2024

NIGERIAN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Online ISSN: 2682-6151 Print
ISSN: 2682-6143

Volume 7, Issue 1, 2024

Editor-in-Chief
Prof. S.O. Adebayo
Managing Editor
Prof. B.E. Nwankwo

Published by
Nigerian Association of Social Psychologists
www.nigerianjsp.com

Women Participation in Democratic Elections: Mitigating Inhibiting Factors in Ekiti State.

Alexander Dike[1] and Celestine Ofodile[2]

Igbinedion University, Okada. Edo State.

Correspondence: dike.alexander-leo@iuokada.edu.ng

Abstract

Democracy offers leverage for participation when citizens consciously engage in process that make up democratic tradition. The fourth republic is significant in the history of Nigeria, more than two decades since inception in 1999. The expectation is that women should have fair share in democratic space and actively participated. However, women have suffered consistent under representation in Nigeria political space. Drawing from this position, this paper identified factors which hindered women participation in democratic election using the data from Ekiti state, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive cross-sectional survey using 215 sample of women who were registered members of political parties. Data were collected and analysed quantitatively using descriptive statistics. Results showed that participants actively engaged political process, were members of political parties, and participated in campaigns for party candidates. However, it was difficult for these women to gain equal access to political advantage like male counterparts. Belief system (10.7%), patriarchy (14.9), finance (31.6%), violence (16.3%) and religious rituals (10.7%) were factors which existed as buffer against political advantage of women in Ekiti. The buffer was complemented with party structure which stringently dominated by men. Women in Ekiti had disproportionately poor representation in democratic election due to factors which acted as buffer to participation. This study therefore recommended that party structure should be deconstructed to accommodate gender and equitable competition especially in the case of Ekiti and other similar scenario.

Key words: ***buffer factors, gender, party deconstruction, political representation***

Introduction

The entrenchment of democratic dispensation in post fourth republic Nigeria opened up opportunities for participation in governance. Democracy is a civil rule that offers wide span of participation for both male and female, young and old, and literate non literate actors (Africa Barometer, 2021). The doctrine of democracy is a universal law which accommodates rights of citizens in the form of civil liberties and political rights (British Council Nigeria, 2012). The law states that every citizen shall have inalienable right to vote and be voted for (Burchard & Barnes, 2012). The maxim clearly states obligation of citizens in democratic rule. Interpretatively, no citizen whatsoever by gender, religion, class background or ethnic shall be excluded to participate and exercise the franchise rights in democracy. The 1999 constitution as amended recognized inalienable rights clearly stated in sections of the constitution and the enforcement thereby sacrosanct by competent courts (Nigeria Constitution, 2015).

Interestingly, Western democracies held in high esteem universal participation for all and without discrimination or hindrance for citizens (Direct, 2019). The idea is that democracy proclaims freedom for all and civil liberties covering demographic difference (Human Rights Watch, 2019). United States of America, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Brazil, Canada and several other capitalist nations of the World have entrenched democratic principles and set pace for others in the global community especially promoting doctrine of liberal democracy. Some of the countries listed above set pace for male and female civil liberties, elections of male or female as Presidents, Chancellor or Prime Ministers and Senate President or Speaker of the Congress or House of Representatives (British Council, 2012). This apparently bridge the gap between male and female in democracies.

Nigeria democracy is a copy of Western liberal democracy. This suggests that doctrines and practices follow similar pattern like the America case which is the standard. Curiously, the fourth republic is historic in the political life cycle of the country. Firstly, it is the longest democratic dispensation in the history of civil rule. Secondly, the pattern of constitutional proposition and system of government is adapted after US prototype. Thirdly, the constitution clearly states unbridled and unhindered rights for all which never precluded women participation or limit of political offices female gender can vie for (Nigeria Constitution, 2015). This marks significant breakthrough in global agenda which have consistently pushed for gender equality (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2018b). It means, in theory there is abolition of cultural hindrance and institutional bottlenecks which hindered women participation in politics (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2019a). Theoretically therefore, the law of liberal democracy abhors deliberate stunting of women participation in politics, male circumspect of opportunities for female and patriarchal ritualization of democracy for male chauvinism.

However, in practice, the reality seems far from the ideal. National statistics and data are replete with facts and figures which show at a glance number of women in politics as ratio to men in politics (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2010, 2018). This figure shows difference in gap between men elected or appointed in government in comparison to women counterpart. Some official statistical figures concluded that less than one-third eligible women were either elected or appointed in government; whereas, more than three-quarter men eligible were elected or appointed in government (NBS, 2018, 2023). This is the reality and departure from the ideal in the Nigeria context. The current scenario is widespread phenomenon in Nigeria, and this has remained major concern for all. This concern is attached to researchers' interest in the academia and professional organisations to offer insight and perhaps action for practice to mitigate the gap. Although studies exist in literature covering women participation in politics, this current study is an extension of literature which relied on data from semi urban Ekiti community, precisely Ikere-Ekiti. This is the focus in this study.

Study objectives

In line with narratives in the background of study, some specific objectives are considered.

1. Examine factors inhibiting women participation in democratic elective positions in Ekiti state.
2. Identify structure of political parties inhibiting women participation.

Literature review

Women's Political Representation in Nigeria

The last two decades in the global history have witnessed an impressive rise in women's political representation around the world, with the global average in the share of women in national parliaments doubling during the time and all regions making substantial progress towards the goal of thirty percent women's representation in decision making (Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU), 2015). Across the world, sub-Saharan Africa has fastest rate of increase in the political representation of women (Nkwachukwu, Chukwuemeka & Agbanyim, 2018). In 1995, no African country had elected more than thirty percent women to their single or lower houses, but by 2015, twelve countries elected more than thirty percent women to such legislative houses, five elected more than forty percent; while one (Rwanda) elected more than sixty percent (IPU, 2015). Since 2003, Rwanda has maintained the record as the country with the highest female legislative representation in the world, surpassing the Nordic countries (Nkwachukwu et al., 2018).

Four of the world's top 10 countries, in terms of women's share of single or lower house of parliament, are in Sub-Saharan Africa: Rwanda, Seychelles, Senegal, and South Africa. While some African countries have made giant strides in women's political representation, others like Nigeria have achieved very little progress. Since 1999 when Nigeria returned to civil rule, the country has conducted six general elections (in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019), which the record of women's political representation has been curiously mixed. Evidently, Nigeria achieved the highest percentage (7.0 percent) of women's representation in the lower parliament (the House of Representatives) in 2007 after the dismal record of 3.4 percent and 4.9 percent in 1999 and 2003, respectively. However, the figures declined to 6.8 percent and 5.6 percent in 2011 and 2015 respectively, while it remained a little above 2011 rate in the 2019 election (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). However, following the conclusion of a number of election petition cases by 2017, the figure went up to 6% (22 in the House of Representatives and 7 in the Senate).

Lack of progress in women's political representation in Nigeria however did not hamper soaring role of women in the country's socio-economic and cultural landscape; and it is expected that the increasing role of women in the society would translate to greater inclusion of women in the political process (Nkwachukwu et al., 2018). Ibeanu (2009) identified four major socio-economic and cultural changes with potentials to positively transform women's political representation in Nigeria. The first is the growing voice and rising profile of women in the economy, community work and various spheres of professional and public engagements. The second is the gradual but steady withering of cultural restrictions on the perception of women in public affairs since the last three decades. The third is the rapid expansion in the work of activist women organizations supporting increased participation of women in politics and a resultant rise in the number of women joining politics and standing for elections. While the fourth is the increasing tendency of women to take up economic roles in the family previously reserved for men and to question the myth of the "males-breadwinner" in many middle and low income families. Generally, Nigeria has a policy environment that would appear to support gender equity. Firstly, the country is a signatory to most of the international conventions on gender equality and women empowerment. Secondly, successive governments in the country have established a vibrant institutional structure for the development and implementation of gender policies, coordinated by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs with desk officers for each sector and corresponding Women Affairs Officers in each government ministry. Thirdly, there seems to be a widespread appreciation of gender issues

as both government and non-governmental organizations emphasize gender mainstreaming in their activities (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2018b). Although the prospect for increased representation of Nigerian women in political leadership appear strong, data on the political representation of women in Nigeria indicate that gender gains of the last decade have not reflected in the level of women's representation in political leadership.

The concern is why gender gap in political representation has continued to exist even when the socio-economic and cultural landscape in Nigeria favours greater political representation of women. Again, why the efforts to address the political marginalization of women failed to improve their level of representation in Nigerian politics. Or what measures are there to ensure that women are better represented in Nigeria. It is argued that slow progress with women's political representation in Nigeria is intimately connected with the diagnosis of the problem, in this case how the problem of women's underrepresentation is perceived and understood as well as the strategies adopted to address it (Kelly, 2019; Nkwachukwu et al., 2018).

The problem of women's political underrepresentation in Nigeria is seen as a question of women's lack of resources. Discussion of barriers to women's participation in politics covers largely on issues that diminish women's political resources and undermine their capacity to engage in politics (Jollie-Bako & Syed, 2018). These issues include traditional values and norms, community expectations, conservative family upbringing, lack of good education, lack of work or professional experience, structural and physical violence against women, and discriminatory roles assigned to women in the political parties (Okoosi-Simbine, 2011).

Efforts to address women's political underrepresentation in Nigeria have typically focused on expanding women's political resources by educating women, mentoring them, expanding their networks, and providing them with financial assistance. These efforts have produced marginal results and incremental change (Nkwachukwu et al., 2018). To fast-track progress towards gender parity in political representation, it is claimed that stakeholders should see women's political underrepresentation as a question of discrimination against women, rather than that of women's lack of resources (Isaksson, Kotsadam & Nerman, 2014).

Similarly, some authors argued that direct and indirect mechanisms of exclusion operate in the society in general, and that these mechanisms of exclusion have had a special impact on women's participation in the political process (Kelly, 2019; Orji, 2014). From this perspective, Nkwachukwu *et al* (2018) outlined that the strategy for addressing women's political underrepresentation should focus on changing how the political institutions themselves work rather than on adjusting the resources and capacities that women do or do not possess. This approach, therefore, locates the responsibility for dealing with the issue of political underrepresentation of women squarely with the political institutions (Kezie-Nwoha, 2006). Some authors consider the introduction of electoral gender quota for the recruitment and election of female candidates as the most appropriate institutional change required to enhance gender equity in political representation (Inter Parliamentary Union, 2015).

Furthermore, some studies argue that greater political representation of women should begin at the local and regional levels (British Council Nigeria, 2012; National Centre for Women Development, 2016). This means that activists and the Nigerian government should initiate legislation that would establish a more gender-balanced representation in elected bodies at local and regional level, requiring that at least one third of candidates in local and state assembly

elections be women. This law would ensure both better representation of the diversity of population and opportunity for women and men to develop a political career on an equal footing. Also, other studies suggest roles for institutions such as political parties and civil society groups in enhancing women's political representation. Overall, political parties adopt and implement party-specific gender quotas, informal targets, and other positive action mechanisms at all levels of office, including for internal party positions. On the other hand, civil society groups have an important role to play in conducting information and awareness-raising campaigns to encourage women to stand for election, and in running capacity-building programmes to support women in this process (Ikelegbe, 2005; Nwadinobi & Maguire, 2013). These actors contribute to developing the skills, experience, knowledge and the resources of women in the pipeline for elected office and once they enter the process.

Obstacles to Women's Political Representation

Gender disparity in political representation in Nigeria is the result of a complex mix factors. It is categorized into socio-cultural, economic as well as political factors. Socio-cultural and economic factors Accounts of women's political marginalization commonly assign a critical role to Nigeria's socio-cultural and economic system in determining the eligibility pool for elected office (Aina, 2003; Nwankwo, 1996; Okonjo, 1981). Scholars have argued that women find it difficult to break into political positions because they are generally disadvantaged by gender ideology, cultural patterns, and predetermined social roles assigned to women and men as well as low literacy, poor childcare, inadequate health care, and poverty. It has long been assumed that traditional anti-egalitarian attitudes toward gender slow down the political advancement of women (Orji, 2014). Studies of political recruitment in established democracies found that these attitudes influence both whether women are prepared to come forward as candidates for office (the supply side) and the criteria that are used by political gatekeepers when evaluating candidates (the demand side) (Norris, 1998; Norris & Lovenduski, 1995).

In cultures with traditional attitudes toward gender roles, many women may be reluctant to run and, if they seek office, may fail to attract sufficient support to win. A study by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) found that female politicians in many countries cited hostile attitudes toward political participation by women as one of the most important barriers to running for parliament (IPU, 2000). There is a consensus in the literature that generally in Africa, women are socialized into passive civic and political roles in the family. This is then subsequently reinforced by the wider society based on cultural precepts that portray publicly active women as cultural deviants (Nkwachukwu, 2018). In Nigeria, women political leaders are not just seen as cultural deviants, but there is very little public confidence in their capacity to perform.

The World Values Survey (for the period 1994-2014), which measures support for gender equality in political leadership, shows a consistent conviction among the respondents that on the whole, men make better political leaders than women do (Nkwachukwu e*t al.*, 2018). Many communities in Nigeria emphasize women's traditional roles as mothers and housewives and restrict them to those roles. In communities where traditional, patriarchal value system is very strong, it favours sexually segregated roles and militate against the advancement, progress and participation of women in the political process (Orji, Orji & Agbanyim, 2018). The gender role assigned to women defines their social and economic status in society, and this has a direct effect on their participation in political institutions and elected bodies. For example, literature emphasizes the importance of the pool of women in the professional, administrative, and managerial occupations that typically

lead to political careers. It suggests that jobs in fields such as law and journalism commonly provide the flexibility, financial resources, experience, and social networks that facilitate running for elected office (Orji *et al,* 2018).

However, the structure of the Nigerian economy is such that many women rely on a male breadwinner for survival due to their inability to independently earn a living. The implication of this, as proponents of the cooperative bargaining theory has observed, is that the ability of women to influence decisions at household level is essentially limited (Manser & Brown, 1980). With very little leverage over decision making at the household level, the capacity of women to participate in decision making at higher levels is equally constrained. The capacity of Nigerian women to independently earn a living is particularly limited by their lack of access to decent employment (Ette, 2017). Available data show that Nigerian women have a limited access to formal employment: only 32.5 percent of women were employed in the (non-agricultural) private sector in 2007 (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2010), while the figures for the public sector show that the proportion of women employed in the sector between 2001 and 2004 did not exceed 30 percent (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2011).

Barriers to formal employment for women can be traced to the reproductive roles they play, which often lead them involuntarily to accept low quality, poorly paid, part time but relatively flexible employment. Reproductive roles also mean that women often forgo promotion to higher paid jobs if these involve anti-social hours or frequent travel away from their families (British Council, 2012). Lack of access to gainful employment means that many women fail to enjoy the regularity and predictability of income that formal employment offers as well as access to assets like bank finance, old age pension, social security (health insurance), union representation, and other benefits that depend on having a formal job. The prevailing cultural factors, it is difficult for women to participate in political life when their major concern is survival, and where they have no choice but to spend much of their time trying to meet the basic needs of their families.

The persistent economic crisis that Nigeria has been experiencing since the 1980s has led to far reaching deterioration of the conditions of families across middle and lower classes of the society. As a result, women have had to increasingly take up economic roles in the family previously reserved for men. This situation is accentuated by the increase in the number of female-headed households, where death or absence of male heads of households has forced women to assume the bread-winner role (Nigerian Women Trust Fund, 2019). In families where women have formal employment (as teachers, lawyers or doctors), they tend to combine them with their full-time role as wives and mothers. Participating in politics under these conditions is sometimes considered a third full-time job (NBS, 2010).

Women's political representation in Nigeria is further constrained by the level of education and training that many women receive. Although the gender gap in educational enrolment is closing, studies reveal that the gross enrolment ratio of girls is still significantly lower than that of boys. The UNESCO EFA Monitoring Report for 2008 puts disparity in the net enrolment ratio between boys and girls in primary schools at 68 percent and 59 percent, respectively (UNESCO, 2008). The report also indicates that girls' completion rates are generally lower than that of boys; some States in the North, such as Jigawa, recorded girls' completion rates as low as 7.8 percent (UNESCO, 2008). Apart from gender disparity in enrolment, studies also suggest that many female students underperform and do not obtain the qualifications that are expected. Figures suggest a decline in the number of female candidates who meet the threshold of five credits

including credits in English Language and Mathematics, which are crucial to further education and training in Nigeria (British Council Nigeria, 2012; Nigerian Women Trust Fund, 2019).

Several reasons are given for the poor enrolment and performance of female students. These include inability to pay school fees, bullying in schools, lack of water and sanitation facilities at schools, early marriage, parental disapproval of the secular curriculum, lack of regular attendance as a result of domestic and other health related issues, and poor quality teaching (Hunt, 2008). Although in general, there might not be any consistent correlation between education and women's political representation, yet certain rules and practices of political recruitment in Nigeria point to the role of literacy in political representation (Nkwachukwu, 2018). Illustratively, the candidate nomination procedure for most political positions in Nigeria require a minimum level of literacy, at least completion of secondary education. This prevents women from registering as candidates for elections. Study claims that education qualification disqualified up to 50 percent aspirants for State Houses of Assembly elections (British Council, 2012). In addition to basic education, many women lack the political training required to participate effectively in the political arena. This leaves them with very little capacity such as political and interpersonal skills and knowledge, public speaking, organizing and coordinating campaigns, and advocacy and negotiation.

Political factors that constrain women's political representation in Nigeria relate to political institutions and practice (Ajayi, 2019; Kelly, 2019). Institutional accounts of women's political underrepresentation lay emphasis on a country's political system and some of its specific features such as the electoral system and presence of specific institutions such as gender quotas in party recruitment processes. This approach suggests that political rules of the game are the primary explanation for systematic differences in women's representation among relatively similar societies, and that changing those rules is the most effective way to promote women's participation in political leadership (Karam, 1998).

Identifying institutional factors, the type of electoral system in place has been regarded as an important factor affecting women's political presence. Many studies have demonstrated that far more women are elected under proportional party-list systems than under majoritarian single-member-district systems (Reynolds, Reilly & Ellis, 2005). The role of proportional representation in increasing women's political representation cannot be generalized as cultural dissimilarities and differences in levels of social and economic development among countries may affect the relationship. Russia offers an interesting insight, where the weakly developed party system, the existence of many parties and blocs, the lack of confidence, and the tendency of political parties to marginalize women's interests, worked together to neutralize the effect of proportional representation system on women's political representation (Karam & Joni, 2005).

Together with institutional factors, the nature of Nigerian politics is crucial in determining the level of women's political representation in the country. It is well known that "Nigerian politics revolve around the distribution of oil money, whether officially (in the form of debates over oil-revenue allocation) or unofficially (as military and civilian politicians seek favour with those in a position to reward them with opportunities to 'chop')" (Human Rights Watch, 1999). Nigerian politics is largely a struggle for the privatization of the state to the benefit of personal and sectional interests (Ake, 1985; Ekekwe, 1986; Orji, 2014). Since political outcomes are key in determining access to socio-economic opportunities and well-being, political contests are often characterized by cut-throat competition and conducted in ways that undermine the rule of law (Nkwachukwu *et*

al., 2018). In this way, elections are usually akin to war, and therefore, prone to manipulation and violence.

Okoosi-Simbine (2012) identified five key factors relating to the practice of politics in Nigeria which have constrained women's political representation, Method of candidate nomination, which most times involve an expensive procedure requiring candidates to conduct their own campaigns. Excessive use of money in politics, to procure support of party leaders and officials, and to encourage voters to support particular candidates. Since male aspirants are generally more affluent than female aspirants, many women are eliminated because they simply cannot match their male opponents. Influence of party elders, who sometimes simply select, endorse and present a candidate supposedly to ease tension among contestants. Deliberate obstruction, arising from arbitrary behaviour by party officials who may nominate candidates without an election; change the election rules or voting system without proper notice to candidates, change the venues for primary elections, hold unscheduled meetings in unannounced venues, rig elections and cause violence and use "zoning" and other criteria selectively to eliminate unwanted (often female) aspirants. Violence, including physical violence, pressure, threat, and intimidation.

Nevertheless, Nigerian politics leans toward the "masculine model" of political life in which men largely dominate the political arena by setting the rules of the political game and defining the standards for evaluation. It is obvious that the Nigerian political life is organized according to male norms and values, and in some cases, even male lifestyles. Therefore, successful political careers by women are predicated on serious adjustments in lifestyle that not many women can afford. Those that eventually end up in politics tend to operate in a political environment characterized by fear of intimidation, physical assault, name calling, whisper campaigns, and innuendos about moral standing. It is a patriarchy political system in which the gladiators are dominantly male. It suffices to state that Nigeria scenario depicts features of patriarchy theory and power relations (Ritzer, 2016). The assumption of patriarchy is rooted in the work of Gerge Ritzer, an American Sociologist. The theory is reinforced on the ground that culture reproduces power of men and justifies the state of inequality in which power is distributed. Power is conceived in the theory when men are placed in position of authority which disproportionately discriminates women as unfit and weak gender (Ritzer, 2016). Power is reinforced by belief system found in every culture, it is universal defining every aspect of life and social learning of power formation justifies the patriarchy. Theory of patriarchy adopted model of culture which it assumes that culture is universal, imposes value on individuals and it is supreme to choice. In this case, culture does not offer space for choice of rejection when it is collective conscience and imposes sanctions on deviant members.

Politics is distribution of power and men dominate the space of power since it is justified by culture. Although Nigerian constitution stipulates equity and equality for men and women as citizen having bonafide rights to elective and appointive position in government, there is sustain inequality in distribution of political offices, discrimination of women in political participation and deliberate exclusion. This study provides extension to literature of gender inequality in political participation using data from Ekiti state.

Methodology

This study adopted cross sectional survey design using quantitative method. Survey was conducted among women who were registered members of political parties, have engaged in political process

ten years and above and actively involved in party politics. Survey in this study was classified in phases. The first phase was delineation of study area into sub-units of accessible study when study location was demarcated by quarters. There were six identical quarters, and each was political ward where it was possible to identify women in politics. The second phase was identification of households per ward which helped to identify specific locations for respondents. The third phase was marking specific households and designated as target location. There were 45 households listed for the study. This study was carried out in Ikere Ekiti, a semi urban location in Ekiti state. It is located in the south-west Nigeria and has long history of political participation in mainstream politics at both local and national scene. The community has produced some notable women in politics who have competed at both local and national political elections, represented the community in the House of Assembly and National Assembly, and also participated in the executive appointments by Governors and Presidents (NBS, 2018).

Sample size of the study was 215 derived using Taro Yamane formula which is expressed as, ss= N/1+N (e^2). The notation of the formula expresses as, ss= sample size; N= number of population target; e= margin error. Population target in the community was forecasted in the upper boundary of 2050 women; error margin was 0.05 upper boundary to arrive at manageable size for researcher. The formula is therefore expressed: 2050/1+2050(0.05^2). Deriving the sample size, sampling technique was applied to execute application of sample. At this level, purposive sampling, random ballot and systematic method was applied. Using purposive method, study location was selected as suitable and fitted study objective having attributes which were suitable to achieve outcome. This study focused on women in politics and Ikere-Ekiti composed has history of women in active politics. At the level of random ballot, having identified households which composed of women in active politics, it was not possible to cover the population, only manageable size was selected having consideration for time frame and completion of the study. Systematic sampling of households was applied when marking out the ballot method. Households in the residential quarters were marked or labeled in the ballots, selection was conducted systematically.

This study adopted quantitative method of data collection and analysis. The former relied on quantitative data using coding and label for structured question items in questionnaire, and input using computer machine. Data were generated in number value. Structured questionnaire was applied. At the level of analysis, codes and data labels were used, generated statistical data in descriptive and inferential description. Statistical tools which consisted of frequency, percentage, table were applied at descriptive analysis, regression model was applied at inferential description. Instrument of data collection was measured by validity and reliability using content validity in the case of former and test re-test method for latter. Cochran's reliability measurement was applied and estimated at 0.87 measurement. Ethics of research covering consent, anonymity and non malfeasance were conscientiously taken into consideration in the study.

Results and discussion

Factors Inhibiting Women Participation in Political Election

The main focus of this objective is an outline of factors inhibiting political participation and representation of women. Some of the factors are extracted from literature and cross checked for reliability in the case of Ekiti state.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Factors Inhibiting Women Participation in Election

Question	Option	Frequency N=215	Percentage %=100
Do you know there is equal right for women and men to participate in elections in Nigeria as stipulated by constitution?	Yes	172	80.0
	No	43	20.0
Do you think the rights for women are recognized in political participation?	Yes	102	47.4
	No	113	52.6
What types of political participation have you engaged in the past?	Registered political party member	21	9.8
	Election campaigns	62	28.8
	Voting	89	41.4
	Voter's registration	25	11.6
	Party candidate	9	4.2
	Party delegate	9	4.2
What factors do you think inhibit your active participation?	Belief system of society	21	9.8
	Patriarchy	45	20.9
	Finance	49	22.7
	Male dominance of party structure	51	23.7
	Violence	23	10.7
	Religion	26	12.1
What types of political representation have you occupied in the past?	Unit representative	63	29.0
	Ward representative	14	6.5
	Local government representative	32	14.9
	State representative	21	9.8
	Federal representative	10	4.7
	Undecided	75	34.9
What forms of impediments inhibit your will to represent?	Belief system of society	23	10.7
	Patriarchy	32	14.9
	Finance	68	31.6
	Male dominance of party structure	34	15.8
	Violence	35	16.3
	Religion	23	10.7

Source: ***Field Survey, 2022***

Table 1 above outlines factors which inhibit political participation and representation of women in the study area. In the preliminary, respondents were asked about knowledge that women have equal right to participate in election as enshrined in the Nigerian constitution. Against this

backdrop, 80.0% reported knowledge and 20.0% lacked knowledge or were not aware of the constitutional provision. Majority of participants in this study knew about equal rights for women in political participation. In a further probe, respondents were also asked to identify whether or not such rights were recognized in political participation. Again, 47.4% attested that such rights were recognized; whereas there were 52.6% that declined recognition for the right. Some literature works have shown that women continued to suffer deprivation of equal rights for political participation and political representation (Africa Barometer, 2019,2021; Ajayi, 2019). This study replicated outcome in previous studies.

Participants were asked to outlie forms of political activities they had participated. Respondents listed activities covering registered political party membership (9.8%), election campaign (28.8%), voting (41.4%) and voter's registration (11.6%). Some 4.2% either participated as party delegate or party candidate. Participants showed sense of political awareness; however, such political attitudes were constrained by some factors. A buttress to foregoing statement is shown by outline of factors which hindered active participation. In this case, belief system (9.8%), patriarchy (20.9%), finance (22.7%), male dominance of party structure (23.7%), violence (10.7%) and religion (12.1%) hindered political participation for women. In studies by previous scholars (Africa Barometer, 2021; Ajayi, 2019; British Council, 2012), these factors were found repetitively and perhaps universal factors in the literature which hamper participation. The current study offers extension in novel location and similar experience for women in politics.

Respondents were further probed to outline types of political representation they were engaged. Participants listed unit representative (29.0%), ward representative (6.5%), local government representative (14.9%) and state representative (9.8%). Similarly, 4.7% had slot for slot for federal representative, while 34.9% were undecided. The idea of political representation here indicated opportunities offered to women as elected party members for political seats. Interestingly, more than half of the respondents had elected representation. Unfortunately, belief system (10.7%), patriarchy (14.9%), finance (31.6%), male dominance of party structure (15.8%), violence (16.3%) and religion (10.7%) have remained mainstream factors that hindered equal access to representation. The factors, means, women in Ekiti politics struggled to neutralize impediments to political representation which most times appeared a major upheaval to participation and representation.

Political Party Structure and Women Participation

Literature of political participation identified party structure and architecture as hurdles which limited women visibility in politics (Africa Barometer, 2021; Dim & Asomah, 2015). Some writers have averred that thirty percent requirement of United Nation's recognition and declaration which offers relief for women participation is endangered by prevailing parties' structure (Africa-Barometer, 2021). This current study outlines the implication of party structure for women participation.

Table 2: Party Structure on Women Participation

Question	Option	Frequency N=215	Percentage %=100
Are you a registered political party member?	Yes	145	67.4
	No	70	32.6
If yes, how long have you registered?	Less than 10 years	69	32.1
	Above 10 years	76	35.3
	Not applicable	70	32.6
Do you think your political party is designed to accommodate equal access for women?	Yes	45	20.9
	No	100	46.5
	Not applicable	70	32.6
Has there been woman leader as chairman of your political party in the past?	Yes	--	--
	No	145	67.4
	Not applicable	70	32.6
Has there been woman deputy chairman in your party?	Yes	17	7.9
	No	128	59.5
	Not applicable	70	32.6
Was there time woman was appointed or elected secretary to your political party?	Yes	--	---
	No	145	67.4
	Not applicable	70	32.6

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 2 projects other limitation to women participation in the form that resembles party structure hinderance. This accounts for power position wielded or held by women which grant political leverage. On this note, participants were asked about political party affiliation or party membership. Result showed that 67.4% were registered part members, whereas 32.6% did not belong to political parties. Further probe revealed that 32.1% had registered party affiliation less than ten years, period prior when this study was conducted; 35.3% registered party affiliation ten years and above. This means, some participants had been regular membership of political parties some ten now actively participating in party business. Also, some participants were not new comer in party politics. Against this background, respondents were probed further to identify the role of women in party structure covering party hierarchy. Although 20.9% agreed that party structure was designed to accommodate equal access for women, there was evidence that most respondents (46.5%) disagreed. This statement however was repetitive for respondents who identified that party structure was dominated by men.

Evidently, 67.4% pointed that the last ten years of party membership, woman leader was never elected, nominated or appointed as party chairman. Also, 59.5% attested that no woman was deputy chairman of political parties which they shared membership; 67.4% said the last ten years never offered opportunities for women to become secretary of their political parties. Although 7.9% recognized that some women occupied position of deputy chairman in the political, such women however could offer little or no leverage to win popular opinion for equal access to power position in political parties. This is manifested in the majority opinion poll which listed weak share

of power for women as party leader or secretary. Previous literature showed that women have continued to suffer deprivation and marginalization in party politics and this carved powerless influence for women in politics (Africa-Barometer, 2021; Direct, 2019).

Table 3: Regression Model

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R. square	Std. Error of Change	Change statistics				
					R square change	F change	df1	df2	Sig. F change
1	.654[a]	.683	.014	.20415	.050	1.403	7	.140	.167

[a] Predictor: (constant): demographic factors

Inferential statistics was applied in the study to cross check relationship between variables. This gives insight to identify effect of demographic of factors on political participation. Table 3 is a regression model which tests causal relationship. Demographic factor was tested on using multiple regression analysis. At the level of R model, it was possible that political participation of Ekiti women could be predicted by at least 0.65 proportion of demographic characteristics. This means, out of every ten women in this study, at least six or seven was found to leverage demographic characteristics as determinant. Also, the strength of variance is shown in the column R-square. The coefficient is given as 0.68 or 68%. It indicates that more than half proportion of women in this study were influenced by demographic characteristics as determinant of intention to participate in political activities. This is consistent existing literature (Africa-Barometer, 2021).

Table 4: Coefficients(a)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	B	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	1.031	.150		6.885	.000
	Gender	.042	.040	.609	1.049	.295
	Age	.007	.016	.302	.418	.676
	Income	.017	.014	.805	1.245	.214
	Education	.010	.016	.401	.613	.541
	Religious affiliation	.053	.037	.903	1.445	.150
	Occupation	.010	.007	.906	1.476	.141

a Dependent Variable: political participation

Table 4.5.3 shows coefficients values for demographic factors which tested for individual independent variable on dependent variable. The coefficients were classified for constant value which combined variables and tested for individual variable. At the level of constant, it was significant, p<.000. The result was consistent with regression estimate. Checking for individual variable using standard error of significance, none of the demographic factors was significant. But collectively, the factors combined as predictor of political participation. Besides, the Beta estimate showed that every factor contributed to prediction. Beta estimate shows volatility of prediction for which relationship between variables can be known. Using beta estimate, result showed that each factor contains positive value for which prediction is known. There is possibility of positive outcome showing that political participation can be predicted by demographic factors.

Conclusion

Considering outcome of finding in this study, women in politics have competed with factors such as rigid traditional belief system, culture of male order, male bullies, strict society which offers stringent space for women to thrive in political participation. Party structure in Ekiti was dominantly male occupied and structured as reflection of patriarchy. Women in politics contented with male dominance and this has remained the established order. Against the backdrop of the finding, the study identified some recommendations as follows.

1. It was found that political party structure in Ekiti state was designed to reflect patriarchy power relation which contributed as hindrance to women participation. It was difficult for women in the political parties to negotiate better representation. This is a major problem and limitation. It is recommended that party structure should be deconstructed to accommodate gender and equitable competition.
2. Tradition in Ekiti was rigid and patriarchy strengthened on background of age long culture which determined power negotiation in politics and this significantly affected chance of women in politics. The study recommended that there should be advocacy and intervention which aim to mitigate rigid tradition. Policy advocacy should address patriarchy which entrenched male order in Ekiti like the case in other similar locations. .

References

Africa Barometer (2021). Women's Political Participation: Countdown to 2030. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. https://www.idea.int

Aina, O. I. (2003). General overview of the status of women in Nigeria, Ibadan: Macmillan Press.

Ake, C. (1985). The future of state in Africa," *International Political Science Review*, 6(1), 105-114.

British Council Nigeria. (2012). Gender in Nigeria report: Improving the lives of girls and women in Nigeria. https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british-council-gender-nigeria2012.pdf

Burchard, S. M., & Barnes, T. D. (2012). Engendering Politics: The impact of descriptive representation on women's political engagement in sub-Saharan Africa. *Comparative Political Studies*, *46*(7), 767–790. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414012463884

Direct, P. (2019). *Civil Society and Inclusive peace key insights and lessons from a global consultation convened on Peace Insight*. https://www.peacedirect.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/P833-PD-IPTI-LVP-Report_LR3.pdf

Ekekwe, E. (1986). *Class and State in Nigeria*. London: Longman.

Ette, M. (2017). Where are the women? Evaluating visibility of Nigerian female politicians in news media space: Where are the women? *Journal of Feminist Geography* , *24*(10), 1480–1497. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2017.1387104

Fatile, J. O. & Adejuwon, K.D. (2011). Gender issues in human resource management in Nigerian public service. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 5(3), 112-119

Human Rights Watch. (1999). *The price of oil: Corporate responsibility and human Rights violations in Nigeria's oil-producing communities*. New York: Human Rights Watch.

Hunt, F. (2008). Dropping out from school: a cross-country review of literature. Pathways to Access, Research Monograph No. 16.

Ibeanu, O. (2009). Historicizing the marginalization of Nigeria women in politics. In J. Mangvwat, O. Ibeanu, and S. Mahdi (Eds). *Election HERstories: Political Experiences of Women in Nigeria*. Abuja: Gender Affirmative Action.

Ikelegbe, A. (2005). Engendering civil society: Oil, women groups and resource conficts in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, *43*(2), 241–270. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X05000820

Inter-Parliamentary Union (2018b). Women in National Parliament in 2018. https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reports/2018-12/youthparticipation-in national-parliaments-2018

Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women. (2019a). Women in politics. https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/infographics/2019-03/women-in-politics-2019.

Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2000). *Politics: Women's insight*. IPU Reports and Documents No. 36. Geneva: IPU.

Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2015). Women in parliament: 20 Years in Review. Geneva: IPU.

Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2018a). Youth participation in national parliaments. https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reports/2018-12/youthparticipation-in national-parliaments-2018

Isaksson, A.-S., Kotsadam, A., & Nerman, M. (2014). The Gender gap in African political participation: Testing theories of individual and contextual determinants. *The Journal of Development Studies*, *50*(2), 302–318. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2013.833321

Jollie-Bako, M., & Syed, J. (2018). Women's marginalization in Nigeria and the way forward. *Human Resource Development International*, *21*(5), 425–443. https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2018.1458567

Karam, A. & Joni L. (2005). Women in parliament: Making a difference. In J. Ballington and A. Karam (Eds.), *Women in Parliament: Beyond the Numbers*. Stockholm: International IDEA

Karam, A. (1998). *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*. Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

Kelly, L. (2019). Barriars and enablers for women's participation in governance in Nigeria. Helpdesk reports UK Department for International Development. https://www.google/ukdfid.com

Kezie-Nwoha, H. (2006). A gender analysis of the Nigerian gender policy. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2013.833321

Manser, M. & Brown, M. (1980). Marriage and household decision making: A bargaining analysis. *International Economic Review*, 21(1), 31-44

National Bureau of Statistics. (2023). *Labour Force Survey, No. 476*. Abuja: NBS.
National Centre for Women Development. (2016). Who are those making key decisions: A survey of women and men in public life and in politics. Abuja, Nigeria: University Press.
Nigeria Constitution, 2015
Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics (2018). Socio-Economic outlook survey. https//:www.nbs.gov.ng
Nigerian Women Trust Fund. (2015). Desk review: Gender assessment of the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria. https//:www.bbc.co.uk
Nkwachukwu, O., Chukwuemeka, O. & Agbanyim, O. (2018). Women's political representation in Nigeria: Why progress is slow and what can be done to fast-track it. Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre. http//: www.placng.org
Norris, P. & Lovenduski, J. (1995). *Political recruitment: Gender, race and class in the British Parliament.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Norris, P. & Ronald, I. (2001). Cultural obstacles to equal representation. *Journal of Democracy*, 12(3), 126-140
Norris, P. (1998). *Passages to Power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Nwadinobi, E. A., & Maguire, S. (2013). The role of women and girls in peace initiatives in Nigeria: Nigeria stability and reconciliation programme. http://www.nsrp-nigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Women-Peace-and-Security-Study.pdf
Nwankwo, N. (1996). *Gender Equality in Nigerian Politics.* Lagos: Deutchetz
Okonjo, K. (1981). Women's political participation in Nigeria. In F. Steady (Ed.) *The black woman cross-culturally*. Cambridge, Mass: Schenkman Publishing Company.
Okoosi-Simbine, A.T. (2011). Gender politics and the 2011 elections. *Journal of African Elections*, 11(1), 74-99.
Okoosi-Simbine, A.T. (2011). Gender politics and the 2011 elections. *Journal of African Elections*, 11(1), 74-99.
Orji, N. (2014). Nigeria's 2015 election in perspective. *Africa Spectrum, 49(3)*, 121-133.
Orji, N., Orji, C., & Agbanyim, O. (2018). *Women's Political Representation In Nigeria.* Abuja: University Press
Reynolds, A., Reilly, B. & Ellis, A. (2005). *Electoral system design: The new international handbook*. Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.
Ritzer, G. (2016). *Sociological theory* (9th edition). New York, United States: McGraw Hill
UN Women. (2015). *Monitoring gender equality and the empowerment of women and Girls in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Opportunities and Challenges*. New York: UN

Indexing