



Research Paper

## Nigerian Women and Political Participation: A Comparative Study of President Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari Administration

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**ABSTRACT:** The study is a comparative study of women political participation under the administrations of President Goodluck Jonathan and President Muhammadu Buhari. The place of women in politics has always been an ongoing study due to patriarchal domination of men in Nigeria. The study was anchored on the equity theory of leadership which holds the assumption that an individual is motivated by the desire to be equitably treated in his or her work relationship based on fairness. The study adopted a mixed method of content/document analysis and interview. The content/document analysis examined manifest content of appointments and interview provided a face-to-face interaction with selected political stakeholders. Amongst other findings, the study revealed that both administrations of President Jonathan and President Buhari encouraged women political participations at various levels. This is equally supported by the results of interview sessions with political stakeholders. Based on the findings, it is recommended that although women participated under the two administrations, there is need to review upwards, the number of women that are assigned ministerial portfolios and other political appointments.

**KEYWORDS:** Nigerian women, politics, participation, administration

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### I. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Politics is the theory and practice of government activities through legislative or executive power, or with forming and running organisations connected with government. It usually describes the processes by which people and institutions exercise and resist power. Political processes are used to formulate policies, influence individuals and institutions, and organize societies. The existing discourse on women participation in politics has continued to generate debates across socio-political domains.

In the developed nations, the role of women in politics is taking a wider dimension due to high level of electoral literacy. In developing nations, politics is seen from a patriarchal dimension that excludes women in politics. A patriarchy is a set of social relations which has a material base and in which there are hierarchical relations between men and solidarity among them which enables them to dominate women. The material base of patriarchy is men's control over women's labour power, a control maintained by excluding women from access to necessary economically productive resources and reducing their sexuality [1]. More often than not, men constitute a larger percentage of party membership and this tends to affect women when it comes to selecting or electing candidates for elections, since men are usually the majority in the political party set-up. They tend to dominate the party hierarchy and are therefore at advantage in influencing the party's internal politics [2]

[3] observes that the increasing salience of women's issues and the resurgence of women's movements have raised popular consciousness and intense academic discourse on poor participation of women in politics. It should be noted that sustainable democratic government relies upon the participation of all citizens in determining through elections and political process.

Worth of note is that the 1999 Constitution recognises women's rights to vote and be voted for. It also guarantees rights to participate in active politics and governance by virtue of Section 42(1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which states that: "A citizen of Nigeria of a particular

community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall not, by reason only that he is such a person be subjected to any form of discrimination. This further confirms that you can go to court to seek redress if as a woman your franchise is violated and that the constitution as a whole prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex". This Section the Constitution recognizes the alienable rights of Nigeria to participate in electoral processes with biases on gender. [4] maintains that over the years, there has been a remarkable increase in women participation when measured with certain standards like the number of women who vote in elections, the number of appointive and elective positions held by women; number of women related policies implemented by government and so on.

Participation means 'to take part in an activity.' It denotes being part of a process. Relatively, it may connote a high sense of participation or low participation. [4] defines active participation as those voluntary activities by which members of the society share in the selection of leaders and directly or indirectly in the formation of policy and is a civic right of all citizens. Political participation involves essential political activities such as attending political meetings, rallies, campaigns, nominations, elections, etc; holding political party offices and public offices; contesting for elective positions; voting in elections; holding elective and appointive positions; attaining political power in legislative bodies; and other electoral activities. On the other hand, [5] remarks that women's involvement in politics varies throughout the world and their participation in politics and the democratic process. Despite the clamour for women's political empowerment, women still wallow on the fringes of the political realm and their participation in government structures and the democratic process remains low.

Nigeria's political history is replete with a long history of military interventions in politics. The First Republic was toppled with a coup that ushered in the regime of the military in governance. A new dawn in politics was in 1999 when Nigeria returned to the era of democratic government. The study critically assesses the extent of political participation of women under former President Jonathan Goodluck and President Muhammadu Buhari. Both regimes were chosen because they were democratic dispensations.

### *1.2 Statement of the Problem*

The place and role of women in politics is very important in the overall political structure of a nation. Regrettably, Nigerian political structure favours men than women. There is a glaring domination of men in terms of assignment of political portfolios and other political engagements. This unfortunate domination of men over women in Nigeria political system continues to create a gap in effective government administration.

Although there is continuous awareness on women political participation in Nigeria, evidence shows that women participation is still low in some aspects of governance and certain political positions. There is large-scale discrimination from the men folk, both in voting for candidates and in allocating political offices, whether government or party offices.

Certain cultural and religious ideologies tend to limit the extent of women political participation in Nigeria. The womenfolk is seen as assistants to menfolk, not just in family but also in politics. The entrenched socio-cultural and religious practices in Nigeria skewed in favour of men and against women constitute serious challenge to women active participation in politics. Most cultures do not encourage women participation in politics. In others where it is permitted, certain electoral positions are seen as prerogatives of men. Women, therefore, are rarely given key positions of administration in Nigerian political structure. This study, therefore, examines the degree of participation of women in politics with specific assessments of the regimes of former President Goodluck Jonathan and President Muhammadu Buhari.

### *1.3 Objectives of the Study*

The broad objective of the study is to examine the place of women in political participation in Nigeria. The specific objectives include:

- a) To find out the extent of women political participation under President Goodluck Jonathan.
- b) To find out the extent of women political participation under President Muhammadu Buhari.
- c) To examine the placement of women in political positions under President Goodluck Jonathan.
- d) To examine the placement of women in political positions under President Muhammadu Buhari.

#### *1.4 Research Questions*

The following research questions guided the study:

- a) What is the extent of women political participation under President Goodluck Jonathan?
- b) What is the extent of women political participation under President Muhammadu Buhari?
- c) What is the placement of women in political positions under President Goodluck Jonathan?
- d) What is the placement of women in political positions under President Muhammadu Buhari?

#### *1.5 Significance of the Study*

The findings of the study would be significant in many ways. First, it will indicate the index of women participation in the two regimes. This will help political parties to consider fielding more women to create a political balance in party structure. Politics is not a patriarchal right of men. Women representativeness in politics will make political stakeholders understand that it takes unity of purpose for a successful political enterprise.

The study will be significant to party leadership in the sense that it will help them to place women especially on strategic positions in politics.

Lastly, the findings of the study will provide empirical basis and aid the formulation of theories for subsequent research efforts in related areas.

#### *1.6 Scope of the Study*

The study focuses on the place of Nigerian women and political participation. It is difficult to indicate the actual number of female electorate due to inaccessibility to statistical data from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). As a result, the study restricts its scope to making an assessment of the regimes of former President Goodluck Jonathan and President Muhammadu Buhari. Areas of coverage include examining the extent as well placement of women in political participation under the two regimes.

#### *1.7 Limitations of the Study*

The study experienced from limitations such inaccessibility of relevant government documents that would have facilitated the study.

#### *1.8 Theoretical Framework*

The study was anchored on the equity theory of leadership. The theory was propounded by J. Stacy Adam. The theory holds the assumption that an individual is motivated by the desire to be equitably treated in his or her work relationship. [6] argues that the equity theory hinges on the fairness at workplace in which a person accepts position with an organisation and expects some good relationship with the organisation.

Applied in the context of women political participation, the equity theory, first, identifies a glaring gap between men and women degree of integration in Nigerian politics. This gap was widened by the age-long patriarchal domination in politics. Women have been relegated to the background as subordinates to men in politics. Marginalization of women is reinforced by patriarchy, poverty, illiteracy, religious and cultural norms. This marginalization has resulted in gaps in representation of sexes in Nigerian politics.

Equity refers to fairness in actions and treatment of others or a general condition characterised by justice, fairness, and impartiality. Women representation in politics is gradually becoming recognised in the developing countries. [7] remarks that marginalization of women is not peculiar to Nigeria. Most advanced democracies today once experienced marginalisation of women in political participation and decision making as can be gleaned from the next slide. Art 7 of Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which was adopted by the UN on December 18, 1979, and ratified by Nigeria on June 13, 1985, requires Nigeria to “take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country...”. This is in consonance with Art. 4 of CEDAW deals with Temporary Special Measures to accelerate equality between men and women. It is also in consonance with Article 2 (11) of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance which states the objective of the Charter is amongst others to promote gender balance and equality in the governance and development process [7].

## **II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### *2.1 Conceptual Review*

#### *A) Women and Political Participation*

Basically, participation is a process by which individuals, groups and organisations could become actively involved in a project or programme of activity. Political participation, therefore, is the active involvement of persons in political activities in a country. This is not the case of electoral participation which in the strict sense is possible when an individual has reached the age of 18 years and above.

[8] defines political participation as one of the fundamental ideas of a democratic society. It is the sine qua non of democracy, because democracy involves a commitment to equal opportunity for men and women to develop their individual capacities. Although equal political opportunity for women is a goal shared by both men and women and despite increased support of women's equality, for thousands of years, women records poor participation in politics and decision making positions. The fact that politics permeates every aspect of life owes to Aristotle's submission that it is only within a political community that human beings can live the good life." It is imperative to grasp the truth that all social problems are in one way or the other linked to political decisions of the powers that be, a participation in this essential ingredient of a political system is therefore very much a necessity [3].

[9] remarks that the critical area of women empowerment has indeed received commendable governmental attention since the return of the Nigerian State to the path of democratic governance in 1999. From the initial Olusegun Obasanjo presidency, through the Umaru Yar'Adua era, up to the current Goodluck Jonathan dispensation, it has been a case of continuous victories for women empowerment. Within this same period also it remains debatable if it has also been success stories in the area of democratic consolidation. This paper has not only joined the debate, it has also proffered solutions on how women empowerment can increasingly lead to democratic consolidation in the Nigerian. The author further extols the place of women in politics during the democracies following the 1999 transition of power from military regime to democratic dispensation. The Obasanjo Administration, for the instance, did a marvelous job in the area of women empowerment. The Administration of President Jonathan has made significant impact in the area of women empowerment, in view of the fact that in all the 100 years of Nigeria's corporate existence, the country has never witnessed the monumental visibility and inclusion of women in governance and decision-making, as it has experienced under the Jonathan Administration [10]

#### *B) Women's Political Participation in Nigeria: Historical Exploration*

The increasing awareness on politics and recognition of women's roles in politics had been shaped through various historical periods.

#### **Pre-Colonial Period**

Before Nigeria's colonial experiences, records abound about women who distinguished themselves in various administrative and political positions. They played active roles in their respective traditional political governance. Although most traditional societies were dominated by men who rules without concern about women, there are, however records of societies in which women played significant roles in leadership [3]. The findings of Awe (1992), Abubakar (1992) and Ojuolape (2001) cited in [3] reveal that the following women that possessed power in the pre-colonial Nigeria (Awe, 1992). Only very few women were initiated into traditional cults such as Ogboni, Osugbo, Ekpo, Ekpe, Eyo, etcetera. Some notable women in the traditional political governance in the South West Nigeria include the Erelu, Ayaba and Olori (King's Wives, Iyalode (Women's Leader), Iyalaje (Market Women's Leader), Yeye Oba (King's Mother) and Iya-olosa (Goddess priests), Moremi of Ife, Efusetan of Ibadan and Emotan. One cannot undermine the significant role of Iya Afin, Iya Agan and Iya Abiye to the palace administrations of the various kingdoms. Likewise, the influence and contributions of Queen Amina of Zaria to the political development of the Northern Nigeria's emirate and the achievement of Kambasa of Bony in the dim pre-colonial past are by no means negligible. The change of government from the Hausa aristocracy to the Fulani/Muslim hegemony however, totally excluded women from the public sphere. After the reign of Amina in the pre-Islamic past of Zaria, there was no woman who sat in the court of any Hausa ruler.

#### **Colonial Period**

The colonial period covers the period of women's poor participation in politics, like many other problems in Nigeria. It occurred during colonial administration when men hijacked most of the positions left for the natives. The era witnessed lack of recognition of the Nigerian women political/leadership role in the mainstream politics in Nigeria (Suleiman, 2017). This was exacerbated by the policy introduced in which men were believed to have the potential of activeness in the society; and those that were lucky to receive some education got recruited into the colonial overlords. Despite the alienation of women from the mainstream of Nigerian politics during colonial administration, the Nigerian womenfolk became relevant by its contributions to nationalist movements, which constituted vanguards against the colonial administration.

#### **Postcolonial Period**

The postcolonial period witnessed a gradual integration of women into mainstream politics. Although there is still apathy on the part of women in political participation, the postcolonial era witnessed a rising trend of political participation among women. There is continuous awareness on the roles of women in politics. [3]

states that from 1960 -1965 there were only two female legislators in the federal parliament and three others in the Eastern House of Assembly. Four female legislators in the whole of the country were a number that was so negligible as to give women the necessary influence over decision-making. The imposition of military, an era that followed this period from 1966 did not foster the participation of women in politics and very little was heard of women at the helm of affairs.

The return to democracy in 1999 opened another epoch in women participation in politics. Women became increasingly aware of politics and showed increased interests in governance. The administrations of former Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan brought to fore, the importance of women in governance. The administration of President Muhammadu Buhari has continued to campaign for wider inclusion of women in governance.

C) *Women Participation in Politics under the Administration of President Goodluck Jonathan*

One of the key policies of President Goodluck Jonathan was the increase in women participation. It is under the Jonathan administration that Nigerian women have attained the highest level of participation in the nation's social, political and economic life. His administration took off with in 2011 with the appointment of 13 female Cabinet Ministers, 5 female Special Advisers, 10 female Ambassadors, 16 female Judges of the Court of Appeal; 11 female Permanent Secretaries, 16 female Judges of the Federal High Court, 3 female Judges of the Supreme Court, 6 female Judges of the National Industrial Court; a female Acting President, Court of Appeal and The Chief Justice of the Federation as female [10]. Other women that occupied prominent positions under former President Goodluck Jonathan include: the First Lady, Mrs. Patience Jonathan, the Coordinating Minister for the Economy and Minister of Finance, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, The Minister of Petroleum Resources, Mrs. Diezani Alision-Madueke, the Director-General of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Ms. Arumah Oteh and the Minister of Aviation, Mrs. Stella Oduah.

The past administrations have somewhat maintained significant margin of men against women and in some cases where women were assigned some duties, such duties are mainly as subordinates to men. [11] concludes that the Jonathan Administration has focused truly on the visibility, genuine empowerment, dignity and participation of women in politics than any time in Nigeria's history and that the Nigerian woman never had it so good. Consequently, women empowerment has taken root in the country. Women now have a place of pride to operate in politics, as they are now sure of appointive positions, where women were completely shut out.

[12] identifies the party assignments of political positions to women in the build-up to 2011 election. He indicates the following significant recognition of women's roles across parties:

*The following positions were occupied by women in ACN – National Women Leader, National Auditor, Vice-Chairperson of North-West and National Auditor (4 offices in all as at 2011 elections); in the ANPP, the following party positions were conceded to women – Assistant National Financial Secretary (North- East), (South East), Deputy Welfare Secretary, National Women leader, Financial Secretary, Assistant National Auditor (South-South and North- Central) and Assistant National Publicity Secretary among other sinecure posts (eight offices in all as at 2011 elections); APGA conceded the following three executive positions to women National Welfare Secretary, National Women's Leader and Deputy National Women's leader; Labour Party conceded none to women; and for the PDP, it only allowed the position of the National Women Leader. It becomes clear from the above that these positions are mere tokenism in that they rarely attract "serious" male contenders who are more interested in the really more juicy party executive positions where the shots are called. Party positions which women occupy are rarely contested for nor are they perceived as the life wire of political parties*

Outside politics, two micro-credit schemes have been set up to assist women: (1) the Women Fund for Economic Empowerment (WOFEE), in collaboration with the Bank of Agriculture and the State Governments and (2) the Business Development Fund for Women (BUDFOW), in collaboration with the Bank of Industry. The two schemes are revolving facilities with an interest rate of 10%. In addition to these efforts, 77 skill acquisition centres have been constructed and equipped across the country to increase income generation, through job creation, for women, especially at the grassroots level [13].

D) *Women Participation in Politics under the Administration of President Muhammadu Buhari*

The first tenure of President Muhammadu Buhari began in 2015 and the second tenure started in 2019. The administration of President Buhari is characterised with women inclusion in politics. Like the regimes of former Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan, the present regime has featured women in wider dimension. [14] observes that:

*Amina Mohammed, Khadija Bukar Abba Ibrahim, Aisha Jummai Al-Hassan, Kemi Adeosun, Zainab Shamsuna Ahmed, Hajia Hadiza Abdullahi and Aisha Abubakar, all females, finally made it made to the cabinet of President Muhammadu Buhari as ministers. There was a glimpse of hope when the first ministerial list was released and with the believe that the President will increase the number in the second list, Nigeria women were optimistic that the 35 percent affirmative action they yearned for would be achieved. The National Policy of Women that was adopted in 2000 reserved 30 percent for women under the affirmative action guidelines. In 2011, former President Goodluck Jonathan administration's cabinet had women occupying about 33 percent of the positions and there were calls for him to make it up to 35 percent as obtainable in some African countries.*

The Buhari-led administration has always championed the place of women in politics.

*E) Challenges to Women Active Participation in Politics in Nigeria*

Studies have identified the following challenges to women active participation in Nigeria political environment:

[3] identifies the following factors that affect women active political participation:

- a) Socioeconomic Development: This focuses on economic development and considers increases in democracy and human choice as direct outcome of economic development. It implies that a country's level of development correlates with women's participation in politics and decreases existing barriers to political activity and participation. Developmental measures such as increase in per capita, gross domestic product, women in the work force and women literacy positively influence the percentage of women's political participation.
- b) Cultural Factor: Cultural norms and customary practices have great influence on women's political participation. Here, the central focus of power is the father, and the factual importance of motherhood kinship structure and history is denied. In other words, patriarchy describes a distribution of power and resources within the family in a manner that men maintain power and control of resources, and women are powerless and dependent on men.
- c) Historical Legacies: A country's developmental trends of social modernization create cultural and institutional legacies that affect societies' abilities to improve women's lives. This influence can take the form of an inertial tendency where institutions affect relevant phenomena that would have otherwise changed due to other social forces.
- d) The Institutional Design Factor: This view holds that a country's institutional characteristics either enable or constrain women's political participation. Three aspects of the political system find support in this literature: the strength of democracy, the electoral system, and gender electoral quota systems. The impact of institutional variation within democracies on women's political involvement has also been considered.

[15] identify the following factors that militate against women active political participation:

- a) Political Violence: Nigerian elections have always been characterized by one form of violence or another since the return of democracy. Female aspirants of various political parties cannot withstand political violence; therefore, women participation in politics is drastically reduced.
- b) Patriarchy: It refers to a society ruled and dominated by men over women, which in turn has given rise to women being looked upon as mere household wives and non-partisans in decision making process in households not to talk of coming out to vie for political positions.
- c) Financing: Competing for political positions in Nigerian requires huge financial backup.
- d) Most Nigerian women who seek these positions could not afford meeting the financial obligations therein, despite the wavers giving to women aspirants by some of the political parties. And so, they could do little or nothing to outweigh their male counterparts.
- e) Stigmatization: following the way politics in Nigeria is played, it is being perceived that it is for individuals that have no regards for human right and are quick at compromising their virtue for indecent gains. Therefore, women aspirants who ventured into politics are looked upon as shameless and promiscuous.
- f) Political Godfatherism is one of the concepts that open narrow doors when it comes to deciding who gets what in the political scene. However, it has effect on women participation.
- g) Low level of education: The low participation of women in education is also part of the shortcomings. The National Adult Literacy Survey, 2010 published by National Bureau of Statistics revealed that the adult females do not engage in active politics.
- h) Religious and Cultural barriers: Both Christianity and Islam do not accord women much role in public life, and same is obtainable in most cultural values, where women are seen culturally as quite submissive and

image of virtue. However, they are not to be seen in public domain. And so, it is a challenge to women participation in politics, more so, women found in the corridor of politics are not often religious in practice.

[4] identifies the following factors that affect women active political participation in Nigeria:

- a) **Discriminatory Socio-cultural and Religious Practices:** The entrenched socio-cultural and religious practices in Nigeria skewed in favour of men and against women constitute serious challenge to women active participation in politics. Women (including Nigerian women) are discouraged from participating in public life from childhood through adulthood by authority figures such as husbands, fathers, mothers and other relations due to cultural image of a virtuous woman defined as quiet, submissive who should be seen and not heard.
- b) **Lack of Finance:** Politics in Nigeria, especially seeking elective position is an expensive venture requiring huge financial involvement and solid financial backing. Generally, the relatively pathetic poor financial disposition of Nigerian women is a critical challenge which mostly accounts for their poor participation in politics and political defeat in elections.
- c) **Unhealthy Political Environment:** Unhealthy Political environment is another challenge to women active participation in politics in Nigeria. The political terrain in Nigeria is do-or-die affair fraught with violence, maiming, assassinations, threats, blackmail, intimidation, humiliation, etc which are used by mostly men to scare women away from active participation in politics in Nigeria.
- d) **Political Party Discrimination:** In Nigeria, political party is the framework for the attainment of political ambitions by politicians. Its hierarchy, membership, and funding are still male dominated which made it possible for them to be influencing the party's internal politics and often sidelining women. The manifestos and constitutions of political parties in Nigeria rarely mention Affirmative Action for women, and when they do, their commitments are lower than the benchmark set by regional and international conventions.
- e) **Lack of Family, Fellow Women and Media Supports:** Lack of family support is a critical challenge to women active participation in politics in Nigeria. Because of the patriarchal nature of Nigerian society, it is culturally assumed that women must seek permission from the men/husbands before venturing into politics. However, if such permission is not granted, the only option for such women is to drop their political ambitions. Thus, most family members especially husbands even among the educated ones do not allow women wives to participate actively in politics in Nigeria. Many poor women political aspirants do not enjoy family support financially, socially, and otherwise.

## 2.2 *Empirical Studies*

This section discusses some relevant empirical studies on women participation in politics.

In a study on *The Role of Women towards Political Participation in Nigeria*, [3] investigated the factors that limit women's participation in Nigeria's politics using case study period between 1999 and 2015, among these factors are socioeconomic development, the country's cultural heritage, historical legacies and institutional designs. The study employs secondary source as a method of data collection. The study reveals that the patriarchal system and male domination of the society, which relegates women to subordinate role, has created women's inferiority complex and alienated them from the mainstream politics in Nigeria. The Nigerian political culture of thuggery and gangsterism has made the political terrain too dangerous for most women to venture into mainstream politics. Besides, the stigmatization of women politicians by fellow women discourages the political participation of the former while religious beliefs and institutional arrangements that restrict women to family responsibilities in the country coupled with lack of genuine and decisive affirmative action to encourage women's political participation, have created a legacy that limit women's political participation in the country. Consequently, the study emphasizes the need to address those factors that entrench women subordination in Nigeria's politics. These include, among others, the reformation of all religious, statutory, and customary laws and practices that perpetuate women's subordination in the country and the explicit specifications and modalities of affirmative actions on women's political participation and clear guidelines for implementations in the Nigeria constitution.

In a study on *Gender, Political Parties, and the Reproduction of Patriarchy in Nigeria: A Reflection on the Democratisation Process, 1999-2011*, [16] examined issues of women's involvement in party politics in Nigeria against the background of the 2011 general elections. It explores the influence of patriarchal disposition on women's participation as well as the extent (or otherwise) to which women are respected and accepted as equal stakeholders in democratic politics and party decision-making organs. It shows that the marginalisation of women defies legal and constitutional guarantees and must be tackled simultaneously with patriarchy by the following means: establishing continuous dialogue between women and men leaders, increasing women's participation in local elections, endorsing and entrenching a quota system/mechanism in national and political party constitutions, reviewing electoral systems and adopting those most conducive to women's participation

(for example, proportional representation). Political parties should establish legal funds to enable women politicians to challenge electoral malpractices in court.

In another study on Political Participation and Gender Inequality in Nigerian Fourth Republic, [15] examined glaring inequality in political participation vis-à-vis gender. The study found that politically, women have been relegated to the background, despite the tremendous effort put forward by government and non-governmental organizations following the declaration made at the fourth World Conference on women in Beijing, which advocated 30% affirmative action and National Gender Policy (NGP) recommendation of 35% affirmative action for a more inclusive representation of women both in elective and appointive positions. The study revealed that Nigerian women are still being marginalized due to the style of leadership inherent in the country. Despite the challenges women are facing, it was discovered that women activism and advocacy, education of women, positivity on the part of successive governments towards women empowerment and interest of women to participate in politics is getting a lot of positive energy. It is therefore, an indication that the participation of women in politics has a bright future. But this is not without that, relevant stakeholders are advised to advocate for the protection of women from abuse, empower them economically and politically and review the necessary legislations to accommodate the growing interest of women in politics both elective and appointive positions.

Another study on Gender Imbalance in President Buhari's Ministerial Nominations and Reactions by the Nigerian Press: Advocacy or Complacency, [17] examined President Muhammadu Buhari's list of ministerial nominees, which was sent to the Senate for confirmation, on September 30, 2015, had twenty –one (21) name. Of this, eighteen (18) were male while three (3) were female. It is against the backdrop Of MDG 3(Gender Equality and Women Empowerment) and SDG (5) that this study sought to find out how the Nigerian press reacted to this gender imbalance with a view to streamlining their disposition within the frame of advocacy and complacency. Content analysis was employed to study the manifest content of three national newspapers – The Guardian, This Day, and The Punch, and two national magazines – Tell and News watch- which were purposively selected based on outlook and spread. The actual issues of the newspapers studied were also selected based on a consecutive day period with October 2015 as the period of study. Measurement was done using column centimetres. The inter-coder reliability which employed Holsti formula stood at 0.91. Findings showed a lack of will by the Nigerian press to constructively criticize, through content, the President's disproportionate gender distribution in political appointments. Findings further revealed that the Nigerian press did not proactively engage in advocacy geared towards enthroning best practices in the light of the MDGs and SDGs especially as they relate to governance and women empowerment. The inference from the foregoing therefore contextualized the disposition of the Nigerian press as complacent. To this end, it was recommended that the Nigerian press should deploy editorial content embellished in advocacy to chart the pathway for egalitarianism through government policies that serve to optimally integrate the potentials of women in the socio-political repertoire of Nigeria.

In a study on Factors Militating against Women's Political Participation in Nupe Communities of Central Nigeria, [18] examined factors militating against women's political participation in selected rural and semi-urban, mainly Muslim, Nupe-speaking communities in central Nigeria. Both the social survey and in-depth interviews methods were employed with selected respondents, composed of women leaders, electoral officers, party chieftains and a few female candidates and aspirants for elective positions. The study reveals among other things that, on a scale, women in the area have not been meaningfully involved in politics since the return of democratic rule in 1999, mainly due to poor financial status, divergent socio-cultural challenges, and the unfavourable political environment. Accordingly, the study recommends several measures to end women subordination, discrimination and stigmatization and improvement in their political participation and fortunes.

### 2.3 *Summary of the Literature*

The crux of the study is a critical examination of degree of women political participation. The gap in literature is the inability of appropriate statistical and electoral agencies to provide concrete figures of how many women participate in electoral activities such as voting at elections. A study on women political participation goes beyond the statistics of women in actual governance by political positions they hold. Active political participation involves women that do not hold political position but at the same time, do not show empathy for politics.

To manage this gap, the reviewed literature supported a specific approach to the study of women political participation by reviewing existing documents of government of elective positions in relation to men and women dichotomy in politics.



### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a mixed method of Content/Document Analysis (which studies the manifest content) and Interview (which is an oral conversation with resource persons to elicit information). The choice of methods was since women political participation is assessed by looking at political appointments of women by the administrations of President Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari.

#### 3.2 Area of Study

The study area covered major political trends that portray how the two administrations represented women in governance. The study chose to focus attention on the Executive and Legislature at the national and state levels. The study did not extend the scope to Local Government Councils of the Federation.

#### 3.3 Population of Study

For the Content/Document Analysis, the population covered all elective positions under the two administrations between 2011 (under President Goodluck Jonathan) to 2015/2019 (two-terms of President Muhammadu Buhari). For the interview, eight political stakeholders were interviewed.

#### 3.4 Sample/Sampling Technique

Whereas the Content/Document Analysis examined government appointments within the period of study, interview was based on the interview discussions of selected 8 political stakeholders in the following categories: four political leaders of two dominant political parties (two persons from each party: PDP and APC), two women political leaders, and two youth political leaders. The interview was conducted by telephone conversation.

#### 3.5 Instrument of Data Collection

The main tool used for the interview is the Interview Guide which covers the research questions. The instrument for Document Analysis is relevant government documents as Executive and Legislative Appointments at the federal and state levels.

#### 3.6 Method of Data Analysis

The Document Analysis method was statistically presented in tables whereas the Interview was thematically presented.

### IV. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.1 Data Presentation

As a mixed research method comprising Content/Document Analysis and Interview, the data presentation was done in two stages.

##### A) Content/document Analysis

Data presentation and analysis was based on government documented appointment in the Executive and Legislature of former President Goodluck Jonathan and President Muhammadu Buhari. The Judiciary arm did not form part of data presentation because, the recommendation for appointment of judges is done by the Nigeria Legal Counsel and ratified by the President.

**Table 1.** First Ministerial Cabinet of President Goodluck Jonathan (2010)

Total Number of Ministers	Male	Female	Ministries headed by women	Vacant
30	24	5	Aviation Education Information and Communication Petroleum Resources Women Affairs	Ministry of Health

The first term of President Goodluck Jonathan was the completion of a joint ticket with late President Yar'dua Musa who died in 2010. At his death, President was sworn in as the President to complete the President Yar'dua's tenure. From the above Table analysis, out of a total of 30 ministers, five (5) ministries were headed by women namely: Aviation, Education, Information and Communication, Petroleum Resources and Women Affairs. Although there is no even distribution of ministries among male and female ministers, it must be noted that President Jonathan assigned key ministerial portfolios to five women. These ministries were not what it popularly known as junior ministers. The ministries of Aviation, Education, Information & Communication, Petroleum Resources and Women Affairs are senior ministerial portfolios. This, therefore, affirmed that women were significantly represented in the first tenure of President Jonathan.

**Table 2.** Ministerial Cabinet of President Goodluck Jonathan (2011 - 2015)

Total Number of Ministers	Male	Female	Ministries headed by women	Headed two ministries within the regime
33	26	7 (1)	Aviation Foreign Affairs (State) Communication Technology Petroleum Women Affairs Niger Delta Affairs (State) Finance Power (State)	Hajiya Zainab Ibrahim Kuchi headed the Ministry of Power (State) and Niger Delta Affairs (State)

The Ministerial cabinet of President Jonathan between 2011 and 2015 was characterised with increased assignment of ministerial portfolios of 7 female ministers in a 33-number of ministers. Women served in the ministries of Aviation, Foreign Affairs (State), Communication Technology, Petroleum, Women Affairs, Niger Delta Affairs (State), Finance and Power (State). In all, women were assigned 3 junior minister portfolios and 5 senior minister portfolios. Interestingly, Hajiya Zainab Ibrahim headed two Ministries of Power (State) and Niger Delta Affairs (State). The increase in the number of portfolios assigned to women under President Jonathan, further showed his administration was gender-friendly in appointments.

**Table 3.** Ministerial Cabinet of President Muhammadu Buhari (2015 - 2019)

Total Number of Ministers	Male	Female	Ministries headed by women.
31	25	6	Finance Environment Foreign Affairs (State) Budget & National Planning (State) Women Affairs Trade & Investment (State)

Table 3 shows the ministerial cabinet of President Muhammadu Buhari's first tenure (2015-2019) in which women headed 6 out of 31 ministries. The distribution shows that women headed 3 senior ministries and 3 junior ministries (popularly referred to as Ministry of State). A senior ministry is headed by one substantive Minister without a subordinate junior minister. As a gender-based ministry, women have always headed the Ministry of Women Affairs.

**Table 4.** Ministerial Cabinet of President Muhammadu Buhari (2019 - present)

Total Number of Ministers	Male	Female	Ministries headed by women.
44	38	6	Finance Environment (State) Industry (State) Transportation (State) Women Affairs Humanitarian Affairs

The second tenure of President Muhammadu Buhari started in 2015 to end in 2023. The present ministerial cabinet has additional ministries from 31 in 2015 to 44 in 2019. The cabinet allocation to women remained the same as in 2015-2019 with slight changes in ministerial portfolios. A total of 6 ministries was allocated to women viz: Finance, Environment (State), Industry (State), Transportation (State), Women Affairs and Humanitarian Affairs. Noticeably, the first and second tenures of President Buhari's showed a consistent allocation of 6 ministries to women.

**Table 5.** Senate

Year	Number of Seats	Men	Women
2011	109	102 (93.6%)	7 (6.4%)
2015	109	101 (92.7%)	8 (7.3%)
Total	218	203(93.1%)	15(6.9%)

The composition of the Senate in 2011-2015 and 2015-2019 showed that out of a combined 218 senators between the two regimes understudy, women senators were only 15(6.9%). There is, however, a meagre increase in the number of senators in 2015. The information shows that there is a patriarchal domination of the Senate.

**Table 6. House of Representatives**

Year	Number of Seats	Men	Women
2011	360	335 (93.1%)	25 (6.9%)
2015	360	341 (94.7%)	19 (5.3%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>676 (93.9%)</b>	<b>44(6.1%)</b>

Table 6 shows the composition of the House of Representatives. This is the lower chamber of the National Assembly. Constitutionally, members are drawn to represent local governments through election. In 2011-2015, out of 360 members of House of Representatives, 335(93.1%) were males and 25 (6.9%) were females. When compared with the composition of the Senate of the regime understudy, it showed that more women occupy the lower chamber of National Assembly. Also, out of 360 members of the House in 2015-2019, male members were 341(94.7%) and female members 19(5.3%). This showed a drop in the number of women in the 2015 members of the House of Representatives from 25(6.9%) to 19(5.3%).

**Table 7. Governors**

Year	Number of States	Men	Women
2011	36	36 (100%)	0 (0%)
2015	36	36 (100%)	0 (0%)
Total	72	72 (100%)	0(6.1%)

Table 7 showed that there has not been a female governor from 2011 to 2020 in Nigeria. The first and only female Governor was Her Excellency, Virginia Etiaba who was the Governor of Anambra State, a state in southeast Nigeria from November 2006 to February 2007.

**Table 8. Deputy Governors**

Year	Number of States	Men	Women
2011	36	33 (91.7%)	3 (8.3%)
2015	36	32 (88.9%)	4 (11.1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>65 (90.3%)</b>	<b>7(9.7%)</b>

Table 8 shows the distribution of the Office of the Deputy Governor in Nigeria from 2011 to 2020. In 2011, only 3 (8.3%) females were Deputy-Governors across the 36 States of the Federation. In 2015-present, 4(11.1%) are female Deputy-Governors across the 36 States of the Federation.

**Table 9. State Houses of Assembly**

Year	Number of Seats	Men	Women
2011	990	928(.7%)	62 (8.3%)
2015	990	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

There are 990 seats in State Houses of Assembly across the country. However, in 2011, women occupied 62 (8.3%) seats across the country. Due to electoral inconclusiveness and litigations, there has been inconsistency in the distribution of members of State Houses of Assembly.

#### *B) In-depth Interview Analysis*

As indicated in the Research Design, the in-depth interview was also used in the study to elicit information from selected 8 persons in the following categories: four political leaders of two dominant political parties (two persons from each party: PDP and APC), two women political leaders, and two youth political leaders. These selected persons were asked questions based on the research question to ascertain the level of women participation in politics under the former President Goodluck Jonathan and Present Muhammadu Buhari. Based on ethical consideration of confidentiality of sources, these selected persons were labelled thus: 1st PDP representative as A; 2nd PDP as B; 1st APC representative as C; 2nd APC as D; 1st Woman leader as E; 2nd Woman leader as F; 1st youth leader as G and 2nd youth leader as H. The analysis of interview sessions is based on summary of common submission of the interviewed persons.

**Interview Question 1: What is the extent of women political participation under President Goodluck Jonathan and President Muhammadu Buhari?** All interviewed persons (A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H) agreed that both administrations of President Goodluck Jonathan and President Muhammadu Buhari encouraged women political participation through ministerial allocations. Although these leaders do not have the constitutional rights to influence voting processes that produce members of the National Assembly; they, however, nominate persons for ministerial portfolios. Adjudged by the degree of ministerial allocations to women, Interviewees A and B stated that President Jonathan's regime gave prominence to the allocation of vital ministerial portfolios (aviation, education, information and communication and petroleum resources) to women. Throughout President Jonathan's administration, the Ministry of Petroleum had always been headed by a person other than the President of the Federation. However, Interviewees C and D argued that President Buhari's choice of heading the Ministry of Petroleum was because of massive corruption in the Ministry during President Jonathan's tenure.

**Interview Question 2: Are there issues of disequilibrium in gender considerations in politics in Nigeria?** All interviewed persons agreed that there is significant disequilibrium in gender considerations in politics in Nigeria. This is because, there has been always consistent allocation of 6 (or less) ministries to women from 2010 – present day.

**Interview Question 3: Are there substantial efforts to address gender imbalance in political participation in Nigeria?** Interviewed persons stated that Nigeria's political structure was built on a patriarchal foundation that grants men grip hold on political issues and allocations. The degree of political participation between men and women remained a wide. Major intervention efforts at addressing gender imbalance in political participation in Nigeria includes empowering women and given them more political appointments.

**Interview Question 4: What accounts for patriarchal dominance of political positions in Nigeria?** Interviewee B and D explained that patriarchal dominance of political positions in Nigeria as a situation where men dominate a nation's politics. Interviewees F and H identify age-long political exposure as a reason for patriarchal dominance. Interviewees A and E stated lack of women interest in politics and Interviewee C and G stated subjugation of women as subordinates to men as a reason for patriarchal dominance of political positions in Nigeria.

**Interview Question 5: What accounts for low participation of women in politics in Nigeria?** Interviewed persons gave different reasons for low participation of women in politics in Nigeria. Interviewee A stated that lack of finance is a factor that inhabits political aspirations in Nigeria. Politics is a capital-intensive venture and many women maybe be financial buoyant to participate without political godfathers. Interviewee B identified cultural factor which places a women under a man thereby limiting her capabilities even in politics. Interviewee E identified stigmatization as a factor for low participation of women in politics in Nigeria. This is because, women in politics are usually seen as wayward and promiscuous persons and maybe stigmatized. Interviewees C and D identified institutional design factor in which institutional characteristics either enable or constrain women's political participation. Interviewees F, G and H identified patriarchy which gives men many rights of domination over women.

#### *4.2 Discussion of Findings*

The discussion of findings was based on quantitative (Content/Document Analysis) and qualitative (Interview) methods using the research questions are measuring parameters.

What is the extent of women political participation under President Goodluck Jonathan? The content/document analysis revealed that between 2010 to 2015, President Goodluck Jonathan had a total of twelve female ministers with 9 substantive senior ministers and 3 junior ministers (popularly addressed as Minister of State). The indication is that President Jonathan's administration recognised the roles of women in politics. The result of interview equally affirmed the recognition of this administration of women in politics.

What is the extent of women political participation under President Muhammadu Buhari? The Buhari-administration also supported women political participation with the allocation of consistent 6 ministerial slots to women. In all, the administration produced 6 senior female ministers and 6 junior ministers (Minister of State). Unlike the President Jonathan's administration, no female minister had become a Minister of Petroleum.

What is the placement of women in political positions under President Goodluck Jonathan? The findings revealed that the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan allocated significant and viable ministries to women such as the ministries of Petroleum, Education, Aviation and Information and Communication.

What is the placement of women in political positions under President Muhammadu Buhari? The findings revealed that the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari allocated viable ministerial portfolios such as Finance and Environment to women. However, both administrations of President Jonathan and President Buhari have maintained the traditional allocation of the Ministry of Women Affairs to women.

## **V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### *5.1 Summary*

The study of women political participation is aimed at understanding the alienable rights of women to political association and participations. The 1999 Constitution recognises women's rights to vote and be voted for. It also guarantees rights to participate in active politics and governance by virtue of Section 42(1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which states that: "A citizen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall not, by reason only that he is such a person be subjected to any form of discrimination.

The knowledge of political awareness helps women to participate in politics, however; certain factors such as cultural factors, institutional design factor, patriarchy and stigmatization tend to militate against active women political participation.

The study adopted a Content/document analysis and interview of selected resource persons in politics. The content/document analysis examines government appointment of ministerial appointments of Presidents Jonathan and Buhari from 2010 to the present date. The study also examined the emergence of women in political elections into the two legislative houses of the National Assembly and the States of Assembly. The study revealed a reasonable inclusion of women in politics under the administrations understudy.

### *5.2 Conclusion*

The study concluded that both administrations of President Jonathan and President Buhari encouraged women political participations at various levels. This is equally supported by the results of interview sessions with political stakeholders.

Interestingly, the study concludes that the number of women in ministerial allocation and other appointing is not evenly distributed thereby, affirming the thesis of patriarchy in Nigeria politics. This is a situation where men dominate political spaces and relegate women to lesser political roles.

### *5.3 Recommendations*

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proffered:

- a) Although women participated under the two administrations, there is need to review upwards, the number of women that are assigned ministerial portfolios and other political appointments.
- b) The study observed a consistent recycling of women within certain ministerial interests. This is due to perceived strengths of women in some areas of endeavours. It is recommended that other areas often, dominated by men may be reassigned to women to test efficiency.
- c) There is need for increased political awareness on women participation. This will make women active political stakeholders and not mere political spectators.
- d) In the allocation of political appointments, there should be no barred area due to gender. Women should be assigned roles that were formerly dominated by men to test efficiency in dividend delivery.

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