



Research Paper

## Political Participation of Women in Politics and Governance in Nigeria: An Evaluation of Ondo State (1999-2019)

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### Abstract:

The study examined women's political participation and representation in politics governance of Ondo State between 1999-2019. It investigated the inverse relation of women's population compared to leadership positions occupied in Ondo State especially at the legislative and executive levels in the last twenty years. The research identified patriarchy, lack of electoral waivers for female politician's thuggery and costly nature of politics as factor that hinder women political participation in Ondo State. The research methodology made use of mixed-method approach which entails both quantitative data and qualitative content analysis. Findings from this research in consistent with previous studies conducted in regards to women's political participation and representation in Nigeria which shows that women's are under-represented politically and in decision-making bodies in Nigeria. There is reason for gender-balancing in politics and governance in Ondo State.

**Keywords:** Democracy, Elections, Women, Patriarchy, Political participation, Ondo State.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Political participation and representation are integral elements of democracy and they both determine the quality and level of democracy. Political participation allows for equal participation of women and men in politics and governance of their state and country, through which they can thrive politically. Political participation is the basic principle of democracy(Gauba,2007). while, Shapiro and Winters (2008) posit that, political participation refer to those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers directly or indirectly in the formulation of public policy.

Since the commencement of the fourth republic in Nigeria and Ondo State inclusive in 1999, women have made several efforts through the ballot process at attaining adequate representation at the level of National Assembly, Ondo State & House of Assembly and other decision making positions available in politics which has yielded less dividend as expected vis-à-vis women's high population in Ondo State. This has made it apparent of invisibility of women in politics as a socio-political phenomenon in Ondo State.

The incidence of women under representation in politics and leadership positions is not exclusive to Ondo State but a general reflection of gender and politics in Nigeria perhaps due to patriarchal nature of African/Nigerian society. Raymond (2014), acknowledge that politics is seen as masculine in Africa thereby limiting women's political participation. IDEA (2002), acknowledge the apparent invisibility of women in politics as a global phenomenon. Nevertheless, there is a growing concern and appeal towards women's political participation, these are anchored by international frameworks such as the Beijing Platform of Actions cited in the United Nations Department For Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (1995) and The Convention In The Elimination Of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women(CEDAW,1979).At the national level in Nigeria, the Nigerian government is a signatory to the realization of the 35% affirmative action of female representation in politics and leadership positions in Nigeria.

**TABLE 1: Table Showing Member of Ondo State Of House Assembly From 1999-2019**

	<b>Year of Assembly</b>	<b>No. of Women Representatives</b>	<b>No. of Men Representyatives</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	1999-2003	1	25	26	4%
2	2003-2007	1	25	26	4%
3	2007-2011	1	25	26	4%
4	2011-2015	3	24	26	12%
5	2015-20-19	2	24	26	8%
6	2019-2023	1	25	26	4%

Source: Ondo State House of Assembly, Akure

### **Problem Statement/Justification**

In Ondo State, women constitute almost half of the total population of the state which is 3,460,877, comprising of 1,745,057 males and 1,715,820 females (Ondo State Bureau of Statistics, 2009). However, in term of political representation, there is perceive inverse relation between female population vis-à-vis elective and selective posts occupied by women in Ondo State. Women are relevant, to democratic development, brings to politics and also represent diverse interests in Nigeria and Ondo State inclusive. Yet, there still exists wide-gap difference between women's and men's political participation and decision-making positions both at Ondo state and national level. Aluko and Ajani (2006), noted that politics in Nigeria is almost exclusively dominated by men who determines the rules, the process and trend.

Furthermore, women aspirations of quality and adequate representation in politics and governance of the state could be weakened by the prevailing patriarchal society values which stereotyped women and relegate them to the background in politics. Even, women are discriminate against in politics by their fellow women!!

### **Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of this study are to:

- i)** The study intends to investigate the level of women participation in politics and governance of Ondo State with emphasis on elective representation of women in Ondo State between 1999 – 2019.
- ii)** To investigate factors that impedes women's political representation in Ondo State between 1999-2019.
- iii)** To determine voters confidence in democratic and electoral process in Ondo State between 1999-2019.
- iv)** To determine the approaches that can promote participation of women in political process in Ondo State.

### **Conceptual Analysis of Political Participation**

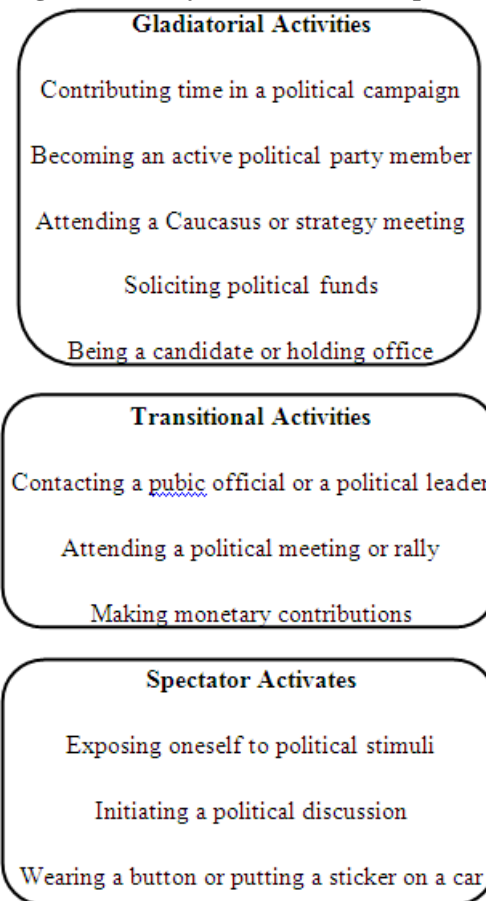
Political participation is a salient concept of politics that have been explored by scholars of political behaviour and democratic studies and subjected to different and similar interpretations based on their ideas of the notion of political participation. Political participation entails a wide range of activities through by which citizens of a particular country express their view points on how their country is governed politically and they try to take part and determine the decisions that affect the citizens lives.

Voting in an election is a fundamental means for eligible citizens to engage in politics than any other means of political participation because it allows for the opinions of more of the citizens to be heard and represented than other activities involved in political participation.

Political participation is a behavioural aspect of politics that have been conceptualize by different scholars of political science. Among these notable scholars are Maclosky (1968), Milbrath (1965) Verba and Nie (1972) Norman and Verba (1975) Sodaro (2011) and Falade (2014) Agbalajobi (2010), Oni and Agbude (2011) Fayomi (2017) Imoukhuede, Kayode and Ojogbede (2019).

Milbrath Lester was the first American political scientist who wrote extensively in his publication titled "political Participation: How and why do people get involved in political? Milbrath (1965) listed hierarchy of political participation:

**Fig 1: Hierarchy of Political Participation**



**Sources:** L. Milbrath (1965)

Milbrath (1965), listed the nature of behaviour which are indicators of levels of political participation. In analyzing the hierarchy of political participation as listed by Milbrath, there are indications that they are ordered and its showed decreasing levels of political participation by the citizens. Verba and Nie (1972) these two scholars in their publication examined the concept of political participation based on their knowledge of American politics, according to the two scholars “political Participation includes acts that aim at influencing the government either by affecting the choice of government personnel or by affecting the choice made by government personnel. By analyzing this conceptual analysis of political participation. Verba and Nie’s perspectives of political participation although it includes voting, contacting elected representatives participating in campaigns, however, it exclude protest activity, marching in parades and expressing support attitudes.

Eremenko (2011) opined that “Political Participation affords citizens in a democracy an opportunity to communicate information to government officials about their concerns and preferences and to put pressure on them to respond”. In analyzing Eremenko’s, conception of political participation it implies that in a democracy, the citizens in the polity have the freedom to express towards whatever thing that are occurring in the public domain or issues affecting their own interests in a manner that government officials are aware and can respond to it.

Political participation is central to democratic society because it enhance equal chance for men and women to aspire and development their individual potential in a democratic setting scholars such as Maclosky (1968) as cited by Oni and Agbude (2011) view political participation as a series of voluntary activities through which members of a society share in the direct or indirect selection of rulers and formation of public policy.

Pausch (2012) opined that; political participation itself is not, per se, a democratic activity as it is also possible to participate in non-democratic activities or events Pausch categorized political participation into two types: direct political participation and indirect political participation.

It is noteworthy that democratic is not always able to provide equal opportunities for inclusive political participation and representation. According to IDEA (2013) as cited by Imoukhuede, Kayode and Ojogbede (2019) unequal opportunities for participation and representation between men and women still exist worldwide. Political participation is regarded as a positive process at enhancing democratic process. It is a form of civic responsibility that is required to be engaged in by the citizens, it is a sign of good political development and the

best method of ensuring that citizens private interests irrespective of their gender are not neglected. Democracy is best enhance when both male and female are given the opportunities of participation in democracy because democratic responsiveness depends on citizen participation Verba (1995).

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In literatures on political discourse about democracy, gender and politics, scholars such as Mohammed, Athanbowa and Shameer (2016), posit that, politics has always coupled with men throughout history. Women as group tends to have less education, lower self-reported interests in politics and low labour force participation compared to men. Also, several studies by political scientists and social sciences scholars attests to the under representation of women in politics and governance of Nigeria (Obiyan and Akindele, 2002; Quadri, 2015; Ihemeje, 2016).

Globally, women have been observed to be under represented in politics and leadership positions despite that, women constitute almost half of the world's total population. Even in emergent democracies in Africa such as Cote d'ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa and Uganda fared better than Nigeria in politics and governance at all levels of government. The incidence of low political representation of women both in elective and selective decision-making position is a social phenomenon in Africa. Raymond (2014) posit that, politics is seen as masculine in Africa, thereby limiting women's political participation.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical foundation of this research study is predicted on theory of feminism. Feminist theory is a reaction and opposes patriarchy which is ideology propagate to sustain men domination of women economically, politically and socially in traditional and emergent African states. Feminism as a theory is vary in nature such as socialist feminism, radical feminism and post-modern feminism. These variants of feminism will provide more knowledge and theoretical analysis for the study and evaluation of women's participation and representation in politics and governance of Ondo State between 1999-2018.

Hawkesworth (2006) posits that, feminism is a range of political movements, ideologies and social movements that share a common goal; to define, establish and achieve political, economic, personal and social equality of sexes. Awofeso and Odeyemi (2014) acknowledged that, feminism is a belief system which preaches equal rights for women and their emancipation from all forms of domination exerted by men.

On a general note, the concept of feminism can be view as a political, cultural and economic movement focused at establishing gender parity, gender mainstreaming and legal protection of women. Thus, this study will build upon feminism as an ideal theoretical framework of analysis that will provides theoretical construct for women's experience politically and socially in Ondo State.

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

In the investigation and realization of the objectives of this research, a survey methodology was used for this study. A sample of 540 respondents were drawn using purposive random sampling technique from the selected 18 towns from the nine local governments of Owo, Akoko South West and Ose (Ondo North Senatorial District), Akure North, Akure South and Ondo West (Ondo Central Senatorial District), Irele, Oke-Igbo/Ile Oluji and Okitipupa (Ondo South senatorial District). The data to be collected will be quantitatively analyse through descriptive statistics using R. Package, tables and charts for graphic illustration of the data.

### **STUDY AREA**

This study was conducted in selected rural and urban communities in Ondo State. Three local governments per senatorial district were chosen using purposive random sampling technique method. These local governments will include Akoko South West, Ose, Owo, (Ondo North Senatorial District), Akure North, Akure South, Ondo West( Ondo Central Senatorial District) Irele, Okitipupa and Oke-igbo/Ile-Oluji.(Ondo South Senatorial District). Each of the local government was represented by two towns. Thus, six communities per senatorial district and a total of eighteen selected communities representing the three senatorial districts in Ondo State.

**Table 1:** Design outlay for selecting study area/location

S/N	Senatorial District	Local Government to be selected	Total number of Towns per Local Government	Towns to be selected per local government	Total
(1)	Ondo North	Owo	Owo, Emure-ile.	2	6
		Akoko South West	Akungba, Supare.	2	
		Ose	Ifon, Ijagba.	2	
(2)	Ondo Central	Akure North	Ita-Ogbolu, Ogbese.	2	6
		Akure South	Akure, Ilara.	2	
		Ondo West	Ondo, Igbado.	2	
(3)	Ondo South	Irele	Irele, Iyansa.	2	6
		Oke-Igbo/Ile Oluji	Ile Oluji, Oke-Igbo.	2	
		Okitipupa	Okitipupa, Odeaye.	2	
Total	3	9	18	18	18

**Sample Frame/Participants**

The participants for this research study were residents of the selected eighteen towns, which will entail; academia, market women, artisans, members of the Ondo State House of Assembly and civil society organization in Ondo State.

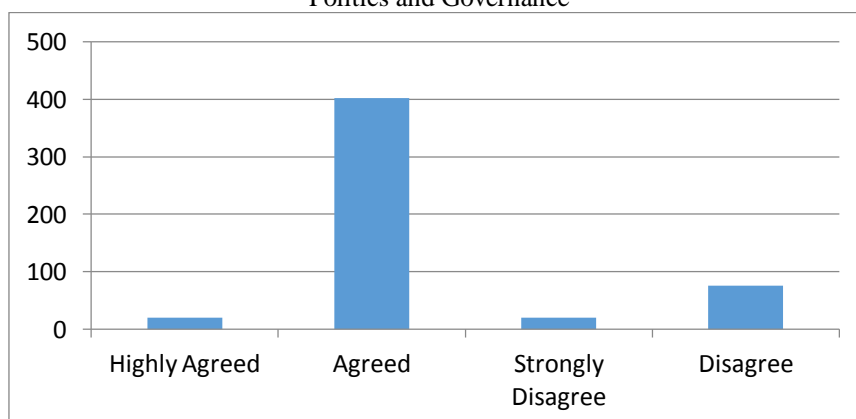
**Data Collection and Analysis Technique**

The research instrument used by the researchers were structured and self-administered questionnaire which involves both open and closed questions relevant to the study. The first section of the questionnaire entails the socio-demographic details of the respondents and the second section address questions relevant to the issues of the research findings. The researchers made use of descriptive statistics through the use of R package to analyse the data to be gathered during the field work

**Table 2:** Democratic practice in Ondo State has been an enabling Factor for enhancing women participation in Politics and Governance

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Agreed	20	3.9
Agreed	402	77.6
Strongly Disagree	20	3.9
Disagree	76	14.7

**Fig. 1:** Democratic practice in Ondo State has been an enabling Factor for enhancing women participation in Politics and Governance

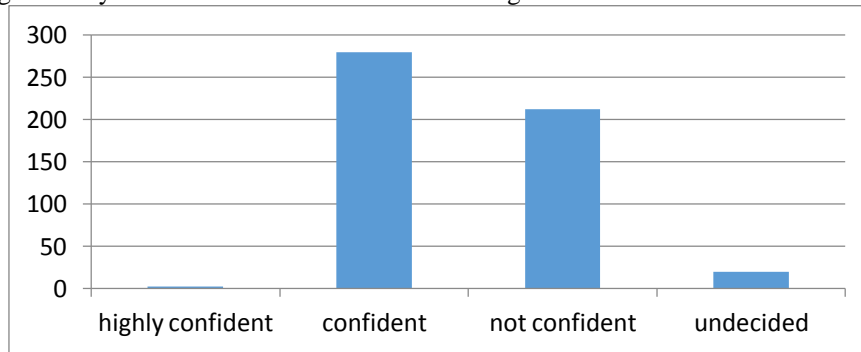


The results from table 1 and fig 1 shows that 402 (77.6%) of the respondents agreed and 20 (3.9%) highly agreed, while 76(14.7%) disagreed and 20 (3.9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. The result above shows that majority (81.5%) of the respondents agreed that Democratic practice in Ondo State has been enabling Factor for effective women participation in Politics and Governance of Ondo State

**Table 3:** Are you confident that electoral laws in Nigeria are fair to women vis-a-vis men

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Highly confident	2	4
Confident	280	54.5
Not confident	212	41.2
Undecided	20	3.9

**Fig. 2:** Are you confident that electoral laws in Nigeria are fair to women vis-a-vis men

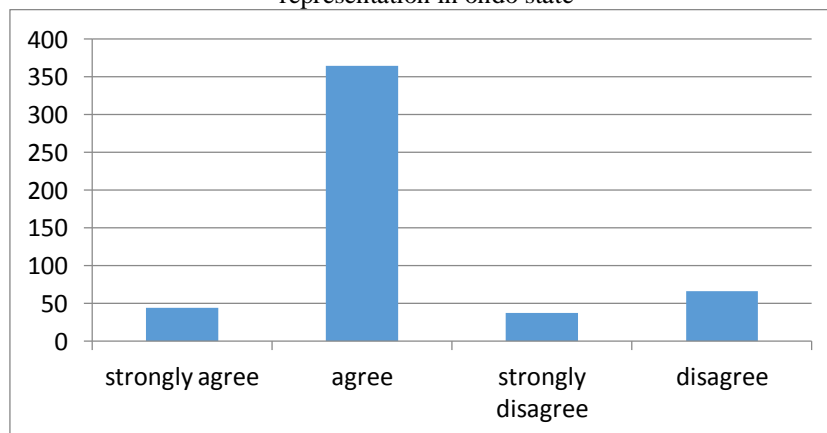


The results from table 8 and fig. 8 shows that 280 (54.5%) of the respondents are confident and 2(0.4%) highly confident, while 212(41.2%) not confident and 20 (3.9%) of the respondents undecided. The result above shows that a slim majority (54.9%) of the respondents are confident that electoral laws in Nigeria are fair to women vis-a-vis men in ondo State

**Table 4:** Do you agree that patriarchy continues to be an impediment towards adequate women's Political Representation

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	44	8.6
Agree	365	71.2
Strongly disagree	38	7.4
Disagree	66	12.9

**Fig. 3:** Do you agree that patriarchy continues to be an impediment towards adequate women's political representation in ondo state

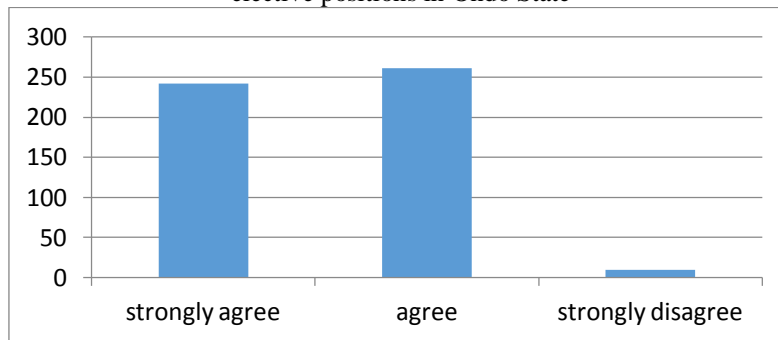


The results from table 4 and fig. 4 shows that 365 (71.2%) of the respondents agreed and 44(8.6%) highly agreed, while only 38(7.4%) disagreed and 66(12.9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. The result above shows that majority (79.8%) of the respondents agreed that patriarchy has continued to be an impediment towards adequate women's political representation in Ondo State

**Table 5:** Do you agree that vote-buying and costly nature of politics are impediments to women's participation in elective positions in Ondo State

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	242	47.2
Agree	261	50.9
Strongly disagree	10	1.9

**Fig. 4:** Do you agree that vote-buying and costly nature of politics are impediments to women's participation in elective positions in Ondo State

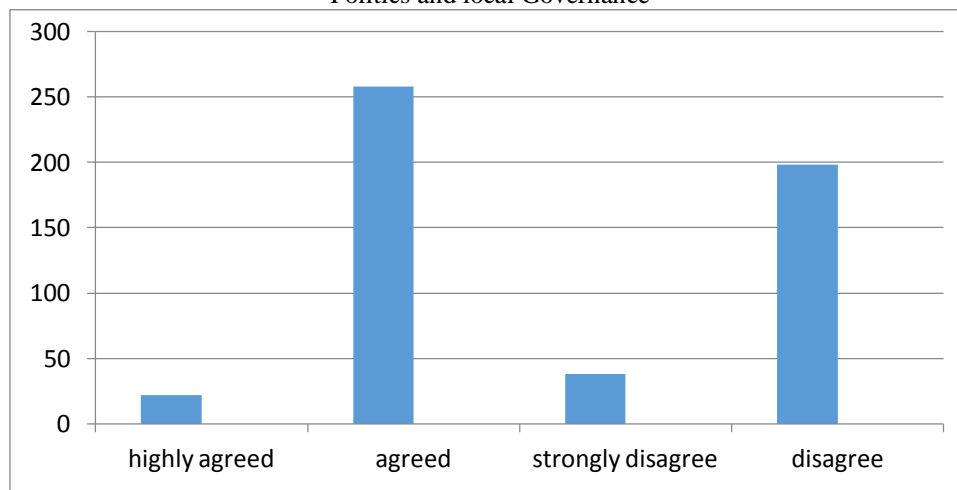


The results from table 5 and fig. 5 shows that 261 (50.9%) of the respondents agreed and 242(47.2%) highly agreed, while only 10(1.9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. The result above shows that majority (98.1%) of the respondents agreed that vote-buying and costly natures of politics are impediments to women's participation in elective positions in Ondo State

**Table 6:** Do you agree that political parties in ondo state have promoted greater participation of women in politics and local governance

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Highly agreed	22	4.3
Agreed	258	50.0
Strongly disagree	38	7.4
Disagree	198	38.4

**Fig. 5:** Do you agree that political parties in Ondo State have promoted greater participation of women in Politics and local Governance



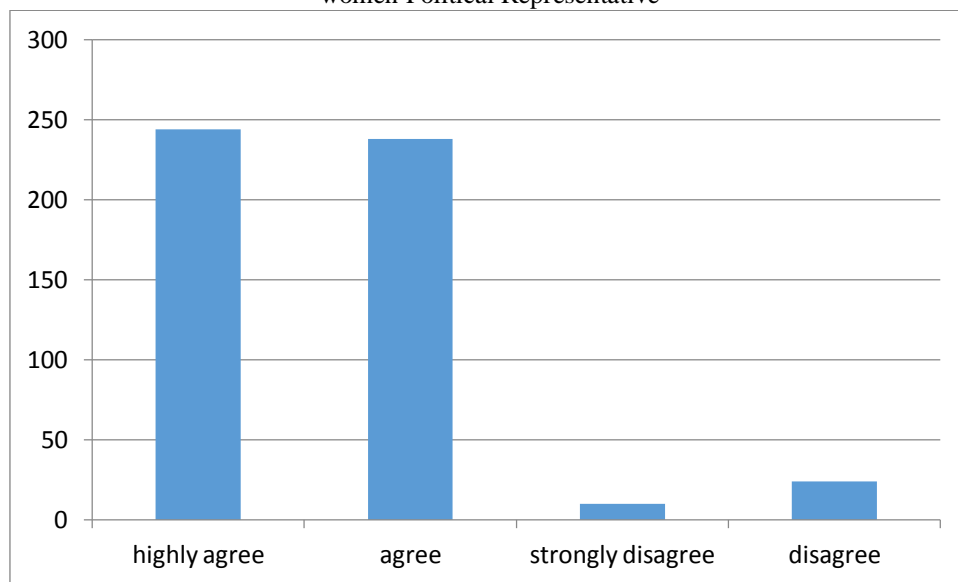


The results from table 12 and fig. 12 shows that 258 (50%) of the respondents agreed and 22 (4.3%) highly agreed, while 198(38.4%) disagreed and 38 (7.4%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. The result above shows that a slim majority (54.3%) of the respondents agreed that political parties in ondo state have promoted greater participation of women in politics and local governance

**Table 7:** Do you agree that offer of waivers for female aspirants by the various political parties can enhance women Political Representative

	Frequency	Percentage
Highly agree	244	47.3
Agree	238	46.1
Strongly Disagree	10	1.9
Disagree	24	4.7

**Fig. 6:** Do you agree that offer of waivers for female aspirants by the various political parties can enhance women Political Representative



The results from table 15 and fig. 15 shows that 238 (46.1%) of the respondents agreed and 244(47.3%) highly agreed, while 24(4.7%) disagreed and 10 (1.9%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. The result above shows that majority (93.4%) of the respondents agreed that the offer of waivers for female aspirants by the various political parties can enhance women political representative.

#### IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the empirical analysis of the evaluation of women’s participation in politics and governance of Ondo State between 1999-2019 indicate that, although democratic practice has been an enabling factor in women’s participation however in it has not result into adequate women’s representation in elective and decision-making bodies in Ondo State.

Also particularly and the incidence of vote-buying are impediment factors militating against women participation in politics and governance of Ondo State in the fourth republic. The findings revealed a slum majority of the respondents agreed that political parties in Ondo State have enhance greater participation of women in politics and governance in Ondo State. Also, the offer of waivers for female aspirants by the various political parties can enhance women political representation in Ondo State.

#### V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is deducible from the empirical research study that women are marginalized and underrepresented in party politics and decision-making bodies in Ondo State between 1999-2019. Between 1999-2003, there was only one (1) elected female out of the twenty six Assembly members. Likewise between 2003-2007 and 2007-2011. Between 2011-2015, there were three female representative and in 2015-2019 there females representative



and in 2015-2019 there were (2) female the increment in female representation in politics and legislature is only marginal in nature till date, Ondo State have yet to produce a female governor nor deputy till date.

In the light of the earlier observation and findings in regards inadequate to women's participation in politics and governance of Ondo State. The study recommends the following; that political parties offer waivers for female aspirants to enable women the chances participation and representation in politics and governance of Ondo State.

Also, to achieve equitable gender-balancing in politics, women should strategy and build a common front in their agitation for better representation in politics as a means of realizing 35% affirmative action and improvement in the rate of women's participation in politics and governance of Ondo State.

Furthermore, patriarchy as a social construct should be de-emphasize and efforts should be more on the girl-child than ever. The assertion plumzie Mlambo-Ngculca cited in the Daily Trust (2017), is apt for this recommendations "we need more women leaders, when women lead side by side with men, it is good for equality and democracy, it is good for peace and stability..."

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