

Women's Obstacles to Democratic Participation in Nigeria: A Case Study of Imo State of Nigeria.

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Abstract

Women underrepresentation and marginalization in democratic participation and governance has continued to be a major political challenge confronting modern nations. This study was on women's obstacles to democratic participation and governance in Nigeria with focus on Imo State. With regards to methodology, this study adopted survey research design and made use of probability sampling technique as well as Taro Yamani formula to determine the sample size of the study from the general population. The study also used both the primary and secondary methods of data collection. In its method of analysis, the study used simple percentages and chi-square statistical tool for test of hypotheses. The group theory was adopted as a framework of analysis to this study. The hypotheses of the study include; there is a correlation between women inequality with men and -women underrepresentation in participation and governance, (ii) Cultural norms have negative implications on women participation in democratic governance. (Hi) Lack of finance limits women's active involvement in democratic participation and governance in Imo State, (iv) Lack of access to education hinders women from participating in the democratic participation and governance in Imo State. The findings of this study showed that there was a correlation between women's inequality with men and women's underrepresentation in governance. The study also established that most cultural norms have negative implications for women participation in democratic governance. The study further established that lack of finance limits women's active involvement in democratic governance of Imo State of Nigeria. Also established is that lack of access to education hinders women from participating in the democratic governance. This study however recommended that gender sensitive and equitable policies in the agenda and operations of political parties should be formulated and their implementation should be monitored. There is need for government and non-governmental bodies to intensify campaigns to promote women's representation in political platforms. Government through customary law courts should ensure that all cultural norms limiting the sociopolitical and civic rights of women be reformed or abolished. And women should be economically empowered through access to education, employment and credit facilities.

Keywords: *Women, Obstacles, Governance, Imo State, Nigeria.*

I. Introduction

The struggle for dominance and superiority between the masculine and feminine genders has been from the Stone Age to the contemporary era. Several ideologies, cultures and metaphysical practices have never been more victorious in the gender struggle [1,2,3]. Ever since, particularly, since the emergence of modern democracy, and in spite of valiant and feeble attempts by gender sensitive men and women to redress this chauvinistic culture, the struggle by women to negotiate their voice into the mainstream of participation; economic, social, vocational and political, has been a permanent feature in human development [4,5]. Democratic government is predicated upon freedom, justice and equal treatment of all citizens; men and women alike, by the society [6]. This is because democracy presupposes equal opportunity platform for political participation and decision making process [8]. Since equal political participation is *sin-qua-non* to democracy [9], a society cannot be truly democratized without the full and active participation of women who constitute about 70% of the population of each country. Incorporation of gender perspectives in policy making process is thus imperative for sustainable democracy. Gender equality is globally accepted as a requisite for achieving development and democratic governance that give men and women equal voices in decision-making, policy implementation and attaining of SDGs [10]. (Sustainable Development Goals of 2015 – 2030).

It has been demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that the woman in the past was down trodden and could not be heard. African derogatory ideologies on women are inhuman and unjust. Women are perceived to be properties and this perception has been thoroughly enmeshed in the people's mind [11]. In Nigeria for instance, the issue of marginalization of women within the economy and gender disparities in the provision of education, employment and general recognition in other spheres of life, still generates a healthy debate. The woman has been the most exploited, the most underprivileged, the most abused and the most relegated segment of the society [12]. Although women comprise a majority of the population, they nonetheless are often treated

like a minority group assigned a definite place in the societal order, denied access to careers and power in the public arena and viewed as dependants, weak and submissive by nature [13]. This author [14] traced the origin of female subjugation by men and not deriving from any natural inferiority but in the age-old dominance of men. The author argues that only a woman is compelled to define herself as a woman in every circumstance, whereas a man takes his manhood for granted. Woman, according to [15], is defined relative to a man. All religions give credence to this man-derived personality of women. Both the Bible and Koran assert that Eve was created from the rib of Adam so as to assist her husband. A woman does not lead prayers in Islam, against the fact of history where Aisha, one of Prophet Mohammed's wives taught his followers a great chunk of the Koranic verses. African religions give definite roles to women, which were inexorably inferior to those of men - as wives, mothers and home tenders. The author [16] puts the subservience theory so succinctly to warrant being copiously quoted: "*While art, literature and philosophy are essentially an attempt to find the world a new view on a human liberty, and that of the individual creator, women are so moulded and indoctrinated by tradition that they are prevented from assuming the status of being with liberty. Meanwhile, a conspiracy is kept alive which implies that woman by nature lack creative genius.*"

Tradition locates the confining role of women within their allotted life space and this accounts for their political orientation and institutional sexism that find women crippled by the socio-economic position assigned to them, as different from men, who have been allotted more versatile positions, including politics [17], and thus has become an enduring stigma by women in later life [18]. This, according to [19], derives from the juvenile (infant) and adult socialization stigma, which takes place in traditional societies where women are stigmatized and defined in terms of wifehood and motherhood roles to the preclusion of other vocational and political responsibilities and exposures. The kitchen-bond, child-bearing socialization processes, which begin early in life for girls and women, also free men from domestic chores and allocate to them more challenging outdoor responsibilities, some of which later include politics. This traditional stigmatization has attained archetypal dimensions as social ethos, which females break with tragic consequences. The woman question is an important socio-political issue which has attracted the attention of international organizations and government worldwide. There is a general realization now that the advancement of women in general must be addressed thoroughly because women constitute a significant percentage of the world's total population and have been making tremendous contributions in all facets of the society. As opined by [20], the almost world-wide recognition of the rights of women came only after centuries of work by certain individuals and later by organizations and inter-governmental bodies. The right to vote became the basic demand of women's movements, because election was considered to be the fundamental act of political life. Even in modern world democracies, feminists concerned with reconstructing gender and redressing gender relations and inequality are beset with the task of securing a place for women especially in the political sphere.

The history of women participation in socio-economic life including political participation in Nigeria can only be dismally poorer than that of America. Yet, before the colonial invasion of Nigeria, women had been noted to perform historic roles and undertaken radical exploits in various areas of society's life. The author [2], observed that since the first Republic and across parties, women hardly functioned at the central Executive Committees of political parties except at the various women wings of the parties, with peripheral roles in party political decision making. The level of political engagement of women in democratic politics/governance has always been marginal or at best tokenistic. According to the author's observation, it is true of course, that in the new democratic dispensation, women political activism has taken a more daring and more noticeable dimensions, but this is marginal as they go, judging from the demographic superiority of the female gender to the male in population quantifications. It could still be stressed that female representation has been minimal with regard to participation in elective and appointive positions since independence [8].

It is from the foregoing premise that the compelling need arises for the study and analysis of women participation in democratic governance or partisan politics as a sine-qua-non for enhanced democracy, good governance and gender equality. Instances of women under-representation or under-involvement in national engagement include among others, the total exclusion of women from the 1975 fifty-one (51) member Constitution Drafting Committee, and the inclusion of only six (6) women in the forty-five (45) member Constitution Review Committee. The Constituent Assembly of 1988-89 had only fourteen (14) women of which only five were elected out of a total 449 elected members. The author [6], argues that this appears as the common phenomenal trend in all the "committees, bureau and panels set up by the military government". Although during the Babangida's regime, more solid participation and recognition was accorded women, with the promulgation of the National Commission for Women Decree of 1989, whose objectives clearly included the general promotion of women's welfare, the deployment and full integration of female potentials in national development, engendering a political atmosphere and culture which eliminates all social and cultural practices that discriminate against and dehumanizes womanhood. The establishment of a board to actualize the spirit and content of this Decree was also a step in the positive engagement and emancipation of women in the social policy, even within the framework of military undemocratic polity. The question that arises is: If under military

regime, such a playing space was made available for the actualization of female potential and genius, and in spite of the establishment of women bodies and vanguards such as the Liberal National Council of Women Societies in Nigeria (NCWSN) and its more radical counterpart, Women In Nigeria (WIN), why has the response of women to active political participation remained so tepid and so non-aggressive, especially in the area of active contestation of elective (political) positions of the various tiers of government? Apart from Sarah Jubril of Kwara State and recently, Major Iyabo Obasanjo (rtd) and a few others who have made feeble shots at the presidency, women have not taken persuasive partisan political steps to control powers in Nigeria. It may be observed that the numerous problems the world faces today are as a consequence of decisions taken to the exclusion of women. Currently, decisions that affect the future have been made without the input of more than half of its people. Yet, we are aware or we may not be aware that the global and national problems; social, economic, environmental and political cannot be resolved without the participation of women and taking cognizance of their needs. Women would like to be part of the process that designs solutions for these and future problems.

II. Research Problem and Objectives

The issue of women participation in democratic governance particularly in Nigeria, with particular reference to Imo state involves a long-term process of political education, liberation movements and empowerment programmes for proper integration into Nigerian politics. This is to increase their representation and political opportunities in the future. It is a truism that women constitute an oppressed, exploited and under-privileged class in the third world countries of which Nigeria is one. The political challenges of women in Nigeria and particularly in Imo State are not in gaining political posts at different level of government, it is rather in gaining equal representation with men in the political arena. The author [7] argues that "striking changes in women's lives over the last 50 years have brought shifts in work roles, family lives, political and educational access and social awareness. What is now more obvious than ever is what has not changed or rather what has barely began to change namely, women's under-representation in positions of power and leadership". The recent involvement of women in political positions in Nigeria and Imo State in particular, being hailed by many as a seminal movement of the advancement of women in politics. But a deeper look at the current political gender balance shows that women still have a long way to go to gain equal footing in the nation's halls of power [4]. It is not in doubt that women are marginalized in political, economic and decision making processes. In the opinion of [9], women are marginalized and grossly unrepresented in the area of public life where important decisions which affect their lives are taken. The political world is essentially male dominated in spite of the increased participation of women in politics in recent years. The author [3] argues that women's participation and representation in the political arena were abysmally low world over.

An examination of the political development of Nigeria suggests that the role of women in politics has been very minimal. For instance, there was no single representation of women in the forty nine 'wise-men' that drafted the Nation's 1979 constitution despite the large number of professional women in Nigeria. On party basis the proportions holding top executive posts were very negligible [4]. In ministerial appointments, only a success of 10% was recorded in May 2007 [3]. Each state in Nigeria has ensured the appointment of only one woman as a commissioner. Marginalization of women is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria; [6] observes that the First Republic political parties in Nigeria were dominated by men. For instance, membership of the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon and the Northern people's Congress, recorded 64 males and 7 females for NCNC and 57 males and 5 females for NPC respectively. In the legislative assembly, out of 53 people only 1 was a female. [7], sharply concludes that the role of women in the political organization of Nigeria illustrates that women have been deprived of responsibilities that ought to be largely theirs. In the Second Republic, of 1979-1983, there was also one woman senator [9]. In a study conducted [8], he observed that in Abia and Imo states (the study area), out of 38 local government executive chairmen, none was a woman, none was a deputy chairman. Out of 68 local government supervisors only 20 were women; out of 400 councilors only 15 were women; out of 20 commissioners, only 5 were female. [4] contends that, over 98% of elective offices in Nigeria were occupied by men. Thus the United Nation's recommendation that at least 30% of political offices should be occupied by women is not yet attained in Nigeria. Despite widespread democratization in most countries and the struggle by the feminist movements for the integration of gender balancing in the national politics of countries all over the world, women who constitute about 70% of Nigerian population still remain systematically alienated from politics and decision making process in the country [5,7,9]. The phenomenon of women's low participation in Nigeria's politics however became worrisome following the demise of military rule and then the transfer of power to a civilian democratic administration in 1999. Nigerian Government in its efforts to tackle this phenomenon of low women's political participation ratified some national and international instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1989 and adopted a National Policy on Women in 2000 (replaced by a National Policy on Gender Equality in 2007 and Platform for Action, the National Committee on Affirmative Action, the Additional Protocol to The African

Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa 2003, The African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality 2004, The National Gender Policy 2006, etcetera [8,9,10]. After five consecutive democratic change of governments (1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015) however, gender inequalities, discriminations and stereotypes continue to exist in all spheres of the Nigerian polity, preventing women from developing and exercising their full human capabilities and to play a powerful role in sustainable democracy. However, the objective of democratic consolidation in Nigeria cannot be realized if the womenfolk who constitute more than half of the national population continue to be marginalized. It is against this backdrop that this paper aims to examine the women's obstacles to democratic governance in Imo state of Nigeria as a case study, as well as the factors that negate their participation in other related issues. In doing this, the paper is guided by the following research questions:

- i. Is there a relationship between women's inequality with men and women underrepresentation in governance?
- ii. What is the implication of obnoxious cultural norms on the women's participation in democratic governance?
- iii. To what extent does lack of finance limit women's active involvement in democratic governance in Nigeria?
- iv. Does lack of access to education hinder women from participating in the democratic governance of Imo State of Nigeria? The broad objective of this study was to examine women's obstacles to democratic governance in Nigeria; Imo state.

Method and Coverage

In order to achieve the stated objectives of this paper, survey research design was adopted. The survey design involved the application of both the primary and secondary data collection methods to gather required information for the study. This research work was conducted in Imo State, with a focus on Ahiazu Mbaise Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria. It has an area of 114 km² and a population of one hundred and seventy thousand, nine hundred and two (170,902) out of which the women population is Eighty Four Thousand, Four Hundred and Ninety Eight (84,498) as at the 2006 census.

The population of this study is accordingly based on information gotten from the 2006 National Population Commission (NPC) census concerning the population of Nigeria. The National Population Commission census report, 2006; Gazette No.2 Vol.96 (2009) Abuja, gives the total population of Ahiazu Mbaise women as Eighty Four Thousand, Four Hundred and Ninety Eight (84,498). This is the general population out of which sample size was taken for this study.

Sample Size

The sampling technique adopted in this paper was the probability sampling technique. This gave each member of the population equal chance as a representative of the entire population. This technique guided the taking of a sample that was representative enough to arrive at reliable research outcomes. Here, the formula of Taro Yamani (1964:280) was adopted. The paper employed the statistical formula by Taro Yamani. This formula was used to calculate the sample from the entire Ahiazu Mbaise women population of 84,498 of the 2006 census year. The formula is stated thus:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(2)^2}$$

Where n = Expected sample size

N = Total population

e = Margin of error 5% (0.05)² or (0.0025).

Therefore, the sample size was gotten out of the 2006 total population census of Ahiazu Mbaise women which is; 84,498.

Thus;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(2)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{84,498}{1 + 84,498(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{84,498}{1 + 84,498(0.0025)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{84,498}{1 + 84,498 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{84,498}{1 + 211.245}$$

n = 398.1 approximately 398

Since there is no fraction of a human being in the population figure, the sample size is approximated to 398. Hence, the sample size used in this study is 398.

Data Collection and Analysis

This study employed both the primary and secondary methods. The primary method provided the quantitative data that were analyzed statistically, while the secondary method provided the qualitative data that were sourced from already existing relevant literatures as presented earlier in the paper. It includes materials from published and unpublished, mainly journals, newspapers, textbooks and internet articles. The paper utilized questionnaire as the principal instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was designed to cover all variables relating to the subjects under study. Here, issues of age, gender, election, occupation, education, and the major variables of women's obstacles to participation in democratic governance in Imo state, were structured into questionnaire items used for the study. A five point's Likert scale was provided and the respondents were required to rate thus: Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagreed (D) Strongly Disagreed (SD) Undecided (UD). The method of data analyses used in this paper was the simple percentage. This is re-presented by the formular:

$$\frac{x}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where:

X = The percentage sought for

N = Total number of population

This method (technique) was found most convenient for this paper and was thus adopted. The study was conducted using structured questionnaire which allowed the respondents to choose from the listed answers in the questionnaire which he/she thought was the best answer in the question by ticking (V) in the box against the answer. This is aimed at capturing the relevant information on women's obstacles to democratic governance in Imo State of Nigeria. To test the hypothesis, the chi-square statistical tool was used. The formular is given as

$$X^2 = \frac{\sum(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Where X^2 = Chi-square

\sum = Summation

O = Observed frequency

E = Expected frequency

III. Data Presentation

The major source of data collected was from the primary source. That is, the use of questionnaire administered to respondents. The questionnaire items were analyzed individually. The questionnaire was distributed to four hundred responses chosen for the study. The questionnaire were self-administered. Out of almost four hundred (398) copies of questionnaire distributed, three hundred and eighty (380) representing 95% were filled and returned, while twenty (20) copies of questionnaire representing 5% were unreturned. The data collected for this paper were arranged in tables, containing the frequency of respondents and their respective percentages. The analysis of this study was also based on the tables.

However, the hypotheses of this study were tested using tables and the percentages of the responses. The formula for absolute number of percentage is given as follows:

$$\frac{RX}{N} \frac{100}{1} \text{ is \%} = \frac{RX}{N} \frac{100}{1}$$

Where $\frac{R}{N}$ = Percentage of respondents
 = Number of responses in each option

N = Sample size

From the table, it is observed that a total of 380 (95.5%) were returned while 18 (4.5%) were not returned. This shows that a workable percentage of the questionnaires were well field and returned.

Bio Data of the Respondents Table 1: Questionnaire Distribution		
Questionnaires	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Returned	380	95.5
Not Returned	18	4.5
Total	398	100%

Source: Field Work, 2019

Table 2: Distribution on Age Bracket		
Years	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
18-30	170	44.7
31-40	90	23.7
41-50	84	22.1
51 and above	36	9.5
Total	380	100%

Source: Field work, 2019

This table indicated that 170 respondents representing (44.7%) of the population were between 18-30 years, 90 (23.7%) were between 31-40 years, 84 respondents representing 22.1% were between the ages of 41-50, and 36 respondents representing 9.5% were people of 51 years and above.

Table 3: Distribution on Marital Status		
Marital Status	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Single	300	79
Married	65	17.1
Divorced	Nil	Nil
Widowed	15	3.9
Total	380	100%

Source: Field Work, 2019

The table showed that 300 respondents representing 79% were single, 65 respondents representing 17.1% were married, there was no respondent divorced which represents 0% while 15 respondents representing 3.9% were widowed.

Table 4: Educational Qualification		
Educational level	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Primary six (FSLC)	30	7.9
SSCE/WAEC-O-Level	120	31.6
NCE(National certified Education)	80	21.1
OND(Ordinary National Diploma)	45	11.8
HND/BSC(Bachelors)	98	25.8
Others	7	1.8
Total	380	100%

Source: Field Work, 2019

This table shows that 30 respondents representing 7.9% were people with first school leaving certificate, 120 representing 31.6% were those with O-Level certificates, 80 respondents representing 21.1% were NCE holders, 45 respondents representing 11.8% were OND holders, 98 respondents representing 25.8% were HND/B.Sc holders, while 7 respondents representing 1.8% have other certificates not indicated.

Table 5: Occupation of Respondents		
Occupation	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Farmer	35	9.2
Trader	85	22.4
Student	195	51.3

Civil servant	20	5.3
Unemployed	40	10.5
Others	5	1.3
Total	380	100%
Source: Field work, 2019		

From this table, 35 (9.2%) were farmers, 85 respondents representing 22.4% were traders, 195 respondents representing 51.3% were students, 20 respondents representing 5.3% were civil servants, 40 respondents representing 10.5% were unemployed while 5 of the respondents representing 1.3%, of the total responses were people with unspecified occupation types.

Question 1: Are Women are underrepresented in Nigerian politics?

Table 6: Responses

Alternatives	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Agree	80	21.1
Strongly Agree	180	47.4
Disagree	60	15.8
Strongly Disagree	40	10.5
Undecided	20	5.2
Total	380	100%

Source: Field Work, 2019

The table showed that 80 respondents amounting to 21.1% of the total response agreed that women are underrepresented in Nigerian politics, 180 respondents representing 47.4% strongly agreed, 60 respondents amounting to 15.8% disagree, 40 (10.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, while 20 respondents amounting to 5.2% were undecided or neutral.

Question 2: Is there is a relationship between women’s inequality with men and women underrepresentation in governance?

Table 7: Responses

Alternatives	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Agree	66	17.4
Strongly Agree	190	50
Disagree	78	20.5
Strongly Disagree	34	8.9
Undecided	12	3.2
Total	380	100%

Source: Field Work, 2019

The table shows that 66 respondents representing 17.4% of the total responses agreed that there is a relationship between women’s inequality with men and women underrepresentation in governance, 190 respondents representing 50% strongly agree, 78 respondents representing 20.5% disagreed, 34 respondents representing 8.9% strongly disagreed, while 12 respondents representing 3.2% were undecided.

Question 3: In your community, are men rated over women in terms of political Competence?

Table 8: Responses

Alternatives	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Agree	42	11%

Strongly Agree	284	74.7
Disagree	20	5.3
Strongly Disagree	20	5.3
Undecided	14	3.7
Total	380	100%

Source: Field work, 2019

The table indicated that 42 (11%) respondents of the total responses agreed that in their state/ community, men are rated over women in terms of political competence, 284 (74.7%) strongly agreed, 20 (5.3%) disagreed, 20 (5.3%) of the respondents strongly disagreed while 14 (3.7%) of the respondents were uncertain.

Question 4: Do most women in your locality not see themselves as capable enough to hold political office?

Table 9: Response

Alternatives	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Agree	44	11.6
Strongly Agree	190	50
Disagree	74	19.5
Strongly Disagree	62	16.3
Undecided	10	2.6
Total	380	100%

Source: Field Work, 2019

The table indicated that 44 respondents representing 11.6% of the total responses agreed that most women in their locality do not see themselves as capable enough to hold political office, 62 respondents representing 16.3% strongly agreed, 74 respondents, amounting to 19.5% disagreed, 190 respondents representing 50% strongly disagreed, while 10 respondents amounting to 2.6% were undecided.

Question 5: Are political positions in Imo State of Nigeria and Ahiazu Mbaise in particular dominated by men?

Table 10: Response

Alternatives	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Agree	46	12.1
Strongly Agree	216	56.8
Disagree	54	14.2
Strongly Disagree	50	13.2
Undecided	14	3.7
Total	380	100%

Source: Field Work, 2019

The table indicated that 46 respondents representing 12.1% the total responses Agreed that political positions in Imo State and Ahiazu Mbaise to be precise, are dominated by men, 216 respondents representing 56.8% strongly agreed, 24 (6.3%) respondents disagreed, 36 (9.4%) respondents strongly disagreed, while 14 (3.7%) respondents were undecided.

Question 6: Is the culture of your community unfavorable to women?

Table 11: Responses

Alternatives	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Agree	38	10
Strongly Agree	210	55.2
Disagree	20	5.3
Strongly Disagree	95	25
Undecided	17	4.5
Total	380	100%

Source: Field work, 2019

Table 11 shows that 38 respondents representing 10% of the total responses agreed that culture of their community is unfavourable to women, 210 respondents representing 55.2% strongly agreed, 20(5.3%) disagreed, 95(25%) strongly disagreed, 17(4.5) respondents were undecided.

Question 7: Most cultural norms have negative implications on women participation in democratic governance?

Table 12: Responses

Alternatives	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Agree	90	25
Strongly Agree	190	50
Disagree	38	10
Strongly Disagree	38	10
Undecided	19	5
Total	380	100%

Source: Field Work, 2019

The table 12 indicated that 95 respondents amounting to 25% of the total responses Agreed that most cultural norms have negative implication on women participation in democratic governance, 190 respondents representing 50% strongly agreed, 38 (10%) respondents disagreed, 38 (10%) respondents strongly disagreed, while 19 respondents representing 5% of the total responses were undecided.

Question 8: Does your culture discourage women's involvement in politics?

Table 13: Responses

Alternatives	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Agree	14	3.7
Strongly Agree	190	50
Disagree	76	20
Strongly Disagree	95	25
Undecided	5	1.3
Total	380	100%

Source: Field Work, 2019

This table 13 indicated that 14 (3.7%) respondents of the total responses agreed that their culture discourages women's involvement in politics, 190 respondents representing 50% strongly agreed, 76 (20%) respondents disagreed, 95 (25%) respondents strongly disagreed, while 5(1.3%) respondents were undecided.

Question 9: Your culture assigns too many domestic roles to women which hinder them from participating in politics?

Table 14: Responses

Alternatives	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Agree	38	10
Strongly Agree	304	80
Disagree	19	5
Strongly Disagree	19	5
Undecided	Nil	Nil
Total	380	100%

Source: Field Work, 2019

The table indicated that 38 respondents representing 10% of the total responses agreed that their culture assigns too many domestic roles on women which hinders them from participating in politics, 304 respondents representing 80% strongly agreed, 19 respondents representing 5% disagreed, 19 (5%) respondents strongly disagreed while there is no undecided response.

Question 10: Lack of finance limits women's active involvement in democratic governance of Imo State Nigeria

Table 15: Response

Alternatives	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Agree	95	25
Strongly Agree	190	50
Disagree	38	10
Strongly Disagree	38	10
Undecided	19	5
Total	380	100%

Source: Field work, 2019

The table above indicated that 95 respondents representing to 25% of the total responses agreed that lack of finance limits women active involvement in democratic governance of Imo State, 190 respondents representing 50% strongly agreed, 38 (10%) respondents disagreed, 38 (10%) respondents strongly disagreed, while 19 respondents representing 5% of the total responses were undecided.

Question 11: Do the kinds of occupations of women in Imo State of Nigeria not afford them enough finance to engage in leadership positions?

Table 16: Responses

Alternatives	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Agree	90	23.7
Strongly Agree	277	72.9
Disagree	7	1.8
Strongly Disagree	5	1.3
Undecided	1	0.3
Total	380	100%

Source: Field Work, 2019

The above table 16 indicated that 90 respondents representing to 23.7% of the total responses agreed that the kinds of occupations of women in Ahiazu Mbaise do not afford them enough finance to engage in leadership

positions, 277 respondents representing 72.9% strongly agreed, 7 respondents representing 1.8% disagreed, 5 (1.3%) respondents strongly disagreed, while 1(0.3%) of the total response was undecided.

Question 12: Does lack of access to education hinder women from participating in the democratic governance of Imo State Nigeria?

Table 17: Responses

Alternatives	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Agree	78	20.5
Strongly Agree	216	56.8
Disagree	44	11.6
Strongly Disagree	32	8.4
Undecided	10	2.6
Total	380	100%

Source: Field Work, 2019

This table indicated that 78 respondents representing 20.5% of the total response agreed that lack of access to education hinders women from participating in the democratic governance of Ahiazu Mbaise of Imo State, 216 respondents amounting to 56.8% strongly agreed, 44 respondents representing 11.6% disagreed, 32 respondents amounting to 8.4% strongly disagreed, while 10 (2.6%) of the total responses are undecided.

Question 13: Is the rate of women's illiteracy in Ahiazu Mbaise Imo State high?

Table 18: Responses

Alternatives	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Agree	95	25
Strongly Agree	206	54.7
Disagree	38	10
Strongly Disagree	19	5
Undecided	20	5.3
Total	380	100%

Source: Field Work, 2019

This table shows that 95 respondents representing 25% of the total responses agreed that the rate of women's illiteracy in Ahiazu Mbaise is high, 206 respondents amounting to 54.7% strongly agreed, 38 respondents representing 10% disagreed, 19 (5%) respondents strongly disagreed, whereas, 20 respondents representing 5.3% were undecided.

Question 14: Do most women in your village not value education?

Table 19: Responses

Alternatives	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Agree	44	11.6
Strongly Agree	190	50
Disagree	74	19.5
Strongly Disagree	62	16.3
Undecided	10	2.6
Total	380	100%

Source: Field Work, 2019

The table 19 indicated that 44 respondents representing 11.6% of the total response agreed that most women in their village do not value education, 62 respondents representing 16,3% strongly agreed, 74 respondents,

amounting to 19.5% disagreed, 190 respondents representing 50% strongly disagreed, while 10respondents amounting to 2.6% were undecided.

Question 15: Does the culture of your land subject women to men?

Table 20: Responses

Alternatives	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Agree	46	12.1
Strongly Agree	216	56.8
Disagree	54	14.2
Strongly Disagree	50	13.2
Undecided	14	3.7
Total	380	100%

Source: Field Work, 2019

The table indicated that 46 respondents representing 12.1% the total responses agreed that the culture of their land subjects women to men, 260 respondents representing 68.4% strongly agreed, 24 (6.3%) respondents disagreed, 36 (9.4%) respondents strongly disagreed, while 14 (3.7%) respondents were undecided.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypotheses I

H₁: There is a relationship between women inequality with men and women underrepresentation in governance. This hypothesis was tested with respect to table 7, question 2, of the questionnaire which states that there is a relationship between women’s inequality with men and women underrepresentation in governance. The statistical tool used was the Chi-Square of simple percentage.

Contingency Table

Alternatives	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Agree	66	17.4
Strongly Agree	190	50
Disagree Strongly Disagree	78	20.5
Undecided	34	8.9
	12	3.2
Total	380	100%

Source: Field work,2019

To test the hypothesis

Chi-Square was used

Expected frequency (E) = $\frac{380}{5} = 76$

Chi - Square Table

Option (O)	Exp. Freq. (E)	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
66	76	-10	100	1.3
190	76	114	12996	171
78	76	2	4	0.05
34	76	-42	1764	23.2
12	76	-64	4096	53.9
Total				249.5

Therefore, calculated frequency = 249.5

To compute the degree of freedom (DF) or critical value = $DF = (R-1)(C-1)$

Where R = number of rows which is 5

C = number of columns which is 2

$$\begin{aligned} \therefore DF &= (5-1)(2-1) \\ &= (4)(1) \\ &= 4 \times 1 = 4 \end{aligned}$$

The paper assumed 95% level of confidence and 5% level significance. At 95% level of confidence and 5% significance, the degree of freedom (DF) at 4 = 9.488. From the above computation, H_0 is hereby accepted since the calculated frequency value (X^2) = about 250 is greater than the value of the critical value (9.488). So, the scenario has confirmed that there is a synergy between women inequality with men and women underrepresentation in governance.

Hypothesis II

H₂: Cultural norms have negative implication on women participation in democratic governance.

This hypothesis was tested with respect to table 12, question 7 of the questionnaire distribution which stated that most cultural norms have negative implication on women participation in democratic governance. The statistical tool used was the chi-square, using a contingency table previously calculated through the use of simple percentage.

Contingency Table

Alternatives	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Agree	95	25
Strongly Agree	190	50
Disagree	38	10
Strongly Disagree	38	10
Undecided	19	5
Total	380	100%

Source: Field Work, 2019

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Expected frequency (E)} &= \frac{380}{5} = 76 \end{aligned}$$

Chi-Square Table

Option (O)	Exp. Freq. (E)	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
95	76	19	361	4.8
190	76	114	12996	171
38	76	-38	1444	19
38	76	-38	1444	19
19	76	-57	3249	42.8
Total				256.6

Therefore, calculated frequency = 256.6

To compute the degree of freedom (DF) or critical value = $DF = (R-1)(C-1)$

Where R = Number of rows which is 5

C = Number of columns which is 2

$$\begin{aligned} \therefore DF &= (5-1)(2-1) \\ &= (4)(1) \\ &= 4 \times 1 = 4 \end{aligned}$$

The paper assumed 95% level of confidence and 5% level of significance, the degree of freedom (DF) at 4 = 9.488. From the above computation, the hypothesis was accepted since the calculated value (X^2) (256.6) was greater than the critical value (9.488). So, the scenario has confirmed that most cultural norms have negative implication on women participation in democratic governance.

Hypothesis III

H₃: Lack of finance limits women’s active involvement in democratic governance of Imo State.

This hypothesis was tested with respect to table 15 question 10 of the questionnaire, which states that lack of finance limits women’s active involvement in democratic governance of Imo State. The statistical tool used was the chi-square, using a contingency table drawn from simple percentage.

Contingency Table

Alternatives	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Agree	95	25
Strongly Agree	190	50
Disagree	38	10
Strongly Disagree	38	10
Undecided	19	5
Total	380	100%

Source: Field Work, 2019

$$\text{Expected frequency (E)} = \frac{380 \times 76}{5}$$

5 Chi-Square Table

Option (O)	Exp. Freq. (E)	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
90	76	19	361	4.8
190	76	114	12996	171
38	76	-38	1444	19
38	76	-38	1444	19
19	76	-57	3249	42.8
Total				256.6

Therefore, calculated frequency = 256.6

To compute the degree of freedom (DF) or critical value = $DF = (R-1)(C-1)$

Where R = Number of rows which is 5

C = Number of columns which is 2

$$\therefore DF = (5-1)(2-1)$$

$$= (4)(1)$$

$$= 4 \times 1 = 4$$

The paper assumed 95% level of confidence and 5% level of significance, the degree of freedom (DF) at 4-9.488.

From the above computation, the hypothesis is hereby accepted since the calculated frequency value (X^2) (256.6) was greater than the value of the critical value (9.488). So, the result has confirmed that lack of finance limits women active involvement in democratic governance of Imo State.

Hypothesis IV

H₄: Lack of access to education hinders women from participating in the democratic governance of Imo State.

This hypothesis was tested with respect to table 17 question 12 of the questionnaire distribution which states that lack of access to education hinders women from participating in the democratic governance of Imo State. The statistical tool used was the chi-square, using a contingency table drawn from simple percentage.

Table 17: Response

Alternatives	Frequency (No)	Percentage (%)
Agree	78	20.5
Strongly Agree	216	56.8
Disagree	44	11.6

Strongly Disagree	32	8.4
Undecided	10	2.6
Total	380	100%

Expected frequency (E) = $\frac{380}{5} = 76$

Chi-Square Table

Option (O)	Exp. Freq. (E)	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
78	76	2	4	0.1
216	76	140	19600	257.9
44	76	-32	1024	13.5
32	76	-44	1936	25.5
10	76	-66	4356	57.3
Total				354.3

Therefore, calculated frequency = 354.3

To compute the degree of freedom (DF) or critical value = $DF - (R-1)(C-1)$

Where R = Number of rows which is 5

C = Number of columns which is 2

$$\therefore DF = (5-1)(2-1)$$

$$= (4)(1)$$

$$= 4 \times 1 = 4$$

The paper assumed 95% level of confidence and 5% level of significance, the degree of freedom (DF) at 9.488. If the calculated Chi-square value is greater than the critical value, that is degree of freedom (DF) at 4, the alternative hypothesis is accepted while the null hypothesis is rejected and vice versa.

From the above computation, the hypothesis was accepted since the calculated frequency value (X^2) (354.3) is greater than the value of the critical value (9.488). So, the result has confirmed that lack of access to education hinders women from participating in the democratic governance of Imo State.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

Efforts have been made in this study to examine women's obstacles to democratic participation and governance in Imo State. The study has been able to establish that women are underrepresented in Nigerian politics and that there is a relationship between women inequality with men and women underrepresentation in governance. The respondents confirmed that in their communities, men were rated over women in terms of political competence as such most women in their locality did not see themselves as capable enough to hold political offices (inferiority complex). In effect, political positions in Imo State and Ahiazu Mbaise in particular are dominated by men. Also identified in the study was that most cultural norms have negative implication on women participation in democratic governance. The respondents affirmed that the cultures of their communities was unfavorable to women. It therefore discouraged them from active involvement in politics by equally assigning too many domestic roles on women which in turn hindered them from participating in politics. The women are thereby subjected to men perpetually.

The study further offered a critical analysis of women's lack of finance and access to education. The participants affirmed that lack of finance and access to education hinders women from participating in the democratic governance of Nigeria and of Imo State. Most women however do not value education which accounts for increased women's illiteracy, and the resultant low participation of women in democratic governance. The study however concludes that women's participation in the democratic governance and participation in Nigerian politics can be enhanced through women's acquisition of basic educational knowledge, access to wealth and reformation of certain cultural norms limiting the rights of women. In order to achieve an improved women's political representation and participation in democratic governance in Imo State and Nigeria in general, the following policy recommendations are suggested:

i. Gender sensitive and equitable policies in the agenda and operations of political parties should be formulated and their implementation should be monitored.

- ii. There is need for government and non-governmental bodies to intensify campaigns to promote women's representation in political platforms.
- iii. Government through customary law courts should ensure that all cultural norms limiting the socio-political and civic rights of women be reformed or abolished.
- iv. Women should be economically empowered through access to education, employment and credit facilities.

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