usually powerless in addressing issues of vote stealing, Election Day intimidation and kidnap. The transition therefore will empower those engaged in democratic projects to bring transparency and accountability into Nigeria's electoral process. Nigeria more than ever before, needs to globalize the more and this begins with the electoral aspect of its politics. The poverty and limited education in the continent has cut it off from the rest of the continents. This contributes also to the decline of democracy in Nigeria as repressive regimes utilizes the ignorance of the people as political tool to deprive them of their electoral rights, while limiting their chances and power to fight for those fundamental rights.

Nigeria looking at its democracy rating must transform its electoral system to deliver transparency and accountability. The individual freedom ranging from the right to vote to freedom of expression and equality before the law can be affected by state or non-state actors. The case for Africa, especially in Nigeria is becoming worrisome. Most African countries, especially Nigeria do not have functional Election Day

security that protect voters' mandate. Existing state laws do not guarantee security of votes on election. Armed groups are even hired to steal ballot papers during election. Nigeria is therefore far behind in security scaling, allowing so much violent attacks against voters at election poll centers, including kidnapping and murder (Harrison, 2018). In 2013, the world's recognition of Nelson Mandela's achievement highlighted the heavy failings of current African leaders, especially in matters of election credibility. That further confirmed the worrisome findings of Freedom House (2014) showing that for sub Saharan Africa, all of the seven categories of political rights and civil liberties declined for successive over years, with the largest decreases coming in the dimension of freedom of expression and association. This area for Nigeria specifically have limited citizens' franchise and affected their legitimate mandate because of lack of credible elections.

This trend highlighted by 2014 Freedom House continues today in Nigeria as increased repression of election mandate is taking the center stage. Arrest and detention of journalists writing and reporting about election fraud is on the increase in Nigeria. This is affecting the deepening of democracy. Factors such as election corruption are increasing the lack of voting will. Despite the scarcity of resources arising from the failing economic system and the non-diversification approach, electoral fraud mentality of current leaders is in constant rise. The minimization of support from the international community, lack of political and financial accountability etc. are also part of the factors affecting democracy and sponsoring its decline. Nigeria therefore requires to go back to the drawing board and revolutionize its voting system. First, institutions of democracy will have to resurrect with fresh and stronger empowerment and enlightenment. Democrats must take the center stage. The press needs courage at this difficult time to be louder on the rule of law, civil liberties, freedoms and rights especially in the area of election malpractices. Education needs to rise in quantity and quality. The judiciary must restate their independent position and maintain justice. The ruling elites, Non-governmental organizations, and the general public must create a veritable platform for influencing INEC and the governing political party (Ajibo, 2018).

While taking stock of the challenges torturing democracy and pressuring democratization, and on the other hand, factors nurturing democracy and making

democratization in Nigeria pleasurable, the major argument is that Nigeria although is becoming more democratic than authoritarian if we evaluate the reports from Freedom House Index, but the country is arguably engulfed in serious electoral issues that are creating democratic problems.

The remnant of dictatorial mentalities and military indoctrination of some of its leaderships, unresolved problems of ethnic pluralism, military coup, corruption, lack of political will, the non-interference principle of sovereignty, poverty, and the minimization of democratic response from the international community are some of the problems caused by lack of election transparency. To get back on the track of democracy and democratization (Oladipo, 2019) argued that apart from transformation of electoral system, there is need for the transformation of Nigeria's institutional design to allow for a long discussion involving democrats, INEC, government and the general public for transition into electronic voting system. These are some of the requirements for the achievement of transparency and accountability of the electoral system and process.

Democracy and democratization in Nigeria also requires credible election system apart from responsive and responsible political leadership, political will, and constitutionalism, political and financial accountability of governments (Roberts, 2018) To resolve the challenges of democracy and democratization which are currently tearing the country into shred, the steps required must also include national reconstruction, responsive civil society, and a massive step towards modernization and industrialization. Many scholars are of the ideological standpoint that, democracy and democratization in Nigeria is not achieving much after a somewhat gradual, but consistent growth from the late 90's because the electoral system of ballot box is always fraudulent and politicians capitalize on its weakness to steal votes. The way in which politicians manipulate the electoral voting system that is hugely manual has therefore become one of the many reasons for the call for transition into electronic voting system. The kind of political approach displayed by the political actors in the political field in contemporary time is diminishing hope of a sustainable democracy as corruption and human right abuses have become almost structural and cultural in Nigeria's political framework. A truly democratizing Nigeria will be one in which citizens are extensively and practically participating in elections, or influencing policy

making; rival political forces have untouched liberties and rights of contestation, parliament ensures free and fair election, the elites and the people are aware of the values and significance of democracy and are working towards it, institutions that promote democracy especially the media, NGOs and judiciary exist, are free, mobilized and functional, democrats are available and taking their rightful position in nation building through democratic restructuring, leadership in every vital institution of government become more accountable financially and politically.

2.4.3. Gender equality as an agent of democracy

Nigeria must enact electoral laws tha provide for women expansivity as the rest of the world. This according to him will improve Nigeria's crumbling democracy. Freedom House classifies the systems of governance into democratic, autocratic, and hybrid regimes. One of the key areas of contestation is the electoral contestation (Elizabeth, 2016). In Nigeria, this area of contestation is a very big issue as it is problematized by lack of transparency and accountability. There is therefore the need to commit to systematic and institutional changes. The category of hybrid regimes which Nigeria has fallen is not the expectation of the citizens looking for democracy, and the change begins with electoral transformation.

Nigerians have acknowledged that development must be revamped by a democratic approach which begins with election transparency and accountability. Electronic system of voting could be the turning point of this movement according to Josh (2019) when he argued that manual voting system is not a reliable voting system for a country like Nigeria, on the premise that the system offers no clear chance for verification. His position was recognized by the Nigerian Convention on Popular Political Participation in 2017. The African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation also looked into this critical area. The plenary holds that the absence of democracy is a principal reason for the persistent development challenges facing Africa and beginning from considering who enters into office at strategic levels, African can gain more in democracy and development. There was also the account of the Arusha Conference of February 1990 which observed that the key challenge on the way of Africa's democracy and development is electoral fraud culture of ruling elites. This electoral fraud culture breeds corruption, fascism and lawlessness. Through this undemocratic political culture, citizens lose their political

participation. And where the people are allowed to participate, it is often "false participation" because the outcome usually does not represent the people's preferences. Nations cannot be built without the popular support and full participation of the people, nor can the economic crisis be resolved and the human and economic conditions improved without the full and effective contribution, creativity, and popular enthusiasm of the vast majority of the people. After all, it is to the people that very benefits of development should and must accrue. Neither can Nigeria's perpetual economic crisis be overcome, nor can a bright future for Nigeria and its people see the light of day unless the structures and pattern of electoral contexts are revolutionized in the most digital way possible.

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or non-state actors. The case for Africa, especially in Nigeria is becoming worrisome. Most African countries, especially Nigeria do not have functional Election Day security that protect voters' mandate. Existing state laws do not guarantee security of votes on election. Armed groups are even hired to steal ballot papers during election. Nigeria is therefore far behind in security scaling, allowing so much violent attacks against voters at election poll centers, including kidnapping and murder (Harrison, 2018). In 2013, the world's recognition of Nelson Mandela's achievement highlighted the heavy failings of current African leaders, especially in matters of election credibility. That further confirmed the worrisome findings of Freedom House (2014) showing that for sub Saharan Africa, all of the seven categories of political rights and civil liberties declined for successive over years, with the largest decreases coming in the dimension of freedom of expression and association. This area for Nigeria specifically have limited citizens' franchise and affected their legitimate mandate because of lack of credible elections.

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making; rival political forces have untouched liberties and rights of contestation, parliament ensures free and fair election, the elites and the people are aware of the values and significance of democracy and are working towards it, institutions that promote democracy especially the media, NGOs and judiciary exist, are free, mobilized and functional, democrats are available and taking their rightful position in nation building through democratic restructuring, leadership in every vital institution of government become more accountable financially and politically.

The move towards democracy in Nigeria is instantiated in its first Republic in 1963, three years after its independence in 1960. The Republic unfortunately succumbed to military rule three years later after a bloody coup. The country though maintained its desire for democracy and democratization. Consequently, the country has to her credit a written Constitution being operated for the effective democratic governance of her population, comprising peoples of different religious freedom and cultural backgrounds. Nigeria is a secular state though, with various religions and cultures comprising it. To achieve cohesion, the electoral system must guarantee a great deal of inclusiveness. This will bear so much on the influence on democracy. Electronic voting system has been considered capable of increasing political participation because it has the capacity to provide avenues for the sick, physically challenged and even the threatened to cast their political preferences. The Berlin Conference of 1885 ensured that other European powers acknowledged Britain's dominance over the Oil River Protectorate of Lagos which Britain annexed in 1861. To effectively control Nigeria and harmonize all the economic zones of the various territories under Britain's control in that region, the Colonial Master called Lord Lugard amalgamated the culturally and religiously various regions in 1914. This is the origin of the existing multiculturalism and religious diversity in Nigeria. Great Britain granted political independence to Nigeria on the 1st of October 1960 and granted a Republican status on the 1st of October 1963. The country was first under parliamentary democracy which was briefly broken by military rule and then followed by a Presidential capitalist system of democracy since 1999. Nigeria has drafted several constitutions and operate a written Constitution –with five amended Constitutions (1960, 1963, 1979, 1989, 1999), each one making Nigeria more of a secular state. This constitutionalism which is a process of making and producing formal principles and laws into a comprehensive document needed to regulate the

behavior of government or any institution has turned Nigeria into a secular state. However, like most countries claiming to be secular or democratic in words not actions, Nigeria is not completely secular and truly democratic in the right sense of the words, as evidences abound where religion and culture take parts in the country's democratic process. In all the drafted Nigerian Constitutions, the position of law is that religious belief is not to influence any public or government decisions. However, interaction within religious groups of Islamic faith and Christian faith did indeed show evidences of one religion trying to outdo the faith of the other through aggressive conversion.

Giwa (2015) argued that the colonialists understood the followers of Christianity and Islam as products of modernization process. The modernization process he argued has not stopped because the electoral process which bring people into power is still been manipulated. Social mobility and constant orientation towards electoral transition he argued can increase political participation and bind the various ethnic groups together. The overall gain is sustainable democratic consolidation. However, there is a weak democratic foundation laid for Nigeria by the colonialists (Henry, 2018). The consequences are seen in the inability of the current leaders to keep the different religious and ethnic groups under one Nigeria roof in true unity and peace. Many have suggested that electronic voting system will increase voting number and create national unity (Moses, 2017). What stands on the way of ethnic unity is the megalomaniac drive for power which does not allow the leaders to democratically serve the people who elect them, or helplessly watch them assume power without their mandate. The same religion and culture have always been used as populist tools to hinder democratic enlightenment among the masses who are mostly uneducated. Of note is that, whenever an attempt is made by the institutions of democracy to question electoral authoritarianism, the regime head most often uses it agencies to clamp down on the institutions of democracy. Consequently, the cultural and religious diversity is proving more divisive than unifying as electoral authoritarianism affects inclusive governance (Mendeline, 2019). Shittu (2018) argued extensively that Nigeria's ethnic and cultural pluralism can only be unified with inclusive government which depends on an electoral system that is encompassing and less repressive.

As Nigeria edged closer to civilian rule where citizen's participation mattered, the important role of women in the country's political and economic structure became more accentuated. A study by the WHO in Adamawa State (WHO, 2018) showed that women plays more role in the fight against diseases in Nigeria and therefore will contribute significantly to the country's political structure in terms of decision making and political representation. The study also showed that in addressing the various areas of gender equality challenges such as education, politics and economy, women are important not only in providing answers but as major determinants of health-seeking behaviours and outcomes, their political representation will help the country. This is particularly the assumption of Dr Kabir Yusuof while pinpointing the role of women in the polio eradication programme and issues related to women victimization. "I believe gender strongly influences disease surveillance and access to immunization services, and with women being parts of the policy making structure and process, Nigeria will be better" (Yusuof, 2018). He argued that a health worker who has worked within the Nigerian Government polio programme for over ten years will better understand the contribution of women to the health of Nigeria.

According to Josh (2018), the trasition of Nigeria from military regime to democracy in 1999 has been the best gift to the country in terms of freedom, however, the freedom is very limited for women. He argued through the most recent case of women political misrepresentation in Nigeria, that the country cannot head upward without gender equlity and women improved political participation. The author assumed that Nigeria requires expansive women political participation to claim any valid transition from military to democracy. There is therefore a sudden weakness of the limbs of Nigeria's democracy caused by gender inequality and lack of women political representation. Quality economic surveillance is crucial to understand exactly what hinders women from political participation in Nigeria. Regions like the north have been hindered majorly by religious beliefs and economic incapacity. Nigeria has although been consistently improved between 2007 and 2015 in terms of women political participation and gender equality. The women mostly in national assembly contributed financially to solving health emergencies especially in the north between 2007 and 2015. There was a total of 17, 867 cases of polio identified in 2016, with 4,305 cases in 2007 alone. In August 2019, a total of 5 152 of polio cases were also identified and reported immediately to the Gender Dimensions of Acute Flaccid

Paralysis Surveillance based in Adamawa Nigeria. The women flank of the Nigeria national assembly launched the bills and supported financially to the eradication of the porlio in 2017 (GDAPS, 2017).

However, the study also found that there were significantly more male health workers engaged in polio surveillance activities than female health workers, highlighting gaps where gender biases exist in relation to surveillance personnel and where intervention is needed. For example, in 2016 there were 29 men employed as state epidemiologists compared with just 8 women doing the same job; there were 23 male state disease surveillance and notification officers (DSNO) compared with 14 women and at LGA level, there were 609 male DSNOs versus 218 female DSNOs. The number of health facility surveillance focal personal was, however, roughly the same (2 814 men and 2 879 women). Generally, the report showed there are more male key surveillance personnel than females in northern zones (3 331 men, 1 081 women), and the reverse is the case in southern zones (687 men, 2 377 women).

Breaking stereotypes WHO believes that involvement of female caregivers in surveillance programmes may help to improve vaccine uptake, in that women generally take care of children and women surveillance officers are more likely to detect more AFP cases given that they have full access to the households. Furthermore, in surveillance activities such as collection of stool or blood samples, women are better positioned to gather historical data and improve stool/blood adequacy, especially in culturally or religiously attuned settings. In the long run, gender balanced surveillance networks will build a more sensitive surveillance that detects cases which will in turn lead to timely intervention. “Promoting gender equality is one of the most important catalysts for sustainable development,” according to Dr Fiona Braka, Team Lead, Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), WHO Nigeria.

“The goal of achieving equality between women and men is based on principles of human rights and social justice and is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Integrating or mainstreaming gender into all facets of socio-economic life is key to tackling gender inequalities. This requires a gender equality policy in which women and men have the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities in all areas of life. WHO advocates for breaking stereotypes, barriers, all discriminatory

practices and illusions that women cannot ‘fit in’ when it comes to disease surveillance practice,” she added.

To reflect the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women in efforts to eradicate polio, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) Oversight Board officially endorsed a Gender Equality Strategy in May 2019. The strategy aims to promote the integration of a gender perspective into different aspects of the GPEI’s programming, to support countries in addressing gender-related barriers to polio vaccination to increase coverage and increase women’s participation in the polio programme.

The 5th goal of the sustainable development goal (SDG) is focused on gender equality. Global attention is on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. Aside from agriculture, women in paid employment account for 41% against 35% as of 1990. The 5th SDG aim to empower all women and girls to ensure gender equity and ultimately end all acts of discrimination against the female gender. The argument for or against gender inequality is a conversation that has remained in the corridor of global debate. In the past, some literature was of the opinion that gender inequality might actually lead to an increase in economic growth (Dorius and Firebaugh, 2010; Klasen, 2002; Kleven and Landais, 2017; Mayoux, 1995; Worsdale and Wright, 2020). However, other authors (Essien et al., 2016; Falk and Hermle, 2018; Kleven and Landais, 2017) have revealed that gender inequality negatively impacts the economy. Gender inequality is a problematic issue as it lowers wellbeing and is regarded as a form of injustice in the very conception of equity (Klasen, 2008; Rewhorn, 2020; UNDP, 2015).

Historically in Nigeria, certain tribes treated men preferentially for economic empowerment and inheritances (Olanrewaju et al., 2015; Pathak, 2017). For instance, the Igbos do not include women or girls in a will when sharing land or another asset (Agbasiere, 2015; Azuakor, 2017). Women are thought to be fit for the kitchen and assist with farm duties. This makes them dependents and subservient to their male counterpart (Ene-Obong et al., 2017). Gender inequality is a multifaceted concept that incorporates both opportunities and outcomes. The latest review of the Nigerian economy by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) revealed that closing the gender

gap is key to achieving higher growth in the economy, enhancing productivity and greater economic stability (Adegbite and Machethe, 2020; Archibong, 2018).

There has been a lot of advocacy by both the government and civil societies making a case for training the girl child and providing equal opportunities over the years (Abendroth et al., 2017; Connell et al., 2020). Over time, with the advent of western education, exposure and enlightenment, there is a need to see how the gap caused by inequality and discrimination against women has been bridged and to what degree. In Nigeria, women dominate the unpaid job sector, twice the figure for men. The economic value of females was projected to be about 30% of the gross national product (UNDP, 2015). Like other parts of the world, women in Nigeria face several discriminations that limit their full capacity.

Gender refers to the roles, behaviors, activities, attributes and opportunities that any society considers appropriate for girls and boys, and women and men. Gender interacts with, but is different from, the binary categories of biological sex (World Health Organization, 2020). Gender can also be the state of being male or female. Inequality, on the other hand, can be defined as a state of being unequal or unfair. Gender inequality is seen as the disparity between the male and female gender. The concept of inequality is broad; it is expressed over the entire population and captures those below a certain poverty line (World Bank, 2011; UNDP, 2013). Inequality is associated with segregation, economically or socially. The presence of barriers mostly drives inequality. These barriers hinder upward movement in social classes through income and wealth crystallization. These barriers give certain high-class people access to a better stake of societal resources, hence make them better off than those in the lower class (Anyalebechi, 2016; Kleven and Landais, 2017; Matthew et al., 2020).

Several factors account for the gap in gender-based earning, such as segregation by occupation and industry, differences in physical structure, education and skill acquisition, contributing to differences in earning (Akinbi and Akinbi, 2015; Para-Mallam, 2017). However, the recent discovery shows that some of this gap is being closed gradually, such as the gap regarding educational attainment and horizontal occupational segregation is further reduced. These events have contributed to the reduction of gender gaps in wages and earnings (Klasen and Santos-Silva, 2018).

The economy of Nigeria is a mixed economy with emerging markets and is of middle-income. With key sectors such as manufacturing, communications, technology, financial services, entertainment on the increase each year, it is ranked as the 27th largest economy globally considering nominal gross domestic product (GDP) and the 23rd largest when considering purchasing power parity (IMF, 2020). It is the largest economy in Africa, with its growing manufacturing sector becoming the biggest in Africa in 2013 (Fantom and Serajuddin, 2016; Lawal et al., 2018). Among West African countries, Nigeria is the largest producer of goods and services. (Isiksal and Chimezie 2016; Manufacturing Sector Report, 2015; Ovadia and Wolf, 2018). Nigeria's debt to GDP ratio has been on the increase though well below many developing nations like her. In 2008, the debt to GDP ratio was 7.2%; however, as of 2019, the figure stood at 16.2% (CEIC, 2019; Onafowora and Owoye, 2019).

Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa, with an estimated population of about 200 million. As of 2019, the Nigeria Bureau Statistics estimated that about 40% of Nigerian population live below the poverty line. Furthermore, Nigeria's outlook in the Human Capital Development Index (0.539) as of 2019 is nothing to be proud of, ranking 158 among nations of the world (UNDP, 2019). Going by the above knowledge, a nation as populous as Nigeria cannot take with levity the problem of gender inequality if she wants her economy to grow. Therefore the problem of gender inequality must be reduced to the minimum that she can attain.

Over the years, research works have shown clearly that there is an imbalance in gender allocation in society and sectors of the economy at large (Ndubuisi, 2017). Inspite of several strategies put in place by the United Nations, the government of nations, and various private institutions to reduce gender inequality to the bare minimum, gender inequality continues to be a menace to society. In light of this imbalance across gender, this study seeks to critically evaluate its impact on income across gender in Nigeria, emphasizing the critical sector of the Nigerian economy and the geographical distribution of Nigeria. This study raises a major concern and the need to carefully outline the determinants of gender inequality in the country and practically see if there has been improvement upon comparison with previous studies as the research work looks at new data sets to show the current state of gender inequality in income in the Nigerian economy.

The study by Fatukasi and Ayeomoni (2015) exposes the consequences of income inequality on health indicators in Nigeria. Considering data from the IMF between 1980 and 2014, the study employs a dynamic ordinary least square (OLS) methodological approach. Evidence supports that income inequality significantly affects health indicators in Nigeria for the period under review. Consequentially, per capita income, saving level and educational attainment contribute positively to health indicators in the county.

Osunde (2015), using data from ILO, studied the labor market for male and female workers. It was found that the labor market demand for both genders differs, favoring the male. Osunde (2015) put the adult male's market participation rate in the country to be 73.7% as of 2000. This figure declined to 71.7% in 2005 and 70.6% in 2007; consequently, female labor participation during this period stood at 38.7% in 2007, a rise from 38.1% in 2005 and 37% in 2000. However, evidence suggests that women in the age bracket of 50–55 have a high labor market participation rate. This means that many women are active in the labor market only after the childbearing period.

A work of Amasa Walker of Oberlin in 1866, explains that “low wages of women, even where physical differences do not matter, is because of their exclusion from many employments, which force women to crowd into the remaining occupations, forcing down wages.” Walker discovered that the average monthly income of male teachers, $49.87, was greater than that of the female teachers, $19.63 in Massachusetts's public schools in 1857–1858.

Over the years, gender disparity has been attributed to males' physical structure, making them more productive and deserving of more earnings than females. However, Walker believed that even in jobs that do not require physical strength or physical differences are not considered, males still dominate, leaving females to be excluded from many job opportunities. This forces female labor to other available occupation, given their large number, the wage is forced down. He looked to widen the range of occupations open to women with more equal wages. Of course, arguments about pay disparities, differences in education by gender, the relationship between family responsibilities and wages and crowding of women into particular occupations have been staples of studying the economic status of women ever since. We leverage on this

theory as we seek to examine the role the employment sector plays in earning capacity along gender in Nigeria.

The study confirmed income inequality, which is more pronounced in the wage-paying job than the self-employment job. The source of income is attributable to the level of disparity in earning. However, based on Theil index measurement, urban inequality is lower than rural; urban is 0.334 and rural is 0.672 in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, girl child education is threatened just like other countries of the world. Girl child education is needed for poverty reduction, ensuring societal tolerance and economic development. Akinbi and Akinbi (2015) examine the root gender disparity in education in Nigeria; factors such as cultural beliefs and practice, family financial constraints, religious encumbrances, and environment are highlighted as a cause of disparity in education in Nigeria between the male child and the girl child. The study further highlights the implication of such disparity in a nation, citing women's high dependency on men, crises and its effect on infant mortality. The study poses that universal education should be a top priority for the government, ensuring free and compulsory education at the secondary school level. Furthermore, the northern part of the country needs more enlightenment on education value.

Women participation in politics in Nigeria is on the low; women are heavily discriminated against and given little or no opportunity to participate in politics Anyalebechi (2016) identified factors that contribute to the high inequality gap in women participation in politics, factors such as culture and norms favoring the male; education level of women also contribute to the low participation; many women are not educated and relegated to doing household chores. The political factor and the rule of law is not favorable to women in politics.

Mandel's (2016) findings indicated that characteristics that increase gender inequality in pay occupation through exclusionary practices really work the opposite direction on within occupation gender inequality. Furthermore, occupation is a strong system that cannot be overridden by an individual characteristic. This shows the superiority of the effect of occupation over the character of an individual. Besides, democratic occupation is found to close the gender pay gap more than a less democratic occupation. The study shows that democratic occupation reduces the gender pay gap between 45% and 63%. In the US, the gender wage report 2017

highlights that women's ratio to men’s median annual earnings is 80.5% in 2017. This figure was recorded for the year 2016, which means that the gender wage gap is of 19.5%. The report shows that gender parity in earning will be achieved at such a growth rate in 2059. Furthermore, comparing the white and black average monthly earning, the black average monthly income was at a disadvantage, earning just about 60% of the white average monthly income (Hegewisch and Williams-Baron, 2018).

Checchi and van De Werfhorst studied the relationship between education dispersion and earnings (2018). In their study, there exists a positive relationship between educational attainment and the level of earning. Differences in skills acquired also add to the inequality gap as those who possess better skills and education earn more. The study was in line with the neoclassical economic theory. In another study by Busemeyer (2015), inequality in skill was examined against the parental background of some set of 15-year-old students using data from OECD. The result shows no relationship between the student's parental background, education opportunity and skills acquired.

The socioeconomic impact of inequality was examined in Israel by Kaplan and Herbst (2015), emphasizing the contribution of relative income, household income and education inequality to divorce in Israel. The result shows that couples in the lower end of the socioeconomic class tend to divorce more in Israel. Furthermore, a higher level of education of both couples reduces the risk of divorce. This shows that equity in education can help curb the menace of divorce. In another vein, a wife earning higher than her husband increases the risk of divorce in Israel. This shows that inequality in earning favoring the female can result in divorce.

The participation of women in the e-wallet program and the use of modern agricultural tools was the focus of Uduji and Okolo-Obasi (2018). The study examines the impact of the government e-wallet on young females' performance in the rural agriculture sphere in contributing to the enhancement of female productivity in the agriculture sector. Evidences suggest that the program has helped young females access infrastructure and helped close the inequality gap on their male counterparts. Furthermore, women engaged more in the farm value chain than they did previously, earning more and closing female–male earnings inequality in Nigeria's rural agriculture sector.

Clark (2011), in his paper “World health inequality: Convergence, divergence, and development,” looked at inequality in health using infant mortality rate and life expectancy and checked for the convergence and divergence in the variables and noted that there is a convergence in life expectancy for the years under study; interestingly, there is a rapid divergence in the infant mortality rate. It was confirmed that in emerging countries, economic development has more bearing on life expectancy than it has on the infant mortality rate. However, this case does not hold in advanced economies. This shows that a positive effect of GDP per capita on life expectancy attenuates at higher development levels. In contrast, the negative effect of GDP per capita on infant mortality grows stronger.

Akinbi and Akinbi (2015) examine inequity in healthcare utilization through an analysis of the Nigeria situation for the period of 2010; using the Nigerian living standard survey (NLSS) data, they adopted the horizontal inequity (HI) index to make their findings. Their result shows that inequity in health-care utilization in the country is generally skewed against the poor as the analysis established evidence about the poor with similar medical needs as the rich have access to less health-care service. Also, health-care services' utilization rate is found to be positively related to household expenditure, while age and health status are significant factors determining health-care visits.

Fidelis et al. (2006) studied labor force participation, earnings and inequality in Nigeria using the General Household Survey (GHS) 1999 for Nigeria. The study makes use of the Gini coefficient, Theil's entropy index, ordinary least squares technique, and other techniques in its analysis and finds that inequality is more pronounced in paid employment than in the self-employed segment of the Nigerian labor force and inequality is generally higher in the rural areas than in the urban areas and within subgroups.

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 30% affirmative action. 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. However, the re-introduction of democratic governance has witnessed once again an increase in women political participation both in elective and appointive offices. The national average of women's political participation in Nigeria has remained 6.7 percent in elective and appointive positions, which is far below the Global Average of 22.5 percent, Africa Regional Average of 23.4 percent and West African Sub Regional Average of 15 percent. For instance, out of the 36 recently confirmed ministerial appointments by the administration now in power, only six (6) are women, representing 16.7 percent.

In the National Assembly, women constitute 5.6 percent of members of the House of Representatives and 6.5 percent of the Senators. Also with the fifteen years of uninterrupted democratic governance (1999-2015), Nigeria is yet to produce a female governor in any of the 36 states of the Federation. This paper seeks a critical review of the importance of data in monitoring women participation in politics in Nigeria vis -à-vis the affirmative declaration. Recently, the National Center for Women Development embarked on the collection of a national data on involvement and participation of women in politics in Nigeria (1999 to 2015). One of the objectives of the data collection is to provide a baseline for the implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The data collation of the exercise is ongoing. Hopes are high that the result will show the progress steadily made to achieving the affirmative declaration and determine how the gap that erstwhile existed has been closed as well as measure the variation between where we are and the affirmative action of 35 percent. Also, it will improve evidence-based planning and programming involving women in decision making; increase the support of key stakeholders on measures to increase representation of women in decision-making and further improved awareness of new advocacy tools among stakeholders to support the campaign fo r increased representation of women in decision making in Nigeria.

Politically, in the pre-colonial era, Nigerian women were an integral part of the political set up of their communities. For instance, in pre-colonial Bornu, women

played active roles in the administration of the state, complementing the roles played by male counterparts. Also, Women also played a very significant role in the political history of ancient Zaria. The modern city of Zaria was founded in the first half of the 16th century by a woman called Queen Bakwa Turuku. She had a daughter called Amina who later succeeded her as Queen. Queen Amina was a great and powerful warrior. She built a high wall around Zaria in order to protect the city from invasion and extended the boundaries of her territory beyond Bauchi and she made Zaria prominent Commercial Centre. The story was not different in ancient Yorubaland, where Oba ruled with the assistance of a number of women referred to as female traditional chiefs. They consisted of eight titled ladies of the highest rank. The significant role played by prominent women such as Moremi of lfe, Emotan of Benin and Omu Okwei of Ossomari, cannot be ignored. Moremi and Emotan were great amazons who displayed wonderful bravery and strength in the politics of lfe and Benin respectively, while Omu Okwei dominated the commercial scene of Ossomari in present day Delta State.

As more democrats are arising and shining, the media must summon courage and patriotism, the judiciary must use the law and its power to free itself from electoral autocratic bondage, as all the institutions of democracy to oversee a significant electoral system transition. This is the surest way to ethnic unity and national security apart from Nigeria's desire for true democracy. Religious leaders and custodians of various cultures must work together to entertain and blend the existing irresistible differences to promote democracy, unit, peace and progress. Not all hands alone, but all cultures and religious groups in Nigeria must pay attention to the urgent need for unity, peace, democracy and development. The government must develop the culture of democracy in the religiously and culturally pluralistic Nigeria. Nigeria as the most populated black nation in the world with approximately 200 million people, 253 ethnic groups, over 525 languages and basically 3 religions, got her independence on the 1st of October 1960 after various and consistent nationalist and socialist movements against the colonial rulership of Great Britain which made Nigeria its protectorate in 1901 after the 1885 Berlin Conference in which other European powers recognized the 'authority' of Great Britain over the territory which is today called Nigeria, named precisely so by the wife of Lord Lugard who was the governor of both the Northern

Nigeria Protectorate and the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria in an 1897 London Times article.

2.4.4. The role of electoral system in women political participation in Nigeria

The voting system and processes adopted by a country, determines to a large extent, the level of development in significant aspects: politics, infrastructure, environment and human capital have not developed (Gusperge, 2011). There have been no significant trust on INEC to deliver credible elections, and so the people call for coalition to protect their mandate (Afred, 2018). Election Day violence has often reduced women voting level in Nigeria and discouraged wholehearted participation. Ogundele (2016) observed that INEC's electoral provision for electronic voting system in 2015 served as a testament that digital voting system will increase women political participation. He argued that electronic voting system can be the game changer in women political participation as it would previde a conducive voting environment for increased women political participation.

Nigerian women political participation is challenged by constraining factors along traditional, religious, economic and social beliefs and practices, but the impact of Election Day violence and intimidation play a huge role (Adegboye, 2017). It is widely believed that the security impact of electronic voting system has the potentials to boost the voting confidence of women who are eager to challenge the existing status quo but are faced with security issues. According to Garuba (2007), what is needed to step up women political participation is an electoral system that guarantees confidence and safety, and that comes in a form of digit- electronic voting system.

Nigerian women population consists of 49% of the total population. Unfortinately, only 4% of of this 49% make up the lawmaking body. The number affects their legislative impact. Issues like gender divide, are mostly caused by religion, economic constraints, belief system and male chauvinism. This situation is not good for national cohesion, peace and progress (Uwa et al., 2018). Bisi (2019) argued that the use of armed men, killers, and criminals on Election Day to steal scare, intimidate and kill voters in attempt to steal ballot boxes often hinder women participation in voting activities, and therefore a digital electoral system is needed to

increase women voting and make the difference in their representation. The Nigerian woman population will continue to be a victim of dysfunctional political system without electoral reforms to increase women political participation (Ette, 2017). Incresaed women political participation can impact on the search for answers to the negative cultural practices. But the author places more emphasis on the political dimension which is obtainable through the social security inherent in the electronic voting system. It helps women, both in the public and private sectors, in decision making.

Since this emergence, issues of electoral malpractice have always dominated the public space. The 2015 general election was considered one of the fairest elections in the history of the country. The impact of the electronic voting system deployed was considered to be key to the high level of transparency and credibility of that election. As the most populous West African country with 201 million people, it was meant to inform many other elections on the continent. However, the country's present territorial shape as it has been right from the time of Lord Frederick Lugard did not influence any of the countries electorally. It was not due to transparency or credibility of election or the validity of the electoral system. We cannot discuss democracy without transparent forms of electoral system. It is a known fact that in Nigeria, reference must be made to Anthony Enahoro in 1923. The election that took him to power was considered free and fair because the country was transiting from autocracy to civilian rule. It was not the case of electoral credibility or validity.

Since after the widely considered free and fair 2015 general election that took current president Mohammadu Buhari to power, they have been many state elections of which a vast majority were considered replete of electoral malpractices and stealing of people's mandate. This enthronement of political elites who have complete aversion for the principles of law and democracy has greatly affected Nigeria's democracy.

2.5. The Role of Pressure Groups in Women Political Participation in Nigeria

The transformation that occasions the developmental programme of pressure groups usually impact on political landscape. In Nigeria, the perception that women are domestic humans rather than politicians has met increasing number of pressure

groups who are campaigning for increased women political participation and gender rights at different levels.

Beneficiaries of fraudulent electoral systems are always opposed to credible electoral instrument and processes and often spend public funds to repress electoral transformation processes (Oswald, 2012). However, pressure groups often find ways of establishing their resolve for the manifestations of the people's political preferences. In Nigeria, some pressure groups like Women and Girls' Political Rights Groups have been popular for demanding increased women political participation. Omenka (2012) was one of those who first postulated that the Nigerian government at various dispensations have always failed to stick both genders together in Nigeria's political structure. He argued that Nigeria cannot meet the requirement for fundamental development without fielding the women counterpart into the political equation of the state.

Augustine (2018) argued that pressure groups are major driving forces in the realization of electoral credibility. Maslow's Hierarchic Theory of Needs came in 1943 in a paper he titled 'A Theory of Human Motivation' is the adopted theoretical framework for this study. Pressure groups in Nigeria adopts Maslow's view to society development, needs and structure. They call for Maslow's 'higher order' need of self-actualization through gender rights and women political participation. According to paul (2018), the fullest development of Nigeria as a state, its unity, national cohesion and prosperity, depends on the place and role of women in national policymaking. According to Collins (2002), the Nigerian government requires to pay attention to the signs which point to increased women place and role in policymaking process. As Collins (2002) argued, development has significant relationship with national cohesion. This nation's self-actualization requires an electoral system that is transparent to usher into power, those who have the mandate of the people, and can deliver in the areas for which they were voted for. Other areas to consider are:

2.5.1. Financial inceptives and removal of discriminatory customs and laws

By subjugating women to men and diminishing their self-esteem, the habitual behaviors in many contemporary communities are biased. The overall effect of gender

inequality, cultural norms and practices has reinforced women's feelings of inferiority and put them at a disadvantage in the socio-political scene, even in urban centers, compared to their male counterparts. Such socially formed standards and stereotypical roles make women overplay their 'femininity' by recognizing that they are 'weaker sexes,' overemphasizing their sex's fragile existence and regarding exceptional achievement as masculine (George, 2019)

2.5.2. Provision of education

Education as a Barrier to political participation in Nigeria Illiteracy has been described as one of Nigerian women's big problems. It may also be true that in the last decade, women's educational needs in Nigeria have been vigorously addressed, especially in areas such as engineering, accounting (Okediran et al., 2006). According to Okediran et al. (2006), while the efforts have benefited women in Nigeria, the issue is that adult education has been streamlined since 1947 along the lines of mass literacy initiatives, vocational training, community growth, social welfare, and industrial work as a decisive factor in promoting women as entrepreneurs to become important in society.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Type of Reseach Method

The methodology section addresses the questions on data, data collection, and data analysis. It covers the segment of research population, sampling size, and sampling techniques too. Descriptive/survey research design was used in this study. The choice of descriptive/survey design is based on Brown's (1985) succinct argument that the descriptive survey research has the potentials to make identification of variables, description of relationships among variables, as well as the identification of existing factors between them.

3.2. Size of Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique.

The study population include Nigerian women and those Nigerian women in politics. The sample size is 60. The sampling technique adopted is the stratified sampling technique. The sample was drawn from officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Nigerian women politicians, political commentators, officials of the State political parties, and political office holders. I made sure the selection of the respondents respected gender equality principles by considering both males and females. All respondents regardless of gender were adults within the age of voting capacity which is 18 years and above. The selection of the respondents was done in such a way that 10 respondents each, were drawn from each of the 6 geopolitical zones that make of the country's political grouping.

3.3. The Discription of the Area where the Study was Carried Out

This research was carried out in Nigeria. Nigeria as a country is located in West African sub-region region. Nigeria has the highest number of population in Africa. The country has 36 states and divided into 6 geopolitical zones for political reasons. This research was carried out in each of the 6 geopolitical zones in terms of data collection, through literature and questionnaires. Based on the reports from the National Population Census of Nigeria (2009), Nigeria's population is two hundred and one million (201 million).

3.4. The Research Instruments Used

Questionnaires were adopted. The questionnaires consisted of standardized questions. The questionnaire used have two different sections to applied to provide information on the bio-data of respondents.

3.5. Validity of Adopted Research Instruments

The validity of data and the instrument of collection was tested and results showed consistency and reliability.

3.6. Sources of Data Collection

Primary and secondary data collection sources were used. The main primary source is questionnaire. The main secondary sources were journals, textbooks, internet sources, newspapers, and academic magazines.

3.7. The Technique of Data Analysis Used

Standardized method of data anaysis was used for the data collected. Chi-Square (x2), simple percentage and t-test were applied in the analysis of the responses generated from the questionnaire. The function of the simple percentage is to provide informed opinions in order to make the testing and interpretations of hypotheses valid and reliable. The duty of the chi-square was to substantiate the data generated in terms of fact compilation.

The data collected was presented with the application of tables and statistics.

Chi-square (x2)

$X2=\sum (fo=fe)\ 2$

(x2) = Chi-square

Observed frequency = F0

Expected frequency = Fe

Simple percentage:

$\% = PC \times 10$

$N \quad 100$

Where

Percentage compliance = PC

Total number of respondents = N

Common base of simple percentage = 100

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Data Presentation

The total of 60 questionnaires were administered. Only 30 questionnaires were returned answered. That figure implies that only 50% of the questionnaires were retrieved. The retrieved 30% of questionnaires are showned in tabular form below. There is also information on the frequency of responses. The information is represented in percentage after analysis.

4.2. Information of Respondents

Table 1. Gender of respondents

Gender	No of response	%	%	Cumulation of %
Male	20	66.7	66.7	66.7
Female	10	33.3	33.3	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, March, 2022

Table 1 showing gender of respondents.

Table 2. The age of respondents

	Age	Frequency of response	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	BELOW 20YEARS	3	10.0	10.0	10.0
	21-30YEARS	5	16.7	16.7	26.7
	31-40YEARS	2	6.7	6.7	33.3
	41-50YEARS	7	23.3	23.3	56.7
	51-60YEARS	8	26.7	26.7	83.3
	ABOVE 60YEARS	5	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, March, 2022.

Table 2 shows the age of respondents.

Table 3. Marital status

	Status	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Single	10	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Married	15	50.0	50.0	83.3
	Divorced	3	10.0	10.0	93.3
	Widowed	2	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, March, 2022

Table 3. shows marital status of respondents.

Table 4. Educational status of respondents

	Academic status of respondents	Number of of response	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	WASSCE/SSCE	5	16.7	16.7	16.7
	OND/HND/BSC	15	50.0	50.0	66.7
	PGD/MSC/PHD	7	23.3	23.3	90.0
	OTHERS	3	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, March, 2022.

Table 4 shows the educational status of respondents.

Table 5. Years of experience in the research subject area

	Number of years	Number of response	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	1-3YEARS	8	26.7	26.7	26.7
	4-7YEARS	10	33.3	33.3	60.0
	8-11YEARS	9	30.0	30.0	90.0
	ABOVE 11YEARS	3	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, March, 2022.

Table 5 shows years of experience of respondents in the research subject.

Table 6. Position of respondents in government

	Position	Number	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Junior staff	22	73.3	73.3	73.3
	Senior staff	8	26.7	26.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, March, 2022.

Table 6 shows the position of respondents in government

4.3. Tables Based on Research Questions and Results

Table 7. Gender equality exists in form of sex-preference, male chauvinism and economic constraints

	Opinion	Number	%	Valid %	Cumulation %
Valid	Strongly Agree	8	26.7	26.7	26.7
	Agree	15	50.0	50.0	76.7
	Disagree	4	13.3	13.3	90.0
	Strongly Disagree	3	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Field survey March, 2022.

Table 7 shows that gender equality exists in form of sex-preference, male chauvinism and economic constraints.

Table 8. Absence of legal framework for gender equality exists at the expense of women political participation

	View of respondent	Number	%	Valid %	Cumulation %
Valid	Strongly Agree	10	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Agree	5	16.7	16.7	50.0
	Undecided	5	16.7	16.7	66.7
	Disagree	4	13.3	13.3	80.0
	Strongly Disagree	6	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, March, 2022

Table 8 shows that absence of legal framework for gender equality exists at the expense of women political participation.

Table 9. Gender inequality in form of sex-preference, economic constraints and male chauvinism impact on women political participation in Nigeria

	View of respondent	Number	%	Valid %	Cumulation %
Valid	Strongly Agree	2	16.7	16.7	16.7
	Agree	15	50.0	50.0	66.7
	Undecıded	8	26.7	26.7	93.3
	Dısagree	5	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, March, 2022.

Table 9 shows that gender inequality in form of sex-preference, economic constraints and male chauvinism impact on women political participation in Nigeria.

Table 10. Insufficient advocacy, funding and unfavorable government policies are the limitations and challenges of gender rights groups in Nigeria

	View of respondents	Number	%	Valid %	Cumulation %
Valid	Strongly Agree	5	16.7	16.7	16.7
	Agree	17	56.7	56.7	73.3
	Undecıded	2	6.7	6.7	80.0
	Dısagree	4	13.3	13.3	93.3
	Strongly Dısagree	2	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, March, 2022.

Table 10 shows that insufficient advocacy, funding and unfavorable government policies are the limitations and challenges of gender rights groups in Nigeria.

Table 11. Legal framework for gender equality and political participation does not exist in Nigeria

	View of respondents	Number	%	Valid %	Cumulation %
Valid	Strongly Agree	5	16.7	16.7	16.7
	Agree	12	40.0	40.0	56.7
	Undecıded	5	16.7	16.7	73.3
	Disagree	4	13.3	13.3	86.7
	Strongly Dısagree	4	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Field survey, March 2022.

Table 11 shows that legal framework for gender equality and political participation does not exist in Nigeria

4.4. Research Hypotheses Confirmation

H0: Absence of legal framework for gender equality exists at the expense of women political participation in Nigeria

H1: Gender inequality in form of sex-preference, economic constraints and male chauvinism impact on women political participation in Nigeria.

H: Insufficient advocacy, funding and unfavorable government policies are the limitations and challenges of gender rights groups in Nigeria

Table 12. The test statistics

	Gender inequality in form of sex-preference, economic constraints and male chauvinism impact on women political participation in Nigeria.
Chi-Square	26.333[a]
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000

4.5. Conclusion from Decision Rule

We accept the hypothesis that electronic voting has no significant impact on election credibility in Nigeria. This is according to p-value above.

4.5.1. T-Test

Table 13. The paired samples correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair no 1:	Gender inequality in form of sex-preference, economic constraints and male chauvinism impact on women political participation in Nigeria.	30	.781	.000

Table 14. Paired samples test

	Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				10% Confidence				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	.067	.828	.151	-.242	.376	.441	29	.000

Table 13 proves sufficiently that absence of legal framework for gender equality exists at the expense of women political participation in Nigeria. This is according to the Pearson correlation coefficient "r" of 0.781 shown above.

This shows that gender inequality in form of sex-preference, economic constraints and male chauvinism impact on women political participation in Nigeria. Again, that the absence of legal framework for gender equality exists at the expense of women political participation in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

This study focused on gender inequality and women political participation in Nigeria. Findings from the research empirically confirm that there is gender inequality and women political under-representation in Nigeria. This result of finding is consistent with the earlier studies conducted by Checchi and van De Werfhorst (2018). Generally, there is a high level of political inequality in Nigeria which has led to severe economic disparity between men and women. Inequality was explained by the sector of politics, economy, location and religion. To this end, this study contributes to the overcrowding theory of Amasa Walker in terms of validating the concept of inequality and women political underrepresentation in Nigeria. It further shows that the women or female labor force in Nigeria is denied equal wage-earning opportunities and conditions. It is evident from the research that the women or female gender has no adequate access and control over major decisions, decision-making process, resources, and offices, hence, find it difficult to influence decision to favour the female gender within and outside the country's political arena. The women are generally relegated to the domestic, agricultural and small trade sector of Nigeria's economic grouping. The aforementioned sectors currently are filed with women who are largely underproductive and politically unrepresented.

Women, today, have come to be accepted as the pillars of the smallest economic unit, the family and from them all great people, both male and female, have been birthed. This goes to show that women are forces to be reckoned with in terms of nation building and economic development. However, the special qualities possessed by women have been toned down and played to a minor key due to ignorance on the part of most and lack of concern or appreciation by others. The establishment of structures of inequality against women, as opposed to men, has come to generate the phenomenon of gender discrimination. This study is carried out to emphasize the need for the empowerment of Nigerian women today so as to eradicate gender discrimination. Questionnaires were administered to gather information from respondents concerning their opinions about the phenomenon. Using the SPSS Package, Chi-square method was used to analyze the data that was obtained. It was observed that gender discrimination, as a result of cultural factors, plays a significant role in the employment process of Nigerian organizations. Also, educational

acquisition plays an important role in eradicating gender discrimination. The basic recommendation is for development of alternative rules, norms and procedures that provide the avenue for structural transformation to protect what rights women have and increase the comprehensiveness of the rights to which they are entitled.

Earlier studies on the subject in order to provide solutions to these issues recommend that gender inequality and women political under-representation can be solved through policies which aim at benefiting the female categories economically, politically, and socially. Such kind of policies have the potentials to encourage women political participation and in wage-paying jobs than the current domestic engagements that relegate them. Those earlier studies also recommend the education of a girl child as effective in bridging the inequality gap in politics, economy and socials. Most of the earlier studies equally prove that women and females have higher returns to education than their male counterparts (Kernel Density Study, 2011).

The government of Nigeria is enjoyed to explore affirmative policy actions while providing incentives that will encourage women and female students to further their education in key areas. This recommendation is in line with the consistent findings of this study and earlier related studies which show that tertiary education provides higher returns than lower education for women and females. Inequality across regions in Nigeria between men and women affect not only the economy but the politics of the country. The result of finding of this study as others show that some regions are better than others such that the southern part of Nigeria is better than the northern part in terms of gender equality and women political participation. This implies that steps to develop the region in terms of gender equality and women political participation is expected to top government's priorities in terms of providing wage-paying jobs for women to assist their political aspirations.

Human capital development for women and girls must be given adequate attention for women political participation to increase. Opinion leaders like religious and traditional rulers also require to push more for women and the girl child. Infrastructure developments leveraging on economically viable activities require to be initiated in less developed regions like the northern part. As far as Nigeria has been able to identify various shades of gender inequality and problems challenging women political participation in Nigeria, more emphasis should be placed on women and their

decision making capacities and rights. This is more so that the research confirms that inequality in educational achievement is a factor that contributes to the decision making capacity. This study recommends that further study is done to examine the root cause of educational inequality along gender and regions of Nigeria.This will make the women and female gender to have equal access to the resources in Nigeria. Their access to the country's resources will strengthen their participation in the political arena and increase their level of political representation.

Women Participation in Nigerian politics is a topic of importance. Politically, women have been relegated to the background, despite the tremendous effort put forward by government and non- governmental organizations following the declaration made at the fourth World Conference on women in Beijing, which advocated 30% affirmative action and National Gender Policy (NGP) recommendation of 35% affirmative action for a more inclusive representation of women both in elective and appointive positions. It is worthy to note that Nigerian women are still being marginalized due to the style of leadership inherent in the country. Despite the challenges women are facing, women activism and advocacy, education of women, positivity on the part of successive governments towards women empowerment and interest of women to participate in politics is getting a lot of positive energy. This is an indication that the participation of women in politics has a bright future. Therefore, the relevant stakeholders are advised to advocate for the protection of women from abuse, empower them economically and politically and review the necessary legislations to accommodate the growing interest of women in politics both elective and appointive positions.

Summary

In a methodological buildup to these findings, the study examined the issue of gender and women participation in the politics of Nigeria. The findings reveal that Nigeria is challenged by gender inequality, and that women political participation is challenged by constraining factors along traditional, religious, economic and social beliefs and practices (Adegboye, 2017). The Obasanjo administration from 1999-2007 started the country's entry into democracy. This was expected to reduce the problems of rights and liberty. The Federal Character Commission lost connections with gender equity from 1999- 2003 during his first tenure. His second tenure, (2003-2007) was

greeted by the impact of gender equality movements across Europe and America, and so, some few women were considered by his regime from 2003- 2007 (Nwokocha, 2007). This was followed by the relatively impactful regimes of the Goodluck Jonathan's regime that had 8 women held in the ministerial positions. These women included late Prof. Dora Akunyili who was Minister for Information, Felicia Njeze who was minister of State, Dlazani Madueke who was minister for Defence, Agata Jerry who was minister for Transport, Aishatu Dikku who was minister of State, Grace Ekpiwhre who was minister for Science and Technology, Fatima Ibrahim who was minister for Energy and Power, and Bingudu who was minister of women Affairs.

There were also Sharon Ikeazor who was Minister of State Environment, Maryam Katagun who was Minister of State Industry, Zainab Ahmed who was Minister of Finance, Ramatu Tijjani who was Minister of State, Federal Capital Territory, Gbemisola Saraki who was Minister of State for Transportation, and Paulen Tallen who was Minister of Women's Affairs. The current renewed campaign by organizations and advocate groups for gender equality and equity is furthering the prospects of a more sustainable human society through women inclusion in core partisan politics. However, without reforms in policy and practices, the Nigerian society is far from being on the right track to increasing women political participation as constraints: cultural, religious, economic, political etc loom (Omoruyi, 2008).

The objectives under which this research was carried out were:

1. To examine the issue of gender in Nigeria
2. To examine the impact that the challenges of gender inequality have on the participation of women in the politics of Nigeria
3. To study the extent of women participation in Nigerian politics
4. To examine the challenges and consequences of low women partcipation in Nigerian politics
5. To study the indicators that have the potentials to increase women participation in Nigerian politics.

The importance of this research are:

1. The government of Nigeria in terms of policy making have this research useful in order close gender inequality gaps towards improvement on women partcipation in Nigerian politics.
2. The research is important for future researchers as its contributes to knowledge.
3. Rights groups will also find the research important in their operational framework and approach.

The study arguments are:

1. Absence of distinctive legal framework for gender equality exists at the expense of women political participation in Nigeria
2. Gender inequality in form of sex-preference, economic constraints and male chauvinism impact on women political participation in Nigeria
3. Insufficient advocacy funding and unfavourable government policies are the limitations and challenges of gender rights groups in Nigeria

The study was categorized into five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction and served as the background to the study. Chapter two reviewed related literature. The chapter three addressed the research method. Chapter four focused on the presentation of data and data analysis. Chapter five functioned as the conclusion.

Within the body of literature, the argument of Aromona (2015), was put forward. The famous author on Nigeria's politics grouped Nigeria's political representation into areas: those who have the economic and influence power to compete, politicians who have the resources of force to grab power, and those who are put in offices regardless of their economic and mental condition.

The argument of Olag and Afolabi (2016) was also highlighted. The author traced the root cause of women under-representation to the traditional belief that men are meant to rule and dominate women who are meant for child-bearing. There is therefore less competitiveness in terms of gender struggle for elective positions. African cultures therefore identify biological differences in cases of government. The alienation of women in Nigeria politics is partly due to this issue (Achi, 2018). There is also the understanding shared by Williams (2019), that politics in Nigeria has

become too violent for women. The abscence of women he argued shows that meritocracy and democracy are still serious areas for consideration in Nigeria. The author argued that the numerical limit of women in Nigeria's elective position is a question of reforms along gender line. He concluded that the political difficulty faced by women and their limited positions is visible in the level of Nigeria's cohesion and progress.

The problem of sexism in Nigeria puts Nigerian women at economic disadvantage. This too affect women political participation which has been considered as having the potential to create economic indepence for women if improved. The economic dependence is a serious issue for women political success in Nigeria. National development has not been duly achieved because of lack of inclussive governance (Kunle, 2019). The author'sassertion is that sexual division is creating problems, not only about national unity and progress, but to also the question of national development where women politicalcontribution has been very limited. According to Statistics, the Nigerian labor market is composed of 75% of men labor. There is therefore an economic inequality, together with an imbalanced labor structure that continues to slow national economic progress. (Kayuni, 2016).

This research has examined the in activeness of women in Nigeria's politics. The assessment was conducted over the democratic dispensation which started since 1999. The study shows that although there is a significant gain following rising campaign for gender equality around the world, however, women's political representation is only 7% and far below the 30% global benchmark. For women's representation in parliaments. The study has shown that the situation has been reflected in the country's socioeconomic life as factors such as political structures, historical heritages, societal and religious norms and beliefs help to alienate women from Nigerian politics.

Since Nigeria's democracy in 1999, there has been no conscious step to address the issue of women political representation. Democracy and its institutions have been identified as best approach and framework to effect the increased participation of women in politics.

Recommendation

Following the trends and happenings around the political environment in Nigeria, it is becoming clearer that women may never achieve the mandated 30% affirmation as enshrined in the Beijing plan of action except the following recommendations are adhered to:

1. Political parties should create a support network for prospective aspirant by pairing them with established women politicians who will be playing key role as mentors and provide capacity building for young or aspiring female politicians as to enhance and develop them ahead of subsequent elections.
2. Building mass Coalition of women support and advocacy group using NGOs
3. To create enabling environment that allows women to engage meaningfully in decision making process
4. Establishment of legal funds to assist women politicians to challenge electoral malpractices
5. Introducing quota system at all levels of government and Identifying and engaging relevant stakeholders

The major challenges to gender equality and women political participation in Nigeria as revealed by the result of findings agree with the study hypotheses. Thefore the recommendations are: to provide a legal framework for realizing the gains of gender cohesion and increased participation of women in Nigeria's politics. This is because, absence of legal framework for gender equality exists at the expense of women political participation in Nigeria. Again, this legal framework will also be abale to address issues of male chauvinism and economic contraints on the female gender. This is because, gender inequality in form of sex-preference, economic constraints and male chauvinism impact on women political participation in Nigeria. Finally, the framework will raise potentials for funding and advocacy. This is because insufficient advocacy, funding and unfavorable government policies are the limitations and challenges of gender rights groups in Nigeria.

There is a cultural assumption in Nigeria that political activities should be performed by male. This belief system problematizes national cohesion and progress.

Harris (2019) argued that what is required is an electoral system proceeding through reforms, providing for gender inclusivity. Measures should then follow to eliminate discrimination and the seemingly systemic limitation of women's voting rights. Legislative mechanisms too should follow to maximize women economic opportunities for political leverage. Through conventions where women will attend, this should happenlike the "Women's International Bill of Rights." This kind of a measure will offer women the courage to push for elective offices in order to demand for increased political participation.

The constitution is another way to provide for women's political opportunities. The composition of the federal government should be constitutionally inclusive in order to provide equal representation. The Constitution does not mention clearly whether this inclussiveness is along the line of gender yet, although it talks about inclusiveness.

While it is understood that women's education in Nigeria has increased in the last three decades, fields such as science and technology, engineering, and research, do not account for much women yet. According to Okediran et al. (2006), educational rise for women in Nigeria will increase their political chances. The educational challenge faced by women and the lack of attention to adult education has to be corrected to policies. Increased political participation for women will improve on so many aspects of Nigeria. Therefore areas such as mass literacy for women, vocational training for more wmen, and more social welfare for more women should be considered. This is because educational incentives for women can stir up mass literacy among the population and can completly remove the difficulties they face in work places. The educational incentive will also minimize the religious beliefs that domesticate women. Existing cultural barriers will also be less considerate if women educational level step up. These educational incentives and should be made to deal with the challenges hindering political emancipation of Nigerian women.

This study set out to investigate the challenges posed by gender inequality and the under-representation of women in the politics of Nigeria. After a review of relevant literature, Maslow's theory is adopted. The study began with a brief historical evolution of Nigeria and its post independent political structure and concluded with recommendations related to the expansion of women political participation and gender

equality challenges affecting women. Nigeria is made up of 36 states put into 6 geopolitical zones. Due to limitation of time, funding and the chalenges of security that did not allow for the conduction an overt interview in all the 36 states of the Nigerian federation, samples were drawn from the 6 geopolitical zones to generalize the result of findings as these 6 geopolitical zones represent the entire political groupings of Nigeria. Stratified sampling technique was adopted in this study, with structured questionnaires, making it a quantitative research.

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SAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRE USED

Below represent questionnaire samples administered for the purpose of questionnaire validity verification.

INSTRUCTION: Kindly and carefully answer the questionnaire through ticking.

SECTION A (Personal Information section)

1. Gender of respondent
   - Male ☐
   - Female ☐

2. Age Grade
   - Below 20yrs ☐
   - 21-30yrs ☐
   - 31-40yrs ☐
   - 41-50yrs ☐
   - 50-60yrs ☐
   - Above 60yrs ☐

3. Educational Qualification
   - WASCE/SSCE/NECO ☐
   - OND/HND/BSC ☐
   - PGD/MSC/PHD ☐
   - Others ☐

4. Marital status
   - Single ☐
   - Married ☐
   - Divorced ☐
   - Widowed ☐

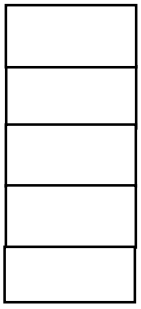
5. Years of experience.

1-3yrs	
4-7yrs	
8-11yrs	
Above 11yrs	

SECTION B: quetions on gender equality legal framework

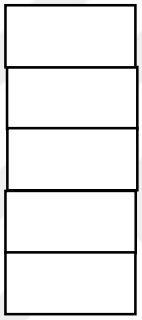
1. Do you agree that absence of distinctive legal framework for gender equality exists at the expense of women political participation in Nigeria?

Strongly agreed
Agreed
Undecided
Disagreed
Strongly disagreed



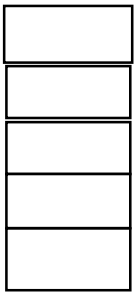
2. Do you agree that gender inequality in form of sex-preference, economic constraint, and male chauvinism impact on women political participation in Nigeria?

Strongly agreed
Agreed
Undecided
Disagreed
Strongly disagreed



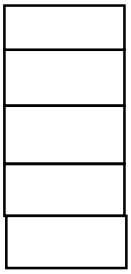
3. Do you agree that insufficient advocacy limit the result of gender equality promotion program?

Strongly agreed
Agreed
Undecided
Disagreed
Strongly disagreed



4. Do you agree that lack of funding for gender equality program limit the result?

Strongly agreed
Agreed
Undecided
Disagreed
Strongly disagreed



5. Do you agree that unfavorable government policies are part of the challenges facing the promotion of gender equality in Nigeria?

Strongly agreed	
Agreed	
Undecided	
Disagreed	
Strongly disagreed	

6. What gender equality legal framework does Nigeria operate?

_____

_____

_____

7. What are the factors that limit the the promotion of gender equality in Nigeria?

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8. How does women discrimination and stereotypes shape voters' preferences in Nigeria electoral process?

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9. What do you think is the solution to the challenges of gender in Nigeria?

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10. What do you think can improve and increase women political participation in Nigeria?
