

An Evaluation of Nigerian Women's Political Engagement in Nigeria

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Abstract:- Nigerian women continue to face severe under-representation in elected and appointed positions, while comprising half of the nation's population and exerting considerable influence in the voting process, particularly in organising and promoting the process at the lowest levels of society. Political hurdles, socio-cultural issues such as patriarchy, religious dogma, anti-egalitarian behaviours, and conventional views of women in politics and socioeconomic hurdles such as low income, a lack of resources, electoral processes and political party structures, have all been identified as barriers to women's political engagement as such, the objective of this study is to evaluate Nigerian women's political engagement in Nigeria quantitatively. The study used quantitative research methods where the questionnaire was administered to 150 respondents. The result of the findings shows that low levels of female appointments to the national parliament are significantly related to women's political voting eligibility, according to the research at $t = 3.125$, $df = 148$, and $p = .002$, which implies that voting eligibility of women is a significantly positive predictor of appointment of women in politics. It further shows that both men and women in Nigerian politics have been the primary sponsors of politics aimed at increasing women's representation in government. The study concluded that it would take a while for women to get to that point where women will be significantly participating in Nigerian politics because women face so many problems in public places. In the same way, Nigerian women need to make their own culture that goes against the deeply rooted traditions that say what women should or shouldn't do or be, especially in an African setting and recommended that the government should look at the current federal constitution, policy-making, and regulatory framework, to see if any regulations might make it harder for women to participate equally, such as rules that require a lot of signatures to register as a candidate or high deposits of money that can be unfair to women candidates. As a result, laws that give women and men equivalent rights and responsibilities should be passed.

Keywords:- Women; Nigerian Politics; Political Representation; Political Parties.

I. INTRODUCTION

Some have argued that women's active participation in society's elections amounts to gender-insensitive politics, even though equality is an essential part of any democratic governance (Allah-Mensah, 2019). Consequently, it has been contended that a democratic state prioritises citizen engagement in politics, a robust civil society, gender and minority representation in leadership positions, and the protection and advancement of human rights (Bluwey, 2018). According to Akiyode-Afolabi and Arogundade (2018), achieving equality, progress, and peace in all areas of life is impossible without actively including and incorporating women's perspectives into decision-making systems.

Paxton and Hughes (2017) state that when it comes to women's equitable participation, several viewpoints exist on a global scale. Some argue for greater official representative by ensuring women have the right to hold positions in diplomatic administration, as was proposed at the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in 1995; others argue for descriptive representation, which involves ensuring that women make up at least half of all government and decision-making bodies, a position that feminist political philosophers disagree with. Thirdly, we must ensure significant participation, which extends beyond simple numerical representation and includes advocacy and direct action on behalf of women's concerns and challenges.

Over the past twenty (20) years, there has been a steady increase in the representation of women and ethnic minorities in national parliaments. However, the literature on female lawmakers is still developing (Haider-Markel, 2020; Reynolds, 2018). Reynolds (2018) notes the growing argument that legislators who are inclusiveness (i.e., include women who are well-represented and who acknowledge the plurality of sexual orientations) are more capable of crafting fair and stable legislation despite the paucity of international research in this area (Norris, 2018). Despite a paucity of factual proof, women's leadership and latent potential are increasingly acknowledged (NDI, 2018). According to a 2016 IPU report, European elections may have increased the number of women in parliament. Women now comprise 26.3 percent of the regional average in Europe as a whole, from 25.4% in 2015 to 27.4% in 2016 (+0.9 percent points). A "strong undercurrent of disenchantment with established political parties" has been blamed for this rise.

Several justifications for increasing female engagement in Africa have been put up as Delvin and Elgie (2018) point out that even though there isn't much proof that having more women in leadership affects policy outcomes they noted the Rwandan tragedy, which left substantial cracks in that nation's predominantly male political system, allowing women to make significant political advances. According to Pande and Ford (2021), women are distinct in political representation because of various characteristics, such as their political behaviour style. They observe that constituent service and problem-solving are the main activities of female lawmakers. The opinions of Rosenthal (2021), Shevchenko (2022), and Karam and Lovenduski (2015) are in line with each other while asserting that female executives and resolution of disputes experts are more likely to work cooperatively and with less hierarchy than their male counterparts and that these traits are rooted in the principles of democracy. According to Ndlovu and Mutale (2018), despite a considerable increase in women's political engagement in Africa, there is still a vast disparity between them and males.

Despite making up half of the population and having significant impact in electoral processes, especially when it comes to organising and obtaining support from the grassroots, women in Nigeria still suffer from serious underrepresentation in elected and appointed role. Economists face obstacles including poverty and a lack of resources, while social and cultural elements include things like patriarchy, anti-egalitarian practices, traditional views, and sexist attitudes towards women in politics, such as electoral processes and political party structures, have all been identified as barriers to women's political representation (Lovenduski and Norris, 2018). (Agishi, 2018). Others include a lack of support for female politicians from family members and other institutional structures, violence, some women's dislike of politics, low self-esteem, and violence (Nwabunkeonye, 2018). Unfortunately, the legislature is one place where the glaring underrepresentation of women and the dominance of men in the contemporary democratic process can be seen (both at the state and federal levels). Between 1999 and 2006, the percentage of female lawmakers increased gradually, from 5.034% to 7.195%. (Ngara and Ayabam, 2018).

During Nigeria's first republic, a mere four female parliamentarians were elected. Neither the National Assembly nor the Federal Executive Council had a female representation of more than 3.1% or 5% before 1999 (Luka, 2021). Segregation against women is prevalent in Nigerian politics and the National Assembly of Nigeria specifically. No gender discrimination has been seen in the exercise of political, economic, social, cultural, religious, or civic rights since the 1999 revision of the Federal Republic of Nigeria's Constitution. In the 109-member Senate that was established after Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999, just three (3) were women. In 2007, the figure reached eight, but by 2011, it had fallen to seven.

In 2015, the number eight was reinstated. In 1999, women made up only twelve (12) of the 360 members of the House of Representatives. From 2003 to 2011, the number of women in the House was twenty-six(26), and from 2009 to 2015, it was nineteen (19). Bolanle (2018) states that... On a state visit to Germany, President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria made the statement that his wife belongs in his kitchen and other places, reflecting the patriarchal realities that are prevalent in most Nigerian cultures. For whatever reason, this makes it seem like women shouldn't do anything outside of their husbands' "kitchens" and "other rooms." Fapohunda (2017) asserts that gender stereotypes are pervasive in Nigerian society.

The fact that there are still fewer female lawmakers in Nigeria than male legislators, as evidenced by the 2019 elections, is no longer a breaking news story. Women held 3.38% of the seats in the legislature as per the 2019 election results (Eme and Onyishim, 2020). The election and inclusion of women in our different parliaments can aid in resolving disputes, feminist and intersex concerns, and other relevant societal problems since the legislature plays a crucial role in creating policies through legislation. In this context, the study makes an effort to evaluate how well women perform and contribute to the nation's houses of assembly in Nigeria's lawmaking process, as well as how much they have taken part in their in-initiation laws.

While previous research on women in politics has largely concentrated on how often and how many women are on government policy-making bodies, this study fills a knowledge gap by examining the experiences of Nigeria's few elected female lawmakers and their level of participation in the legislative process (Eme and Onyishim, 2020). Ericka Tucker posits a theoretical relationship between the research and feminist thought (2019). The "private" may be better understood via political analysis, according to feminist thinkers. One defining feature of feminist political theory, which developed out of the struggles of feminist groups in the twentieth century, is its commitment to expanding the scope of politics. In politics, culture, the economy, and society at large, feminism is a political movement that fights for women's emancipation and equality. The goal of feminist politics is to end women's domination by challenging and ultimately transforming the systems and ideologies that sustain it.

II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Nigerian women are underrepresented in Nigerian law regarding decision-making and full involvement globally in socioeconomic and political spheres. This results from society's inherent gender prejudice, which views women as the weaker gender and believes they should not be represented in or involved in public affairs. Consequently, women who wish to enter politics find it extremely difficult to get the jobs they want. This is due to the perception that women are socially and economically marginalised by their party members, particularly in a particular caucus which prevents them from making a meaningful contribution and their quota to the country's development.

The above assertion is supported, in part, by the National Assembly's unwillingness to enact any gender-sensitive legislation into law, which would have allowed for further progress in Nigeria. In addition to the Affirmative Action (Equal Opportunities for Women) Bill 2012, there are many legislations about gender and equitable chances, empowering females and gender equality, and advocating for women's involvement in elections. A trio of bills on gender and equal opportunities were introduced in 2012 and 2015, as well as the Equal Opportunities Commission (Establishment) Bill, of 2020 are also included. This is because women have not been treated fairly by Nigeria's electoral system, which is a factor in the underrepresentation of women in the country's legislative branch. This is unfortunate and does not reflect well on Nigeria since women only have 21 of the 469 seats in the National Assembly. However, the situation is even worse at the State level, where women hold 45 of the 990 seats, with a national proportion of State seats of 4.5%. Because there are so few women in the National Assembly, it is difficult to support or fight for these laws in a setting where the quantity of votes cast is important.

Despite the various international regulations in place, women still are not regarded as having the same rights as men to engage in politics. As a result, women in Nigeria still lag behind men in terms of political and government engagement. This may be due to socioeconomic causes, poverty, religious convictions, cultural norms, or just a lack of knowledge about their legal rights under national and international laws since women continue to be underrepresented in all decision-making and power structures in Nigeria. Worldwide, more and more women are in positions of authority and decision-making. Still, cultural ideas regarding women remain dominant, particularly regarding whether or not they should take the lead.

The federal government has launched several initiatives to increase women's political involvement, most notably 35% affirmative action (women for a change initiative). However, it is thought that the initiative has had little effect on women's political life. Because they have limited or no access to funding as they have evolved into men's campaign agents. Based on this assumption, this paper will evaluate and analyse how Nigerian women's political lifestyle and suggest ways to increase their political participation in the country's affairs.

III. AIM AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The major objective of this research is to evaluate the effects of Nigerian women's political engagement in Nigeria.

IV. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. *The Involvement of Women in Nigerian Politics and Government*

Unquestionably, women make up more than half of the world's population. The situation in Nigeria is similar because a sizable portion of the population comprises women. Unfortunately, Nigeria's public life has not yet discovered a way to articulate or convey its numerical strength. In addition to being strategically important for

women's emancipation, women's engagement in politics and governance has wider advantages and effects (Gender in Nigeria Report, 2017). Many people have voiced the belief that women's involvement and representation in the national government are extremely important and may contribute to national progress.

Our ideal of spreading democracy and prosperity will remain in substantial jeopardy if half of the world's population stays exposed to economic, political, legal, and social marginalisation, according to former U.S. Secretary of State and top presidential contender Hillary Clinton. The United States must maintain its steadfast support for women's rights across all nations, regions, and continents since there is much progress to be made. Madeleine K. Albright, a former US envoy to the UN and Special Adviser, added, "Every country deserves to have the finest possible leader, and that means that women ought to be allowed to compete." Meanwhile, the National Democratic Institute of Nigeria chairperson is also a Democratic woman. No nation can hope to attract talented individuals if they are not allowed to run for office.

Any nation that aspires to the lofty ideal of democracy—which prioritises people's freedom, involvement, and competitiveness—must promote gender imbalance, according to Anifowose (2018). Anifowose (2018) argues that democracy cannot foster progress in a society if men and women do not engage in the political process. Considerations such as voting in elections and seeking public office are apparent when one discusses the role of women in Nigerian politics and administration. Accordingly, keep in mind that participation may be used to talk about the number of women in public office. As an example, if women's voting involvement increases from 10% to 40% of the total vote, it may be considered a growth in participation. Their vote percentage is increasing, yet women are still under-represented in public office compared to males (Agbalajobi, 2020).

Political participation is one area where women in Nigeria face bias and exclusion due to the widespread belief that certain roles are "exclusively or predominantly male and therefore overwhelming and morally important" (Agbalajobi, 2020). Part of the reason women in Nigeria are marginalised, especially in politics, is the worldview, which encompasses ethnic, religious, and cultural norms and beliefs. As a consequence of the country's sex role socialisation practices, the biological sexes are socially segregated from one another in terms of the kind of work they are allowed to do (Agbalajobi, 2020). Politics and the workforce in Nigeria seem to revolve around the sexual division of labour, according to which men and women do different but complementary tasks.

Women's involvement in Nigerian politics has been studied. Agbalajobi (2020) also looked at women's involvement in Nigeria's political process in previous research. The view that women are the weaker sex throughout time has led to them being placed in positions of inferiority to males in the country's political structure,

according to Agbalajobi. This perspective, however, frequently overlooks the significant contribution that women may make to a country's political structure. Before colonisation, the issue of gender-based labour division did not exist in Nigeria (Agbalajobi, 2020). The colonial government established the idea of masculine dominance prevalent in Western culture. The Sir Hugh Clifford Constitution of 1922, according to Agbalajobi (2020), excluded women and gave more power to the affluent. The argument made by academics is that colonialism was a direct outcome of the more severe gender discrimination that occurred in the conventional state, although some scholars still maintain that statelessness societies and some degree of gender inequality may have existed there (Agbalajobi, 2020; Nolte, 2018). Women had prestigious positions such as Iyalaja, Iyalaje and Iyalode titles, in old Yoruba towns in Nigeria (Agbalajobi, 2020).

According to Agbalajobi (2020), women's political enfranchisement seems to be upheld in Nigeria, notwithstanding the presumption that there are no constitutional constraints on their participation in political issues. The goal of women's movements in Nigeria is to increase the number of politically active women by addressing the obstacles that women encounter or that hinder them from participating in politics. However, it would be much more advantageous if women were cognizant of the extent to which men are under-represented. Although women's political participation in Nigeria has been on the upswing recently, Agbalajobi (2020) found that women are still significantly under-represented in politics when compared to males.

The problem is that women should have equal voting rights as they constitute half of the population. According to Agbalajobi (2020), women should have the same rights as males to participate in politics and other public sphere activities. The problem is that women are not explicitly barred from holding political office in Nigeria according to the country's 1999 constitution. Women face inherent discrimination in Nigeria's political system. There were very few female candidates elected to public office in the 1999, 2003, and 2007 national elections. Women remain under-represented in positions of power, while males continue to hold the majority of public office. According to Agbalajobi, statistics showed that women held a meagre 3% of elected positions in 1999, 4% in 2003, and a somewhat higher 6% in 2007, after twenty years of military rule. There are a lot of factors that contribute to women not being very involved in politics in our country. Agbalajobi (2020) has traits such as patriarchy in gender roles. Gender inequality, according to Agbalajobi, stems from the patriarchal nature of the family. According to Agbalajobi (2020), this culture is defined as "the reign of the father" or one in which women are subjugated or ruled by males. The higher social status that males enjoy in African households extends to their interactions with the public. Another obstacle to women's engagement in politics is their overall impression of the subject. According to Agbalajobi (2020), the majority of women see politics as unpleasant, and the concept of

violence has only served to further exclude them from mainstream politics.

Economically, women continue to feel the effects of a long history of discrimination. The unequal distribution of employment between the sexes has given men greater resources to further their political careers. The majority of Nigerian women count on their husbands to provide financially. However, women cannot afford to pursue political ambitions on their own. What's more, sponsors and financiers tend to favour male candidates due to their greater success, so some women who want to run for office end up without the funds they need. Legal and cultural discrimination is another obstacle that women face when trying to have a say in national politics. For example, the country's customs promote sending boys to school and preparing girls for marriage, which has contributed to women's inferiority complex. As a result, male politicians become more competitive and the number of illiterate women increases somewhat.

Quotas and affirmative action programs have not been implemented in Nigeria to address the long-standing bias against women. Another reason women don't often take part in politics is because of their religious views. According to Agbalajobi (2020), Christian teachings seem to support patriarchy, whereas Islamic law forbids women from holding public office. A lack of education is one of the obstacles that has prevented women from becoming involved in the political administration of the nation. Other factors that have an influence include culture, religion, and ethnicity.

B. Women in Politics and Representation in Political Leadership

Globally, women are underrepresented in politics. Turning on the television to foreign leaders meeting and watching discussions at an African Union and United Nations summit reveals a lack of female faces. The majority of people in every nation on earth are women. However, only 21.4% of women are in national parliaments globally (IPU, 2015). This indicates a modest rise from the average of 16% in 2007 (Paxton and Hughes, 2017). Only 19 of the world's more than 195 nations have a woman serving as the prime minister or president (World Statesmen, 2019), an increase from 7 in 2007. (Paxton and Hughes, 2017). Women are discriminated against in politics at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Women have almost complete freedom to participate in politics around the globe. Women have the right to vote, can provide their support to politicians, and can run for political office. However, the lack of women in politics in country after country raises the possibility of covert discrimination against women.

According to Paxton and Hughes (2017), there is no nation in the world where women make up fifty percent (50%) or more of the national legislative, but a few do so very close to or even over that. Sweden held the top spot for several years in the league table of the number of women in parliament. However, in 2003, Rwanda passed Sweden, which had risen to 48.8%. Rwanda today claims to have the highest average of women in parliament, at 63.8% (IPU,

2018). As an industrialised nation with a long history of peace, Sweden differs from other countries in this regard. The rise of women in politics in the Swedish example was a protracted, gradual process. Beginning with changes in the 1920s, Sweden saw a 10% increase in women's participation in parliament in 1952, the first female temporary prime minister in 1958, and finally, a 20% increase in women's political representation in the country's government in 1958. (Paxton and Hughes, 2017).

However, Rwanda has only recently begun to recover from the brutal devastation that claimed the lives of over a million people in 2003. A new constitution that guaranteed at least 30% of seats for women in the National Assembly was first put to the vote in the 2003 election. Women were invisible before the shift to a provisional government in 1994, never making up 20% of the legislature (Paxton and Hughes, 2017). The sudden rise of women to significant political supremacy in Rwanda is described by Mann and Berry (2016), who credits international organisations, local women's institutions, and the sheer number of men who were either killed or imprisoned after the massacre for this accomplishment of having more women in the Rwandan parliament.

Why is it important that there be fewer women in government? A crucial area of decision-making is politics. Politicians or government representatives prioritise their interests over those of others. Legislative decisions might even affect a person's choice since they encourage some behaviours and forbid others. Once more, political hegemony is honourable. Martin (2019) says that politicians have authority over other societal institutions like the home and the classroom and can incorporate particular practices into the law. Politicians have the absolute advantage in enforcing their judgments, sometimes violently. A position of control exists when there is political power. In theory, most laws are gender-neutral, and elected officials pay equal attention to voters. However, in reality, feminist political theorists have argued that the seeming parity or objectivity regarding gender that prevails between men and women in political office conceals significant gender inequality (Paxton and Hughes, 2017). Generally speaking, male politicians are less likely to propose legislation or enact laws that advance the interests of women and children (Allen and Childs, 2019). However, all individuals and organisations must have their voices heard to achieve social equality. As a result, political decision-making must consider both men's and women's perspectives.

C. Theoretical Framework

The study has ties to feminist political theory, according to the hypotheses put out by Ericka Tucker (2014). The "private" may be better understood via political analysis, according to feminist thinkers. One defining feature of feminist political theory, which developed out of the struggles of feminist groups in the twentieth century, is its commitment to expanding the scope of politics. In politics, culture, the economy, and society at large, feminism is a political movement that fights for women's emancipation and equality. A primary goal of feminist political theory and

practice is the dismantling of patriarchal power structures and the adoption of more egalitarian values and norms.

Throughout its history, feminist politics have placed a strong focus on questioning the objectives and methods of traditional academia. From its early days as a subfield of "women's studies," feminist inquiry has broadened to include the study of gender across disciplines, with an emphasis on gender relations and the historical development of traditional notions of manhood and femininity. The bulk of contemporary academic disciplines are portrayed in feminist writings as being gender insensitive. The field of political science and other social sciences were greatly impacted by the shift. A fundamental feminist concern in the social sciences is the establishment of gender as a fundamental social division. The feminist critiques of political science mirror this movement; they draw on the study of gender in other disciplines, question the narrow definitions of the word, and analyse the particular areas of research within political science.

Since feminist political science offers a broad definition of the field, it is radical, interdisciplinary, and inclusive. There are essentially three branches of feminist political studies: (a) theory, which questions liberal assumptions and norms in political theory; (b) science, which questions and analyses political institutions; and (c) accounts, which examine the interplay between gender and politics by examining gender in all its forms: category, hierarchy, and performance. Every single one of these subjects is complex, divisive, and constantly evolving. The three areas of focus have all shown a comparable upward tendency.

Both the terminology and the political reasoning put women in the position of embodying these polar contrasts. Given that women were legally bound to their husbands or fathers, they were often deprived of the right to liberty and independence. Additionally, they faced significant barriers when trying to join guilds, join the labour, or pursue other occupations. Modern conceptions of liberal rights vary significantly from those of Hobbes, Locke, and Kant, who draughted the contemporary social compact. A person was considered "independent" if they were not legally considered a wage earner, servant, enslaved person, or otherwise legally dependent on another. This wasn't limited to women alone.

According to Susan Moller Okin, the freedom enjoyed by the liberal social contract subject is made possible via his exploitation of his "dependents," or the women who serve as his housekeepers and attend to his mental and physical needs. But their work in assisting the head of the household in becoming self-sufficient guarantees that they will always be "dependents" and prevents them from participating in politics. Within the Western canon of liberal political theorists, the vast majority either asserted or believed that women were innately subordinate and unequal. With a few notable outliers like Hobbes, political philosophers who recognised women's presence were not deemed "equal" to the responsibility of citizenship.

The inability to control one's emotions renders women irrational and unfit for political office, according to Kant. Certainly, Kant is far from the first political thinker to argue that women lack the logical faculties necessary to think critically because of their inherent biases and sentiments. In contrast, his compact social notion maintained that reason was the most important condition for participation in politics. Two of his followers in the twentieth century passed this concept of "reason" on to Rawls and Habermas, who embraced it. Their independence and objectivity were severely cast into doubt due to women's reliance on and connection to the natural world, their emotions, and their physical fragility. Being rational enables objectivity and independence. Feminist political theorists have shown how some political philosophers' definitions of the "political subject" or "agent" lead to the marginalisation of women in politics.

Feminist thinkers disagree on the best way forward, notwithstanding their almost universal condemnation of the liberal political subject and its historical application to women's exclusion. Liberal feminists argue that this area of liberalism contains essential ideals that feminists should fight for, such as justice, equality, and autonomy. The real problem is not the principles per se, but rather the long-standing gender gap in political participation. A failure to uphold liberal ideals of equality and autonomy has, according to Martha Nussbaum, historically defined liberal intellectuals' omission of women.

By arguing that liberal values were founded on the exclusion of the oppressed—women, workers, and minorities—socialists, radicals, and so-called difference feminists fought back against liberal feminists' efforts to transform liberal principles and the liberal subject into instruments for liberatory projects. As an alternative to embracing liberal ideology, each of these groups responded. Many feminists have contended that, instead of minimising or rejecting what is traditionally considered "feminine," feminists should promote and defend these qualities while also praising the special bond that women have with the natural world, their families, and their communities.

It is not the traits themselves that are problematic, but rather their devaluation in comparison to more stereotypically male attributes, argues these philosophers. Aiming to achieve a revaluation of values, different feminists like Naomi Scheman and Carol Gilligan contended that liberal subjects are inherently "paranoid" due to their traits and that it is backwards to base moral judgements on a person's ability to be objective and apply broad moral principles rather than the details of a particular moral dilemma. The fundamental premise of political philosophy, "justice," which states that equals should be treated equally and that everyone should get their due, is allegedly denied to women owing to their "difference" from men and their inequality. In reaction to this male-dominated emphasis on justice in political theory, some female philosophers have sought to construct and articulate feminist political concepts like "care." According to radical feminists, "feminine" and "masculine" traits originated with male domination.

Consequently, it's hard to recommend each set of characteristics separately. One willingly takes on a submissive position at home and in politics by embracing devalued "feminine" characteristics; one promotes the concept that these masculine qualities are superior by embracing "masculine" characteristics and denigrating the feminine. We still don't completely comprehend what men and women are capable of, according to many radical feminists, even when we remove patriarchal contexts. The fundamental idea behind the separatist movement, which pushed for female-only communities, was that this would be the only way to limit patriarchal control and allow women to develop their identities freely.

That care and connection are more appropriately "feminine" and independence and solitude more appropriately "masculine" are, according to feminist humanists, oversimplified goals. A shared political strategy for gender equality should include a revised understanding of the human being and revised principles to attain freedom for all people. This is taken up by poststructuralist feminists, who change the emphasis to what they call the "subjectivisation" process. This includes the practices, norms, institutions, and practices that transform individuals into "subjects," like men and women. Poststructuralists, who reject the idea that women are fundamentally different from males, argue that to understand and critique these biological and social categories, we need to investigate the power relations that give birth to them. We need to go further into the theories that support these biological distinctions and focus on what they call "micropolitics" and "bio-power."

Among the normative foundations that underpin feminist thought are the following:

- Power relations are concentrated according to gender, body type, race, class, or culture.
- Natural objects like the ego, the family, and the current patterns of political discourse are not subject to the theory's scrutiny.
- The history of political philosophy and its standards criticise the theory.
- The idea denies essentialism and maintains that immutable essences map some features and inequalities.

As we've seen, feminists' political ambition—the belief that men and women are fundamentally equal and should enjoy equal political and legal rights—forms the basis of both the theory's significance and the feminist movement's current efforts to end women's unfair oppression. This duty is one that feminist political theory seeks to do away with. Conventional political philosophy argues, as previously said, that women are treated unjustly and offers solutions to this problem. I will now examine some causes and some remedies for the injustice that women face.

The influence of feminist political philosophy in Nigeria (1) Feminist political philosophy's prominence and unique position have contributed to its significance. The ever-growing body of literature attests to this, as does the incredible variety of philosophical and theoretical terms used

to describe it. (2) Problematization of the normal man has set in. Re-examining political concepts like citizenship, freedom, equality, and justice in light of women's experiences, demands, and aspirations, it explores the political implications of how gender, sexuality, and the feminine are positioned within narratives of varied political systems. (3) Additionally, it helped formulate a critical project that aimed to reveal the sexism, misogyny, and gender indifference or conspiracy inside contemporary and classical mainstream philosophical and theoretical frameworks.

(4) It has allowed philosophers to keep exploring constructive or reconstructive concerns and methods. (5) It might bring up valid points about women's status, but it could also bring up disturbing and compelling points about the politics of signifying and whether or not women are appropriate to be signified. (6) Many sex-related misconceptions, biases, and outliers will be eliminated from our society as a whole when women's equality is advanced. (7) Women's latent talents and abilities will be unleashed when the value of women is acknowledged. (8) When men and women are respected for their inherent worth, women will develop stronger household skills and a greater sense of personal responsibility. It will reawaken a deeper sense of responsibility. That is to say since it boosts women's independence and self-confidence, it will encourage them to take more proactive steps towards achieving their goals.

(9) Our long-standing prejudice and moralising platitude towards women may be replaced with a more rational and healthy attitude if we accept the inherent worth and dignity of femininity. A more compassionate, tension-free, peaceful, creative, dynamic, and productive society and social life are possible when the equal dignity of men and women is the guiding principle in theory and practice and the administration of justice. (10) In a certain political system, it will also promote constructive rivalry between the sexes. One of the main reasons why feminist political and philosophical work is so important is because, as Marten argues, men can never truly degrade or elevate women without simultaneously degrading or elevating themselves. This is because women's status is the universal standard by which all civilisations are evaluated.

A norm of feminist theory and practice that applies to the study is the idea of reflexivity. This methodological

standard calls for one's theory to apply to acquired evidence. This standard is occasionally viewed as an ethical mandate for acknowledging place or position in politics, society, economy, and culture. Identifying how "positionality" impacts abstract theory starts with acknowledging situatedness and considering how theoretical commitments may be connected to this place.

V. METHODOLOGY

When extrapolated to a larger population and backed up by measurable data, the quantitative research approach used in this paper's study becomes more convincing. A total of 150 adults (male and female) of voting age who are literate, well-versed in global and Nigerian politics, and familiar with the study's guiding principles were selected for the study through the use of purposive sampling. In this research, a questionnaire was utilised to collect primary data. The data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics on the demographic variables, with the use of SPSS version 23.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Voting Eligibility of Women in Politics

Since being included on the voter list is frequently considered an eligibility requirement for voters in Nigeria, the voter registration procedure is a crucial step in ensuring the right to vote for all individuals. Ensuring a strong representation of female voters during the registration process might encourage their involvement. Table I shows that women have maximum voting eligibility in politics with a mean score of 4.19; also, women are allowed freely to vote without intimidation in politics with a mean score of 3.81; conversely, women most of the time are influenced by their male partners to vote against their wishes, this is a case of male dominance and denial of voting right by women with a mean score of 3.74. In contrast, women are eligible to vote for the candidate of their choice with a mean score of 4.25; this allows women's fair representation among electoral administrators as essential for fulfilling their participation rights, particularly the right to vote and be voted for. Generally, women have voting eligibility in politics at an average cumulative mean value of 3.99, higher and above the acceptable mean value of 3.0.

Table 1 The Mean Responses of the Extent of Voting Eligibility of Women In Politics

S/No.	Statements	Mean	Decision
1	Women have maximum voting eligibility in politics.	4.19	Accepted
2	Women are allowed freely to vote without intimidation in politics.	3.81	Accepted
3	Women, most of the time, are influenced by their male partners to vote against their wishes.	3.74	Accepted
4	Women are eligible to vote for the candidate of their choice.	4.25	Accepted
	Cumulative Mean	3.99	Accepted

B. Factors Hindering Women Vying for Political Positions

Women may encounter various obstacles during the election cycle that prevent them from effectively participating in political positions and exercising their voting rights. Table II shows some of the challenges that women in various roles may face throughout the political process; however, it is not comprehensive. The Table shows that political violence hinders women's participation in local politics with a mean score of 4.07; the discrimination of customs and laws is equally a blockage with a mean score of 4.21; lack of internal party democracy is another hindrance to women's participation in political position with a mean score of 4.41 while social prejudice and lack of financed capacity to participate formed another hindrance of women participation in political position with a mean score of 4.32. Generally, some factors hinder women from vying for political positions at an average cumulative mean value of 4.25, higher and above the acceptable mean value of 3.0.

Table 2 The Mean Responses of Factors that Hinder Women Vying for Positions In Politics

S/No.	Statements	Mean		Decision
5	Political Violence hinders women's participation in local politics.	4.07		Accepted
6	Discriminatory customs and laws.	4.21		Accepted
7	Lack of internal party democracy.	4.41		Accepted
8	Social prejudice and lack of financed capacity to participate.	4.32		Accepted
	Cumulative Mean	4.25		Accepted

C. Women's Appointment in Politics

Unlike males, women actively bargain for access, which sometimes means forming relationships with men who support patriarchal systems. To be respected and acquire momentum, they may also repress their femininity as such Table III shows that there is no high level of women elections/appointments in politics with a mean score of 2.37; also, women have no equal election/appointment opportunities with men in politics which is due to social prejudice and economic practices with a mean score of 3.15. Generally, there is a poor and low level of women's appointment in politics at an average cumulative mean value of 2.75, which is lower and below the acceptable mean value of 3.0.

Table 3 The Mean Responses of the Level of Women Appointment in Politics

S/No.	Statements	Mean		Decision
9	There is a high level of women's elections/appointments in politics.	2.37		Rejected
10	Women have equal election/appointment opportunities with men in politics.	2.18		Rejected
11	Social prejudice and economic practices.	3.15		Accepted
	Cumulative Mean	2.57		Rejected

D. Test of Hypothesis

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Table 4.10 shows the summary and descriptive statistics of the data collected. To test the research hypothesis, t-test independent samples statistic was used on the respondents' responses, and the data were analysed using SPSS v23.0. Thus, the low level of women's appointment in the national assembly was compared to the voting eligibility of women in politics and factors hindering women from vying for political positions.

The research null hypothesis stated that:

H₀₁: The voting eligibility of women in politics has no significant relationship with the low level of women's appointment in the national assembly

Table 4 T-Test Analysis for Differences Between Voting Eligibility of Women and Appointment of Women in Politics

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t		Sig.
		Beta	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	1.029	.497		2.069		.040
	Voting Eligibility of Women	.385	.123	.249	3.125	148	.002
a. Dependent Variable: Appointment of Women in Politics							

Using the ordinal regression coefficients, which are interpreted as the estimated or predicted change in log odds of being in a higher group on the dependent variables per unit increase on the independent variable, Table 4.10 indicated that the absolute calculated t-value for the differences in voting eligibility of women and appointment of women in politics was $t = 3.125$, $df = 148$, and $p = .002$, which implies that voting eligibility of women was a significantly positive predictor of appointment of women in politics. Thereby, for every one unit increase in voting eligibility of women, there is a predicted increase of 3.125 in the log odds of being a higher level of women appointment in politics. Since the p-value is less than alpha (.05), the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis was adopted; therefore, the voting eligibility of women in politics has a significant relationship with the low level of women's appointment in politics.

VII. CONCLUSION

Since Nigeria came back to being a democracy in 1999, there is evidence that political parties have made it harder for women to be involved in politics. This is especially true when it comes to how candidates are chosen, which has been done in a way that isn't democratic, such as by not being open about the process and by changing candidates' names on the parties' lists. During the 2019 general elections, there were not many women running for office. This was especially true for the two largest political parties, the APC and the PDP. Most of the women candidates came from political parties that were new, not very popular, and had little or no history of winning elections. These actions showed that fewer women were elected to different positions across the federation. After 20 years of democracy in Nigeria, the number of women in parliament is still small compared to the number of men.

To create and maintain healthy democracies, women must be given the same opportunities as men to take part in all aspects of public life. Increased representation of women in politics promotes equality and diversity and influences the variety of policy topics and legislation examined in legislative assemblies and the sorts of solutions provided. More women in government roles benefit not just women and girls, but also men and boys because they are more likely to support and advocate for high-impact social laws that benefit everyone. Policy changes have been implemented to increase the number of women sitting in parliaments so that they may have a greater impact on legislation, although many legislatures throughout the globe have a poor reputation for being representative or gender-sensitive.

Previous research has emphasised that the growing prominence of women in Nigeria's economy and culture belies the slow progress being made toward gender parity in the country's political sphere. One trend is women assuming economic tasks in the home that males have traditionally handled, such as working outside the home and bringing home the bacon. Women's participation in politics seems like it should increase in tandem with their expanding responsibilities in society, but this has not happened yet.

To get more women involved in politics and government in Nigeria, political parties, which are the only way to get into political office, should make it legal to have a certain percentage of women on their candidate lists, use a more open process for choosing candidates for elections, create a women's section in political parties where a lot of women are in charge, and educate and raise awareness among voters about women's rights. Keeping women out of the economy and politics goes against the values of democratic government and a free market economy. Our society is worse off without educated and active women because they are responsible for raising the next generation. Young people must take the lead in breaking down barriers to female empowerment. Women have nothing to lose by getting involved in social, economic, and policy issues, but they have a lot to gain.

Efforts have been made to make sure that women are represented at all levels of government. As a result, many countries that believe in fair democratic representation now recognise representation as a basic human right. So far, affirmative action, the quota system (where a certain number of positions are set aside for women), and presidential appointments have been the main ways to fix the inequities between men and women in the private and public sectors (in the case of parliament and cabinet). It is thought that once equality for women has become the norm, these roles will be won through a public process. According to this view, rather than focusing on women's strengths and weaknesses, the solution to the underrepresentation of women in politics lies in altering the structure of political institutions. Therefore, this method places the onus for addressing the problem of inadequate political representation of women and women's problems firmly on these establishments. Nigeria, like other jurisdictions, may achieve the necessary ability to support the necessary revolution for women with an increase in political will by the government and initiatives by political parties, lawmakers, and civil society organisations.

But it looks like it will take a while to get to that point because women face so many problems in public places. In the same way, Nigerian women need to make their own culture that goes against the deeply rooted traditions that say what women should or shouldn't do or be, especially in an African setting. At this point, it's important to say that countries around the world are trying to close the gender gap in politics. But in Nigeria, even though the number of women in government has gone up, it is still very low compared to what happens in other countries, especially in developed countries. As it stands, there are still not that many women ministers in Nigeria. There's no doubt that Nigerian women have some rights and abilities that could help their country grow and improve. Therefore, the government of Nigeria must take steps to ensure that women have equal access to and participation in democratic decision-making. It's important to recognise that women's traditional roles as homemakers have far-reaching effects on their service obligations and that this fact cannot be minimised. Women have an unrivalled ability to make any situation better with only a touch.

Nonetheless, the aforementioned suggestions are made to the Government, NGOs, and people who are ready to combat these gender disadvantages for women in politics in Nigeria:

- The first recommendation is to look at the current federal constitution, government, policy-making, and regulatory framework, to see if any regulations might make it harder for women to participate equally, such as rules that require a lot of signatures to register as a candidate or high deposits of money that can be unfair to women candidates. As a result, laws that give women and men equivalent rights and responsibilities should be passed.
- The second suggestion is to teach men, women, and children how to be sensitive to differences between men and women. Both men and women would benefit from this kind of training because it would help get rid of preconceptions and make people more open-minded.
- The third suggestion is to help women do their jobs well at all levels of government, especially in positions of power. Women need to have more chances to take part in the political process. This can be done by increasing the number of women in all levels of government and giving them money to do so. Election funding was a major concern and was seen as a reason not to run for office. Education is seen as the best way to help Nigerian women understand politics and take part in them more effectively. Because of this, it's important to talk about how both men and women feel about formal education after secondary school.

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