



Democracy and Women's Political Participation in Ogun State, Nigeria

Nnamdi Azikiwe Journal of
Political Science (NAJOPS).
2023, Vol. 8(3)
ISSN: 2992-5924
©NAJOPS 2023
Reprints and permissions:
www.najops.org.ng

ODUNTAN, Kemi Olalekan
Department of Economics,
Sikiru Adetona College of Education, Science and Technology
Omu-Ajose, Ogun State.

Temitope Emmanuel ABIODUN
Department of Political Science,
Sikiru Adetona College of Education, Science and Technology
Omu-Ajose, Ogun State.

AGORO Fatai Ayowole
Department of Political Science
Sikiru Adetona College of Education, Science and Technology
Omu-Ajose, Ogun State.

Abstract

This paper examines women's political participation in democratic process from the return to democratic rule in 1999 in Ogun state, Nigeria. The scope of the study covers three (3) local government areas in the state. Democracy is widely perceived as rule by the majority with the interest of the minority protected; however, women are underrepresented in the political process of the nation. The national average of women's political participation in Nigeria has remained 6.7 percent (both in elective and appointive positions) as against the global (22.5 percent), Africa Regional (23.4 percent) and West Africa Sub-regional average of 15 percent. The study adopted a survey research method with four research questions as a guide. Data collection instrument comprised both primary and secondary data sources. Oral interview and documentary materials. Findings of the study revealed that many women are willing to participate actively in politics in the state but factors such as marital responsibilities, public perception, occupation, patriarchal practice, financial resources and gender bias among others remain major impediments to women's political participation in Ogun state. The study, therefore, recommended among others, the need to deliberately design and implement policies that will not only remove daunting obstacles to women's political participation in the democratic process but also give them the assurance of recognition in decision-making process from elective and appointive positions.

Keywords

Decision-making, Democracy, Ogun State, Political Participation, Women.

Introduction

Globally, democracy is conceived as a government by the majority where all gender alike are to take part in the process of decision making and execution. Men and women are not to be differentiated when it comes to democratic participation in any given state of the world. Women constitutes more than half of the entire world's population today (Afolabi, 2022), contributing in different aspects to the growth and development of their various states and the world as a whole in areas such as: motherhood, farming, business, media, medical, education, sociocultural and political activities among others. Out of these

Corresponding Author:

Oduntan, Kemi Olalekan, Department of Economics, Sikiru Adetona College of Education, Science and Technology, Omu-Ajose, Ogun State. Email: Kemioduntan1@gmail.com

numerous roles, women have not been well represented in the political aspect especially when it comes to political elective positions.

Historically, in the sub-Saharan African states, women were relegated to the position of house wives and mothers who only manages the affairs of the home. This is mostly as a result of the cultural believes of the people. However, the inception of modern governance which came as aftermath of colonial rule and subsequently, the introduction of democratic rule in the continent brought about the question of equality among genders. In line with global trend, Nigerian women constitute nearly half of the population of the country (Oluyemi, n.d; NBS, 2022) and a chunk of the voting population, with 6.2 million out of 12.2 million newly registered voters ahead of the 2023 elections (Afolabi, 2022). Even with the population advantage, women roles in the political sphere are yet to be given needed attention. This is largely due to primordial factors in this part of the world as against international standards, such as the recognition of rights to participation of both gender as stipulated in article 25 adopted by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI) on 16 December 1966, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (Bashir, 2018) and the International Conference on women in Beijing in 1995 which enhanced the effective participation of women in politics in states of the world (Nigeria inclusive).

Since the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1999, more than 50 percent of the women folks have been involved in voting during elections but yet to have good representations in both elective and non-elective political positions in the country. Women overall political representation in Nigeria's government before 2011 general election was less than 7 percent (Agbalajobi, 2010), recent statistics shows improvement from 7 percent to 11 percent by 2022 (Afolabi, 2022) yet, Nigeria has not attained the 30 percent affirmative as stipulated by the 1995 Beijing Platform of Action (Oluyemi, n.d), and 35 per cent affirmative action for women enshrined in Nigeria's National Gender Policy (NGP) (Afolabi, 2022).

Data from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in April, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 general elections show the high level of women marginalisation in Nigerian politics. For instance, of the 7160 candidates that contested in April 2007 election, only 628 were women, 25 people out of these candidates vied for the office of the president and only one was a woman, while 5 women contested for the office of the vice president (Modupe, 2001). The percentage of women participation amazingly dropped to 10 percent with only 1,553 of the total 15,307 candidates who contested in the 2023 elections (Alabi, 2022; Afolabi, 2022), this is a short of 1,415 from 2,968 female participants in the 2019 general election (Alabi, 2022).

Table 1: Summary of Seats held in National Assembly by Gender (2003-2019).

Legislators	2003		2007		2011		2015		2019	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Senate										
Male	105	96%	100	92%	100	92%	101	93%	102	94%
Female	04	4%	09	8%	09	8%	08	7%	07	6%
Total	109	100	109	100	109	100	109	100	109	100
House of Representatives										
Male	338	94%	334	93%	338	94%	315	88%	347	96%
Female	22	6%	26	7%	22	6%	45	12%	13	4%
Total	360	100	360	100	360	100	360	100	360	100
Both Houses										
Male	443	95%	434	93%	440	94%	416	87%	449	96%
Female	26	5%	35	7%	29	6%	53	13%	20	4%
Total	469	100	469	100	469	100	469	100	469	100

Source: Sogbesan, 2015; Afolabi, 2022; National Bureau of Statistics (2004, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2020), Oluyemi, (n.d)

Generally speaking, from 1999 to date, the number of women political appointees into the federal government offices such as the Ambassadorial, Ministerial, Advisers and Heads of government parastatal or agencies have been low compared to their male counterpart. This has in no small measure contributed to the low level of representations by women in the country.

Out of estimated 7,535,007 in 2021 population projection by NBS for Ogun State, females accounted for 3,788,932 (about 50.28 per cent) (Alli, 2022; NBS, 2022). However, just like the case at the national level, women political representation has remained abysmal when compared with some states in the country. Since 1999, only two (2) women- Mrs Iyabo Anisulowo and Mrs Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello have been elected to represent the state in the Senate and handful of them representing the state in House of Representatives. This berates the issue of gender equality as espoused by National Gender Policy (NGP) and the Beijing Platform of Action.

Low political representation of women in the process of decision-making in Ogun state have no small measure affected the female folks in the state in both political and non-political activities across the twenty (20) local government areas and this negates the principle of participatory-democracy as seen in other states of the world. Though Governor Dapo Abiodun in April, 2022 signed an Executive Order affirming 35% inclusion of women in politics and government (**Olorunlomeru, 2022**), the act is yet to be met with reality as the 2023 elections still shows relatively low political participation of women from the list of candidates vying for different elective positions in Ogun state.

The thrust of this paper therefore, is to examine factors that have constraint women from participating fully in both elective and appointive political positions in Ogun state, Nigeria in this current democratic dispensation.

Methodology

This chapter relied on data from primary and secondary sources. Oral interview was conducted for women (in political offices and other sectors) in Ogun state, archival materials were also used. Also, books, journals, articles and other periodicals from scholars in fields relevant to this research were used

Conceptual Clarification

Democracy and Political Participation

The term democracy is one of the popular concepts which have gained prominence across the globe, today. This is because it is one of the yard stick for measuring and evaluating human right, legitimacy and good governance in any political system. Etymologically, the word democracy is derived from two Greek words “demos” which means “people” and Latin word “Kratos” which means “rule” or “government”, literally “people’s rule or government” however, all the attempts by extant authorities in defining the term emphasize the centrality of people (the majority) in the governance of the state (Obi and Oddih, cited in Okonkwo, Nwafor and Unaji, 2016).

Adeosun (2014), contend that democracy has gained popularity and won for itself a household name across the globe, this is because it is believed to be sine-qua-non for growth and development. Various scholars through different literature have conceptualized the term democracy; it is a buzzword that has received many definitions by scholars either in the classical political studies or in the contemporary world of scholarship (Erunke, cited in Adeosun, 2014). Regardless of the definition offered by scholars, it is important to note that the core principle of democracy is self-rule; it is a form of government where all adult citizens participate in shaping the collective decision in an environment of equality and of open deliberation (Rod and Harrop, 2016). This definition offered a descriptive explanation of the direct form of democracy which was practiced in the ancient Greek city-state of Athens.

However, increase in population and the advent of modern government makes this form of democracy obsolete. As rightly observed by Rod and Harrop, (2016) contemporary democracies are representative rather than direct, as a result of this democratic principle has transmuted from self-government to elected government. Omodia and Egwemi, (2011) succinctly posit that democracy is about participation and representation. Participation to Omodia and Egwemi, (2011), focus on the extent to which citizens get involved in the decision making process, while representation refers to the process by which people get chosen to act in the interest of the all. Our interest however is how women participate and represent the people in the decision-making processes in a democratic society.

In the same vein, Dahl (cited in, Adeosun, 2014) puts democracy as a system of elected representative government operated under the rule of law, where most significant group in the population participate in the political process and have to effectively represent the practice of making governmental decisions, that is, of allocation of scarce resource. Considering the fact that democracy today, is representative in nature, therefore fair and equality in representation among genders becomes an integral part of a democratic process in a civil society.

Political Participation and Women Political Participation

Political participation as a concept discusses and explores the level at which each citizen of a given country participates in the nation's political affairs by making decisions on who to elect into power, how resources should be allocated and distributed (Odetola and Ademola (1985). In other words, every citizen (adult) of a nation has the civil and political right to participate actively in the country's political affairs. As a corollary to Odetola and Ademola's view, Anifowoshe (2004) puts political participation as those voluntary activities such as, holding public and party office, being a candidate for office, attending election campaigns, voting and exposing oneself to political stimuli. Momodu (2003) suggests that the issues of women's political participation, representation and governance should be viewed from four perspectives which are Access, Participation, Representation and Transformation (APRT). Access to political organisations, participation (which encompasses control of power within such organisations), quantitative and subjective representation and the outcome will be social and political change in the nation. The fulfilment of these four conditions can enhance the chances of women being politically empowered. The idea that women's involvement in politics is important, is supported by three reasons.

Firstly, politics is a significant arena for decision making. Government officials tend to decide how to distribute scarce resources, for example, tax incomes. People holding governmental positions make political choices that may favour a few people to the detriment of others. Politician's decisions are most likely to affect individual choices by encouraging some behaviours and outlawing others.

Secondly, political power is a valuable good. Those in political power preside over other social organisations, such as the family. Thirdly, holding a political position is to hold a position of power (Paxton, 2010). Women in positions of authority can make an informed decision on issues that concern women in general and positively impact the lives of the female gender. Political participation is the degree and types of the people's contribution in governance and related organisations of society, for instance, the economy and culture. In active sense, it includes participating in political missions and discussions, being present in political gatherings or strategy meetings, casting votes during elections, indicating interest in political positions, holding a government and party posts (Igwe 2002, cited in Osimen, Anegbode, Basil, and Oyewole, 2018). Okolie's (2004) also defines political participation as the freedom of expression, association, right to communicate freely, influence decision processes, and right to social equity. According to him; it further expresses such rights to demand for better health and social services, better working conditions, and increase in wages, among others. Thus, in this case, this will be used in a restricted sense of not just participating in electoral politics, but to also stand as a contender for political positions.

The importance of political participation in any society, either developed or undeveloped, is to seek control of power, allocation of resources and making decisions in accordance with collective or individual interest (Arowolo and Aluko, 2010). All groups (women inclusive) aspire to influence the dispensation of power in accordance with their personal interests as the main purpose of participating in politics. In recent times, women in their sub-consciousness, progressively seek for power equations, distribution and allocation of resources in their favour. Albeit, cautious observations have shown that the inclusion of women in Nigerian political space is generally noticeable mostly during voting period. Adeniyi (2003) suggests that violence and other forms of political conflicts caused and sustained by the men (mostly youths) is the major barrier that hinders Nigerian women from actively participating in politics. There are ongoing arguments with regards to specific roles women should play in society, whether they should mainly focus on household affairs or also participate in other socio-political and economic activities like their male counterparts (Dare and Folorunso, 2012).

For instance, Onyenwere (2017) argues that women not having equal opportunity as their male counterparts to participate in political positions is a form of oppression and discrimination against them, while Ejumudo (2013), on the contrary, argues that political gender inequality in Nigeria is not an oppression against the women or marginalisation in the Nigerian political space, rather it is simply and evidently a natural phenomenon as the women, right from inception were created as subordinates to men, while the men are structured to "lord" over them. In other words, women are naturally predisposed towards socio-political activities. While it is assumed that the natural relationship between a mother and her child may compel and restrict her to lose interest in some social and political activities, it is also essential that such mother contributes her quota to the advancement of her family and that of the society at large (Dare and Folorunso, 2012). The consistent marginalisation of Nigerian women denies them the chances of participating in these functions. It is intriguing to note that society only acknowledges the relevance of women in politics as voters in a democratic process, still they are perceived as being incompetent to hold political position, hence hindering them from participating in the power structures and pursuing their political goals.

Women access to positions of power, when they are in a minority, is not certainly a guarantee for greater coordination of women's interest in general, and it also clarifies why they risk having their basic needs subsumed in their interests with regards to their involvement in a specific class, cultural or ethnic groups (Guzman 2004, cited in Osimen et al., 2018). The representation of women in politics can add to "the feminisation of the political plan" that is the articulation of women's interests and views in a public argument as much as "the feminisation of legislation" that is the effect of public policies on women needs are needed to be considered (Dovi, 2006). In most cases, gender related issues in a male dominated parliament are either neglected or are mostly addressed from the male perspectives. In another instance, the female lawmaker(s) may need to persuade or convince their male counterparts to see reasons why a particular gender bill should be passed. Financial instability is one of the fundamental factors that hinders female participation in politics. More so, she noted that individuals who do not support the idea of women involvement in politics are strongly against the idea of women going out of their way to encourage or convince others to participate in politics (Asase 2003, cited in Osimen et al., 2018).

The then minister of women Affairs and social Development as reported by Suleiman (2009), in her response to the issue of women emancipation, disagreed with low participation and marginalization of women in the Nigerian political space, ascribing it to the hostile political atmosphere in Nigeria. She also attributed the low percentage of women in politics to the prevalence of violence and patriarchy in the political space, coupled with financial issues. Money, politics and power are some of the major requirements needed to participate, contest and possibly win elections in the Nigerian political system, and these factors indirectly relegates women to the political background because they are not financially empowered to challenge their male counterparts. Moreover, there have consistently been instances of much violence and killings, and most women are not psychologically fit to withstand these conflicts (Ogbonna 2009, cited in Osimen et al., 2018). Conventional Nigerian society considers women's

education to be in the home front. Therefore, the girl child is informally trained to be domesticated and well behaved. The girls were socialized into domestic chores of cooking, domestic chores, food crop production, child bearing, managing the home and also fulfilling their wifely duties, while the boys on the other hand are trained to get formal education with parental and societal support, and also encouraged to participate in some leadership positions in their communities, these privileges indirectly gave them the sense of superiority over the girls. Consequently, the society unconsciously contributed to the challenges women encounter in the contemporary Nigerian political system due to leadership and education privilege given to the boy child (Ozigbo 1998, Osimen et al., 2018).

Women are mostly identified with the transmission of societal culture and moral values. However, a well-educated population has the tendency to produce an adult population who are well informed and active politically. Educational negligence of a significant population of the society (women) could be dangerous and retrogressive (Okeke 2000, cited in Osimen et al., 2018). Women marginalisation has been in existence for decades. Discrimination against women comes in various forms, such as economic, socio-cultural, religious, traditional and political, these and many more hinders women from actualising their desired dreams, especially in politics. These cultures and traditions accord lots of respect to the men while the women are seen as the weaker gender (Ilo and Mike, 2009).

Theoretical Framework

There are avalanche of theories capable of explaining women participation in the political system of a state. For instance, feminist theory, social role theory, African feminist theory and Leadership Categorisation Theory (LCT) among others. For this paper, the social role theory will be adopted.

The social role theory which can also be referred to as sociocultural theory or social structural theory can be traced to the work of Eagly and Wood in 1999. The theory is of the position that widely shared gender stereotypes develop from the gender division of labour that characterizes a society, gender distinctions in behaviour are driven by the gendered division of labour in a society. For instance, women's higher nurturing is a result of their duties to care for children rather than the cause of it. Psychological gender differences result from people's adaptations to the particular roles they are given and the roles that are mandated. The biological distinctions between males and females are significant because culture tends to emphasize them.

Men's greater size and strength, historically, led them to pursue activities such as warfare, which gave them greater status, power, and wealth than women (Eagly and Wood, 1999). Once in those roles, men's behaviour became more dominant and women's behaviour accommodated by becoming more subordinate. Women's biological capacity for bearing children and breastfeeding led them to care for children, which in turn led them to develop nurturance and relationship skills.

Kacmar, Bachrach, Harris, and Zivnuska, (2011) averred that people internalize gender roles that society has defined, and they have a tendency to view the world and behave in ways that conform to the societal expectations associated with these roles. As Kacmar et al. (2011) explained, women and men tend to respond to social information in predictable ways, and over time, these processes generally lead either to communal or agentic behaviour patterns. Communal behaviour patterns are considered nurturing and socially oriented and emerge mainly among women; wherein agentic are competitive and achievement oriented behavior patterns and tend to emerge more among men.

Akpabio (2009) suggested that some barriers may prevent women from equal participation as men in the government and the decision making process of Nigeria. These discriminatory barriers may include poverty, religious, social, cultural taboos, and restrictions (Okediran, Olujide, and Danesy, 2006). The social role at which women are relegated to in the African culture in most cases make them not to be at equal level with men when it comes to policy making and or attending some political position in a democratic society. Though, the feminist opposes this position as they believe that men and women

should be giving equal opportunities in every sectors of the society including political representation at a given time.

Comparison of Women Political Participation from 2003 to 2019.

As earlier mentioned in the introductory section, women participation in the democratic process in Nigeria and Ogun State to be precise have been at the minimal level when compared with their men counterpart. This is further explained in the following paragraphs.

Table 2: Representation in the National Assembly from Ogun state since 2003

Fifth Assembly

S/N	Senate House	Gender	Political Party	District/Constituency	Term
1.	Ibikunle Amosun	Male	PDP	Ogun Central	2003-2007
2.	Iyabo Anisulowo	Female	PDP	Ogun East	2003-2007
3.	Tokunbo Ogunbanjo	Male	PDP	Ogun West	2003-2007
	House of Representatives				
1.	Olalekan Mustapha	Male	PDP	Ijebu North/Ijebu East	2003-2007
2.	Ojugbele Jimoh Ohasola	Male	PDP	Ado-Odo/Ota	2003-2007
3.	Alako Dave Oladapo	Male	PDP	Remo	2003-2007
4.	Anthony Wale Ogunbanjo	Male	PDP	Ijebu Central	2003-2007
5.	Abayomi Sowande Collins	Male	PDP	Ifo/Ewekoro	2003-2007
6.	Kayode Amusan	Male	PDP	Abeokuta/Odeda/Obafemi Owode	2003-2007
7.	Bankole Dimeji	Male	PDP	Abeokuta South	2003-2007
8.	Razak Tunde Adewusi	Male	PDP	Yewa North/Imeko Afon	2003-2007
9.	Akinlade Abiodun Isiaq	Male	PDP	Yewa South/Ipokia	2003-2007

Source: INEC (2003)

Sixth Assembly

S/N	Senate House	Gender	Political Party	District/Constituency	Term
1.	Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello	Female	PDP	Ogun Central	2007-2011
2.	Ramoni Mustapha	Male	PDP	Ogun East	2007-2011
3.	Felix Bajomo	Male	PDP	Ogun West	2007-2011
	House of Representatives				
1.	Mustapha Olalekan	Male	PDP	Ikenne/Shagamu/Remo North	2007-2011
2.	Ojugbele Jimoh Olusola	Male	PDP	Ijebu North/Ijebu East/Ogun Waterside	2007-2011
3.	Salako Dave Oladapo	Male	PDP	Ijebu-Ode/Ogdogbolu/Ijebu North East	2007-2011
4.	Anthony Wale Ogunbanjo	Male	PDP	Ifo/Ewekoro	2007-2011
5.	Abayomi Sowande Collins	Male	PDP	Imeko Afon/Egbado North	2007-2011
6.	Kayode Amusan	Male	PDP	Abeokuta/Odeda/Obafemi Owode	2007-2011
7.	Bankole Dimeji	Male	PDP	Abeokuta South	2007-2011
8.	Razak Tunde Adewusi	Male	PDP	Yewa North/Imeko Afon	2007-2011
9.	Akinlade Abiodun Isiaq	Male	PDP	Yewa South/Ipokia	2007-2011

Source: INEC (2007)

Seventh Assembly

S/N	Senate House	Gender	Political Party	District/Constituency	Term
1.	Olugbenga Obadara	Male	ACN	Ogun Central	2011-2015
2.	Adegbenga Kaka	Male	ACN	Ogun East	2011-2015
3.	Akin Odunsi	Male	ACN	Ogun West	2011-2015

	House of Representatives				
1.	Buraimo Taofeek	Male	ACN	Ikenne/Shagamu/Remo North	2011-2015
2.	Abudu Abiodun	Male	SDP	Ijebu North/Ijebu East/Ogun Waterside	2011-2015
3.	Kehinde Odeneye	Male	ACN	Ijebu-Ode/Ogdogbolu/Ijebu North East	2011-2015
4.	Adeyemi Adekunle	Male	SDP	Ifo/Ewekoro	2011-2015
5.	Rasaq Adewusi	Male	PPN	Egbado North/Imeko Afon	2011-2015
6	Osoba Babatunde	Male	ACN	Abeokuta/Odeda/Obafemi Owode	2011-2015
7.	Samuel Williams	Male	ACN	Abeokuta South	2011-2015
8.	Ogunola Tunde	Male	ACN	Ado-Odo/Ota	2011-2015
9.	Akinlade Abiodun Isiaq	Male	PDP	Egbado South/Ipokia	2011-2015

Source: INEC (2011)

Eighth Assembly

S/N	Senate House	Gender	Political Party	District/Constituency	Term
1.	Lanre Tejuosho	Male	APC	Ogun Central	2015-2019
2.	Buruji Kashamu	Male	PDP	Ogun East	2015-2019
3.	Joseph Dada	Male	APC	Ogun West	2015-2019
	House of Representatives				
1.	Oladipupo Adebutu	Male	PDP	Ikenne/Shagamu/Remo North	2015-2019
2.	Adekoya Adesegun	Male	PDP	Ijebu North/Ijebu East/Ogun Waterside	2015-2019
3.	Odeneye Olusegun	Male	APC	Ijebu-Ode/Ogdogbolu/Ijebu North East	2015-2019
4.	Ibrahim Isiaka	Male	APC	Ifo/Ewekoro	2015-2019
5.	Kayode Oladele	Male	APC	Egbado North/Imeko Afon	2015-2019
6	Mukaiila Kassim	Male	APC	Abeokuta/Odeda/Obafemi Owode	2015-2019
7.	Samuel Williams	Male	APC	Abeokuta South	2015-2019
8.	Jimoh Ojugbele	Male	APC	Ado-Odo/Ota	2015-2019
9.	Akinlade Adekunle	Male	PDP	Egbado South/Ipokia	2015-2019

Source: Adedeji (2015), INEC (2015)

Ninth Assembly

S/N	Senate House	Gender	Political Party	District/Constituency	Term
1.	Ibikunle Amosun	Male	APC	Ogun Central	2019-2023
2.	Mustapha Olalekan	Male	APC	Ogun East	2019-2023
3.	Odeebiyi Tolulope	Male	APC	Ogun West	2019-2023
	House of Representatives				
1.	Adewunmi Onanuga	Male	APC	Ikenne/Shagamu/Remo North	2019-2023
2.	Adekoya Adesegun	Male	PDP	Ijebu North/Ijebu East/Ogun Waterside	2019-2023
3.	Odeneye Olusegun	Male	APC	Ijebu-Ode/Ogdogbolu/Ijebu North East	2019-2023
4.	Ibrahim Isiaka	Male	APC	Ifo/Ewekoro	2019-2023
5.	Olaifa Jimoh Aremu	Male	APC	Egbado North/Imeko Afon	2019-2023
6	Olumide Osoba	Male	APC	Abeokuta/Odeda/Obafemi Owode	2019-2023
7.	Lanre Edun	Male	APC	Abeokuta South	2019-2023
8.	Jimoh Ojugbele	Male	APC	Ado-Odo/Ota	2019-2023
9.	Kolawole Lawal	Male	APM	Egbado South/Ipokia	2019-2023

Source: Tunji, 2019, INEC (2019)

From the above tables, the level of women political participation at the federal legislative level obviously remains at the low level, similarly at the State House of Assembly level, male has over the time dominated the House member positions with over 97 per cent since 1999.

Factors that precipitate women Political Participation in Ogun state

Colonial Legacy

One major factor working against women political participation in the democratic process was the colonial policy, prior to colonial rule in Nigeria, an average Yoruba woman participated in the administrative system of their communities by occupying critical positions such as Iyalode, Iyaloja, and Iyalaje titles (Agbalajobi, 2010), which makes them contribute meaning in the decision-making process of the time. However, the Western cultural notion of male superiority was introduced to the country by the colonial administration. Women were perceived to be a weaker sex and thereby placed as subordinate to men in nation's political system when the policy of indirect rule was finally initiated by Lord Lugard.

As noted by Agbalajobi (2010), the Sir Hugh Clifford Constitution of 1922 tactically disenfranchised women and increased the participation of the wealthy, this is largely as the qualification of 100 pounds per annum as one the conditions for exercising one's franchise then. Of course, we are not disputing the fact that some elements of gender inequality and stateless societies may have existed in the traditional state, but the contention is that colonialism was the result of the more pronounced gender discrimination (Agbalajobi, 2010; Nolte, 2008) between the men and women when it comes to political representation.

Socio-cultural believes

Women face a significant barrier as a result of the well ingrained sociocultural norms in Yoruba society that favour men over women. Because of the patriarchal nature of Nigerian society, women are frequently forbidden from participating in public life from an early age through adulthood by authority figures like husbands, fathers, mothers, and other relatives. This is due to the cultural ideal of a virtuous woman, which is defined as quiet, submissive, and who should be seen and not heard. The majority of Nigerians, including women, continue to hold onto and support conventional viewpoints that perceive women as less valuable than men, second-class citizens, weaker sex to be seen and not heard, child bearers, primary carers, etc. (Ngara and Ayobami, 2013). Most of the time, they believe that politics is a man's game, and that women should not dare to enter it.

In-line with this socio-cultural difficulty, many women psychologically admit and sense the social stigma that politics is a "dirty game," and as a result, they frequently perceive other women in politics as being conceited and irresponsible and seek to bring them down (Odebiyi and Iwuagwu, 2018). Because of this, most women in Ogun State detest politics in order to maintain their positive character features and maintain their homes (for married ones). More specifically, a major obstacle to women's active participation in politics in the state is a lack of family support. Due to the patriarchal nature of Nigerian society, it is traditionally accepted that women must obtain their husbands' or boyfriends' consent before entering politics.

However, if such permission is not granted, the only option for such women is to drop their political ambitions. Thus, most family members especially husbands even among educated ones do not allow their wives to participate actively in politics. Also, many poor women political aspirant do not enjoy family support financially socially and otherwise. Mrs Fashina Adedoyin, a gender advocate revealed that the family is the primary actor that discourages women from participating actively in politics. Lack of support from the family background negatively affects women participation in Ogun state. Many women's political fervor can be threatened by the burden of having a child or children at home. In a society where women are more responsible for taking care of the home, most women do not see the prospect of merging politics with family responsibilities because running a household requires a lot of time and efforts as submitted by Dr. Oyedele Afolake, the Head of Christian Religious Studies Department, Sikiru Adetona College of Education, Science and Technology, Omu-Ajose, Ijebu Ode Ogun State.

Public Perception and Acceptance

Another germane explanation for women's small share in political offices is the negative perception from the populace on women politicians and lack of public acceptance of women in political life. The disposition of the public is an important reason against women going to freely join the political process. They are often exposed to public shame and are socially stigmatised by both men and women (Odebiyi and Iwuagwu, 2018). The use of negative labelling, derogatory names; abusive languages and expressions to describe women in politics poses a big challenge to them.

An interviewee, Mrs. Adenike Shittu, APC women leader in Ward 4, Ijebu-Ode Local government area of Ogun state lamented the perception of the public regarding them when they appear in the public. She mentioned that verbal insults and derogatory remarks are often passed on her and other women in the ward especially when they are discussing issues that are beneficial to the women folks. Hon. Ogunwale Olamide, Council leader of Ijebu-North East Local Government, Ogun state mentioned that the perception and acceptance of women by the public remains a colossal challenge to women seeking political or public office; she added that most people see all women in politics as prostitutes who sleeps around with men for positions or appointments, which is enough to discourage willing women from participating in politics.

Religious Factors

Religion is another powerful factor of stereotype against women political participation in Ogun state politics. Though, it is not out of place that traditional religious practice in Yorubland before colonial rule fully allowed women to participate in the decision-making process though, women are sometimes restricted from joining their male counterparts in performing some rites. However, colonialism further compounded these woes of women as modern government relegated women more in the name of religious doctrine and practice. Dr. Azeez an Islamic scholar and Chief lecturer in Sikiru Adetona College of Education, Science and Technology, Omu-Ajose, Ogun State, speaking from the Islamic doctrine said that the role of women is linked in politics as they are primarily responsible for the care of the home (Children and husband). Citing the purdah system (which means house seclusion of women), he further mentioned that women in Islam will perform better in classroom as teachers or in the nursing profession as these goes with care giving than venturing into politics in full scale.

Christianity, like the Islamic doctrine, also forbid women from participating in the leadership role as they were not giving equal rights as their men counterparts to lead in the church, to lead at home and even in the society. Women are to learn in silence and ask questions from their husband at home as stated in (I Timothy 2: 11-12) and in another admonition, the women were instructed to be submissive to their husband (men) in all everything (Ephesians 5: 22-24). This is often transmitted to the political scenes as women are believed to be submissive and learn from men. Adebisi and Iwuagwu (2018) submitted that when it comes to the issue of political leadership and formulation of government policies, women's role in both religions is limited to supportive and advisory to the men.

Constitutional Barriers

The 1999 constitution of Nigeria tactically sideline women from playing active role in the decision-making process through elected or appointed representatives. There is the assumption that there are no constitutional barriers to women's participating in the political affairs; however, the political enfranchisement of women appears to be maintained on the surface level (Agbalajobi, 2010). In accordance with the National Gender Policy (NGP) and the Beijing Platform of Action on women participation, the constitution ought to specifically state positions where only women can contest for to ensure 35 per cent affirmative action for women (Modupe, 2019). The framers of the constitution

interesting were men, most of whom were military officers. Thus, the silence of the constitution on such crucial issue affects negatively women political participation in the democratic system of Ogun state.

Unhealthy Political Terrain

Another factor percipating women political participation in Ogun state politics as well as Nigeria as a whole is the unfriendly, hostile and unhealthy political terrain. The issue of “do-or-die” affairs in politics often make many women to stay away from contesting or taking active part in the political process. Since the inception of the fourth republic in Nigeria, different forms of political violence, assassination, maiming, threats, blackmail, humiliation, family attacks etc, have been experienced in Ogun state (Olatunji, 2019; Adebisi and Iwuagwu, 2018). Many politicians and party faithfuls have lost their properties and even lives to political violence of different magnitudes in the state as involvement of thugs before, during and after elections along with the attendant insecurity makes politics scaring for women to participate fully in. Sharing her ordeal, Mrs Shittu Adenike mentioned that thugs invaded their meeting, shooting sporadically with many injured, she added that majority of the women fainted at the spot but men still tried to escape the scene. This was collaborated by the submission of Honourable Ogunwale Olamide, when she mentioned that incessant attacks by political thugs often scares women from participating fully in politics. “it is by the grace of God that I am still alive today” she added.

In another testimony, Mrs Olasode Ganiyat, an ADC woman leader in Abeokuta North Local government said that “my husband was the one who rushed me home when armed thugs stormed the party secretariat while meeting was going on”. Political violence has claimed several lives in the state some of which are Dipo Dina a governorship candidate for the 2011 guber polls, Kunle Adeyemi a strong supporter of Senator Obadara in Ogun Central District (Olatunji, 2014), Madam Saliat Eleweju an influential women leader in People’s Democratic Party (PDP) during Otunba Gbenga Daniel’s administration in Ogun state was hacked to death by an unknown assailant at her home in Sabo area of Ijebu-Ode (Adedeji, 2015).

Inadequate Education

Another impediment to women's involvement in politics is inadequate per-requisite knowledge and exposure among the female population regarding the requirements or demands of political leadership. They lack the mental fortitude to enter the male-dominated field of politics as a result of their lack of education and professional success. Many women lack the self-confidence, courage, and audacity necessary to pursue the highest office in politics due to their lack of a significant level of education, professional aptitude, and inadequate leadership abilities (Odebiyi and Iwuagwu, 2018). Ironically, women who do venture into politics are expected to demonstrate the high caliber type of education and exposure either equal or above that of men. Unfortunately a reasonable percentage of women, due to circumstances beyond their control lack the resources that could launch them into the political arena (Ogunwale, 2023).

Conclusion

The paper examined the level of women political participation in democratic system of Ogun state, it was established that women population in the state and by extension in Nigeria as a whole is more than that of their men counterpart (NBS, 2022), but the level of representation of the women folks is far below the 1995 Beijing's agreement on women political participation in their country’s political system. Although, having women in political positions is not enough, as most of these women still encounter different obstacles from their male counterparts when trying to promote women’s interest (Gurr, 2014).

In Ogun state, despite global campaign for gender equality, women’s political representation has failed to achieve the 30% women representation in the state, different factors (as examined in this paper) have created an alienating culture against women from

the main stream of Ogun state politics. It is therefore expedient to deliberately design and implement policies that will not only remove daunting obstacles to women's political participation in the democratic process but also gives them the assurance of recognition in decision-making process from elective and appointive positions in Ogun state and Nigeria as whole.

References

- Adedeji, D. K. (2015, July 15). Ogun PDP woman leader, 82, hacked to death. Premium Times Newspaper. Retrieved from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/regional/ssouth-west/186404-ogun-pdp-woman-leader-82-hacked-to-death.html?tztc=1> 10/01/2023
- Afolabi, E. (2022, December 4). Analysis: State of women's candidacy ahead of 2023 elections. Premium Times. Retrieved from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/features-and-interviews/568878-analysis-state-of-womens-candidacy-ahead-of-2023-elections.html> 21/02/2023.
- Afolabi A. T. and Adrogba, K. A. (2013). Politics, 2011 polls and political embriglo in Nigeria: For records and directions for sustainable democracy. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 2(1), 415-450.
- Agbalajobi, D. (2010). Women's participation and the political process in Nigeria: Problems and prospects. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 4(2), 75-82.
- Ajibade, O. A. Ademiluyi, I. A., & Adedamola, S. A. (2015). Gender analysis of political participation in Nigeria. *Journal of Law & Psychology*, 1(1), 55-60.
- Akpabio, I. A. (2009). Women NGOs and rural women empowerment activities in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. *Environment, Development Sustainability*, 11(2), 307-317.
- Anifowose, R. (2004). Women political participation in Nigeria: problems and prospects. In Akinboye S. O. (ed). *Paradox of Gender Equality in Nigeria Politics*, Lagos: Concept Publication Limited.
- Anigwe, A. (2014). Perceptions of Women in Political Leadership Positions in Nigeria. An Unpublished Doctoral Thesis conducted in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Walden University
- Alabi, M. (2022, November 26). 2023: Only 10% of candidates in Nigeria are women. Premium Times. Retrieved from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/gender/567616-2023-only-10-of-candidates-in-nigeria-are-women.html?tztc=1> 26/02/2023.
- Alli, A. Y. (2022, April 21). Tracking the Ogun affirmative action. The Vanguard Newspaper. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2022/04/tracking-the-ogun-affirmative-action/#:~:text=This%20was%20not%20fortuitous%3A%20out,state%20truly%20desired%20sustainable%20development.>
- Arowolo, D. & Aluko, F. (2010). Women and political participation in Nigeria. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 14(4), 581-593.
- Ayman, R., & Korabik, K. (2010). Leadership: Why gender and culture matter. *American Psychologist*, 65(3), 157-170.
- Eagly, A. H. (1997). Sex differences in social behavior: Comparing social role theory and evolutionary psychology. *American Psychologist*, 52(12), 1380-1383.
- Igwesi, B. N. (2012). Enhancing women's participation in national development through a change in the gender system of Nigeria. *Asian Social Science*, 8(1), 217-223.
- Independent National Electoral Commission (2019). Senator and House member elected. Retrieved from <https://main.inecnigeria.org/> 11/01/2023.
- Interview with Dr. Afeez A., Head of Department, Islamic Studies, Sikiru Adetona College of Education, Science and Technology, Omu-Ajose, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State on 11th March, 2023.
- Interview with Dr. Oyedele A., the Head of Christain Religious Studies Department, Sikiru Adetona College of Education, Science and Technology, Omu-Ajose, Ijebu Ode Ogun State on 11th march, 2023.

- Interview with Honourable Ogunwale O., House Leader, Ijebu-North East Local Government Area on 17th March, 2023.
- Interview with Mrs Shittu A. a women leader in Ward 4, Ijebu-Ode Local government area of Ogun state on 11th March, 2023.
- Interview with Mrs Olasode G. a woman leader in Abeokuta North Local government, Ogun state on 26th March, 2023.
- Interview with Mrs Fashina, A. a gender advocate in Abeokuta, Ogun state on 26th March, 2023.
- Modupe, A. (2001). Women political participation in Nigeria: Problems and prospects.” In Akinboye, S. (ed) *Paradox of Gender Equality in Nigerian Politics*. Lagos: Concept Publications
- Ngara C. O & Abayomi A. T. (2013). Women in Politics and Decision – Making in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects. *European Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, 2(1), 47-58.
- Nolte, I. (2004). Identity and violence: the politics of youth in Ijebu-Remo, Nigeria. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 42 (1), 61–89.
- Nolte, I. (2008). Without women, nothing can succeed: Yoruba women in the Oodua People’s Congress (OPC), Nigeria. *Africa*, 78(1), 84-106.
- Odebiyi, O. A. & Iwuagwu, O. (2018). Challenges Facing Women in Politics; A Case Study of Lagos State. *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 1(2), 110-120.
- Olatunji, D. (2014, January 17). Ogun APC crisis: 2 Senators, 4 reps escape death in shootout. Vanguard Newspaper. Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/01/ogun-apc-crisis-2-senators-4-reps-escape-death-shootout/> 14/03/2023.
- Olatunji, D. (2019, January 14). Probe political violence in Ogun, APC urges IGP. Vanguard Newspaper, Retrieved from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2019/01/probe-political-violence-in-ogun-apc-urges-igp/> 11/03/2023.
- Olorunlomeru, A. (2022, April 3). Ogun: Abiodun signs executive order to provide 35% representation for women. *The Guardian Newspaper*. Retrieved from <https://guardian.ng/news/ogun-abiodun-signs-executive-order-to-provide-35-representation-for-women/> 11/02/2023.**
- Oluyemi, O. (n.d). Monitoring participation of women in politics in Nigeria. Paper presented at National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Abuja, Nigeria.**
- Omodia, E., Esidene, I. & Abdul, A. (2013). Evaluation of job involvement potency of Nigerian male and female managers in education: Implication for balancing gender gap in employment. *Ahfad Journal*, 24(1), 34-58.
- Osimen, G. U., Anegbode, E. J., Basil, O. D. & Oyewole, O. O. (Political participation and gender inequality in Nigerian Fourth Republic. *Global Journal of Political Science and Administration*, 6(5), 22-38.
- Sogbesan, H. (2015, March 26). Analysis: 2015 elections hold no promise for improved women representation in Nigerian politics. PremiumTimes Newspaper. Retrieved from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/features-and-interviews/179136-analysis-2015-elections-hold-no-promise-for-improved-women-representation-in-nigerian-politics.html> 24/03/2023.
- Tunji, B. (2019, February 26). Osoba’s son wins House of Reps seat in Ogun. Punch Newspaper. Retrieved from <https://punchng.com/osobas-son-wins-house-of-reps-seat-in-ogun-2/> 21/03/2023.

Authors' Biographies

Oduntan Kemi Olalekan is a Principal Lecturer at Department of Economics, Sikiru Adetona College of Education, Science and Technology, Omu-Ajose. He is a Director, DICEPP and current Dean, School of Arts and Social Sciences. His research interests include good governance, and economic analysis and has published in local and international journals.

Abiodun, Temitope Emmanuel teaches in the Department of Political Science, Sikiru Adetona College of Education, Science and Technology. He is currently on his Doctorate degree programme at Tai Solarin University of Education. His research interests include public policy analysis, local government, political philosophy and analysis and have published in local and international journals.

Agoro, Fatai Ayowole teaches in the Department of Political Science, Sikiru Adetona College of Education, Science and Technology. He is currently on his Doctorate degree programme at Tai Solarin University of Education. His research interests include international politics, diplomacy, and analysis and have published in local and international journals