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**THE CONNECTION OF GENDER, POLITICAL AND BUSINESS
PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA: AN ANALYSIS OF
FACTORS AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICS AND BUSINESS IN
NIGERIA**

Chima Samuel NWANEGBO

Master's Thesis

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PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA: AN ANALYSIS OF
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NIGERIA

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International Business Administration (Thesis) Program

Master's Thesis

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İstanbul
July 2024

ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

The study titled "The connection of gender, political and business participation and social media. An analysis of factors against women in politics and business in Nigeria" prepared by Chima Samuel NWANEGBO, has been accepted by our jury as a Master's Thesis, following a successful defense examination conducted on July /18/2024

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Chima Samuel NWANEGBO

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ÖZET

Chima Samuel NWANEGBO

Cinsiyet, Siyasi ve İş Katılımı ile Sosyal Medya Bağlantısı Yüksek Lisans Okulu:

Nijerya'da Kadınlara Karşı Siyaset ve İş Dünyasındaki Faktörlerin Analizi

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

İstanbul, 2024

Nijerya'da toplumsal cinsiyet ayrımcılığının bir mirası olan ataerkillik ve kadınların siyasette marjinalleştirilmesi, kadınların siyasete yavaş veya hiç var olmayan katılımını desteklemektedir. Bu tez, Sokoto Şehrinde kadınların seçilmiş yetkililer olmasını ve sosyal medya katılımını engelleyen engellere odaklanmıştır. Kültürel gecikme teorilerini ve nicel metodolojileri kullanarak bir anket yapmak için kültürel gecikmelerin çalışma tasarımına dahil edilmesi gerekir. İlk olarak, 470 kişiden yanıt toplamak için 21 maddeden oluşan bir Likert ölçeği anketi kullanılmıştır. Veriler bir anket yoluyla elde edilmiş ve veri analizi, tanımlayıcı istatistiklerin (sıklık, yüzdeler ve ortalama) kullanımı ile değerlendirilmiştir. Siyasette aktif olmayan seçmenlerin çoğunluğunu kadınların oluşturduğu tespit edilmiştir. Çalışma, sosyo-ekonomik ve kültürel engellerin, ev işleri, çocuk doğurma, aile desteğinin olmaması ve olanak sağlama fırsatlarının olmamasının siyasete katılmalarını savunan kadın katılımcılar tarafından en sık dile getirilen zorluklar arasında olduğunu göstermiştir. Siyasi liderlik pozisyonlarında bulunanlar, siyasete katılımlarının toplulukları üzerinde faydalı bir etki yarattığı konusunda hemfikirdirler. Ancak kadınların büyük çoğunluğu sosyal medyaya katıldıklarını ancak siyaset açısından çok az şey yaptıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Bu tezde, Nijeryalı kadınların siyasetteki beklentilerinin iyimser olacağı tartışılmaktadır. Nijerya'daki kadınlar, ülkenin siyasi gelişimine anlamlı bir katkı için kapasitelerini daha iyi güçlendirmek için, özellikle taban topluluklarına katılma konusunda siyasi katılımlarında güçlendirilmelidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Nijerya'da Kadın, cinsiyetçilik, sosyal medya, siyasette kadın, iş dünyasında kadın.

ABSTRACT

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Social Media: An Analysis of Factors Against Women in Politics and Business in
Nigeria

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Istanbul, 2024

Patriarchalism, a legacy of gender discrimination and marginalization of women in politics in Nigeria have all favored a slow or non-existent engagement of women in politics. This thesis focused on the barriers that prevent women from becoming elected officials and engagement of social media participation in Sokoto City. To conduct a survey, using the theories of cultural lag and quantitative methodologies, cultural lags have to be factored into the study design. First, a Likert scale questionnaire that contained 21 items was utilized to gather responses from 470 individuals. Data was obtained through a questionnaire and data analysis involved the use of descriptive statistics (frequency, percentages and mean). It was found that women constituted the majority of the electorate that was not active in politics. the study showed that socioeconomic and cultural impediments, household duties, bearing children, a lack of family support and lack of enabling opportunities were among the most often cited challenges stated by female participants advocating against their engagement in politics. Only a handful of the women who held political leadership positions agreed that their involvement in politics brought about a beneficial impact in their communities. However, the majority of the women stated that they participated in social media while doing very little in terms of politics. It is argued in this thesis that if some of the problems outlined above are addressed, the prospects for Nigerian women in politics will be optimistic. Women in Nigeria should be empowered in their political engagement, particularly in regard to participating in grassroots communities, so as to better strengthen their capacity for a meaningful contribution to the country's political development.

Keywords

Women in Nigeria, sexism, social media, women in politics, women in business.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

Abbreviations	Descriptions
ACHPR	African Charter on Human and People's Rights
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CCPR	Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CMC	Computer Mediated Communication
EA	Enumeration Areas
FaWPP	Factors Alleviating against Women's Participation in Politics
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICCPR	International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IWP	Impact of Women's Involvement in Politics
LWSmP	Level of Women's Involvement in social media and Political Participation
MDGs	Millenium Development Goals
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UAC	United African Company
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WiP	Women Involvement in Politics

INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the complex interplay between gender, political and business participation and the role of social media in shaping these dynamics in Nigeria. Despite global advancements in gender equality, Nigerian women continue to face significant barriers in politics and business, deeply rooted in cultural norms, patriarchal structures and institutionalized discrimination. These challenges not only limit women's opportunities but also stifle the overall development of the country by restricting diverse voices in leadership roles.

Through an analysis of various socio-political and economic factors, this study aims to uncover the underlying obstacles that hinder women's participation in these sectors. Furthermore, it delves into the ways in which social media both reinforces traditional gender biases and provides a platform for activism, enabling women to challenge existing power structures and advocate for greater representation. By examining the intersection of these forces, this research contributes to a broader understanding of gender inequality in Nigeria and suggests pathways for fostering more inclusive participation in both politics and business.

Overview: While gender restrictions occur at both the local and global levels, women's leadership and business engagement are mostly missing from each level. Women are significantly outnumbered in prominent positions, such as political office, the civil service, the corporate sector and academia, when compared to the number of women who vote and those who hold leadership positions in other fields. Notwithstanding this being widely accepted, the equal participation of capable leaders and agents of change as well as their rights to partake in democratic government are ignored. Women must contend with a number of challenges when they participate in politics. While laws and institutions which unfairly discriminate against women hinder their ability to compete for public office, there are still structural impediments keeping women from becoming political leaders. Consequently, women are significantly less likely than men to achieve leadership positions because they are unable to access the educational, business and financial resources that men are accustomed to having at their fingertips.

Specifically, the purpose of this study is to determine factors that mitigate against women's political participation, as well as to assess the amount of women's participation on social media in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

Women's political participation is a critical component of democratic governance and an essential factor in achieving gender equality and sustainable development. Despite making up nearly half of the Nigerian population, women have historically been underrepresented in political positions, a disparity that persists in 2024. This underrepresentation reflects broader global trends, as highlighted by the United Nations, which notes that women hold only 26% of parliamentary seats worldwide.

The situation in Nigeria is even more pronounced, with women occupying a mere 7.3% of seats in the National Assembly. This thesis explores the barriers and opportunities for increasing women's political participation in Nigeria, examining factors such as education, socio-economic status, cultural norms and the influence of social media.

Nigeria, as Africa's most populous nation, presents a unique landscape where diverse ethnic, religious and cultural dynamics intersect to shape women's roles in society. Historically, Nigerian women have been significant contributors to social and economic life, yet their political influence remains limited. The gender gap in political participation is not only a matter of fairness but also impacts the country's ability to achieve comprehensive and inclusive development.

Recent reports from the United Nations and the Nigerian government highlight the systemic challenges women face, including socio-cultural norms, economic dependency and inadequate access to education and political networks. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), as of 2022, only 43% of women in Nigeria are employed compared to 73% of men, underscoring the economic barriers that limit women's capacity to engage in politics. Additionally, educational disparities persist, with literacy rates for women standing at 54% compared to 71% for men. These statistics illustrate the multifaceted barriers that hinder women's full participation in political life.

However, there is a growing recognition of the importance of women's involvement in politics, driven by both intrinsic and instrumental arguments. Intrinsically, equal participation is a fundamental human right and a prerequisite for achieving gender

equality. Instrumentally, women's involvement is vital for bringing diverse perspectives to policy-making processes, particularly those that affect women and children directly.

The rise of social media platforms presents a transformative opportunity for Nigerian women to overcome traditional barriers to political participation. Social media has become an influential tool for political engagement, advocacy and mobilization, enabling women to voice their opinions, connect with like-minded individuals and hold political leaders accountable.

A 2023 report by the social media and Political Participation Lab found that 65% of Nigerian women between the ages of 18 and 35 use social media to engage with political content, indicating the potential of digital platforms to enhance women's political activism.

This study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the current state of women's political participation in Nigeria, identifying the key barriers and enablers of engagement. By drawing on recent data and case studies, the thesis seeks to offer practical recommendations for policymakers, civil society organizations and the international community to support and enhance women's political involvement in Nigeria.

This research focuses on the specific difficulties and important achievements in regard to women's rights to elect, be elected and participate in politics. Over the previous three decades, programs to improve gender balance in Africa have made significant progress and it is critical to recognize this accomplishment. As a result, this stimulus has been spurred on by several instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights (ICCPR), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) on the Rights of Women in Africa, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) and the Millennium Development Goals that were made under various

commitments and declarations from member states that include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), also known as the women's international bill of rights, the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights (ICCPR), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human (MDGs).

The pursuit and participation in political life of their countries is being pursued by African women despite several obstacles (including political, sociological, cultural, economic and psychological ones), albeit in varying degrees across a wide range of countries. As you might guess, the countries with the highest proportions of women in decision-making positions are those that have recently been involved in armed conflict. When it comes to overall governance quality, the aforementioned countries of Rwanda, Burundi, Mozambique and Uganda have achieved statistically significant development over the past five years. In Africa, these are significant steps forward, as Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf became the continent's first female president shortly after Banda was elected and Joyce Hilda Banda became Malawi's first female president shortly after Banda was elected.

In the same year, Joyce Hilda Banda was elected as the country's president. But just a small fraction of African countries has achieved the same level of achievement in terms of gender equality as the United States and Europe. A generalized concept of a typical African lady does not apply to the continent due to the fact that it is not homogeneous in nature. A number of countries in East and Southern Africa have made significant strides forward in this field, whereas those in the Northern, Western and Central regions of the continent have achieved just minor progress.

Background: Nigerian women account for about half of the country's population and they are widely acknowledged as carrying out major responsibilities at the citizen, family and social levels. Such responsibilities include being a mother, developer and time manager, creator of empowerment, community organizer, social activist and political activist. Yet despite their major roles and their considerable contribution from their population, no recognition has been given to women, especially in political participation activities.

Therefore, they are discriminated against due to patriarchal structure of mainstream African and Nigerian societies. Other aspects responsible for discrimination against women include social norms, exploitation of faith, traditional traditions and high rates of illiteracy, low participation in the labor force, early marriage and lack of empowerment. Subsequently, over the years, Nigerian women have become objects of conflict, brutality and complex forms of stigmatization based on their role in fostering

transformative behaviour. Nigerian culture is profoundly rooted in social cultural traditions and values, regardless of the country's ethnic groups or geo-political zone stratification. The study indicates that Northern women can circumvent the democratic system by equal involvement in their households and group gathering and contribute significantly to the society's political participation and development.

Women in northern states are frequently viewed as marginalized and subjugated people with a marginal political, economic or even counterproductive position in society (Zakaria, 2001: 109). Men are therefore seen as the locus of cultural values and male-controlled society where the features of patriarchal social culture point to male gender as the society's most important members. Some areas of operation, such as agricultural exports of cash crops and the political arena, are often seen as exclusively or primarily male; hence, they are disproportionately and morally important (Rosaldo and Lamphere, 1974: 17). The outcome was that women were subjected to various forms of gender discrimination, inequity, stigmatization and exclusion, particularly in the political realm, as a result of this. Such diverse types of discrimination against women are a multiple result of the structure of ideologies, cultural values and norms. Such social views, as well as racial, religious doctrines and cultural norms reduced women to remain idle at the level of subsistence and the household. As a result of societal expectations and socialization, biological genders have been assigned distinct and sometimes inherently unfair job and political roles, transforming women into socially distinct genders that are fundamental to the Nigerian political structure, in which genders are assigned to different complementary tasks in the political landscape.

These are constructed socially because of social importance, norms and values that have ignored their significant contributions and put them in a subordinate role to men in the political system of the country. Political participation is good for democracy, but the structural disparities in participation threaten all democracies (Lijphart, 1997: 1; Galston, 2001: 217).

According to gender, one of the most consistent was that women were found to participate less than men, indicating that half the desires of the population were less well served (Andersen, 1975: 439; Schlozman et al., 1994: 963).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares that everyone has the right to vote in his / her own country's government (Zakaria, 2001: 107). Attaining the goal of women's equal engagement in decision-making would provide a balance and will facilitate the proper functioning of democracy (Lijphart, 1997: 7). It is not only a yearning for fundamental fairness that equal participation of women in decision-making is expressed, but it can also be considered as a necessary prerequisite for the wellbeing of women to be taken into consideration. Democracy entails delegating responsibilities to others on behalf of the general public, or at the very least the majority, in order to recognize their objectives. (Afolabi, 2009: 10). In order to guarantee that in the literal sense of the word, there should be proportionality between the two genders in the legislative body. However, as things currently stand in Nigeria, one gender (men) predominate, relegating the other (women) to a secondary position, so undercutting the fundamental principle of representative democracy (Afolabi, 2009: 12). Despite international accords recognizing the rights and equality between men and women, to which Nigeria is a signatory, available research indicates that women continue to constitute a disproportionately small proportion of individuals involved in political decision-making and leadership. (Bello, 2013).

As a result, despite the fact that women constitute approximately 49 percent of the country's population, their presence and involvement in the country's government process remain mostly hidden. Women's participation in politics has, nevertheless, increased marginally in recent years, particularly during the administrations of late President Yar'Adua (2007-2010) and President Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015). In order to compute this, indicators such as the number of women who vote in elections, the number of women who occupy appointment or elected positions, the number of government-implemented policies that are important to gender and so on were used (Ugwuegede, 2014: 284). When compared to their male counterparts' actual experience, there is systematic discrimination against women and their under-representation in Nigeria's politics and government, which is a problem. As a result, women's participation in policy and decision-making in Nigeria is significantly lower than the global average of 35%, which is an affirmative action target. (Bello, 2013; Fayomi, 2014; Ugwuegede, 2014: 286; Okafor and Akokuwebe, 2015: 1).

Aims and Objectives of the Study: This study's main objective and scope is to explore the characteristics that militate against political and businesswomen and argues that the prospects of Nigerian women in politics and business are promising if any of those factors outlined can be resolved accordingly.

Problem Statement and Research Hypotheses: According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone has a responsibility to participate in the government of his or her country. The achievement of the goal of equal participation of women in decision-making will strengthen the proper functioning of democracy by restoring a sense of balance to the system. Equal participation of women in decision-making is not only a prerequisite for plain fairness, but it is also a vital prerequisite for the consideration of women's interests. But in Nigeria, one gender (men) dominates, while the other (women) is relegated to the background, undermining the fundamental premise of representative democracy in the country (Afolabi, 2009: 15). Despite the fact that women constitute around 49 percent of the country's population, little is known about their participation and representation in the country's political system...

This study entails a range of research hypotheses to be tested:

1. Factors alleviating against women participation significantly affects women involvement in politics.
2. Level of women involvement in business has a significant impact on political participation.
3. Level of women involvement in politics has a significant impact on social media and business participation.

Limitations of the study: The current limitation of this study is my current location (the fact that I am based in Istanbul and not Nigeria) limits my ability to conduct in person interviews and get first hand quotes and sources however I have done an extensive analysis on this case to the best of my ability using credible sources.

Methodology: This quantitative study was carried out in three local government areas in Sokoto state, namely Gada, Binji and Gudu, with the women serving as the study's target audience. The study was carried out in three local government areas, namely Gada, Binji and Gudu. Survey collection would be conducted online as part of a quantitative study to ensure that all questions were answered correctly. For the purpose

of data gathering, structured questionnaires were delivered. Sokoto state, in Nigeria, is situated in the north section of the country and is one of the places where women are under-represented.

In conclusion, increasing women's political participation in Nigeria is not only a matter of justice and equality but also a strategic imperative for fostering inclusive governance and sustainable development. By addressing the structural barriers and leveraging the opportunities presented by digital technologies, Nigeria can create a more equitable political landscape that reflects the diversity and potential of its population.



FIRST CHAPTER: LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender refers to certain physical, cultural and psychological features correlated with males and females across unique social background. Gender often gives us a status obtained masculine or feminine, since it must be taught. Gender can be viewed on a spectrum of features that a person has displayed regardless of the biological sex of the person (Lindsey, 2015). Gender is a phenomenon that has affected interest across numerous fields globally, especially women's involvement in politics (Afolabi, 2009: 13). This is because politics is a major pillar that supports every community as an act of governance. However, there are many problems within Nigeria's political structure that verge on gender inequality (Bello, 2013). Gender inequity is a time-honored global controversy and the topic of gender discrimination cuts through all aspects of life (Fayomi, 2014). Female participation in politics is influenced by a variety of groups, including political parties, which are among the most influential. In the vast majority of middle- and low-income countries, political parties determine which individuals are considered, voted for and elected, as well as which issues gain national recognition and which are not (Zakaria, 2001: 110).

Because of this, women's participation in political parties is indeed a critical factor in the likelihood that they will be granted political empowerment, particularly at the national level. For this reason, governments and international organizations working to increase women's involvement in elections continue to focus on the role of political parties, which is understandable given their influence over women's political possibilities (Galston, 2001: 219). Modern democratic government is characterized by its commitment to gender equality as a core component. Almost all men and women ought to have equality of opportunity to participate fully in all areas of life and at all political levels, according to international law (Afolabi, 2009: 14).

Nevertheless, in reality, access to and exercise of these rights is often more difficult for women. Existing reports on Nigeria's national growth are largely silent about women's contributions. The International Women's Year (1975 to date) is, however, a time that generates ideas about women's status in all spheres of life (Ogunseye, 1988). Throughout the second half of the 1980s, increasing attention was drawn to the importance of women's contributions to development in Nigeria (Omu and Makinwa,

1987: 213). As a result of Nigerian women's effective participation at the International Conference on Women, which took place in Beijing, China in 1995, this was further underlined in 1996. (Bello, 2013). However, it is vital to point out that, despite these attempts, there has been a lack of attention paid to the involvement of Nigerian women in development from the pre-colonial period to the present. Importantly, Nigerian women having made substantial contributions to the country's progress and development across all domains. When Nigerian women first entered politics, they were confronted with a slew of difficulties. (Okafor and Ako, 2015: 3).

of women in politics in the country (Behrendt-Kigozi, 2012). Participation in various components of the election process can also be achieved by women through autonomous action, particularly at the local level and the formation of civil society organizations. Some women have gained governing experience in post-conflict nations

It is attributable to the widespread marginalization of both electoral procedures and the distribution of political office on a big scale. Political warfare, abuse and the growing awareness that politics is a filthy game are some of the major barriers women face while attempting to enter politics in Nigeria and these are the primary indicators of poor representation by voting in transitional assemblies that are not elected by the general public. Women having networks, trade unions, non-governmental groups and the media have all contributed to the expansion of chances for women to participate in political life. (Ukrainian Women's Fund, 2011).

For the purposes of this definition, the word "participation in political life," which includes poll participation, refers to legal efforts by private persons that are directed at influencing the selection of government officials as well as the acts taken by those officials (Verba et al., 1978). It is a multifaceted phrase that encompasses a number of different metrics. It includes, among other things, policy-related group activities, contacting elected officials and demonstrations on the streets. Dalton (2002: 32) proposes three means of participating in politics: voting, campaigning and civic action, all of which are supported by research. Verba and colleagues (1978) added two additional routes of participation to the mix: contacting officials and protesting against them.

For example, voting, participating in election campaigns, campaigning for a candidate, attending a community meeting, engaging in lobbying, attending a protest, writing a message, contacting party representatives and becoming a member of the party are all examples of ongoing political participation (Bratton et al, 2005). Aspects of political participation that fall within this category can be split into three categories. The first subset consists of activities that took place after the election. Attending a community meeting, participating in a lobbying effort, participating in a demonstration, writing a message, contacting leaders and starting a civic or growth organization are all examples of what you can do (Dalton, 2002: 34). The second factor is turnout on Election Day, which is represented by voting and the third factor is involvement before to Election Day, which is represented by campaign operation, which is defined as participating in an election campaign and working for candidates (Bratton et al., 2005). However, this feature necessitates voter registration, which is a necessary step on the road to submission (Pintor and Gratschew, 2002: 33).

Participation of politics from a multifaceted standpoint; rather than using the general definition of political participation, it focuses on two sub-sets: pre-election day participation and Election Day participation. The merger of the two subgroups can be called poll participation and stated as the act of taking part in an election starting from enrolment of elections to rising on vote's Election Day (Okafor and Ako, 2015: 5).

1.1. Women's Political Participation in the World

In terms of population, women constitute slightly more than half of the world's population. Given their simultaneous roles in the productive and reproductive domains, women's contributions to social and economic growth are more than half that of men's in most societies. Their participation in established political institutions and processes, where choices about the use of society's resources contributed by both men and women are decided, is, on the other hand, extremely limited. Globally, women are represented in legislatures at a rate of only 15 percent at the moment. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform of Action both demonstrate that the international community is strongly committed to gender equality and closing the gender gap in formal political arenas, yet

only twelve countries have women holding 33 percent or more seats in parliaments (UNDP Report, 2005).

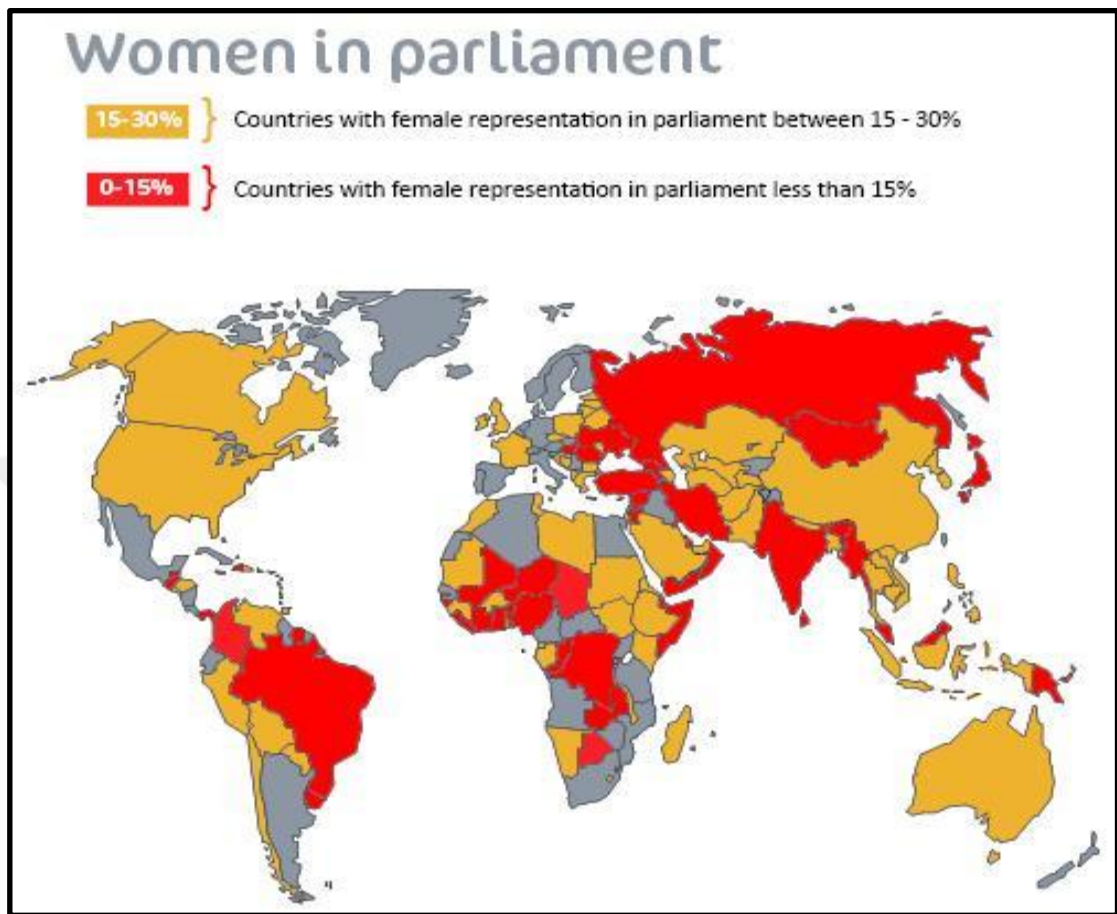


Figure 1. Geographical Representation of Women in Parliament across Continents in World Politics

Source: vsinternational.org, 2015

There has been an increased awareness of women's historical exclusion from power systems within the international community and there has been an increased commitment to redressing gender inequity in politics. Women's increased participation in governance processes is often regarded as essential to eliminating gender inequity in our society. The global discussion on enhancing women's political participation and representation has been fraught with arguments that are both intrinsic and instrumental in nature. From the perspective of human rights, the former argues for the equitable inclusion of women in political life. Given that women constitute half of the world's population, it is only right that they be afforded equal participation and representation in global democracies, as well as in national and local governments. Women's greater

engagement in politics was pushed by instrumentalist arguments based on the essentialist premise that men and women are fundamentally different. Women's political viewpoints and opinions differ from men's due to their sex and gender roles as mothers, among other factors. The expectation is that women in politics will put a specific emphasis on caring and female values to the political arena as a result of this expectation. There is a considerable body of research literature supporting a variety of rationales or theoretical approaches to women's participation in political affairs (Bari, 2005: 393).

Those who advocate for gender equality must refocus on the gender - based nature of development and invalidate the capitalist model of global development, which exacerbates gender inequality, while also attempting to create an enabling environment for women's participation in development (Rai, 2000: 16). Simply including women in sustainable development will not result in their progression and gender equality without first addressing the discrepancy that exists between the development rationale for justice and equality and the reality. The extent and character of women's participation in development is a factor in determining their ability to share in development gains. (Rai, 2000: 10).



Figure 2. Gender Equality

Source: Eurostat, 2019

Politics, in generally and liberal democracy, in particular, are fundamentally male-dominated institutions with a male-dominated culture. In the previous era, men have

reaped the benefits of democracy at a greater rate than women. From ancient Greece to current times in the twenty-first century, it has been based on the public-private divide and has barred women from citizenship as a political institution (Bennett and Bennett, 1986:85). In the private realm, most political thinkers and theorists of the time believed that women were exclusively appropriate for caring duties such as mothers and wives. This belief was shared by Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, John Lock, Thomas Hobbes and Hegel, among many others. Even in their varied manifestations, the public-private split continues to serve as the foundation for world democracies (Phillips, 1998).

Women all throughout the world were purposely kept from the corridors of government for many decades and this practice continues today. As the entire world came to recognize that gender disparity had become the norm for a long time, this became a concern that required attention. In our society, it is widely accepted that women's participation in governance institutions is a necessary first step in the process of addressing gender inequality. It has become more difficult to separate the global debate on the expansion of women's political from a discussion that is marked by both intrinsic and instrumentalist debates about what women should do in politics. For the former, it is argued that, in conformity with the recommendations of civil rights, women need to take equal opportunity to participate in political life. In light of the fact that women account for a considerable proportion of the globe's population, equal participation and influence for women in democratic societies throughout history is only fair. In order to advance the perspective of women's involvement, instrumentalist arguments were used to promote the view that men and women are not only comparable, but also distinct from one another. As a result of their position as mothers, women's political opinions and opinions change depending on their gender and the special parental responsibilities that they bear as a result of their position. In light of this notion, it is believed that women in politics will bring to the political arena an emphasis on compassion and values that are specific to women's experiences.

A substantial quantity of research has been developed in support of each of the several arguments or rationales for why women should be allowed to participate in politics. Although there is much to be gained from arguing the merits and demerits of various strategies, this study is premised on the common consensus that proponents of different

strategies have come to the conclusion that women must be included in political decision-making (Podolefsky, 1997).

1.2. Women's Right to Vote and to be Elected in the World

Prior to the outbreak of the First World War (also known as the Great War), women had fought in a number of tough battles in countries such as Canada, Great Britain and the United States. During the Great War, women served as soldiers, nurses and in a variety of other combat positions. However, despite the fact that women in these countries were legally bound by their own laws, they were completely unrepresented when it came to amending or repealing those laws (Podolefsky, 1997: 839). It was linked with individuals who advocated for women's suffrage (sometimes referred to as suffragists, political franchise, or the right to vote). Aside from their amazing organization and vocal campaigning, the suffragettes also caused considerable disturbances in their efforts to improve the rights of women during this time period. These characteristics set them apart from other feminist activists. An escalation in large-scale suffragette rallies and marches was a significant feature of daily life in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century. Following World War One, this began to shift and fewer of these protests could be found. Nellie McClung, a long-time fighter for women's rights and the right to vote, went on to play a key role in the establishment of women's social service and voluntary organizations, as well as in their development. As a result of the increase in the number of men serving on the front lines, more and more women were given equal opportunities to achieve in all fields of endeavor. When the disparity between women's obligations and rights became apparent, it was only a matter of time until a problem occurred (Werner, 1966: 16-19).



Figure 3. Protesting Women in New Zealand in 1893

Source: New Zealand History, 2018

It was in 1893 that New Zealand made it possible for its female residents to cast their ballots in national elections, making it the world's first nation or territory to provide women with this chance. In total, it is discovered that at least 19 foreign countries had granted women the right to vote prior to the ratification of the 19th Amendment in the United States in 1920. These countries can be located all throughout Europe and Asia and half of them are still under the jurisdiction of a former Soviet Union state or of an independent state, where women have long been granted the right to vote. The Russian government had planned to grant women the right to vote in 1917, but the demonstrations pushed them to act more quickly. At least eight additional countries, in which women got the right to vote in or before 1920 but were not represented in an equal number, are also affected by this phenomenon (Schaeffer, 2020).

In the analysis of the countries and territories, it was found that, out of the 129 which provided women the right to vote, about half (51 or 56%) of those countries and territories provided women the right to vote between 1893 and 1960. In addition to these six nations, this comprises all but six European countries. In particular, many European countries that permitted universal suffrage in the years following 1960 include Switzerland (1971), Portugal (1976) and Liechtenstein (1984) (Nagar et al, 2017: 30).

When academics take a step back and look at the broader picture, they discover that Bhutan, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait are just a few of the more contemporary

countries or territories to offer women the opportunity to cast ballots in national elections. Bhutan is the only country in the world where women have the voting rights in national elections and this is the first time this has happened. In comparison to other countries in the region, national elections in the United Arab Emirates and Bhutan were just recently held in the two countries. Bhutan made the transition from becoming a constitutional monarchy to a democratic republic with a parliamentary form of government over the course of two years in 2007. The first national elections in the United Arab Emirates, held in 2006 for the first time, were attended by only a small number of men and women representing a diverse range of ethnicities and religious beliefs (UAE). During the 2005 legislative session, Kuwait's Parliament revised the country's election law, ensuring that women will be entitled to vote and run for public office in the future. (Garnett, 2016: 101).

Women were granted the ability to vote in local elections in Saudi Arabia for the first time in 2015, marking a significant step forward for the country. National elections are not held in Saudi Arabia at this time. The Republic of South Sudan was established in 2011. Although this territory was a part of Sudan in 1964, it was not included in the list of the most recent countries to allow women the right to vote since women had already been granted this right in 1964, when the region was a part of that country.

While many countries in the world gained universal suffrage only after undergoing significant cultural or political upheavals, in other countries, women's voting rights have stayed mostly intact. For example, we found that between 1950 and 1975, universal suffrage was granted in 80 percent of the countries in Africa that we surveyed. This is a phase of substantial European decolonization for Africa (as well as for sections of Asia and Latin America), which began in the late nineteenth century (Pailey, 2014: 174). Following their declaration of independence, numerous newly independent countries established new governments and constitutions, all of which included universal suffrage.

Women in Samoa lost their right to vote in parliamentary elections after this period, due to the country's ruling system, which permitted only chiefly titles known as matai and hence barred women from voting. The country that became the first in the world to provide universal suffrage in 1990 was an island nation. Women were able to vote in

local elections before they were granted the right to vote at the national level; alternately, they were granted the right to vote at the national level before they were granted the right to vote in local elections. Female voters in Switzerland, for example, were granted the right to vote in all national elections in 1971, despite the fact that they had already been granted the right to vote in specific cantons or states as early as 1959. (Leornardi, 2014: 816).

Only a handful of countries and territories have reversed women's voting rights after they first granted them, although there are some significant exceptions. Afghanistan, for instance, was one of the first countries to give women the right to vote when it won independence from Britain in 1919. The democratic process has seen a number of transformations during the next approximately 100 years. As a result, women have and then lost and then regained the right to vote on multiple occasions. While Afghan women have been granted the right to vote, there are still restrictions in place that keep them from taking part in the political process (Scholer et al, 2018: 1768).

Women, both in the United States and in other nations, have a tendency to vote in greater numbers than men in presidential elections. According to a study done by the Pew Research Center in August, despite traditionally higher male voter turnout in every presidential election in the United States since 1984, American women have voted at a slightly higher rate than men. The same pattern may be observed in a number of other countries as well. In 2016, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance conducted a comprehensive study of 58 countries to evaluate the relationship between gender and turnout in electoral voting. The findings were published in the journal *Political Research Quarterly*. Women's participation in elections outpaces men's participation in 21 countries, according to the organization (Schaeffer, 2020).

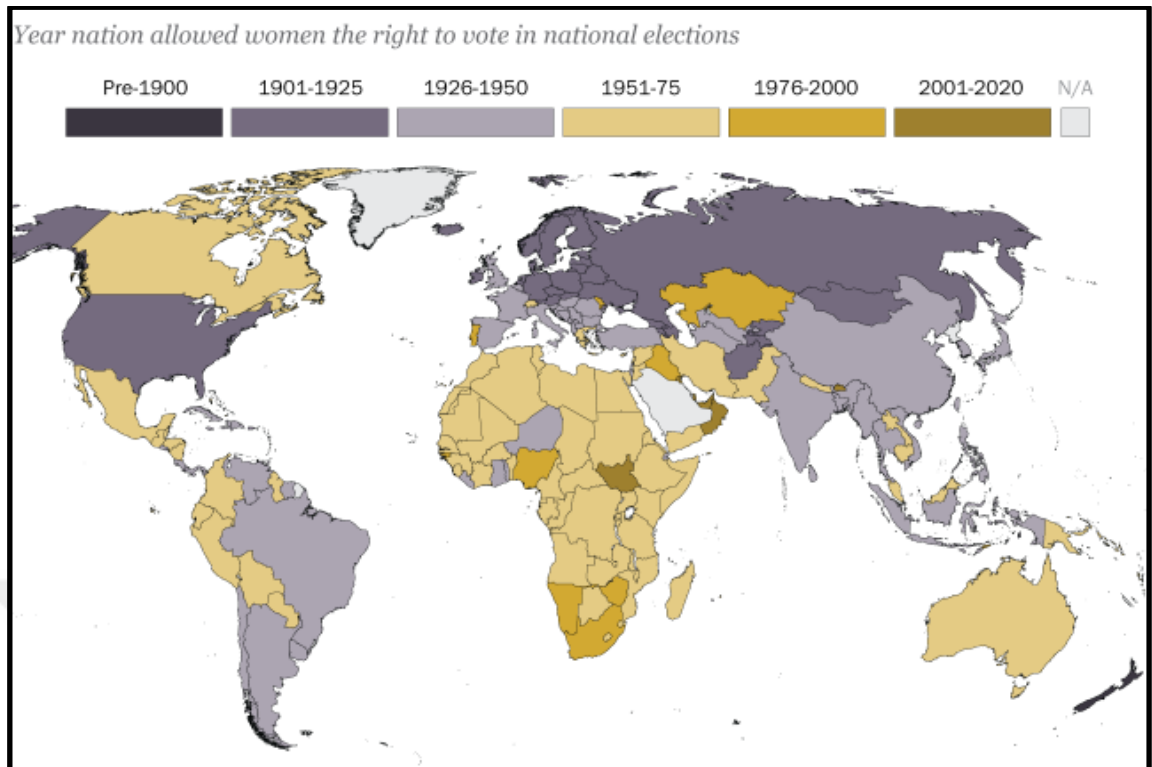


Figure 4. More than half of all Countries and Territories Granted Women the Right to Vote before 1960

Pew Research Center, 2020

1.3. Women's Right to Vote and to be Elected in Africa

In recent decades, there has been a significant increase in the number of women holding positions of power in Africa's political representation. During the first decade of the twenty-first century, the share of women in parliament nearly doubled, while their participation in government more than fivefold increased, reaching 22 percent of the population (Ndlovu & Mutale, 2013: 73). In spite of how frustrating it is, statistics do not always reflect reality. Women's political representation in Africa is primarily descriptive rather than substantive, as shown in the graph below. According to the Global Gender Gap Report published by the World Economic Forum in 2014, women account for approximately half of the population in Africa, yet they are the least likely to hold government positions and exercise authority across the continent (Etang, 2014: 190). Women politicians in Africa often overcome obstacles and restrictions in order to be nominated to major political posts in their respective countries. However, despite the fact that the vast majority of them do not wield considerable decision-making authority,

a considerable number of people in government are excluded from crucial decisions when it comes to legislation, policy and financial allocation (Kodila, Tedika & Asongu, 2017: 89).

Since the 1980s, West Africa has been racked by warfare and armed warfare is still ongoing. Many countries, notably Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Casamance in Senegal and Togo, as well as Nigeria's Niger Delta and currently Northern Mali, have experienced conflict. The West African region is also recognized for being dominated by men, very patriarchal and characterized by gender inequalities and a lack of equality, which makes women particularly vulnerable to violence and discrimination, particularly in some parts of the region (Agbalajobi, 2010: 82). However, despite the fact that there have been numerous conflicts, the expansion of women's responsibilities has given them the ability to take better advantage of their roles in decision-making processes and to increase their political engagement; however, when compared to the other two regions (the Southern and Eastern regions), the region's records do not show an equivalent increase in the number of women in politics (Zakari, 2001: 123). According to studies, the average representation of women in positions of political authority and decision-making bodies on the African continent is only 20 percent, which is much lower than the amount agreed upon in the Beijing Declaration and other international accords. Parity undercuts the AU's objective of parity in this way. The current situation in West Africa is particularly dire because there are no women from the region in positions of leadership, with an average of only 9 percent representation in the region (Okafor and Ako, 2015: 10).

According to reports, this refers to commitments made by African nations in the area of women's human rights at the regional and international levels. The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa receive particular emphasis. The United Nations Charter, as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, both establish a fundamental premise of equal rights for men and women as a matter of course. Also accepting the notion are the two 1966 treaties, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which contains the rights in Articles 2 and 7 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR), as well as the international Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (ICESCR). The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination

Against Women (CEDAW) protects certain rights for women. States are also subjected to restrictions and obligations are associated with their rights. The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women also establishes mechanisms for monitoring the conformity of state acts with their commitments, namely the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW Committee). At the conclusion of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, it is recognized that when traditional gender norms and expectations are maintained, governments are prevented from growing and prospering. It is advised that states develop explicit programs for altering these entrenched habits and orientations in order to eradicate sexism from society totally (UNECA, 2012: 13). Furthermore, the Convention aims to achieve de jure and de facto equality, while simultaneously underlining the significance of putting in place exceptional temporary measures in the sake of accomplishing this objective.

1.4. CEDAW Committee's Recommendations

In terms of the issue of women in politics, the Convention has conducted a thorough investigation of the issue. It is a direct result of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women's Articles 7 and 8 that women have the right to be treated equally with men in a country's public and political spheres, as well as their equality with men in areas such as the right to vote, the right to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies, the right to participate in the formulation and implementation of government policy and the right to hold and perform public functions. It also makes a passing reference to the importance of development, international peace and the general well-being of people, which are all intertwined in the preamble of the Convention. "Women's full and equal participation in political and public life, as well as in all other realms of endeavor" is the rallying cry that encapsulates all of these ideals (UNECA, 2012: 11).

It is critical to understand Articles 7 and 8 in conjunction with Articles 1 through 5 in order to fully comprehend these Articles. These are treaties that contain stipulations pertaining to action and outcomes for the States Parties with respect to their legislation, policies and programs aimed at empowering women and bringing about social change in their respective countries. Countries that ratify the Convention on the Elimination of

All Forms of Discrimination are required to: put an end to direct and indirect discrimination; adhere to the tenets of formal equality as well as substantive or de-facto equality; and incorporate the concepts of equality and non-discrimination into their national constitutions and legislation (Cheeseman et al, 2017: 10).

People believe in the concept of substantive equality, which takes into account both biological differences between men and women as well as the socially constructed roles and expectations that have been ascribed to them over time (Pailey, 2014: 172). Equal treatment for women (as opposed to men) is ensured at the substantive level in a variety of areas, including safety during pregnancy (nursing functions) and correction (such as going through puberty) (acceleration of the achievement of de facto equality). Article 4 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination mandates governments to refrain from discriminatory acts, regardless of whether those acts can be construed as discriminatory. It is vital to achieve gender equality, which implies that both men and women must be afforded the same rights and opportunities as they do today. Because this discussion is pertinent to gender equality, it is important to keep it in mind as we work to achieve more balanced gender roles in the public and political spheres (UNECA, 2012: 9).

The Convention identifies several areas in which countries should focus their efforts in order to ensure that women are not subjected to discrimination on the basis of gender. These locations have the following characteristics: participation in public life, nationality, education, employment, healthcare, economic and social well-being, equality under the law and equal marriage. The African continent, like all other continents, has adhered to the Convention without deviation, with the exception of three countries: Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan. The treaty has been signed by three of the four permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (the United States, Russia and China) and much of the North African region has made reservations to the treaty (Algeria, Egypt, Lesotho, Libya, Mauritania, Malawi, Mauritius, Morocco, Niger and Tunisia.) (Arriola and Johnson, 2014: 496)

This is the justification given by these countries for their objections to the articles' incompatibility with religious and customary traditions in their own countries. However, as a result of debate and discussion with members of the CEDAW

Committee, as well as regional and national pressure applied by women's organizations, some countries, such as Malawi and Mauritius in the 1990s and Morocco and Tunisia in the twenty-first century, withdrew all of their reservations; 16(1) (c) (d) (UNECA, 2012: 11).

However, while Ndlovu and Mutale (2013: 74) distinguish between various concurrent elements, such as advances in gender equality, that have spurred women's political engagement and representation, they assert that Africa has made significant progress in the equality of citizenship across a broad range of factors. Women's liberation movements, quota systems and access to educational opportunities have all been used to assist women in achieving greater levels of independence. For example, the move to multiparty democracy has also been used to assist women in gaining increased rights and freedoms. In addition, accords, agreements and agreements at the global and national levels have been used to aid in the freedom of women and girls. Because women's efforts for political equality in sub-Saharan Africa are the primary examples presented here, it's important to note that the ongoing struggle for women's political participation in North Africa is a constant topic of discussion when it comes to the territory's citizenship, resources and political representation. North African women have gained more political representation since independence, but these gains have not been evenly distributed across all levels of government and are more likely to be one-off occurrences than representative of an increase in the norm (Moghadam, 2003, 71). This specific region, in stark contrast to the immediate surrounding neighborhood, serves as a heartbreaking reminder of the enormous obstacles that African women face in achieving one of the most important hallmarks of gender-inclusive citizenship agency, namely active political involvement and representation.

A growing body of academic research is focusing on African women's increased representation in parliament and legislatures across the continent, particularly as an increasing number of African women serve as presidents (in the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Liberia, Malawi and Mauritius), prime ministers (in Burundi, Guinea-Bissau and Mauritius) and vice presidents (in the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Liberia, Malawi and Mauritius) (Adams, 2018: 476; Cheeseman, et al, 2017). When a female head of state is in power, researchers have discussed whether women's circumstances and experiences as citizens improve. They have also discussed whether

there is evidence that women's circumstances and experiences as citizens improve when a female head of state is in power. The case of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Africa's first democratically elected female president, is presented as an example (Kodila-Tedika and Asongu, 2017; Pailey, 2014).

Cabinet appointments are typically significant for the executive in Africa, owing to the fact that they account for a substantial portion of the continent's political environment. The result is that a careful study of how women participate in national politics has been conducted and it has looked at not only presidential leadership, but also cabinet selections. While the number of women nominated to cabinet-level positions in Africa has increased considerably since 1980, ethnic politics continues to be a significant barrier to achieving those positions, as evidenced by the issue of plurality in multi-ethnic societies. To determine whether women in sub-Saharan Africa have a lower chance of being appointed to ministerial positions when the incumbent president uses cabinet-level appointments to form alliances with predominantly male political leaders who emphasize and campaign on behalf of certain ethno-regional constituencies, Arriola and Johnson (2014, 495) used a dataset on the composition of cabinets in 34 Africom member countries. Because of the numerous obstacles that exist for women, who make up the majority of those who are disadvantaged in terms of economic and social capital, opportunities for cabinet-level appointments for women are limited. This is because the amount of capital required to achieve ethno-regional patronage status (i.e., wealth) is difficult to accumulate for women due to existing gender disparities (Arriola & Johns, 2000).

1.5. The Dates of Women's Right to Vote and to be Elected in the World, Africa and Nigeria.

One of the most fundamental ways people can have an impact on governmental decision-making is through voting. The act of voting is an explicit representation of support for a candidate for public office or for a motion that is on the table. At the larger scale, voting tends to occur as part of a large-scale national or regional election, but on a local and small-scale level, community and neighborhood elections are just as important to citizen engagement in governance. A consensus decision was reached unanimously by the UN General Assembly in 1948 to make the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights, which recognizes the vital role that transparent and free elections play in giving citizens the opportunity to partake in participatory government, internationally binding (Risse-Kappen et al, 1999: 60).

In Article 21 of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**, it says:

- Everyone has the right to participate in the government of his or her country, whether by personally serving in elected office or by selecting representatives who are freely chosen.
- The equal right of all citizens to access public services is assured by international law.
- The will of the people must serve as the basis of governmental authority; this will shall be demonstrated by periodic and real elections that allow all eligible citizens to vote freely and that are conducted via universal and equal suffrage. These elections should either be held in secret or through free and fair voting processes.

As long as there has been a gender imbalance at the highest levels of government, it is far from being totally addressed and addressed properly.

In earlier national-level studies on women in legislative office, the findings revealed three possible explanations for the variation in women's political representation: social structure, politics and ideological beliefs and values. Prior cross-national statistical investigations have found little support for the theoretical arguments in favor of the significance of ideology in international affairs studies up to this point. Ideologies, on the other hand, have not been quantified with the same precision as structural and political components (Paxton et al, 2003: 89). Global disparity in women's participation may be linked to everything that has occurred on a broad scale over a period of time and it can also be found on a smaller scale in the local community.

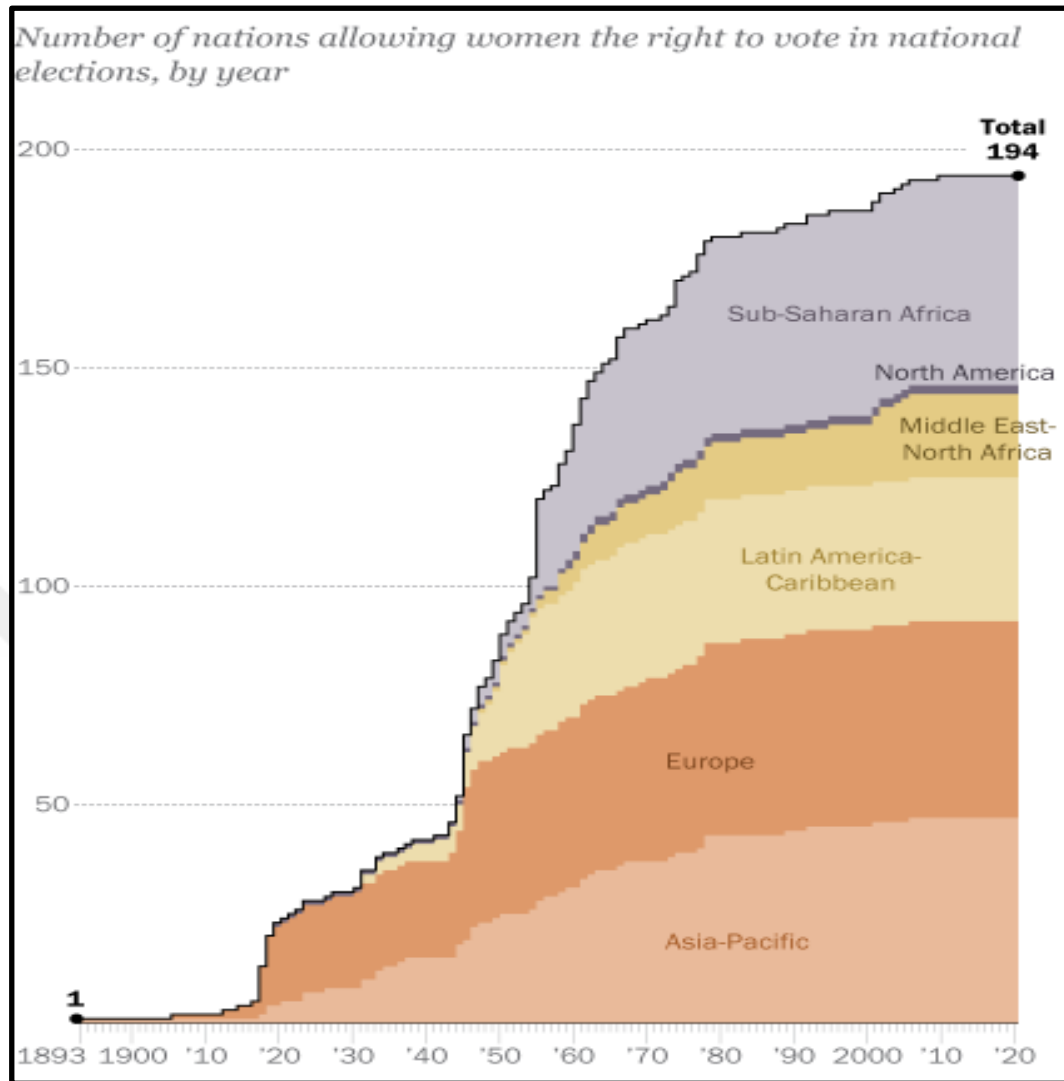


Figure 5. Europe, Asia-Pasific Regions were Front-Runners in Women’s Suffrage

Source: Pew Research Center, 2020.

Table 1. A Representation of Women’s Right to Vote in Different Geographical Regions

Dates	Duration of years	Islands, Settlements and Countries
17th century	1689	Friesland
18 th century	1718 -1776	Sweden, Corsica, Massachusetts Bay, New Jersey.
19 th century	1838 -1862	Pitcairn Islands, Hawaiian Kingdom, Tuscany, Velez Province, South Australia, Sweden, Argentina
20 th century	1901 – 1917	South Australia, Finland, Denmark, Washington

		(US State), Portugal, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, British Columbia, Canada, Ukrainian, Uruguay, Crimean People's Republic
	1918	Austria, Azerbaijan, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Russian (Soviet Union), Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland
	1919	Afghanistan, Armenia, Belgium, Georgia, Isle of Man, Jamaica, Czechoslovakia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, New Brunswick, Minnesota and Southern Rhodesia.
	1930	Brazil, Maldives, Thailand, Chile, Cuba, Turkey, Spain, Philippines, Romania, Bolivia, Western Samoa.
	1940	Panama, Dominican Republic, Vietnam, France, Italy, Japan, Senegal, India, Nepal, Yugoslavia, Cameroon, Pakistan, Kenya, Liberia, Venezuela, Singapore, Niger, Belgium
	1950	Ghana, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Greece, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Mexico, Honduras, Peru, Indonesia, Mali, Gabon, Egypt, Colombia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Nigeria.
	1960	Uganda, Cyprus, Gambia, Geneva, Burundi, Malawi, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Paraguay, Bahamas, Monaco, Algeria, Congo, Monaco, Iran,
	1970 -1990	Namibia, Central African Republic, Portugal, Vanuatu, Sao' Tome and Principe, Mozambique, Capeverde, Angola, Solomon Islands.
	2001 – 2015	Afghanistan, Oman, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia

Source: UNECA, 2012

Countries have enacted legislation that reflects the principles of the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and other treaty-related measures. The following African countries have gained independence in the last decade: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Eritrea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi. Mali, Mauritania. Mauritius. Namibia. The Democratic Republic of the Congo. Rwanda. Sierra Leone. Swaziland. Zambia Morocco's nationality law was revised in 2007 and it is now allowed for Moroccan mothers to pass on their nationality to their children, as before prohibited. According to a news story, Uganda changed its Land Act in 2004 to include clauses protecting women's rights to own, use and inherit land, as well as the rights of their children. As of December 2008, the Republic of Mauritius has likewise enacted an Equal Opportunity Act. There are a number of countries that state that they have increased their efforts to protect the human rights of women (including Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cap Verde, Chad, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon, Gambia (including the Gambia), Ghana (including the Gambia), Lesotho (including the Gambia), Malawi (including the Gambia), Mali (including the Gamb (Kassa, 2015: 7; Ekpe, Eja & Egbe, 2014: 20).

Table 2. African Women in National Parliaments as of 31st Oct, 201

WORLD CLASSIFICATION									
Rank	Country	Lower or single House				Upper House or Senate			
		Elections	Seats*	Women	% W	Elections	Seats*	Women	% W
1	Rwanda	9 2008	80	45	56.3%	9 2011	26	10	38.5%
5	Seychelles	9 2011	32	14	43.8%	---	---	---	---
6	Senegal	7 2012	150	64	42.7%	---	---	---	---
8	South Africa	4 2009	400	169	42.3%	4 2009	53	17	32.1%
12	Mozambique	10 2009	250	98	39.2%	---	---	---	---
20"	United Republic of Tanzania	10 2010	350	126	36.0%	---	---	---	---
21	Uganda	2 2011	386	135	35.0%	---	---	---	---
22	Angola	8 2012	220	75	34.1%	---	---	---	---
28	Algeria	5 2012	462	146	31.6%	12 2009	136	7	5.1%
31	Burundi	7 2010	105	32	30.5%	7 2010	41	19	46.3%
36	Ethiopia	5 2010	547	152	27.8%	5 2010	135	22	16.3%
39	Tunisia	10 2011	217	58	26.7%	---	---	---	---
41	South Sudan	8 2011	332	88	26.5%	8 2011	50	5	10.0%
43	Lesotho	5 2012	120	31	25.8%	6 2012	33	9	27.3%

48	Sudan	4 2010	354	87	24.6%	5 2010	28	5	17.9%
50	Namibia	11 2009	78	19	24.4%	11 2010	26	7	26.9%
60	Malawi	5 2009	193	43	22.3%	---	---	---	---
61	Mauritania	11 2006	95	21	22.1%	11 2009	56	8	14.3%
68	Cape Verde	2 2011	72	15	20.8%	---	---	---	---
75	Mauritius	5 2010	69	13	18.8%	---	---	---	---
78	Sao Tome and Principe	8 2010	55	10	18.2%	---	---	---	---
79	Madagascar	10 2010	365	64	17.5%	10 2010	164	20	12.2%
75	Mauritius	5 2010	69	13	18.8%	---	---	---	---
82	Morocco	11 2011	395	67	17.0%	10 2009	270	6	2.2%
85	Libya	7 2012	200	33	16.5%	---	---	---	---
87	Gabon	12 2011	114	18	15.8%	1 2009	102	18	17.6%
90	Burkina Faso	5 2007	111	17	15.3%	---	---	---	---
93	Chad	2 2011	188	28	14.9%	---	---	---	---
96	Cameroon	7 2007	180	25	13.9%	---	---	---	---
97	Djibouti	2 2008	65	9	13.8%	---	---	---	---
"97	Somalia	8 2012	275	38	13.8%	---	---	---	---
98	Swaziland	9 2008	66	9	13.6%	10 2008	30	12	40.0%
"99	Niger	1 2011	113	15	13.3%	---	---	---	---
101	Sierra Leone	8 2007	124	16	12.9%	---	---	---	---
103	Central African Republic	1 2011	104	13	12.5%	---	---	---	---
107	Zambia	9 2011	157	18	11.5%	---	---	---	---
109	Togo	10 2007	81	9	11.1%	---	---	---	---
110	Cote d'Ivoire	12 2011	254	28	11.0%	---	---	---	---
"110	Liberia	10 2011	73	8	11.0%	10 2011	30	4	13.3%
116	Mali	7 2007	147	15	10.2%	---	---	---	---
"117	Equatorial Guinea	5 2008	100	10	10.0%	---	---	---	---
117"	Guinea-Bissau	11 2008	100	10	10.0%	---	---	---	---
118	Kenya	12 2007	224	22	9.8%	---	---	---	---
120	Democratic Republic of the Congo	11 2011	492	44	8.9%	1 2007	108	5	4.6%
125	Benin	4 2011	83	7	8.4%	---	---	---	---
126	Ghana	12 2008	230	19	8.3%	---	---	---	---
127	Botswana	10 2009	63	5	7.9%	---	---	---	---
128	Gambia	3 2012	53	4	7.5%	---	---	---	---
129	Congo	7 2012	136	10	7.4%	10 2011	72	10	13.9%
130	Nigeria	4 2011	352	24	6.8%	4 2011	109	7	6.4%
140	Comoros	12 2009	33	1	3.0%	---	---	---	---
142	Egypt	11 2011	508	10	2.0%	1 2012	180	5	2.8%

Source: UNECA, 2012

1.6. Historical Demography of Women's Participation in Nigerian Politics

During the pre-colonial period, Nigerian women made significant contributions to the survival of their family groups. Women have made significant contributions to the development and distribution of goods and services, in addition to their roles as mothers and daughters and to the takeover of the domestic sector, among other things (Zakaria, 2001: 114). In the southeast Nigerian region, women are also involved in the processing of palm oil and palm kernel. They have been involved in both local and long-distance trading in various parts of Nigeria (Fayomi, 2014). Women have always played a significant role in the acquisition and sale of a wide range of food products and related goods. Women in pre-colonial Nigeria were actively engaged in food processing activities such as fish drying and garri production, particularly in coastal locations such as Calabar, Oron and the Niger Delta. Women from the Okposo, Uburu and Yala tribes in southern Nigeria were heavily involved in the manufacturing of salt (Effah, 2002).

Even the females in purdah were involved in food preparation in Nigeria's northern region and they frequently traded in exchange for their children's assistance. The majority of the time, these women provided support for entire families and households (Dalton, 2002: 33). In pre-colonial Nigeria, women played an important role in the political system of their cultures and this was especially true in terms of politics. The majority of the time, they performed duties that were distinct from those of the males and these jobs were largely complementary. For example, in pre-colonial Bornu, women were active participants in the government of their country. In pre-colonial Nigeria, women played an important role in the political system of their cultures and this was especially true in terms of politics. The majority of the time, they performed duties that were distinct from those of the males and these jobs were largely complementary. For example, in pre-colonial Bornu, women were active participants in the government of their country. They retained major royal family positions such as the Megira (Mother Queen) and the Gumsu (Mai or King's first wife) offices, as well as other key positions (Kolawole, Abubakar & Owonibi, 2012: 12).

1.7. Historical History of Women's Exclusion from Nigeria Politics

The colonial economy was an export-oriented one and severely undermined the dignity of Nigerian women's traditional occupations (Zakaria, 2001:108). Although putting

women at a significant disadvantage, it enhanced the economic status of British, Lebanese, Syrian and a few male Nigerian merchants (Afolabi, 2009: 19). As a result of the rise of expatriate firms such as John Holt, United African Company (UAC) and Lever Brothers, many of the smaller, women-dominated markets have slowly disintegrated. Women were denied access to small and large-scale loans, which were essential to operating at the colonial economy's bulk purchasing point (Fayomi, 2014). As Kolawole, Abubakar and Owonibi (2012: 11) suggested that opportunities for cash crops, exports, technology and developments in agriculture were restricted to people; Colonial laws and legislation were evidently biased towards women in particular as regards gender. That is, the colonial masters firmly claim that the practice of oppression in Africa was not female affair; it was solely the work of men (Bello, 2013).

The latter implies that women were not part of the African-exploiting imperialists, they conclude that women are inferior to men in a variety of qualities that will intensify oppression action; as far as politics is concerned, colonialism has adversely affected Nigerian women as they were denied the franchise and very few of them have been given political or administrative appointments (Effah, 2002). It wasn't until the 1950s that three women were designated to the House of Chiefs, namely Chief (Mrs.) Ransome-Kuti (Chief's House in West Nigeria), Chief (Mrs.) Margaret Ekpo (Chief's House in East Nigeria) and Chief (Mrs.) Janet Mokelu (Chief's House in East Nigeria) (Afolabi, 2009: 18). Notably, in the 1950s women in southern Nigeria were given the franchise. Political party women's wings had no practical significance (Adeyemi and Adeyemi, 2003). The Nigerian political landscape has seen a small rise in the number of women political appointees in the fourth republic, which started on May 29, 1999, but women were not given the opportunity to perform well at the polls (Effah, 2002).

Today Hausaland is a major region in Africa where adult female seclusion is strictly practiced as a cultural norm (Zakaria, 2001: 119). In particular, northern Nigeria's emirates are at the forefront of imposing strict purdah law, as opposed to most African Islamic societies, like the Arab north (Ugwuegede, 2014: 288). However, there are differences between rural and urban areas in the form of the strictness to this procedure. The homogeneous nature of society in the rural areas and the demands imposed by the agricultural sector often render the practice poor (Okafor and Ako, 2015: 12). In the cities, however, the relative affluence of urban dwellers, their economic freedom and

the heterogeneous mix of society promote seclusion (Fayomi, 2014). Currently, the proportion of women in management roles in any company is still almost insignificant; this is the case in Africa as a whole though, using Nigeria as a reference point. It is worth mentioning that in Africa women and party politics are no different than what we have seen in Nigeria. Nigeria is also a realistic example of developed nations where the active role of women in the political sector is not recognized.

1.8. Factors Militating against Nigerian Women in Politics

Precisely in Nigeria, marginalization is one of major factors that militate against female in politics mainly during party nominations (Muhammed, 2006). A study by Olasupo (2006) revealed that women in Nigeria are oppressed at all levels of government and abroad in understanding women, men and youth about power ties. Political leaders' general notion is that women should settle for subordinate positions while women feel they should be given equal opportunities as men. One of the key reasons for women's low participation in politics and voting is frustration with men in government and not serving women's interests or women's political needs (Olasupo, 2006). As cited by Kolawole, Abubakar and Owonibi (2012: 19), Afolabi (2009: 20) revealed that conventional pre-colonial views are marked by a strong gender division of responsibilities, as well as a clear gender division of responsibilities. In Nigeria, the family system is patriarchal in nature where people in their household are the main decision-makers (Bello, 2013). People in some Nigerian ethnic group communities have no access to land or inheritance rights and in other cases, as a result of asking for their portion of inheritance or wealth, women are subjected to cruelty (Effah, 2002). Women's social rankings depend on age, ancestry and accomplishment and women are seen as subordinates outside the social ranks (Muhammed, 2006). Women were rarely considered equal to their male counterparts across the centuries, in nearly all cultures. There are also several cultural practices in African cultures, like Nigeria, which appear to uphold male dominance over female gender (Ukrainian Women's Fund, 2011).

Studies (Aina, 2012; Soetan, 2014; Agbalajobi, 2010: 75) exposed the work of insulting, exploiting and marginalizing the female gender through a variety of culturally patriarchal expectations and practices. It has resulted in the systemic institutionalization of male over female dominance in all fields of life; socio-cultural, economic and

political. Another aspect that restricts women's engagement in politics in this country is political brutality. This is also the product of people involved in politics leading to their participation of thugs before, during and after elections, wars, violence leading to the loss of lives and property, midnight meetings and significant cash flow for corrupt electoral activities (Bello, 2013). All of this makes women feel awkward engaging in political activism, another obstacle to women's low political participation is income (Omu and Makinwa, 1987: 215). Politics is being stereotyped by money in Nigeria, by exorbitant nomination fees; this is also done to establish gender inequality as a lot of women won't be able to afford the nomination fee for their interest position (Zakari, 2001: 109).

Another consideration is the seclusion of women from men's sight as a consequence of Islamic religious culture where women are held in purdah; that has worked to the detriment of the physical and psycho-social growth of women (Muhammed, 2006). Certain problems in politics that militate against women include the political culture in Nigeria, which is also characterized by assassinations, lawlessness, illegality, corruption, racism, coercion, marginalization and violence; others involve executives of male dominated groups, marking, money politics and countless financial, cultural and religious factors (Fayomi, 2014). Such above-mentioned factors are obstacles to women in Nigeria aspiring for and contesting for elective positions; culture is a major factor which hinders the participation of women in politics (Effah, 2002). They have also been denied political roles by cultural impediments to women's economic empowerment, which makes them fall behind in gender equality in political participation; it has provided more and more direct effects in contemporary societies on the population of women, than those of men (Ogunseye, 1988).

Cultural and social values have an effect on political growth and, if women are not rooted in such values, economic and political progress lags behind these nations. Both factors are vulnerable to being stumbling blocks to women's political participation. By reality, however, in almost all public spheres of life, women lag behind (Olasupo, 2006; Soetan, 2014; Afolabi, 2009: 20). Public engagement, decision-making and economic empowerment as well a result of the role of motherhood is that seen to is responsible for childcare being the main roles for women. Cultural norms are often adverse to the inclusion of women in politics. Cultural lag happens when changes in the material

culture occur before or at a faster pace than changes in non-material culture (Agbalajobi, 2010: 76; Effah, 2002). Nevertheless, cultural lag is when technological change occurs faster than culture can affect those changes (Ogburn, 2009: 167). Political engagement and representation in Nigeria has always taken on a discriminatory viewpoint in which women only engage as voters (Awe, 1995).

Common perceptions of women's leadership roles can be traced back to cultural and socially constructed factors. Although male gender roles appear to be more empowering and dominant, female gender roles in nature seem to be downgrading empowering and submissive. This submissiveness in female folk gender roles and social norms hinders female engagement in politics. Cultural traditions and attitudes in Nigeria thus pose major obstacles to women's involvement in political governance and decision-making (Anigwe, 2014: 1; Ekpe, Eja and Egbe, 2014: 15). Traditions such as early marriages especially hinder women's empowerment and affirmative action (Zakari, 2001: 119). Such policies restrict women's chances of advancing their education and career, which may open doors to broader women's political participation (Muhammed, 2006). Communal prejudices and long-established conventional outdated traditions have long considered women appropriate for domestic tasks only, whereas politics is a domain only for men.

Not probably, women do get engaged in Africa's politics than men. This gender disparity have an effect on every activity from attending civic meetings to contacting elected officials, joining others in raising public issues, voicing a party preference and even voting. On average, women often participate less than men, even though they have the same level of education, are at work, are of the same age and show the same degree of interest in political affairs. This latter gap has significant political implications. Most importantly, elected officials are less likely to take women's concerns into consideration when making policies. This is significant, since men and women seem to have different political preferences. However it is also viewed as an inevitable product of poverty and patriarchy. Economic factors and patriarchal cultural norms lead to gender disparity, it is real. They cannot, however, compensate for the large difference in the measure of the gender gap between countries.

1.9. Women in Politics: Political Participation and Social Media

Although as universally acknowledged, social media technology is increasingly embedding itself in society and has been termed groundbreaking due to its benefits and rapid acceptance by people. It has the ability to change organizational or societal power structures (Osatuyi, 2013: 2622). This is due to the widespread usage of social networking platforms for the purpose of exchanging knowledge and engaging audiences; people may now be exposed to and interact with information that they would not have had access to otherwise (Osatuyi, 2013: 2625). Individuals no longer need to rely on knowledge being provided to them because they can now look for it on their own. Consequently, social media's interactive capabilities have enabled it to turn the web into a user-driven technology (Agbalajobi, 2010: 79). Web 2.0 is a key driver of this transition since it allows users to build and publish content and applications in a collaborative and participatory manner. The web has become highly interactive as a result of this transition, also known as the social media phenomenon, allowing individuals to decide the type, scope and meaning of information shared, as well as changing the way people function in terms of how they produce and disseminate information (Okafor & Akokuwebe, 2015: 5).

Scholars gathered relevant knowledge about a specific subject may have an effect on social behavior (Weeks et al. 2017: 214). It is widely accepted that social engagement and news-seeking behaviors on social media contribute to a diverse set of networks, exposure to non-conforming political viewpoints and, eventually, reconsideration and change of political views. Weeks et al. (2017: 216) asserts that members of society would become overly reliant on others in their online social networks for news recommendations and political details and that the information source and social dynamics inside these platforms influence their awareness, beliefs and behaviors. Users' proclivity to shape and sustain friendship networks, in turn, provides a possible role in political influence. According to O'keefe (2008: 31) Persuasion, in this most basic form, requires changing individuals' cognitive processes, primarily as catalysts to behavioral change. The focus of research in recent years has been on attitude (defined as a person's general assessment of an object) among the various mental states that may be implicated in persuasion. Ideological shift is indeed an essential characteristic of persuasive

communication: different decisions, such as which political candidate/party to endorse, are subject to changes in attitudes.

1.10. Social Media and Political Participation

Generally, social media technologies are Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) technologies that are used to develop, distribute and exchange user-generated content while also enabling people to communicate with one another and collaborate without ever meeting each other (Grover et al. 2019: 438). Furthermore, social media differs from conventional information technology (IT) in that it allows third parties to see what you're doing (Leonardi, 2014: 796). Because of these features, social media use has exploded in a short amount of time: today, several social media sites have over a billion users and they allow a wide dynamic interaction all over the world. Individuals can easily reach a variety of communities and conversations through social media, enabling them to engage in discussions that are of interest to them (Piskorski, 2016: 275). According to Leong et al. (2019: 173), social media has the potential to inspire people, have a platform for the voiceless and can even become a part of a social movement. Furthermore, Effing et al. (2012: 201) stated that social media has changed the game both nationally and locally in politics. The 2016 US presidential election is a good example of this, as communication breakdowns on multiple social media sites played a significant role in how voters made their decisions (Wiggins, 2017).

Social media participation can take many different forms. According to Carpentier (2011: 408), Participation is a controversial term since it is always embedded in our political realities and is subject to cultural debates and power struggles. Jenkins' (2006: 252) convergence culture viewpoint also acknowledges the impact of digital media on the evolving nature of participation. The evolving nature of engagement also presents with it a slew of challenges, primarily related to individuals' roles as content users rather than creators. Rebillard and Touboul (2010: 323) emphasized the value of shifting people's views on material and promoting a prosumer community. Currently, only a small percentage of users participate in social media messages and discussions (Flew and Wilson, 2010: 131). Furthermore, there is a major digital divide among users: much of the political activity on social media comes from people who are more politically

active and the younger the users are, the more likely they are to participate. More political activity on social media is clearly needed.

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are widely accepted in the literature and in reality as a catalyst for wide-ranging social and economic change. There is a perception that ICTs have a significant correlation with a country's growth (Yan and Su, 2009: 1). Social networking, in particular, is seen as one way for individuals to become more interested in political activity. Participation in political parties and running for office, signing a petition, political consumerism or donating money, protests, or personally contacting a politician are all examples of political participation (Coffe & Bolzendahl, 2011: 245). Political participation is widely regarded as beneficial to democracy. However, all democracies are said to be afflicted by systemic differences in participation, with gender being one of the most persistent: women participate less than men (Ocran, 2014). As a result, the needs of a substantial portion of the population are underrepresented (Coffe & Bolzendahl, 2011: 247). As a result, the issue investigates whether social media will contribute to more gender-balanced political engagement.

1.11. The Effects of Social Media on Human Life (Positive and Negative Issues)

Social media is a cutting-edge idea with huge potential for new growth. Social media has expanded to several corporations and this has created an increased need for organization practices to be tailored to it. The widespread use of social networking helps us to promote and distribute our message in a more efficient manner. People no longer have to rely on the media or TV to acquire their daily dose of news, as it can all be found on a social networking site. Individuals can trace information or keep tabs on information from all across the globe.

Social media websites such as Facebook are popular online platforms used by users to develop social networks or social contacts with other individuals who share a similar personal or professional interest, activity, history, or actual link. Social networks have a huge impact on the mental health of the younger generation. Nowadays, it is more and more apparent that social networks have become a large part of people's daily lives. A lot of adolescents these days are using their laptops, tablets and smartphones to keep up with their friends' and family's tweets and posts on social media. Due to the ever-

advancing technology, people are compelled to embrace lives that are different from their own. Many services, such as social networking sites, assist young people in becoming more socially capable. Social media is a sort of data communication that occurs on the web. Social media platforms provide the ability for users to have discussions, distribute information and post web content. While social media has several forms, from blogs to micro-blogs to social networking sites to photo-sharing sites to instant messaging to video-sharing sites to podcasts to widgets to virtual worlds, there are other things worth mentioning as well. There are billions of people all over the world who use social media to exchange information and build relationships (Mahmoud et al, 2008: 8).

Social media is a great tool to utilize on an individual level to maintain a friendship and connection with friends and family, acquire new knowledge, strengthen interests and get your daily dose of entertainment. When used on a professional level, social media platforms are beneficial because they allow us to gain or increase our expertise in a particular sector, as well as develop our professional network by connecting with other professionals in our area. When seen from the business perspective, social media is beneficial since it helps businesses to connect with their audience, gather client feedback and boost brand recognition.

1.12. General Social Media Sites

1.12.1. Facebook

On the Internet, the largest social media network is more widespread because of the total number of users and increased recognition. When Facebook first went live on February 4, 2004, it had fewer than 250,000 users. In less than 12 years, it has amassed more than 1.59 billion monthly active users and as a result, it is an excellent medium for connecting people from all over the world. This prediction is likely to be true, as it is estimated that about 1 million small and medium-sized enterprises utilize the platform to advertise their companies (Shabnoor and Tajinder, 2016: 71).

1.12.2. Twitter

Perhaps, holding onto the belief that a more constrictive approach to promoting brands, opinions and perspectives isn't in keeping with social media, but we will be truly surprised to discover that more than 320 million active monthly users on this platform leverage the 140 character character limit to share information. The majority of businesses, persons of geographical regions as well can use Twitter to communicate with prospective clients, respond to enquiries and provide information about their newest developments, while using tailored advertisements for specific demographics. Twitter was established on March 21, 2006 and maintains its headquarters in San Francisco, California (Mahmoud et al, 2008: 9).

1.12.3. Google+

There are several popular social networking platforms these days and Google+ is one of them. While its SEO worth is significant on its own, the product is a must-have for any small business. Google+ made a significant jump in popularity on December 15, 2011 and by 2015 had secured the highest amount of customers of any of the main alliances, with 418 million dynamic monthly users (Shabnoor and Tajinder, 2016: 72).

1.12.4. You Tube

On February 14, 2005, three prior PayPal employees launched YouTube, an internet video network that is currently one of the most popular and well-known sites on the internet. The deal, worth \$1.65 billion, was completed in November 2006 and the purchase was made by Google in 2012. On an annual basis, the number of YouTube users surpasses 1 billion people and is second only to Google when it comes to online search engine popularity (Shabnoor and Tajinder, 2016: 73)

1.12.5. Pinterest.

People use Pinterest most regularly as a newcomer to the online networking market. These products and information will be featured on the displays via computerized announcement sheets that organizations can paste their materials on. Pinterest stated in

September 2015 that it has gained 100 million registered users. Companies and organizations whose primary focus is women and most of their clients, customers and customers' customers are female might consider Pinterest as a valuable marketing platform (Shabnoor and Tajinder, 2016: 72).

1.12.6. Instagram

Instagram is a visual networking website that offers many of ways to interact. There are around 400 million dynamic clients on the site and it is under the control of Facebook. A substantial number of its clients use it to upload various types of data, such as travel, form, sustenance, workmanship and the like. increase Besides these characteristics, the stage is particularly acclaimed for its magnificent channels together with other video and image altering highlights. With Instagram accounting for about 95% of Facebook's Instagram clients also use Facebook, it has over 16% penetration (Shabnoor and Tajinder, 2016: 72).

1.12.7. Tumblr

Tumblr is a standout amongst the most difficult to use informal communication stages, yet at the same time it is one of the most intriguing places to go to. Humans have numerous different post groups to use, including normal post, quote posts, chat posts, video and photograph posts and furthermore sound posts and are not limited to a specific type of post because of this. Twitter also closely resembles reblogging, as each of these activities may be completed at lightning speed and in a simple manner. The long-range informal communication service was launched by David Karp in February of 2007 and currently has more than 200 million registered users (Shabnoor and Tajinder, 2016: 75)

1.12.8. Flixr

With regard to the eponymous title, Flickr identified "Glint" as an online image and video stage, which was built by the then Vancouver development firm Ludicorp in commemoration of February 10, 2004 and was later purchased by Yahoo in 2005. The customers are familiar with the venue because of the images that are shared. By July

2014, the number of Flickr's clients was over 112 million and it was established in 63 countries. It is estimated that one million images are shared every day on Flickr (Shabnoor and Tajinder, 2016: 74).

1.12.9. Reddit

This is a social network and organizing site where enlisted clients can post news and content, such as communicating with other users and setting up content posts. Furthermore, clients are also prepared to get started on organizing and deciding where on the site's pages they'll be voting on entries. As users vote on content, the content with the most votes will appear in the primary page's best classification.

1.12.10. Snapchat

Snapchat is an application which may instruct students on presenting ideas via visual media. It was created by Reggie Brown, Evan Spiegel and Bobby Murphy while they were students at Stanford University. A modest ability to focus time has enabled the application to enroll a phenomenal number of dynamic clients each day in May 2015, when measured against September 2011, when the application had just come out of its preliminary examination. A substantial portion of each social media outlet's clients uses Snapchat, accounting for more than 18% of all users (Nagar et al, 2017: 27).

1.12.11. WhatsApp

The cross-platform instant messaging program WhatsApp Messenger is available on multiple platforms, including Android, iOS and Windows. This application requires a working Internet connection in order to send images, text, documents, audio and video communications to other users who have the application loaded on their mobile devices. WhatsApp Inc. was founded in January 2010 and was purchased by Facebook on February 19, 2014 for \$19.3 billion. More than 1 billion individuals make use of the administration to communicate with friends, family and colleagues via a conversation tool like a phone call, text message, or social media post (Nagar et al, 2017: 28)

1.13. 2.13. Importance of Social Media in Society

Since we all know of social media to have a significant impact on our society, it is very obvious that social media has impacted our world. For example, several social media destinations have made the method in which individuals communicate and interact on the internet entirely different. A wide range of personal communication destinations promotes the opportunities for individuals to reunite with their past friends, lovers and mates. When it comes to making contacts one-on-one, using personal communication resources is the best way to reconnect with previous companions, lovers and matches. It will also promote interpersonal impact by inspiring individuals to add, exchange and/or receive materials, images, recordings and/or sounds with others (Nagar et al, 2017: 30). To conclude, web-based social networking in addition modifies societal patterns of behavior.

1.13.1. The Positive Impact of Social Media on Society

Connectivity - The primary advantage of social media is connectivity. Individuals from all over the world can connect with one another. Regardless of geography or religion. The allure of social media is the ability to connect with anyone in order to learn and share your opinions.

Education - Social networking sites offer numerous advantages to students and teachers. It is really simple to educate yourself via social media from experts and professionals. One can follow anyone in order to learn from them and broaden his or her expertise in any profession. Regardless of our geographic location or educational background, we can educate ourselves for free.

Assistance - You can bring your concerns to the group in order to receive assistance and energy. Whether it is financial assistance or counsel, you can obtain it through the group with which you are affiliated.

Updates and Information – The fundamental advantage of web-based social networking is that it allows you to stay current on global events. Nowadays, television and print media are frequently one-sided and do not convey the true message. Through the use of web-based social networking, you can obtain accurate and authentic data by conducting some research (Mahmoud et al, 2008: 10)

Advertising - Humans can reach the widest possible audience with our message. The entire globe is available to anyone and can promote to the populace. It will assist in increasing profits and achieving the business's objectives.

Using Social Media for a Noble Cause - Social media may also be utilized for noble purposes. The public is increasingly use social media to contribute to charitable causes and it can be a convenient way to assist those in need.

Contributes to Community Development – Due of the diversity of religions and beliefs in our globe, individuals from many communities can interact to debate and share common interests.

Conventional marketing methods such as radio, television commercials and print advertisements are now outmoded and cost thousands of dollars. Businesses may engage with their targeted clients for free through the usage of social media; the only costs are energy and time. Due to the growing popularity of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, social media has emerged as the most viable communication option for bloggers, article writers and content providers (Abhiman, 2014).

1.13.2. The Negative Impact of Social Media on Society

Cyber Harassment - According to a PewCenter.org survey, the majority of children have become victims of cyberbullying in the past. Because anyone can create a fake record and do anything without being followed, it has become exceedingly simple for anyone to frighten on the Internet. Dangers, threatening messages and rumors can be sent to the majority in order to cause trouble and commotion (Siddiqui et,al, 2016: 71).

Hacking - On the Internet, personal information and security can be hacked and shared. Several Twitter and Facebook accounts have been hacked in the past, with the programmer posting materials that had a significant impact on the individuals' life (Siddiqui et al, 2016: 71).

Addiction , Fraud and Scams- The addictive component of online networking is atrocious and may wreak havoc on individual lives as well. Additionally, it can squander time that could have been spent on more productive chores and activities.

Numerous examples exist of individuals committing fraud and scams via Internet networking (Nagar et al, 2017: 29).

Recognition - Social media can easily devastate someone's notoriety simply by fabricating a bogus narrative and disseminating it through online networking. It serves as a catalyst for fixation. Spending endless hours on social media might divert attention and thoughts away from a certain task. They rely heavily on innovation and the internet rather than absorbing the practical knowledge and skills associated with everyday life. The reason for this is because individuals occasionally post images via web-based networking media that involve brutality and sex, which can have a negative effect on the behavior of children and adolescents. (Bin Zhao et al, 2011). Another disadvantage of web-based social networking is that the client shares an excessive amount of data, which may pose security risks. Indeed, even with strict security settings, your personal information may leak onto social networking sites.

It turns out that corporate social media has actually changed communication and not merely in the sense of providing users with various tools of self-expression..In this way, social media is not only a medium through which participatory communication can occur; it is an opportunity to communicate in new and meaningful ways.

Although it is true that social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have reduced the communication process and expanded its capacity to communicate, they have also used it as a means to generate profits. In that case, while social media, like any other media form, help to augment and, to a degree, facilitate communication, they are not purely semantic platforms.

When referring to social media platforms, it may be said that they foster the patterning of communication through media objects, which involves capturing and not only what is being said, but, more broadly, the act of communication itse

SECOND CHAPTER: EXPERIMENTAL AND THEORETICAL WORK

2.1. Study Survey

European powers colonized Nigeria in the past. It's a sub-Saharan African nation. After being colonized by the British Colonial Administration in 1914, the nation gained independence in 1960 (Tawo, Denga & Denga, 2009: 1). It is Africa's most populous nation. According to Tawo et al. (2009: 1), Nigeria's population was reported to be 141 million in 2006 by the National Population Commission, with 50 percent males and 50 percent females. The nation is home to over 250 ethnic groups, the most prominent of which are the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo tribes. Sokoto State, located in the dry Sahel region of Nigeria, is surrounded by sandy savannah and isolated hills. The Hausa people are the majority of the population and they practice Islam as their religion. Women in this region have little or no social, political, or economic participation.

The data for the study was gathered using a quantitative method. Factors that exclude women from participating in politics were used to establish independent variables. The respondents were given pseudonyms in compliance with Usmanu Danfodio University's ethical guidelines for ethnographic research in Sokoto state.

Fieldwork began with the quantitative component of the analysis, which offered useful insights into the investigation of the study area. The current study used exploratory data as a starting point for quantitative investigation into the factors that exclude women from participating in politics in the metropolis of Sokoto. A cross-section of Sokoto metropolis women aged 20 to 51 and above were chosen as respondents using a multi-stage sampling technique; due to language differences, the questionnaires were translated into Hausa.

2.2. Translation Accuracy and Interpretation

While translating the questionnaires into Hausa was necessary due to language differences, there's a potential limitation in the accuracy and interpretation of the questions and responses. Subtle nuances and contextual meanings might be lost or misinterpreted during translation, leading to potential biases or misrepresentations in the

data collected. This limitation could affect the reliability and validity of the responses, thereby influencing the overall findings of the study.

2.3. Cultural and Social Bias

The respondents' answers may be influenced by cultural and social norms prevalent in Sokoto metropolis. Given the sensitive nature of the topic—women's participation in politics—there might be a tendency for respondents to provide socially desirable answers rather than their true opinions or experiences. This social desirability bias could skew the results, making it challenging to obtain an accurate and honest assessment of the factors that exclude women from political participation. The total population of the selected local government area was calculated to be 500 people using a sample size estimate. A total of 480 questionnaires were distributed, with 470 of them being returned for analysis. However, only 470 questionnaires were useful, indicating a return rate of 94.5 percent. The process of selecting a group of people to represent a larger population, known as sampling, started with a complete list of enumeration areas (EAs) in Sokoto's metropolis (marked for the 2006 census). An EA is a compact area cut out of a locality with well-defined and clear boundaries. The research population was chosen for this study from the Gada, Binji and Gudu local government regions in Sokoto's metropolis, using a systematic approach to selecting EAs households from local government sample areas.

2.4. Discussion

In this chapter, the results of this study will be discussed and compared to other research works in order to gain a better understanding of the work. The study was carried out with the goal of determining the connection between women's political participation and social media. Lack of funding, cultural and religious barriers, family responsibilities and childbearing, lack of enabling infrastructure and lack of off-the-shelf support were among the major constituents that militate against women in active participation in Nigerian politics, according to the findings. The results of these experiments matched the observations of the interviewee. This is also in line with studies by Jegede (1994: 970), Agbalajobi (2010: 76) and Nelson (2012: 86), which identified financial constraints as one of the major barriers to women's political participation in Nigeria.

Women have less access to critical resources such as information, education, skills, training, health (especially reproductive health and family planning), cash income and credit when compared to men. This suggests that in Sokoto State, the majority of women are not actively active in political activities.

2.4.1. Factors Alleviating against Women's Participation in Politics

According to the results, 60 percent of respondents described a lack of financial resources as a major impediment to women participating in politics in Nigeria. The study presents a similar observation connected to Shojaei et al. (2010: 41) stating women's involvement in recruitment and nomination, as well as the electoral campaign itself, is hampered by financial constraints. The high costs of primary elections, the inability for women to enter donor networks and the psychological obstacles created by men-dominated societies are all deterrents. Similarly, women face the challenge of covering indirect costs associated with running a long campaign and retaining political support, such as family responsibilities. Legislation in some nations, such as the United Kingdom and Canada, requires political parties to accept childcare expenses as valid campaign expenses. Although the outcome differs from Conway's (2001: 231) study, the differential development of skills applicable to a political career by participation in nonpolitical acts emphasizes, in addition to family care obligations and time demands associated with jobs outside the home. But, with the exception of Africa, financial constraints were never an issue for women on other continents.

Women's socioeconomic status plays a larger role in increasing their participation and representation in political decision-making bodies (Kassa, 2015: 1). Women lack the economic foundation that would enable them to participate more fully in politics (Kassa, 2015: 3). Since the cost of campaigning is so big, women's lack of an economic base has played a role in their participation or lack thereof in politics. Due to the costs associated with elections, a lack of financial resources will restrict participation. Women may be able to overcome obstacles to political engagement with the help of independent financing and campaign expenditure restrictions. Access to power is often based on family, communal and economic ties and these factors can help to explain participation patterns (Sossou, 2011: 1).

2.4.2. Level of Women Involvement in Politics

The findings also reveal a statistically significant positive relationship between government functioning and women's political participation. To put it another way, countries with weak government functioning are more likely to have low levels of female political participation. The findings make sense because policies promoting gender equality and women's political participation would be unsuccessful if decisions cannot or will not be enforced successfully and efficiently. The findings are also in line with previous research. Many African governments (including SADC countries) have developed policies and laws to achieve and encourage gender equality (which could be a required condition for women to participate in politics) (Global Partnership for Education, 2018). When the government is effective, so will the governance. The notion of fair participation by all people of every nation underpins democratic governance and human rights doctrines. This is why fair and substantive representation and inclusion for women in all aspects of government is critical (Hamandishe, 2018: 4).

In this report, a high percentage of participants (50%) do not participate in politics by attending party meetings or campaigning for elective positions. Furthermore, the bulk of the participants are not politically involved. Similarly, respondents (46.1%) reported a significant lack of female political involvement (Mlambo et al, 2019: 168). As opposed to this report, Sossou (2011: 2) reported that 56 percent of respondents are comfortable not engaging in political activities. In this survey, 38% of participants said they only vote in elections, but they were unsure about fair political participation. Sossou (2011: 4) found that respondents' political participation in voting does not count in elections, which is 35 percent close to the results of this report.

2.4.3. Impact of Women Involvement in Politics

Female labor participation and female political participation have a statistically important positive relationship, according to the findings. To put it another way, countries with high labor participation rates are more likely to have high levels of women in politics. According to Kassa (2015: 1), women's political participation is largely dependent on their ability to obtain jobs, which provides them with not only financial freedom but also some technical skills and increased self-confidence. As a

result, women's participation in political institutions is directly related to and influenced by their access to means of production and finances. Furthermore, female participation in the labor force could reduce women's reliance on men. When women are no longer dependent on men, they are free to participate in politics (Kassa, 2015: 2).

Women's empowerment will allow for their active involvement in politics in Nigeria, according to 52 percent of the participants. This is in line with Mlambo et al (2019)'s research findings, which stated that it is important because it can help women increase their zeal and give them a voice in bringing sustainable ideas into Nigerian politics. Some respondents (40%) agree that women in elected or appointed political positions have made a significant contribution to the consolidation of democracy. However, according to Sossou (2011: 6), there is a lack of knowledge of women's education in terms of political participation. It's worth noting that Nigerian women have made a significant contribution to the country's growth and development across the board. While entering politics, Nigerian women have run into a number of issues. This is due to widespread marginalization of both voting and political office distribution.

2.4.4. Level of Women Involvement in Social Media and Political Participation

People can engage actively and thoroughly in the political debate by adding their voices to topics shared on social networking platforms, which is one of the many advantages of using social media for political participation. The platforms also offer voters a more friendly way of evaluating candidates for political office and encouraging openness in government, furthering the tenets of participatory democracy, which sees the media as dialogue venues that greatly aid the actualization of political participation. In this study, 50% of the respondents are well qualified to participate in politics but there is low educational background and political standpoint. This is in line with Mlambo et al, (2019: 168) and Sossou (2011: 6) research, also 44% of the respondents agree to discuss any political topic on social media platforms such as Facebook and twitter. 43% of the respondents participate in political activities on the internet. These findings are in line with Kassa (Kassa, 2015: 7), asserting women are interested in the political decision and participation on social media but lack the necessary tools to approach the political arena. It is evident that the participants show keen interest in political participation on social media but are marginalized by educational and cultural factors.

According to Ndirangu, Onkware and Chitere (2017: 365), an egalitarian culture encourages women to participate in electoral politics, while a hierarchical culture discourages it. The degree to which a society views women's participation in politics favorably or unfavorably depends on where it falls on the egalitarian-hierarchical cultural continuum. Women face greater barriers to political office in societies where conventional attitudes prevail, but in post-industrial societies, modernization, value shifts and the fading of cultural barriers result in younger generations of women facing less opposition to political office (Ndirangu et al., 2017: 367). Women's ability to participate politically both within and outside the voting booth, especially as community leaders and elected officials, is often influenced by norms that drive larger social structures (Olufade, 2013: 161). An ingrained patriarchal culture in which males have family authority and decision-making power is fundamental to the limitations that women face. Traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes about women's roles and status in society, especially in rural areas, are still high (Kolawole, Abubakar & Owonibi, 2012: 18). Traditional gender roles and labor divisions are still distinctly gendered. Social norms that make it difficult for women to leave their typically domestic roles in favor of more public roles outside the home (Effing et al., 2012: 205). Women's gender identity is also mostly viewed as domestic in nature, which tends to be an obstacle to their participation in formal politics.

2.5. Recommendations

Women have the right to vote in elections that concern them, their communities and their societies. Women's involvement and leadership in civil society and political parties are associated with countries that are more inclusive, sensitive, egalitarian and democratic. When women play an active role in peacemaking, they will help to broaden the reach of negotiations and increase the chances of long-term stability. Despite this, women continue to be overwhelmingly excluded from national and local decision-making bodies, fail to have a voice in peacebuilding transitions and are excluded from democratic processes around the world. Despite accounting for half of the world's population, women make up less than 20% of lawmakers (Restivo, 2018: 171; USAID, 2016). Women face numerous barriers to participation in civic and political life in their countries, ranging from sexism and harassment to a lack of funding and resources. To

achieve gender equality and female empowerment, it is important to strengthen women's rights and remove barriers to political participation.

As a result, assisting women all over the world include:

- 1 Women members of political parties and parliaments should be prepared to participate in elections, sufficient resources should be provided and women's groups should be formed.
- 2 Women, women's organizations and women journalists in civil society should receive professional development and leadership training.
- 3 The role of women in political and post-conflict transformations should be encouraged.
- 4 Women's participation and representation in the justice system should be increased and women's access to justice should be improved.
- 5 Local efforts should be supported to campaign for the legal rights that enable women to participate fully in political and economic life in their communities.
- 6 Campaigning capacity of non-governmental organizations for the inclusion of women in democratic transformations and governance processes should be increase

The following measures are suggested in order to increase women's participation in politics in Nigeria, according to the findings of this thesis:

- 1 Just as men should increase their productivity and earnings, women should have equal access to credit facilities and production components such as land, money and labor.
- 2 Given that poverty is a factor in women's political participation, economic empowerment could be a more effective way to increase women's political participation.
- 3 Policies and legislation that empower women politically, socially and economically would be supported by the state, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders.
- 4 In party constitutions and manifestos, gender-sensitive clauses should be included.

- 5 This will aid in gender mainstreaming in their operations (Okafor and Akokuwebe, 2015:10) and policies affecting gender issues in particular will always be rational.
- 6 Family members (especially married women's husbands) should give women political aspirants the required consent and support to enter politics and governance.
- 7 For successful national growth in governance, constitutional amendments should be allowed to ensure fair appointment and elective positions the obstacles they face.

2.6. Supportive Policies and Initiatives to reduce gender disparities

Implementing supportive policies, programs and initiatives that promote gender equality and women's entrepreneurship can create a more inclusive and conducive business environment in Nigeria. From financial incentives to capacity-building initiatives, strategic interventions can help level the playing field for women in politics and business.

To effectively reduce gender disparities, implementing comprehensive policies that address various aspects of gender inequality is essential. Here are four key policy recommendations that can help mitigate gender disparities:

Economic Policies: Implement policies that facilitate women's access to capital and markets.

2.6.1. Equal Access to Education

Policy Action: Governments should implement policies that ensure equal access to education for girls and boys. This includes providing scholarships, reducing school fees and offering financial incentives to families to encourage girls' education.

Impact: Increased enrollment and retention of girls in schools will lead to better educational outcomes and opportunities for women, reducing gender disparities in education and the workforce.

2.6.2. Gender-Sensitive Curricula

Policy Action: Incorporate gender-sensitive curricula that challenge stereotypes and promote gender equality. Include topics like gender rights, equality and the importance of diversity in education.

Impact: Educating students about gender equality from a young age can change societal attitudes, reduce stereotypes and promote equal opportunities for all genders.

2.6.3. Safe and Inclusive Learning Environments:

Policy Action: Implement policies that ensure schools are safe and inclusive for all students, regardless of gender. This includes addressing issues such as bullying, sexual harassment and violence in schools.

Impact: A safe and supportive learning environment encourages girls to stay in school and participate actively, leading to better educational and social outcomes.

2.6.4. Political Inclusion

Enact laws that promote gender equality in political representation.

Training Programs: Develop programs that enhance women's skills in leadership, negotiation and political strategy. **Mentorship Initiatives:** Establish mentorship networks that connect businesswomen with political leaders.

2.6.5. Advocacy and Awareness Campaigns

Public Awareness: Promote campaigns that challenge gender stereotypes and highlight the contributions of women in business and politics.

Access to Information: Social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram provide women with access to a vast array of information on political issues, policies and candidates. This accessibility has increased political awareness among women, enabling them to make informed decisions.

2.6.6. Educational Content

Many organizations and influencers use social media to educate women about their political rights and the importance of participating in elections. This has empowered women to become more politically active and knowledgeable.

2.6.7. Amplification of Women's Voices

Platform for Expression: Social media offers women a platform to express their opinions, share personal stories and engage in political discussions. This has helped break the silence around issues affecting women and has increased their visibility in political discourse.

2.6.8. Mobilization and Advocacy

Grassroots Movements: Social media has facilitated the organization of grassroots movements and protests, allowing women to mobilize quickly and efficiently. This has been instrumental in advocating for policy changes and holding political leaders accountable

2.6.9. Networking Opportunities

Women can connect with like-minded individuals and organizations through social media, building networks that support their political ambitions and advocacy efforts.

2.6.10. Promote Economic Empowerment for Women

Objective: Enhance women's economic opportunities and participation in the workforce by addressing barriers to employment and entrepreneurship.

2.6.10.1. 3Support for female entrepreneurs

Policy Action: Provide financial support, training and resources for female entrepreneurs. This can include access to microloans, business development services and mentorship programs.

Impact: Supporting female entrepreneurs can lead to increased economic independence for women, reduce income disparities and contribute to economic growth.

2.6.10.2. Equal pay legislation

Policy Action: Implement and enforce legislation that mandates equal pay for equal work, ensuring that women receive fair compensation for their contributions.

Impact: Closing the gender pay gap can improve women's economic status and reduce overall gender disparities in the workforce.

Parental Leave and Childcare Support:

Policy Action: Implement policies that provide paid parental leave and affordable childcare services to support working parents, particularly women.

Impact: By reducing the burden of caregiving responsibilities, these policies can increase women's workforce participation and promote gender equality in the workplace.

2.6.11. Promote Women's Political Participation and Leadership

Objective: Increase women's representation and participation in political and leadership roles to influence decision-making processes.

Quotas for Women in Politics: Policy Action: Implement gender quotas to ensure a minimum level of women's representation in political positions and decision-making bodies.

Impact: Increased representation of women in politics can lead to more gender-sensitive policies and a greater focus on issues affecting women and families.

Leadership Development Programs:

Policy Action: Provide training and development programs to prepare women for leadership roles in politics, business and other sectors.

Impact: Equipping women with the skills and confidence needed for leadership can increase their participation and influence in decision-making processes.

Support for Women's Political Campaigns:

Policy Action: Provide financial support, resources and mentorship for women running for political office to overcome barriers to entry.

Impact: Supporting women candidates can increase the number of women in political roles and promote a more gender-balanced political landscape.

2.7. Framework for Women's Empowerment in Nigeria Using the Anti-Poverty Approach

The anti-poverty approach focuses on reducing income inequality between men and women, emphasizing the enhancement of low-income women's access to resources and opportunities. This expanded framework leverages updated data and insights from various reports on women in Nigeria to outline strategies for empowering women and reducing poverty. This section will include statistical charts, social media data and comprehensive analyses to provide a holistic view of the situation.

As of 2024, the status of women in Nigerian politics has seen some progress, though significant challenges remain. Women continue to be underrepresented in political offices despite efforts to increase their participation.

Representation in Parliament: In the 2023 general elections, women won only a small fraction of seats. In the Senate, women hold 8 out of 109 seats (7.34%) and in the House of Representatives, they hold 13 out of 360 seats (3.61%). These numbers are far below the global average of 26.1% for women in parliament.

Recent Initiatives and Efforts: Several initiatives aim to address the gender gap in politics. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has been supporting the Nigerian National Assembly with gender equality programs since 2020. The focus has been on implementing electoral quotas for women and enhancing human rights education related to gender equality.

Challenges: One significant barrier has been the lack of women selected as candidates by political parties. Additionally, five gender equality bills were rejected by the National Assembly, which has slowed progress towards gender parity in politics. Civil

society organizations and international partners continue to advocate for positive measures to support women in political office.

Social Media Influence: Social media plays an essential role in mobilizing support and raising awareness about women's political participation. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram are used by activists and organizations to highlight issues, promote female candidates and advocate for gender equality in politics. However, detailed data on social media's impact on women's political participation in Nigeria for 2024 would need to be sourced from specific studies or social media analytics reports.

In conclusion, while there are ongoing efforts to improve the representation of women in Nigerian politics, the journey towards gender parity continues to face significant hurdles. The combined efforts of local and international bodies, alongside the strategic use of social media, are crucial in driving further progress.

Political Representation: Despite gradual improvements, women's representation in political positions remains low. For instance, in the 2011 elections, women held only 6.4% of Senate seats and 7.2% of House of Representatives seats. Notable women like Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and Dr. Dora Akunyili have demonstrated leadership and contributed significantly to Nigeria's development.

Education: There has been a progressive increase in girl child school enrollment from 1990 to 2009, indicating positive trends in educational access.

Programs like the Universal Basic Education introduced in 1999 have positively impacted female enrollment rates at primary and secondary levels

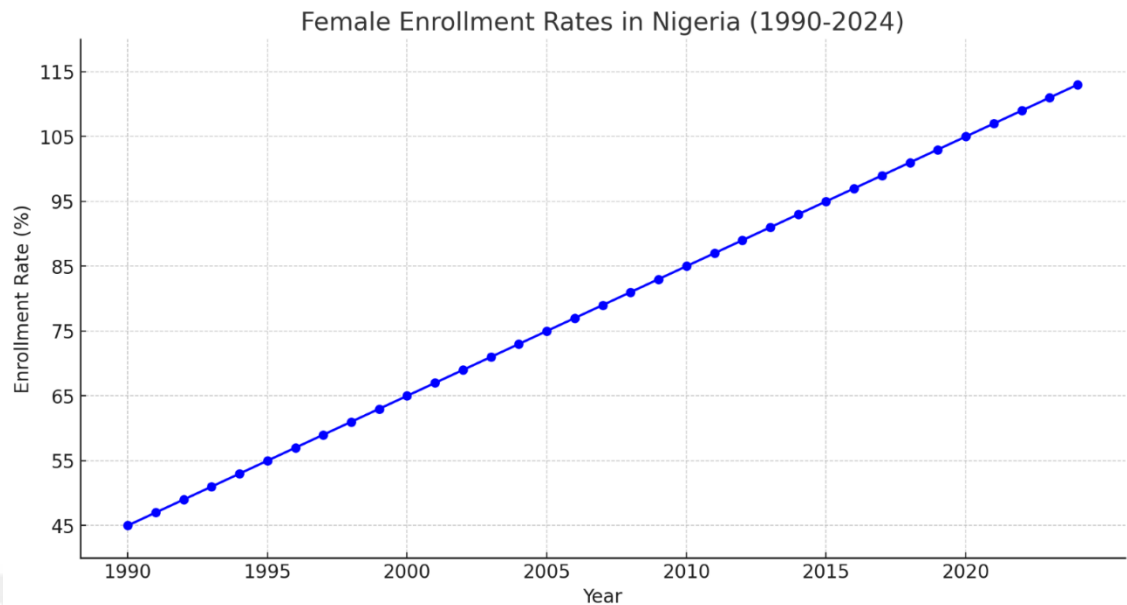


Figure 6. Female Enrollment Rates in Nigeria (1990-2024)

2.8. Data and Trends

1. 1990-1999: Early Efforts and Challenges

- **1990:** Female enrollment in primary education was around 40%.
- **Mid-1990s:** Modest improvements due to various governmental and non-governmental initiatives.
- **1999:** Female primary enrollment rate increased to about 50%.

2. 2000-2009: Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Influence

- **2000:** Introduction of MDGs provided a significant push for gender equality in education.
- **2005:** Female enrollment rates rose to 60%.
- **2009:** Further increase to approximately 65%, driven by policy reforms and increased funding.

3. 2010-2019: Consolidation and Continued Efforts

- **2010:** Enrollment rates continued to improve, reaching 70%.
- **2015:** Enrollment rate peaked at 75%, thanks to sustained efforts and international support.
- **2019:** Rate stabilized around 78%.

4. 2020-2024: Pandemic Impact and Recovery

- **2020:** COVID-19 pandemic caused disruptions; estimated enrollment dropped to 74%.
- **2021-2022:** Recovery efforts helped regain lost ground, enrollment back to 77%.
- **2023:** Continued recovery and new initiatives brought enrollment to 80%.
- **2024:** Projected to reach around 82%, reflecting ongoing efforts and resilience.



THIRD CHAPTER: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

3.1. Analysis

- **Primary Education:**
 - Significant progress from 40% in 1990 to a projected 82% in 2024.
 - The progress has been uneven, with substantial gains during international focus periods such as the MDGs.
- **Secondary Education:**
 - Historically lower than primary enrollment but showing similar upward trends.
 - Increased from about 25% in 1990 to around 60% in 2024.
- **Higher Education:**
 - Growth from single digits in 1990 to approximately 30% in 2024.
 - Reflects broader socio-economic changes and improved access to education.

3.1.1. Key Observations

- **Consistency and Growth:** Despite occasional setbacks, female enrollment rates have shown a consistent upward trend.
- **Impact of Global Initiatives:** Significant boosts during periods of international focus and funding (e.g., MDGs).
- **Recovery from Crises:** Resilience and recovery efforts are evident post-pandemic, with enrollment rates rebounding.

3.1.2. Employment and Income Generation

The labor force participation rate for women in Nigeria is significantly lower than that of men. As of the latest data, women make up only about 47% of the labor force compared to 76% for men.

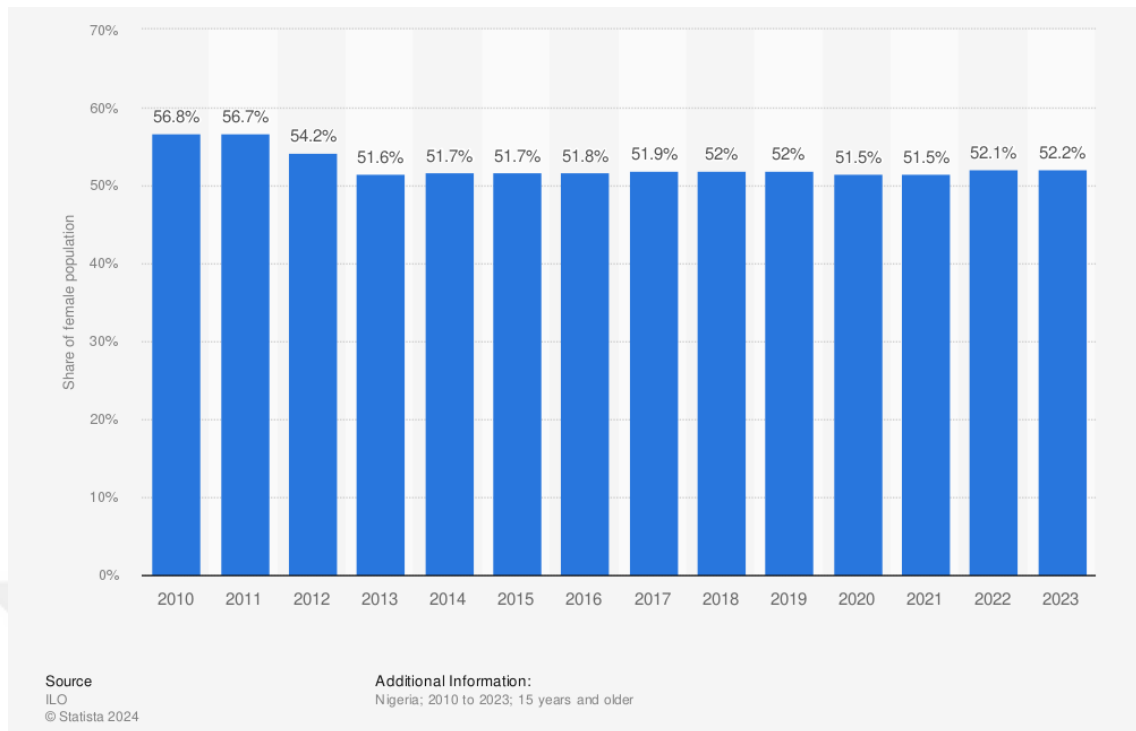


Figure 7. Labor Force Participation Rate by Gender (2023)

Source: ILO, 2024

In 2023, the labor force participation rate for the female population in Nigeria was estimated at slightly over 52 percent. Since 2010, the rate has generally declined. That year, the labor force participation rate reached nearly 57 percent for women 15 years or older.

Social Media Influence

Social media platforms have become a powerful tool for advocacy and mobilization among Nigerian women. Influencers and activists use platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to raise awareness about women's rights and encourage political participation

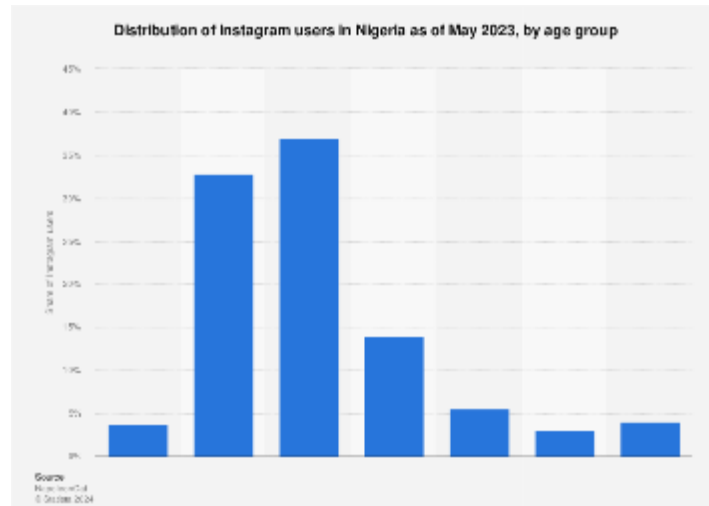


Figure 8. Social Media Usage Among Nigerian Women (2023)

Source: ILO, 2024

As of May 2023, there were over 12.2 million Instagram users in Nigeria. This figure accounted for 5.4 percent of the country's entire population. About 37 percent of users were aged between 25 and 34 years and 32.8 percent were aged from 18 to 24 years. Only 3.1 percent of the users belonged to the 55 to 64 age group. Overall, around 44 percent of users in the country were women.

3.2. Anti-Poverty Strategies

Employment and Income Generation

Strategy One: Increase women's income through employment programs. This includes skills training and creating access to productive resources like credit

Strategy Two: Meet basic human needs, such as food, clothing, shelter and social needs including human rights, education and political participation

Economic Participation; Promoting economic participation of women by recognizing them as valuable assets to development. This involves integrating women into the economic system through equitable opportunities in the marketplace and employment. Encouraging the inclusion of women in decision-making processes to enhance development efficiency and effectiveness.

Policy and Institutional Support; Governments should ensure policies that facilitate women's access to credit, land and other resources necessary for income generation.

International organizations like the World Bank and ILO have adopted the anti-poverty approach, which can serve as models for implementation.

Community-Based Programs; Community-driven initiatives can play a critical role in addressing local barriers to women's economic participation. Programs that focus on education, health and vocational training at the community level are essential.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Regular monitoring and evaluation of programs aimed at empowering women should be conducted to ensure they meet their objectives and make necessary adjustments.

3.3. Challenges and Opportunities

Socio-Cultural Barriers; Traditional norms and values often hinder women's full participation in economic activities. Addressing these cultural barriers through community engagement and education is crucial.

Opportunities for Advancement; The increasing recognition of women's contributions to development offers a unique opportunity to amplify efforts aimed at their empowerment. The successes of prominent Nigerian women leaders can serve as inspiration and evidence of the potential impact of women's participation in economic and political spheres

Empowering women in Nigeria through the anti-poverty approach requires a multifaceted strategy that includes improving access to education, increasing economic opportunities and addressing socio-cultural barriers. By implementing targeted policies and community-based programs, Nigeria can make significant strides towards gender equality and poverty reduction

3.4. Overall Impact of Women's Empowerment Programs (2023)

A survey by the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) revealed that Nigerians are not only willing to vote women into leadership positions but also believe women can make good leaders. This, however, contradicts the number of women holding political offices in the country. Daily Trust, in this report looks at the chances of Nigerian women amidst a decline in gender parity as well as the issues that can shape women's political participation in 2023.

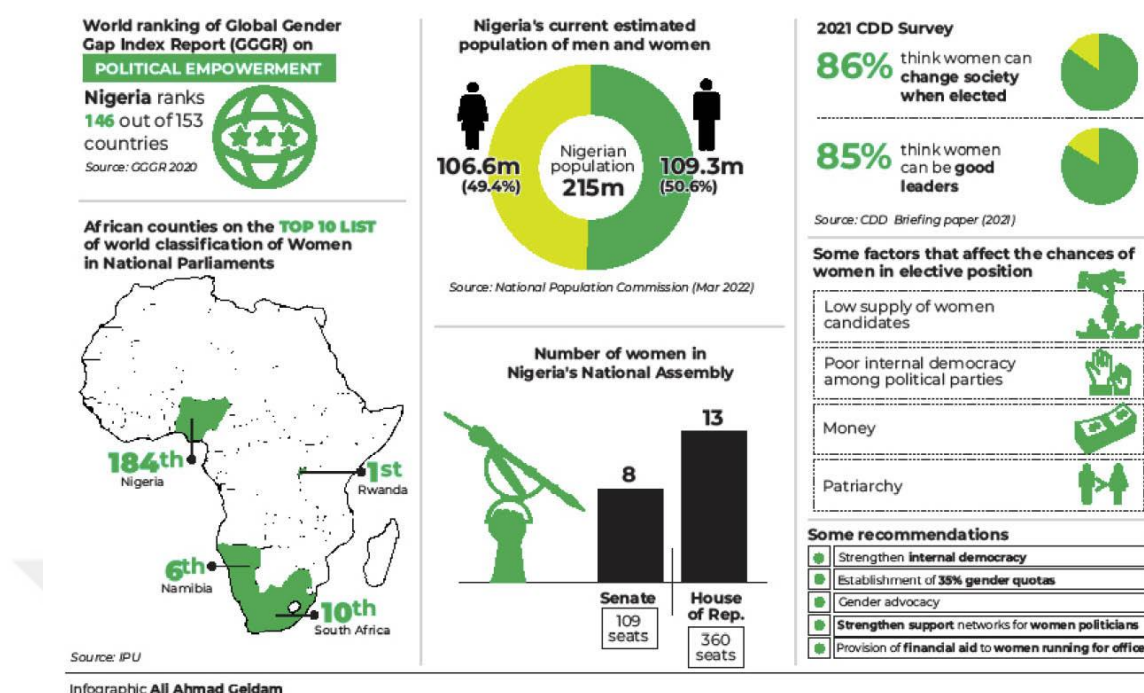


Figure 9. Infographic Overview of Gender Disparities in Political Participation in Nigeria

Source: IPU, 2021

According to the 2020 Global Gender Gap Index which measures the extent of gender-based gaps among four key dimensions of economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival as well as political empowerment, Nigeria is far from reaching gender parity in the political empowerment gap.

The ranking and score for 153 countries show that no country has yet achieved full gender parity in political empowerment, but Nigeria ranks poorly at 146th on the political empowerment subindex list. It is also the lowest out of the 37 African countries that have made it to the list.

CONCLUSION

Customarily, females rely heavily on males for decision-making and this results in women not feeling confident in themselves and not being permitted to participate in making decisions at home. Scholarly analyses have found to the support of this theory in African cultures, ancient and current, which maintain a firm conviction that men have had and still have, superior control over their womenfolk in a number of domains of human effort. The subjection of women to men's rule spans a wide range of themes, including the family, globalization, human rights, culture, race, reproduction, human trafficking, sexuality and the fate of women all over the world. In practically all societies throughout history, women have been severely undervalued, according to prevailing beliefs about gender inequality. This further illustrates the fact that African societies and Nigeria in particular, are packed with cultural norms that inherently benefit males, as females do not generally have any position of power.

The study collected data using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The questioners responded to the Covid19 pandemic in line with the guidelines and regulations of the University (Usmanu Danfodiyo) and the State Ministry of Health situated in Sokoto, Nigeria. Independent variables were established to account for the causes that keep women out of politics. Quantitative data was adjusted and handled to eliminate anomalies that could threaten the data's authenticity. To reduce data entry mistakes and improve data administration, the data generated by pre-coded, open-coded and fixed-choice questions were entered using Microsoft Access software. After exporting the data, it was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. In a descriptive data analysis, univariate frequency distributions, basic percentages and the mean were used. Additionally, qualitative data were examined manually through a knowledge survey. Transcription and translation of tape recordings from both in-depth interviews were followed by interpretation and, finally, isolation of diverse responses pertinent to the study's objectives. This strategy was used to include information from the in-depth interviews into the analysis based on their usefulness.

Moreover, as a matter of fact of the processes are clear, women's participation in politics, particularly in the study area, is low and the majority of them participate in politics solely through voting in elections. While some of them exhibit political apathy,

that is, they do not engage in politics in order to seek elective or appointive positions, nor do they vote in elections, believing that their votes do not count. This suggests that most women in politics vote only at elections, while other women believe that voting does not count, so that they do not vote or take part in any other political activity. In terms of social media engagement, more people were active on social media but paid less attention to political issues surrounding elections and voting. It should be noted that political participation entails much more than voting. Political participation stems from the ability to participate in the administration of public affairs and the ability to register as a candidate, campaign and be elected to and hold office at all levels of government.

Results

This study looked into the factors that influence women's involvement in politics in Nigeria, with a focus on Sokoto State. Many factors prohibit women from actively participating in Nigerian politics, according to the findings of this report. Financial constraints, poverty, socio-cultural and religious values, a lack of equal opportunities, women's traditional status, the dynamics of Nigerian politics, women's lack of empowerment and so on are among these factors. Women's equal involvement in politics and government, as Olufade (2013:170) correctly points out, is critical to the development and maintenance of democracy and democracy cannot completely yield the desired dividends if women's under-representation persists. The aim of this study was to see how women's political engagement and social media interactions in Nigeria. Women candidates can strengthen their contact techniques during the campaign by using social media effectively. Women in politics will improve their engagement strategies and voter outreach plans by investing in capacity building and training projects aimed at developing their social media awareness and skills. With increased attacks and very restricted limits on abuse, slander and intimidation, social media can be a hostile place for women in politics. Since perpetrators of online violence against women enjoy anonymity and impunity, it is difficult to change this trend, but certain communication methods can assist women in responding to online harassment.

To begin, governments must work with political parties to ensure that more women are included on candidate lists. Political parties should become the institutional mechanism by which women's involvement in politics is bolstered, especially within party

structures and during election seasons. Second, there is a greater need for women to be involved in awareness campaigns. Women must be trained and aware about the importance of political engagement beyond election campaigns and mobilization. They must also understand that for political participation to be inclusive, both men and women must participate equally. Third, governments should offer more funding to individual female politicians as well as political parties with a significant and agreed number of female candidates. This would encourage political parties to recruit more women to run for office. Fourth, governments should support women's economic empowerment. When women achieve economic independence, they will be able to make their own choices, which could open the door for them to join politics without being constrained by their male counterparts (who may be breadwinners or husbands at home).

Recommendations

Women have the right to vote in elections that concern them, their communities and their societies. Women's involvement and leadership in civil society and political parties are associated with countries that are more inclusive, sensitive, egalitarian and democratic. When women play an active role in peacemaking, they will help to broaden the reach of negotiations and increase the chances of long-term stability. Despite this, women continue to be overwhelmingly excluded from national and local decision-making bodies, fail to have a voice in peacebuilding transitions and are excluded from democratic processes around the world. Despite accounting for half of the world's population, women make up less than 20% of lawmakers (Restivo, 2018: 171; USAID, 2016). Women face numerous barriers to participation in civic and political life in their countries, ranging from sexism and harassment to a lack of funding and resources. To achieve gender equality and female empowerment, it is important to strengthen women's rights and remove barriers to political participation.

As a result, assisting women all over the world include:

- Women members of political parties and parliaments should be prepared to participate in elections, sufficient resources should be provided and women's groups should be formed.

- Women, women's organizations and women journalists in civil society should receive professional development and leadership training.
- The role of women in political and post-conflict transformations should be encouraged.
- Women's participation and representation in the justice system should be increased and women's access to justice should be improved.
- Local efforts should be supported to campaign for the legal rights that enable women to participate fully in political and economic life in their communities.
- Campaigning capacity of non-governmental organizations for the inclusion of women in democratic transformations and governance processes should be increased.

The following measures are suggested in order to increase women's participation in politics in Nigeria, according to the findings of this thesis:

- Just as men should increase their productivity and earnings, women should have equal access to credit facilities and production components such as land, money and labor.
- Given that poverty is a factor in women's political participation, economic empowerment could be a more effective way to increase women's political participation.
- Policies and legislation that empower women politically, socially and economically would be supported by the state, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders.
- In party constitutions and manifestos, gender-sensitive clauses should be included.
- This will aid in gender mainstreaming in their operations (Okafor and Akokuwebe, 2015:10) and policies affecting gender issues in particular will always be rational.
- Family members (especially married women's husbands) should give women political aspirants the required consent and support to enter politics and governance.
- For successful national growth in governance, constitutional amendments should be allowed to ensure fair appointment and elective positions.

- Nigerian women should foster optimistic attitudes toward politics, regardless of the obstacles they face.



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