Cross-Sectional Analyses of Women Political Participation for Development in Northwestern Nigeria: A Study of Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara States.

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ABSTRACT: Gender properly conceived, refers to male and female concerns and needs. It stands for values of quality and equality. Achieving gender equity in political participation requires access to equal opportunities. This paper, through the use of descriptive survey, take a cross-sectional analyses of gender inequality and political participation in Northwestern Nigeria, using Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara states as a study area. The paper discovered that despite democratic waves experienced by Nigerians since 1999-2011, none of the Northwestern state has ever produced a female presidential candidate neither for the seat of vice president. It also discovered that none of the state has ever produced a female senatorial candidate, while only Kebbi state in 2007 produced a female representative. The paper also discovered that none of the Northwestern state has ever produced a gubernatorial candidate, or chairperson .However, this monumental marginalization can not augur well for the smooth flourishing of nascent democracy. This without much doubt will also go a long way in militating the actualization of the gender and millennium development goal beyond 2015.In view of the above; the paper proffers the following recommendations: That woman subordination must be set off the record from the women themselves. Women must recognized that the ideology that male are superior to women is nothing but a mere statement. This recognition reverses both the attitudes and values and indeed the world view that most men have internalized since earliest childhood. Expanding educational opportunities for women is also suggested for solving the women marginalization.

Keywords: Analyses, Participation, Politics, Women

I. INTRODUCTION

The issues of gender equality and particularly mainstreaming gender into governance are recognized as critical to national development. While the goal of gender equality has been lauded in many international agreements such as the 1995 Beijing declaration which calls for gender equity in sharing of power and decision making at all levels, the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) also guarantees women's equal rights with men in all spheres of life, and the millennium development goals (MDGs) with its set target of reducing gender inequality. Yet in the political arena, meaningful participation of women still remained loom.

However, it is widely believed that democracy, which is predicated on the principle of majority rule, offers a window of opportunity for the marginalized groups to participate in shaping policies and decisions that affect their lives irrespective of ethnicity, religion, age or gender. (Walby, 2008). Nigeria is still left behind in term of gender equality. The Northwestern Nigeria is among the most marginalized and unrepresentative both in the national and local in term of women getting access to political offices. It is in view of this, the paper take a cross-sectional analysis of women political participation in Nigeriawesthern using sokoto, kebbi ,and zamfara states as our study area.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL EXPLANATION
Gender Defined

Like any concept of social science, the term gender has been subjected to varying interpretations. In fact, there are as many definition of gender as there are people, scholars, analysts and institutions grappling with the subject. According to the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) the term genders denote:

The qualities associated with men and women that are socially and culturally than biologically determined. Gender includes the way in which society differentiates appropriate behaviors and access to power for women and men. Although the detail vary from society to society and change over time, gender relations tend to include a strong element inequality between women and men and are strongly influenced by ideology. (UNDP 1986:258).

Amali (2003:385) defines gender as socially constructed and culturally variable roles that men and women play in their homes. It is a structural relation of inequality between household. It is reinforced by customs, law and specific development policies. In order word, gender is a social word that differentiates and establishes status and role between men and women, particularly in the way they contribute to participate in and are rewarded by the economy and the prevailing social system (National population commission, 2001: 3). Gender concern involves women as well as men, hence understanding gender means understanding opportunities, expectation, and responsibilities and constrain as they affect both men and women in any society.

Dantake (2011) puts it in a more simple way, to her, gender identities of masculine and femininity in relation to pattern of human actions, activities and relationships which are social in nature. These patterns of human social actions and relationships are culturally determined rather than being the inevitable result of biology. The attributes of gender which are culturally determined are learned, shaved and transmitted from one generation to another through the process of socialization, highly influenced by perception and responsibilities and which vary from one society to another.

Theoretical Perspective

Over the years, theory has being used in order to address the contending issues surrounding social reality. Feminist theory is one of this theories developed to address and explain issues on gender. Feminism is typically associated with particular historical moments when a coalition of women succeeds in bringing issues of gender equality, sexual oppression, and sex discrimination into public arena. However, feminism has been defined as advocacy for social equality for men and women. The concept is generally opposed to patriarchy and sexism (Igube, 2004). According to Osaghae (1997) feminist theory aim to understand gender inequality and focuses on gender politics, power relations and sexuality while providing a critique of these social and political relations, much of feminist theory also focuses on the promotion of women's rights and interests, politics is grounded in the nature of society in which it takes place.

This assertion is strongly related to the Nigerian feminists who have contributed to the political and social economic development of women. They have achieved this through the formation of women liberation movement such as: women in Nigeria (WIN). This organization originated from the interest generated in women's affairs by the first Nigeria annual women conference held in 1982. Members of WIN believe that the liberation of women cannot be fully achieved outside the context of the liberation of the oppressed and poor majority of the people of Nigeria (Igube, 2004). Another similar organization worthy of mentioning is women's right advancement and protection alternative (WRAPA). Sani (2001) posits that WRAPA was registered in 1999 and is a non-governmental, non profit making organization set up with aim of promoting and improving social justices especially for women.

However, the theory was criticized on the fact that it is gender sensitive and one side loaded. Secondly, it has been criticized on the facts that the theory was trying to change the course of nature. For men to be on top of women is not man doing but a divine intervention, but never the less, the theory has contributed beyond expectations

Women Political Participation: A Global Outlook

Gender disparity in political participation is a global phenomenon, Literature abounds showing that the low level of women's participation at the highest levels of political activities accounts for their invisibility in the top position of power locally and internationally (Goetz, 1996). Such low representation cuts across countries with different political system and at different stages of economic development. Though to some extent, some countries particularly from the Nordic region such as Costa Rica, South Africa and Uganda have proportional representatives of about 41 percent (Philips 1991). The global male monopoly of power is exemplified by the fact that for every one hundred (100) ministerial appointments in various government of the world, only few are women (Yetunde, 2003). Even in the established liberal democracy of the world, like USA and Britain the political powerlessness of women are reality. There is no doubt that women contribution to social political and economic development of a country is more than half due to their double roles in the productive and reproductive sphere. Yet, their participation in formal political structures and processes, where decision regarding the use of such societal resources generated by both men and women are made remains insignificant. Presently, women representation in legislations around the world is 18 percent (International Women's Democracy Centre (IWDC) 2008) also regional averages of the percentage of women in parliament vary greatly, for instance:

-     Nordic countries 11.4%
-     America 21.8%
-     Europe (excluding Nordic countries) 19.1%
-     Asia 17.4%
-     Sub-Saharan Africa 17.2%
-     Pacific 13.4%
-     Arab states 9.6%

Today only 22 countries have achieved 30 percent or higher women representation in their national parliaments mainly as a result of constitutional quotas written into law and requiring that a certain percentage of political positions be occupied by women. Of that number, six are African countries: Burundi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda (Aluko). These countries succeeded because they recognized the importance and essentiality of equity between men and women in decision making and they instituted changes in their electoral and parliamentary processes. The U.S currently ranked 68th of 134 nations world wide with only 16.8% of women elected to the House of Representatives and 16% elected to the senate.

In October 2003, Rwanda became the country closet to reaching parity between men and women of any national legislature. Currently Rwanda has 48.8% of lower house seat held by women and 34.6% held in the upper house (Aluko). From 1945 – 1995, the number of sovereign states with parliaments increase seven fold but the number of women members in parliament world wide increased only four fold. From 1945-1997 only 42 of the 186 states with a legislative institution have at one time or another selected a woman to preside over parliament or house of parliament; 18 European, 19 of Americas, 3 Africa, 1 Asia, 1 Pacific. Women minister remain concentrated in social area (14%) rather than legal (9.4%), economic (4.1%), political (3.4%) and executive (3.9%) and there are only 13 women in the highest positions of states out of 189 governments position (IWDC, 2008).

Here in Nigeria, the issue of women right is very low, women under representation is largely linked to the male dominated culture which gives women an inferior position in the society.

Historical Overview of Nigeria Women Political Participation

Historically, before the advent of modern politics, they were local political system which people used to govern themselves and Nigerian women were seen to have participated wholeheartedly in these system (Mba, 1982) Nwankwu (2001) depicted that, among the Igbos of eastern Nigeria, women were actively involved in the community affairs especially when it has to do with those affairs that directly has bearing on their lives. Similarly is the same in the Yoruba land where women actively participated in the decision making in the land. History has also shown where Queen Amina of Zazzau was not only a powerful ruler, but actually involved in the ruling system of the Hausa land. Without much doubt, this illustrates a level of women's participation in the political sphere of all time. There is also the famous Idia of Benin who was not only famous but also reputed to be a warrior in her own right (Alkali, 1999).

However, the advent of colonialism brought about structural changes that had enormous impact on the existing socio-economic particularly between men and women and thus women's power and political sphere considerably diminished. From independence to date, the history of women's participation in Nigerian politics is one of a long process of women's struggle in the political sphere. The 1988 national policy on women (which is now replaced by National Gender Policy) articulates coherent policies and programmes capable of advancing the course of women so as to enable them actively participate in the political processes. It was against this background that a lot of effort was made by successive administrators, starting from the military era.

All these in one way or the other has a gigantic and enormous bearing on the political growth of Nigerian women. Nevertheless, the contemporary political landscape of Nigeria does not give space for women, in fact the gender inequality that still characterizes the political system in Nigeria is a reflection of the under representation of women in decision making position and this has affected Nigeria political process.

Factors Militating against Northwestern Women Political participation

Northern women have encountered a number of problems while venturing into politics. First and foremost there is large scale discrimination from the men folk, both in voting for candidates and in allocating political offices. The advocated ideal of parity between men and women in national legislature is still a distant goal. Women in the North have always been grossly underrepresented in party memberships as well as in the decision making structure of the party.

Corporate culture is yet another problem identified as it was discovered that employers prefer to recruit and promote men rather than women on the premise that women are less achievement oriented and are often distracted from their job by domestic duties, thus denying them of economic prosperity (Olojede, 1996).

However, conclusions in literature on gender recognized that there are few if any important differences between men and women that affect their job performance.

Also, the conflict in multiple roles of women is another limiting factor, it has been established that multiple roles of women as caretakers of home and offices worker tend to divide women's attention in different direction with negative consequences on performance at work and promotion (Narayan, 1997). The multiple factors that hinder women's political participation include male-dominated cultures of formal political process, traditional gender roles that exclude women from the public political sphere, absent or weak networks among women and lack of knowledge concerning public rights and duties, imbalances in access to education and resources as well as unequal share of the burdens of reproduction (Walter, 2005). The women folk are being discriminated against in leadership and educational policies. This makes them play the role of the second fiddle and suffer many losses (Olojede 2009).

Political instability arising from frequent and uncoordinated changes of government hinders political participation of women. The prevailing intra-party politics make it difficult for women to get party nomination to context posts because there are few women party members, even the few party women are unable to capture significant party offices. Consequently the low level of representation at the party executive level impact negatively on them as decision and shadow elections are made at the level. Some parties even refuse the candidature of women and thus after campaigning with their resources, they are dropped at nomination level in favor of male candidates. Women usually constitute a smaller percentage of political party membership because of the social, cultural and religious attitudes of different Nigerian societies which most often tend to relegate women to the background. As a result, only very few men, even among the educated, allow their wives to come out and participate in parties. In the Northern Nigeria for instance, an important factor inhibiting women's participation in politics is the purdah system (i.e. house seclusion of women) (Asholonu, 2001).

Another problem inhibiting women from active political participation is lack of adequate education. Women constitute a larger percentage of the illiterate group in Nigeria. This could be attributed to the fact that most families, parents prefer to send their sons to school, instead of their daughters whom they feel would eventually get married and thus get incorporated into another family. (Acholonu, 2001).

Lack of adequate finance is yet a crucial hindrance to effective women participation in politics in Nigeria. Large proportions of the Nigerian female population are not financially strong as their male counterparts and no man want to sponsor for a woman for one reason or the other.

Again violence and thuggery associated with campaigns and rallies by political parties literally scare women away from participating in the political process. Spanning from the first to the fourth republics, political parties in Nigeria have witnessed different degrees of violence in the process of electioneering for e.g. the 2003 election witnessed serious violence, political assassinations, criminal intimidation and electoral fraud never seen before in Nigeria's history (Radda, 2009). By their passive and emotional nature, women find such situations and environment very unhealthy and as such difficult to cope with and this has contributed to their alienation from political processes.

Women Political Participation in Northwestern Nigeria: A Study of Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara states
The following are the analysis of data presented inform of tables and following the tables is the description analysis of the findings.

1.1. Winner of presidential and vice president seat of federal republic of Nigeria on Gender bases

President	1999	2003	2007	2011
Sokoto	M / F 1 / 0	M / F 1 / 0	M / F 1 / 0	M / F 1 / 0
Kebbi	M / F 1 / 0	M / F 1 / 0	M / F 1 / 0	M / F 1 / 0
Zamfara	M / F 1 / 0	M / F 1 / 0	M / F 1 / 0	M / F 1 / 0

Vice President	1999	2003	2007	2011
Sokoto	M / F 1 / 0	M / F 1 / 0	M / F 1 / 0	M / F 1 / 0
Kebbi	M / F 1 / 0	M / F 1 / 0	M / F 1 / 0	M / F 1 / 0
Zamfara	M / F 1 / 0	M / F 1 / 0	M / F 1 / 0	M / F 1 / 0

Source: Independent National Electoral Commission

The above table indicate the extent at which northwestern Nigerian women have being marginalized since the inception of democratic dispensation from 1999-2011. It clearly show that no single woman in Nigeria since 1999 ever won the seat of the president or vice president.

1.2 Number of Seat Held in National Assembly by States and Gender (Senate)

Senators	1999	2003	2007	2011
Sokoto	M / F 3 / 0	M / F 3 / 0	M / F 3 / 0	M / F 3 / 0
Kebbi	M / F 3 / 0	M / F 3 / 0	M / F 3 / 0	M / F 3 / 0
Zamfara	M / F 3 / 0	M / F 3 / 0	M / F 3 / 0	M / F 3 / 0

Source: Independent National Electoral Commission

The above table shows that none of the above states have ever produced a female senator at the national assembly. This is contrary to other states within Nigeria where certain level of representation exist like FCT Abuja where one female was elected into senate in 1999, same occurred in Delta state in 1999 and Kwara in 2003.

1.3 Number of Seats Held in National Assembly by States Based on Gender. (House of Representatives)

Reps	1999	2003	2007	2011
Zamfara	M / F 7 / 0	M / F 7 / 0	M / F 7 / 0	M / F 7 / 0
Kebbi	M / F 9 / 0	M / F 9 / 0	M / F 8 / 1	M / F 9 / 0
Sokoto	M / F 11 / 0	M / F 11 / 0	M / F 11 / 0	M / F 11 / 0

Source: Independent National Electoral Commission

The tables above shows though, apart from Kebbi state n 2007 none of the above state ever in one time in history were able to produce a woman representatives at the lower chambers. This is contrary to other states such as Lagos in 1999,2. 2003,3, 2007,3. 2011, 3. respectively and in Ekiti 3, in 2003, 2007, 3. and 2011,3 respectively. This is a clear indication that sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara were grossly marginalized and unequally represented at national level.

1.4 Number of Seats Held in State House of Assembly on Gender Bases from 1999-2011 (Honourable members).

Honourable members	1999	2003	2007	2011
Sokoto	M / F 30/ 0	M / F 30/ 1	M / F 30/ 0	M / F 30/ 0
Kebbi	M / F 24 / 0	M / F 24 / 0	M / F 24 / 0	M / F 24 / 0
Zamfara	M / F 24 / 0	M / F 24 / 0	M / F 24 / 0	M / F 24 / 0

Source: Independent National Electoral Commission

The above table indicates that apart from sokoto state in 2003 where a single woman emerged as an honorable, none of the state was opportune to produce woman honorable. This is contrary to Rivers where 5 women emerged as honorable in 2005. Same occurred in Oyo where 3 emerged in 1999, 2 in 2003 and 1, in 2007 respectively.

1.5 Number of seats Held in L.G Area by Gender Basses from 1999-2011. (Chairperson)

Chairperson	1999	2003	2007	2011
Sokoto	M / F 23/ 0	M / F 23/ 0	M / F 23/ 0	M / F 23/ 0
Kebbi	M / F 21 / 0	M / F 21 / 0	M / F 21 / 0	M / F 21 / 0
Zamfara	M / F 14 / 0	M / F 14 / 0	M / F 14 / 0	M / F 14 / 0

Source: Independent National Electoral Commission

The above table indicated that none of the three states has ever produced a female chairperson since the inception of democracy in 1999-2011. This is contrary to Imo state, where 2 women emerged as chairperson in 1999 and 3 in 2007 respectively.

1.6 Number of States Held by L.G Councilor by Gender Basses

Councilor	1999	2003	2007	2011
Sokoto	M / F 224/ 0	M / F 224/ 0	M / F 162/ 3	M / F 165/ 0
Kebbi	M / F 225 / 0	M / F 225 / 0	M / F 225 / 0	M / F 225 / 0
Zamfara	M / F 147/ 0	M / F 147/ 0	M / F 147/ 0	M / F 147/ 0

Source: Independent National Electoral Commission

The above table shows that only sokoto state was able to produced three (3) women councilor out of 165 seats within various local governments. Kebbi and Zamfara were not able to produce any female councilor since the inception of democracy in 1999. This is contrary to Borno state where two (2) female emerged as councilor out of 360 seats in 1999, five (5) in 2003 and ninety-one (91) seats were all taken by women in 2007 out of 311 seats. This sound very amazing and encouraging.

Women Political Participation and National Development

Women generally constituted half of the Nigeria's population; they make an essential and largely unacknowledged contribution to economic life and play a crucial role in all spheres of society. According to Aderiye (2009), in Nigeria today, the exemplary roles of relevance of women public administrators and quality governance have been clearly demonstrated. In another word, he advocated for women inclusion in politics, because they have led the country out of pariah status once again. The like of Mrs. Abigail Likpabi who championed the constituent assembly in outlawing of discriminating provisions to include protection from sex discrimination, the like of Mrs. Okonjo Iweala, Prof. Dora Akunyili, Dr. Oby Ezekwesli have all demonstrated the ability of women as a catalyst for total change from the unacceptable. According to Matynia (1995) women are led by moral examples to preserve their country's entity and value.

Women have proved their ability to lead with foresight, to foresee and forestall inevitable problems that can arise now and in future. In sum, the role of women in engendering socio-economic and political development of a country should never be under-estimated. Therefore, their inclusion remains a matter of necessity. It was from this point of view people advocated for adequate and active women participation in politics.

III. CONCLUSION

The paper was divided into four sessions, session one is the introductory session while session two basically dealt with literature review and theoretical explanation on gender. Session three looked at Women political participation from global out look and the role of Nigerian women political participation in historical perspective, and factors militating against woman participation in politics. Session four was an assessment of women political participation in Nigeria: study of Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara state. This session acts as the crux of the subject matter and very amazing inferences were drown at the end of the findings. Women political participation and issues of national development was also looked at, and conclusion and recommendations

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is a common assertion by scholars and individual citizen that women generally were grossly marginalized and denied their right for full political participation. Therefore the study provide the following recommendations

- First and foremost in order to challenge the women subordination, women themselves must first recognize the ideology that legitimize male domination and understand how it perpetuates their oppression. This recognition requires reversal of the values and attitudes and indeed the world view that most women have internalized since earliest childhood. Women have been led to participate in their own oppression through complex web of religious sanction, seclusion e.t.c. These have to change.
- It is very essential that the women folk been political empowered to assert themselves, appreciate their life's work and therefore be in a position to take their destiny into their own hands. What this entails per herbs is the need for women to get organize into civil society associations and establish structures, through which their needs and preferences could be projected and promoted. In a nut shell, women sensitization programmes must not only forms on the economy aspect, but most importantly should aim at sensitizing

them on their fundamental human right and liberties so that they could assert themselves and in so doing maximize their potentialities.

- Expanding educational opportunities for women is another panacea in solving women marginalization in politics, especially beyond primary schools level. This will surely have direct impact on women health by increasing their knowledge in knowing how to protect their constitutional right.

- The government, both the federal and states should enforce and make women centered legislation as a priority. Law and policies that define and enforce an egalitarian view of gender roles (equal access to education and credit, equity in inheritance, etc) can help to improve women's status generally.

- And finally, government, community leaders, and precisely women advocate need to address social, economic and cultural factors that limit women's choice and decision making abilities. Legal reform and community mobilization are essential for empowering women to understand and articulate their needs and to seek services with confidence and without delay.

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