

# NATIONAL GENDER IN NIGERIA REPORT

## CHAPTER ONE

### i. INTRODUCTION

Women's leadership has been a part of the global discourse since the Beijing World Conference on women. Women are powerful agents of change and so gender parity in leadership and decision-making is increasingly recognized in all spheres of the society.<sup>i</sup> When women are equitably represented in bodies like legislatures, courts, executive boards and community councils – laws, rulings and decisions are more likely to be inclusive and representative.<sup>ii</sup> Countries with a greater proportion of women as top decision-makers in legislatures have lower levels of income inequality.<sup>iii</sup>

Unconscious bias against women taking up leadership roles has been linked to legal discrimination, social norms and practices (e.g. early marriage) that inhibit their participation in the public sphere.<sup>iv</sup> Representation by women in global governance continues to be curtailed by the “glass wall” on the one hand and flexible glass ceilings on the other.<sup>v</sup> However, in certain instances like the 2010 establishment of the UN entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), which has been on the agenda of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), and the 2011 appointment of Christine Lagarde as managing director of one of the most prominent international organizations – IMF, the issue of women representation is now being taken seriously.<sup>vi</sup> In 2012, at the Rio+20 meeting, women leaders of eight countries (Brazil, Costa Rica, Lithuania, Jamaica, Australia, Denmark, Iceland and Switzerland) pledged to use their leadership positions to advance women's empowerment in the context of sustainable development in their countries and internationally.<sup>vii</sup>

In Nigeria, male suppression of women's political autonomy increased after independence, despite the contributions that women had made to nationalist politics and despite state claims to equitable approaches in education, policies and laws.<sup>viii</sup> Some other factors that prevent women from participating fully in political leadership and governance in all forms include but are not limited to:

- (a) Obnoxious Socio-cultural practices – practices such as harsh widowhood practices, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), child marriage and other subjugating tendencies that can eventually make a woman lose self-confidence.<sup>ix</sup>
- (b) Poor access to education – most of these restrictions affect women's access to education and professional aspiration.<sup>x</sup> According to UNICEF, one out of every child that is out of school globally is in Nigeria and about 60% of the 10 million out-of-school children is female.<sup>xi</sup>
- (c) Non-extension of equal rights to all citizens – the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) under Section 26(2)(a) confers on a man the privilege to be able to transfer citizenship to a woman by marriage but a woman (Nigerian citizen) is unable to do the same.

## **ii. METHODOLOGY OF THE REPORT**

A mixed method research (MMR) methodology was employed for this research study, involving qualitative and quantitative collection methods. Data was sourced from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources of data for this research include focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs) and deployment of questionnaires. Data was sourced from secondary sources such as journals, academic papers, media publications, legislations, research reports, international instruments, and other public documents.

This research is designed to serve as a resource for stakeholders in the gender and development community. The report will provide an in-depth analysis of data collected from emerging issues around the Beijing Declaration, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Women Political Empowerment (WPE), Women Peace and Security (WPS), Women Economic Empowerment (WEE), effect of the Covid-19 pandemic, amongst others.

## **iii. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Each geo-political zone had only one state as the focus of the study, therefore disparities between states within a zone were not brought into focus. Consequently, there could be content provided for a certain geo-political that may not be the reality of another state within the same zone.

Additionally, the data collection period coincided with the end of year seasonal trade in the southeast, and so respondents were not readily available. Furthermore, the transcription of the questionnaires from English to Igbo and back to English took more time than required.

## CHAPTER TWO

### iv. DESK REVIEW

#### ➤ Democracy in Nigeria

Nigeria is a British creation fashioned out between 1861 and 1914 – from the annexation of Lagos in 1861 to the ‘infamous’ amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914.<sup>xii</sup> The British administered the country until its independence in 1960 and subsequently, it has experienced inexplicable trajectories politically despite having more than five decades of independence and sovereignty.<sup>xiii</sup> A country of enormous national wealth, today, intractable corruption has sentenced the majority of its citizens to grinding poverty and left the economy to a near total collapse.<sup>xiv</sup>

Women’s contribution to the fight for independence and democracy in Nigeria is invaluable. The women’s riot of 1929 was one of the revolts against the colonial regime in Nigeria and for that is an important landmark in the history of the nationalist movement.<sup>xv</sup> Women also formed women’s wings of the major political parties in colonial Nigeria. The National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), which was formed by Herbert Macauley and Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, had working committees with female members.<sup>xvi</sup> In the early fifties, Lagos has a female deputy Mayor in the person of Mrs. Mabel Ojike and a few city council members were women as well.<sup>xvii</sup>

Some other invaluable contributions include the formation of ethnic and career-based affiliations and associations such as the Nigeria Women’s Union (NWU) led by Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti.<sup>xviii</sup> In 1959, the National Council of Women’s Society (NCWS) was formed as a non-partisan umbrella society for women’s organizations.<sup>xix</sup> The same year, the Aba Women’s Association (AWA) was formed under the leadership of Mrs. Margaret Ekpo to provide a platform for women to engage in the political process.<sup>xx</sup> With such marvellous contributions and participation, it is unbelievable that decades later, women would be fighting to get into the various levels of government in Nigeria.

In October 1979, Nigeria adopted a presidential system of government after thirteen years of military rule. The constitution at that time was drafted by 50 men – all members of the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC).<sup>xxi</sup> The military government later appointed four women as special members of the constituent assembly to vet the already drafted constitution after a series of protests.<sup>xxii</sup> Out of 250 members of the constituent assembly, only one woman was elected.<sup>xxiii</sup> This trend has continued to date, even with modern-day feminist movements globally and nationally.

The current constitution was adopted in 1999 when Nigeria transitioned to civilian rule following another lengthy military rule over 16 years.<sup>xxiv</sup> Since then, Nigeria has gained a

reputation for not having smooth transitions from one administration to another. Elections have been marred with violence in one way or the other, except in 2015 when the ruling party lost the elections and conceded with civility.<sup>xxv</sup> The transition moved Nigeria closer to the threshold of democratization by meeting key criteria: alternation of government by free, fair and competitive multi-party elections; and the participation of the electorate through an unrestrained contest for elective positions and the exercise of the right to vote by citizens who are 18 years old and above.<sup>xxvi</sup>

Even with the seemingly positive stride to deepening democracy in Nigeria set by the 2015 general elections, women still (remove) remain grossly under-represented in elective offices and political leadership positions.<sup>xxvii</sup> Nigeria has not only failed to make significant progress in women's representation in both elective and appointive public offices (remove comma) but has steadily retrogressed in global ranking.<sup>xxviii</sup> On the 2021 World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report, Nigeria ranked 149 (out of 155) in political empowerment, and on the overall global gender gap index, it ranked 139 out of 156 countries (with a 63% gender gap).<sup>xxix</sup> The number of women elected into the Senate in Nigeria rose from 3 in 1999 to 9 in 2007 out of 109, only to slump to 7 in 2011 and has not risen above that since then.<sup>xxx</sup> The number of female members of the House of Representatives rose from 13 in 1999 to 26 in 2007 out of 360 but later slumped to 11 in 2021.<sup>xxxi</sup>

This persistent poor women representation in Nigeria's government after several cycles of elections and different administrations compels an in-depth analysis of the socio-cultural and institutional apparatus that sustains the Nigerian polity. Women's political empowerment stems from the fact that democratic resilience requires that political systems and processes take account of the voice and agency of all populations.<sup>xxxii</sup> Women as equal participants in the decision-making that affects their lives and communities, is both a rights issue and an issue of democratic integrity.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

## **Towards Effective Implementation of International and Regional Commitments**

### **➤ The Problem of Representation**

One of the ways that the concept of representation can be explained would be by drawing from Hanna Fenichel Pitkin's well-established four-part typology, which makes distinctions between descriptive, substantive, formal and symbolic representation<sup>xxxiv</sup>. With the focus on two of the four – substantive and descriptive, Pitkin describes substantive representation as 'acting in the interests of the represented in a manner responsive to them', which is commonly operationalized as 'policy responsiveness'.<sup>xxxv</sup> Women can be said to be represented when public policy deliberations take into consideration the potential impact on their interests. Furthermore, Pitkin's typology refers to descriptive representation as a situation where the leadership mirrors the backgrounds of the represented.<sup>xxxvi</sup> The 2006 national census in Nigeria, shows that women are almost half of the population<sup>xxxvii</sup>; however, the current structure of the government does not seem to mirror that.

Every human being enjoys the same dignity and is entitled to the same possibilities to participate in the decision-making of their community. Historically, the idea of universal suffrage was a conquest that took many centuries to happen as women and ethnic minorities were denied political rights<sup>xxxviii</sup>. In the United States of America, the term ‘one man, one vote (today, more appropriately, *one person, one vote*) designates a rule of equal representation, as stated in the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, 1868, Section 2:

*“Representation shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State...”<sup>xxxix</sup>*

Nowadays, the consensus is that the principle of equality requires every human to be equally represented in the deliberative chambers of the country.<sup>xl</sup> Equality in representation, therefore, is essential for democracy.

Rwanda is known to be the first country to achieve 50% female representation in parliament on the continent of Africa and indeed, the world. Additionally, the government has in place, policies and strategies to promote the role of women in economic development and specifically in agriculture, where the vast majority of women work.<sup>xli</sup> Rwanda has made a strong commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women as the country went further to ratify and domesticate the CEDAW.<sup>xlii</sup> When international law has been ratified and gazetted (published in the Rwandan Official Gazette; Article 190 of the 2003 Constitution) its provisions take precedence over national laws. In other words, the Rwandan law generally provides for gender equality in line with international laws and its 2003 Constitution guarantees gender equality (Preamble 9, 10 and Article 9).<sup>xliii</sup>

According to the UN Women, 52% of Senegal’s population is female<sup>xliv</sup>. This is reasonably one of the reasons why women should be involved in making decisions affecting their lives, views and priorities. Senegal gained international recognition for its adoption of a Gender Parity Law (2010) as part of its efforts towards increasing women’s participation. As a result of this law, which demands parity on electoral lists, the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament has increased significantly from 19.2% in 2001 to 43% in the 2017 elections.<sup>xlv</sup> Additionally, Women represent 21% of ministers in the National Government (8 women out of 39 members).<sup>xlvi</sup> Despite this effort by the Senegalese government and the statutory provisions aimed at inclusion and participation, women still face a number of constraints such as difficulty in access to land, access to markets, and access to financial mechanisms.<sup>xlvii</sup>

Statutory reforms in both Senegal and Rwanda as is evident, have led to the increase of women’s participation and inclusion in governance. Perhaps a model that Nigeria should adopt to usher more women into the political leadership space; since the population of women is almost half of the men according to the 2006 National census, they deserve a significant percentage in the structure of leadership in Nigeria. Another African country, which is making efforts to increase women’s participation is South Africa. President Cyril Ramaphosa appointed a cabinet made up of 50% women in 2019, for the first time in South Africa’s history.<sup>xlviii</sup> The appointment of more women and young people was

described as reflecting a good balance of gender, youth, geographical spread and experience.<sup>xlix</sup> In support of his government's deliberate effort to increase women's representation and inclusion, President Ramaphosa posited in his speech during the commemoration of the 2022 Women's Day, that 40% of public procurement spend would be committed to female-owned businesses.<sup>l</sup> This he said in recognition that women bear the brunt of poverty in South Africa.<sup>li</sup>

Women in other African countries discussed above (Senegal, Rwanda and South Africa) seem to experience peculiar challenges like women in Nigeria; however, the kinds of efforts being made by other governments to increase women's representation and inclusion are not made in Nigeria. The attempt at using legislation and policies to encourage women's participation has not yielded any positive results. The Gender and Equal Opportunities (GEO) bill<sup>lii</sup> sponsored by Senator Biodun Olujimi in both the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Assemblies was not supported by the male-dominated legislature, and the 2006 National Gender Policy, which prescribed reserving 35% of appointments into public offices for women<sup>liii</sup>, is never adhered to. In April 2022, the Federal High Court sitting in Abuja ruled that the government was not in compliance with the National Gender Policy in appointive positions.<sup>liv</sup> There has been no action taken by the government to comply with this requirement.

### ➤ **Diagnosis of Women's Political Participation in Nigeria**

Women's political participation in Nigeria started before independence. Colonialism altered women's position in their societies and particularly affected their economic roles and ability to participate in local politics and government.<sup>lv</sup> In a society where politics is masculinized and women's subordination to male authority is considered a virtue like in Nigeria, women's political participation would naturally face constraints. Before independence, women formed mass-based interest groups. One of the pre-independence women-led interest groups formed was the Lagos Market Women Association (LMWA), which was formed in the mid-1920s.<sup>lvi</sup> The group led by Madam Alimotu Pelewura was claimed to have been linked to Herbert Macaulay, founder of the first modern political party in Nigeria – Nigeria National Democratic Party (NNDP) in 1923.<sup>lvii</sup> The LMWA sought to oppose government measures inimical to women's interests, like the 1932 attempt to levy a tax on women in Lagos, which was fought against by the LMWA led by Pelewura.<sup>lviii</sup>

In the early 1950s, the women's political party, Women Movement of Nigeria (WM) led by its president, Mrs. Elizabeth Adekogbe, wrote in the context of the constitutional conference being prepared in Nigeria for 1956 to move the discussion forward about the political rights of Nigerian women.<sup>lix</sup> An extract from the article reads:

***“The nomination of women as ‘special members’ in our Legislature can be regarded as the beginning of the recognition of women’s rights to such Assemblies. We have scored. But this system will not persist as it cannot stand the test of time and popularity, and I hope that men who cling tenaciously to old practices and prejudices when women’s problems are discussed***

***will keep their minds open and study exactly what women want.... The nomination system will never satisfy us just as it failed to satisfy men. It confers an inferior status on the women of the country and the fact that we have been relegated to the background should move us to think very seriously of our future status”.***<sup>lx</sup>

The extract clearly highlights part of the constraints that women who fought to break into the political arena faced, and several decades after, women are still facing the same.

Women continued to form career-based affiliations and associations that provided the basis for their political mobilization. One of such was the Nigerian Women’s Union (NWU) led by Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, which later became the Federation of Nigerian Women’s Societies.<sup>lxi</sup> Women formed wings to the major political parties and although the associations were not autonomous, they provided a platform for women to engage in politics. Nigerian politics after independence alternated between civilian administrations and military regimes. While the military dominated the political history from 1966 – 1979, 1983 – 93 and 1994 – 1998; the civilian administrations ran from 1960 - 1965, 1979 – 1983 and 1999 to present. Women’s participation throughout this political history irrespective of their immense contribution to Nigeria’s political history was abysmal due to male dominance. This seems to buttress what the Women’s Movement of Nigeria’s article referred to as being conferred an “inferior status”.

Women’s lower propensity to engage in political leadership in Nigeria raises normative concerns and has important policy consequences. Given that men and women tend to hold divergent political views, lower levels of political participation among women can produce policies that are systematically biased against women and consequently could reinforce inequities in social and economic domains.<sup>lxii</sup> That is why for decades now, international development agencies have skirted gender issues in highly patriarchal societies like Nigeria. For instance, the World Bank supports the training of female political candidates in Morocco., and the Asian Development Bank is promoting gender-sensitive judicial and police reforms in Pakistan.<sup>lxiii</sup> Women’s status has advanced in many other countries where there has been a steady narrowing of gender gaps leading to lower infant mortality rates, increased school enrollment, access to health care and political participation.<sup>lxiv</sup> These changes have benefitted the society at large, improving living standards and attracting foreign direct investment.<sup>lxv</sup> It is therefore evident why Nigeria ranks low on global development indices, and why women issues (like the GEO bill) are relegated to the rear.

The constraints on Nigerian women, limiting their access to the political leadership space like patriarchal and conservative practices, often linked to religious values, are increasingly recognized as a drag on development, and evidently responsible for the ‘killing’ of the pro-women bills at the National Assembly.<sup>lxvi</sup> The rejected proposed legislations include –

1. Bill 35 – to provide women with additional seats in the National and State Houses of Assembly
2. Bill 36 – to expand the scope of citizenship by marriage.



3. Bill 37 – to provide for affirmative action for women in political party administration.
4. Bill 38 – to allow women to become indigenes of their spouses' hometown.
5. Bill 68 – to give women a quota in the federal and state executive councils.<sup>lxxvii</sup>

According to the OECD, a large body of theoretical and empirical analysis exists on the link between investment in women's human capital and economic growth.<sup>lxxviii</sup> It has been proven to improve the economic and social opportunities of young and upcoming individuals, thereby helping to reduce poverty and foster technological progress.<sup>lxxix</sup> It is therefore questionable why an important group, which makes up about half of the human capital should be excluded from contributing to the growth and development of Nigeria.

### **Theoretical Approaches to Women's Visibility in Decision-Making**

As has been established, women's human capital is crucial for the development of Nigeria. The 2006 national census places the female population at almost half of the entire country's population,<sup>lxxx</sup> which makes the women a formidable workforce. The Beijing Platform for Action agreed at the Fourth UN Conference on Women (Beijing 1995), is credited for spurring the global diffusion of gender mainstreaming as a 'rights-based approach to development' and the new standard strategy to achieve gender equality.<sup>lxxxi</sup> Scholars argue that all is not lost and that gender mainstreaming still has transformative potential that can be realized if it is understood to be an evolving, incremental process.<sup>lxxxii</sup>

Understanding that political parties in Nigeria is deeply masculinized, and masculinity is privileged, it can be concluded that women face unique challenges just because they are women.<sup>lxxxiii</sup> Additionally, women's minimal presence in the political space in the country is an outcome of the interplay of economic and socio-cultural factors of the political system.<sup>lxxxiv</sup> Therefore, until these factors are curtailed, women's visibility in the political leadership space will remain bleak. With the rules of engagement clearly different for women compared to their male counterparts, some scholars have argued that women were responsible for their own political underrepresentation due to their unwillingness to support one another.<sup>lxxxv</sup> However, this discourse was contentious because while some women validated the view that women do not support women, some others claimed to have achieved electoral success because they depended on fellow women.<sup>lxxxvi</sup>

Studies have shown that for greater political participation of women and of course, increased visibility, the challenges posed by exclusive and unaccountable governance must be overcome, and strategies that promote people-centered governance need to be developed.<sup>lxxxvii</sup> This can be achieved through bridging gaps between governance norms and policies and their implementation as well as strengthening existing movements that empower women. Education is crucial in this regard but with UNICEF reporting that 60% of the 10 million out-of-school children are girls,<sup>lxxxviii</sup> Nigeria's future women do not seem to be preparing for empowerment.

In understanding a rights-based approach to democracy, it is important to recognize that democracy is an issue of degree, with values and principles intrinsic to it.<sup>lxxxix</sup> These principles include popular control over public decision-making and decision-makers as well as equality of citizens (both male and female) in the exercise of that control.<sup>lxxx</sup> These principles expose the root causes of vulnerability and do not encourage marginalization while empowering citizens across the board to exercise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities.<sup>lxxxii</sup> It is therefore evident that democracy in Nigeria is neither rights-based nor people-centered; otherwise, almost half of its population would not be marginalized. Even the Pitkin's typology of descriptive representation as earlier discussed does not apply as the structure of governance does not mirror the structure of the society; otherwise, women would constitute almost half of the appointive and elective positions.

➤ **Historical and political factors that have positively influenced women's political participation**

The gender and age structure of the transatlantic slave trade several centuries ago is critical to understanding the development of women in the political structure today. From the broad perspective of contact between the Old World and the New, the two salient characteristics that emerged were – the male predomination of the Atlantic slave trade and secondly, the proportion of African females carried across the Atlantic, varying in age and regional spread over time.<sup>lxxxiii</sup> The explanation for this has been the economic functions, but especially the requirements of the plantation complexes of the Americas.<sup>lxxxiii</sup> Even though the New World planters demanded men, they quickly discovered that enslaved African women had a high work rate.<sup>lxxxiv</sup> The few historians who explored the gender structure of the slave trade saw the predominance of males in overseas export as more a function of supply than demand and that women commanded higher prices in domestic African slave markets, whereas men were sold for higher prices in markets supplying the Atlantic.<sup>lxxxv</sup> Women thus constituted the larger group of slaves in Africa – a trend that has cascaded into the present times, not as slaves per se but as persons 'lower' than the men.

As the transatlantic slave trade subsided centuries later, slaves were diverted towards domestic use, for agricultural labour, as porters for "legitimate trade".<sup>lxxxvi</sup> Land and slaves were often organized towards palm oil production in the Bight of Biafra outside Old Calabar and the hinterland regions.<sup>lxxxvii</sup> While men were generally responsible for the harvest, women did most of the remaining labour, including removing the palm nuts, cooking them and extracting the oil, as well as selling them to the markets.<sup>lxxxviii</sup> The ability of women to participate in this business changed the dynamics and women dominated palm oil production, which led to their greater involvement in commerce. Women thereafter began to gain power and prestige through trading.<sup>lxxxix</sup>

Having played a key role in the development of the economy of Nigeria from the colonial era, it is expected that women should have a stake in decision-making; however, women

remained sidelined, which eventually led them to take their ‘war’ to the streets to fight ‘indirect rule’. The indirect rule system of colonial administration recognized male authority through the creation of male warrant chiefs and effectively excluded women from all colonial state political structures.<sup>xc</sup> In 1929, women in the south-eastern part of Nigeria mobilized through local grassroots groups in communities in such towns as Aba, Port Harcourt, Onitsha and Calabar to demonstrate against indirect rule.<sup>xc<sup>i</sup></sup> They were particularly grieved over the threat of being taxed following rumours spread during an altercation while counting livestock.<sup>xc<sup>ii</sup></sup> Women formed pressure groups like the Women’s Movement of Nigeria, Nigeria Women’s Movement, Lagos Market Women Association, and other groups as earlier mentioned, in order to cater to women’s interests.

After independence in 1960, came the declaration of the United Nations (UN) Decade for Women, 1976-85, which drew attention to the need to grant greater freedom and more privileges to womenfolk throughout the world, in addition to the need to study their role in societies, the challenges they face and the best ways to enable them to participate effectively in their own self-actualization.<sup>xc<sup>iii</sup></sup> The colonial government’s interventionist approach created a political and economic imbalance based on gender, and made export and agricultural production male-dominated, thereby limiting women’s role in agro-commerce.<sup>xc<sup>iv</sup></sup> It is clear, therefore that the strategic nature of women’s structural position as mere reproductive laborers cannot be traced to any lack of entrepreneurial skill, rather it was as a result of colonial conspiracy that offered the men opportunities for capital accumulation. Consequently, the men dominated both economic and political leadership spaces and control.

The UN Year of Women and the years that followed have brought a welcome change and a feminist awakening that embolden women to take the leap into political leadership spaces formerly dominated by the men. As women have become the subject of discussions due to the changing emphasis on the terms like women’s welfare, women development, women empowerment and gender equity in the social, economic and political analysis of both developing and developed countries,<sup>xc<sup>v</sup></sup> the Nigerian woman is more encouraged than ever to participate in governance. Feminist movements were born out of the concrete experiences, realities and possibilities of women’s life.<sup>xc<sup>vi</sup></sup> It has been active internationally and has multiplied in the last several decades as women’s rights movements.

**“... The full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life, at national, regional and international levels, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on the grounds of sex are priority objectives of the international community.”**

- Article 18, Vienna Declaration on Human Rights (1993)

This international strategy for women’s empowerment that emerged linked women’s rights agendas to the increasingly vocal and visible international human rights campaigns. Key moments in the campaign include – the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conference on Women

(Nairobi, 1985); the second United Nations World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993); and the 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), where the campaign gained more visibility, momentum and sophistication.<sup>xcvii</sup> There were other campaigns like the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>xcviii</sup> of 2000, which included the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>xcix</sup> of 2015, which has gender equality as one of its goals.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ➤ Beijing Declaration and SDGs

The fourth world conference on Women in Beijing established clearly that women are a global force for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and that women's human rights are central to women's leadership.<sup>c</sup> The activities formed a groundswell of support for making the platform an affirmation of the human rights of women, including women's rights to education, health and freedom from violence as well as to the exercise of citizenship in all its manifestations.<sup>ci</sup> The tenth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2005 (Beijing +10) sparked a great deal of discussion among activists and scholars about whether gender mainstreaming, the flagship strategy of the platform was working.<sup>cii</sup> Most concluded that in the decade following the widespread diffusion of gender mainstreaming, there had been a failure to sustain the interest and commitment of governments to women's empowerment.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and in the future.<sup>ciii</sup> The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) became an urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing - in a global partnership. The 17 goals are as follows:

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere;
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all;
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all;
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation;
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries;
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts;
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development;
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss;

16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels;
17. Strengthen the mean of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.<sup>civ</sup>

With regards to SDG 5 – achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, Nigeria seems to be retrogressing rather than progressing. The National Assembly failed to pass pro-women bills, and the Gender and Equal Opportunities (GEO) bill failed to scale through at the National Assembly<sup>cv</sup> as well, and UNICEF estimates that 60% of the 10 million<sup>cvi</sup> out-of-school children are girls. The statistics are not pointing towards any form of progress under SDG 5.

### Women’s political participation in local or sub-national governments

Women have managed to get elected at both national and sub-national levels of government. What scholars argue about, however, is the low number of women’s represented at each level, compared to the men. Since Nigeria transitioned to a democracy in 1999, no woman has been elected as a governor though a few have been deputy governors. Below is a table showing women representation at sub-national levels in Nigeria:

POLITICAL OFFICE	1999		2003		2007		2011		2015	
	No of Seats	Women	No of seats	Women	No of seats	Women	No of seats	Women	No of seats	Women
<b>Governor</b>	36	0	36	0	36	0	36	0	36	0
<b>Dep Governor</b>	36	1	36	2	36	6	36	3	36	4
<b>State House of Assembly</b>	990	12	990	38	990	52	990	62	-	-
<b>L.G.A. Chairpersons</b>	710	9	774	15	740	27	740	-	-	-
<b>Councillors</b>	8,810	143	6368	267	6368	235	6368	-	-	-

Source: National Bureau of Statistics<sup>cvi</sup>

### ➤ Barriers to equal access for women

In 1998, Francis Fukuyama wrote in *Foreign Affairs* that women’s political leadership would bring about a more cooperative and less conflict-prone world (“Women and the Evolution of World Politics,” 1998).<sup>cvi</sup> This is unfortunately not the case globally. There are a few women who are breaking the glass ceiling and becoming presidents, prime ministers, legislators and even heads of global institutions; however, the numbers are still very low compared to the men. A recent World Economic report covering 115 countries notes that women have closed over 90% of the gender gap in education and health, but only 15% of it when it comes to political empowerment at the highest levels.<sup>cix</sup> In the United States, the Capitol Hill had a historic antipathy towards women, who were denied the vote for 133 years, refused an equal rights amendment and shut out of

government-funded health research for decades.<sup>cx</sup> On the continent of Africa, the same trend persists.

A Research conducted by the World Bank has shown that countries with a high number of women in parliament enjoy levels of corruption because women are less likely to be involved in bribery and that corruption is less severe where women make up a large share of senior government officials as well as the labour force.<sup>cx<sup>i</sup></sup> An instance was in 2003 when the watchdog group, Transparency International (TI) ranked Nigeria as the most corrupt country in the world, but in 2005 when Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala became the country's finance minister, TI was hailing Nigeria as one of the 21 most improved states.<sup>cx<sup>ii</sup></sup>

The Nigerian political culture seems to be uncondusive for women, hence their low level of participation. Scholars have argued that the terrain has become too dangerous to venture into mainstream politics and that religious beliefs and institutional arrangements tend to restrict women to family responsibilities. Some of the factors that preclude women from participating in politics include –

1. **Socio-economic development** – This is often referred to as ‘economic modernity’. It focuses on economic development and considers increases in democracy and human choice as the direct outcome of economic development.<sup>cx<sup>iii</sup></sup> In relation to Concerning women's participation and inclusion, this approach holds that economic development is central to increasing the pool of women eligible for positions of power, and a country's level of development correlates with women's participation.<sup>cx<sup>iv</sup></sup> Greater access to educational and occupational resources increases women's development and therefore their eligibility to occupy leadership positions; however, as 60% of the 10 million out-of-school children are girls (UNICEF, July 2022), it is most likely that the future will not present a lot of opportunities for women to participate in the leadership space in Nigeria.
2. **Cultural factor** – Culture is defined by some scholars as a socially created phenomenon that is influenced by the history, social experiences, and material circumstances of the people.<sup>cx<sup>v</sup></sup> F. Bari in his paper, ‘Women's Political Participation: Issues and Challenges’, postulates that women have been kept outside the public domain of politics due to the culture of patriarchy as most political thinkers and philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, John Locke, Thomas Hobbes and Hegel considered women fit only for domestic roles, and maintained that there was no place for women in politics.<sup>cx<sup>vi</sup></sup> Thus there is a need for cultural re-evaluation and legal rebalance to shield women from discriminatory practices because cultural beliefs and practices that do not contribute to women's freedom, and socio-economic and political progress have no basis to exist, if Nigeria is to develop.<sup>cx<sup>vii</sup></sup>
3. **Historical legacies stemming from a society's political traditions -**

Scholars have argued that a country's historical developmental trends of social modernization create institutional legacies that affect societies' abilities to improve women's lives.<sup>cxviii</sup> The subordination of women to men is the most persistent form of group discrimination in human history, and Nigeria is no different with the underrepresentation of women in the leadership sphere despite their valuable contributions to the fight for independence and democracy, as have been earlier mentioned. Scholars identified 'resources', 'agency' and 'achievement' as the three key domains of political empowerment.<sup>cxix</sup> When women succeed in these domains, their opportunities to participate in decision-making grow. As the leadership space in Nigeria has been historically dominated by men, a lot of advocacy is needed to reform the system (or institutions) that would make the space accommodate more women. No male politician would naturally want to give up his seat for a woman but legal and structural reforms to the political traditions can make it possible.

4. **Institutional design** – The way an institution is structured affects the belief system of any society. A leading social theorist of gender inequality, Chafetz (1988) argues that gendered patterns of work organization diminish women's opportunities to advance to higher statuses in an objective sense.<sup>cxx</sup> Therefore, widening a group's objective opportunities will only advance the group to power if subjective beliefs in the legitimacy and desirability of this group's empowerment emerge. The progressing empowerment of women over recent decades constitutes a true 'civilization process'.<sup>cxxi</sup> Scholars have posited that a 'well-structured' polity is essential to ensure that the political system becomes more gender inclusive. A well-structured polity calls attention to certain factors such as –
- ✓ The state and party organizations through which politicians pursue policies
  - ✓ The effects of political institutions on the identities, goals, and capacities of social groups involved in policymaking,
  - ✓ The correspondence between the goals and capacities of social groups,
  - ✓ The opportunities afforded them by political institutions, and
  - ✓ The ways in which early public policy influences subsequent policy (policy feedbacks)<sup>cxxii</sup>

In terms of the significance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> factor – “the effects of political institutions on the identities, goals and capacities of social groups involved in policymaking”, the term 'social groups' denotes differences in the kind of people involved in policymaking. In other words, it denote diversity. Considering the Nigerian political structure, the term 'diversity' can be said to exist because women are serving in government; however, when women are a minority, their opinions would not count without the support of the male majority. Therefore, there cannot be a true representation of diverse social groups and interests.



## CHAPTER FOUR – ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AND GENDER

### ➤ Electoral systems

*“if one wants to change the nature of a particular democracy, the electoral system is likely to be the most suitable and effective instrument for doing so” - Arend Lijphart (1995: 412)<sup>cxix</sup>*

The electoral system sets the rules by which candidates are elected into public offices. It impact on the number of political parties represented in the governance structure, their coalition and campaigning strategies and may ultimately facilitate or inhibit cooperation among the political representatives of different ethnic groups.<sup>cxix</sup> Electoral systems are typically said to be broadly divided into 3 categories: -

- a) **Plurality-majority systems**, which simply means ‘winner-takes-all’ and the major disadvantage is that they strongly favour larger political parties and consequently impede the representation of ethnic minorities.<sup>cxix</sup> The exclusion of ethnic or religious minority interests from the political arena usually leads to instability; for instance, the formation of separatist groups purportedly fighting for the interest of their people in Nigeria is because of the dominance of certain groups<sup>cxix</sup>.
- b) **Proportional representation (PR)**, which favors proportionality using multi-member electoral districts. The dominant form of proportional representation is list-PR, where each party presents a list of candidates to the electorates who vote for a party rather than a candidate.<sup>cxix</sup> The seats are distributed in proportion to the overall share of votes that the parties receive, which fosters inclusive representation.
- c) **Mixed systems**, which aim to combine the benefits of list PR and single-member electoral districts and are gaining popularity. This system basically involves both methods mentioned above (list-PR and plurality-majority methods).

Democratization in Nigeria has ushered in change, rebirth and renewal; yet the electoral season has not been bereft of fragility and crisis. On November 28<sup>th</sup> 2022, a woman, Victoria Chintex who served as Labour Party’s woman leader was gunned down in her home in Kaduna State by unknown gunmen.<sup>cxix</sup> In 2019, another woman leader, Salome Abuh of the the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) was burnt to death in Kogi State.<sup>cxix</sup> This incessant violence against women political figures has contributed to this fragility and crisis.

### ➤ The role of Electoral Management Bodies

The quest for democracy by nation-states like Nigeria through an orderly process involving interest groups vying for political power makes election inevitable.<sup>cxix</sup> With a democracy of more than 2 decades now, Nigeria prepares for periodic and regular elections that have become part and parcel of the process of expanding and deepening

the democratic space. Consequently, bodies are constituted and charged with the crucial duty of the country’s democratization process. The nature and character of these bodies, as well as the way and manner they’re established have a lot of implications of their performance capacity in the final analysis: the type of election they would be capable of mid-wiving, the legitimacy or otherwise of that election and the electorates’ perception of this.<sup>cxxxix</sup>

Historically, Nigeria has had Electoral Management Bodies (EMB) since the fifties. Between 1954 and 2009, the country has had about 11 electoral bodies. Before 1959, elections in Nigeria were managed by the regional government which operated separate electoral regulations; however, the 1954-1958 constitutional conference raised recommendations in favour of the establishment of a permanent and impartial body to conduct future elections in the country. As a result, a law was passed formally creating the Electoral Commission of Nigeria (ECN). The body had the responsibility of registering voters and conducting federal elections. Over the years, Nigeria has had several electoral management bodies before the current Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as listed below:

S/N	NAME OF BODY	YEAR OF EXISTENCE
1	Electoral Commission of Nigeria (ECN)	1958
2	Federal Electoral Commission (FEC)	1964
3	Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO)	1976
4	National Electoral Commission (NEC)	1987
5	National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON)	1994
6	Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)	1998

Source: Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria <sup>cxxxix</sup>

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was established under Section 153(1)(f) of the 1999 Constitution<sup>cxxxix</sup> as a federal executive body whose chairman is appointed by the President. INEC is statutorily allocated funds by the federal government through its Independent National Electoral Commission Fund under Section 3 of the Electoral Act 2022. The fund for any general election is usually allocated to it one year before the elections.<sup>cxxxix</sup> Section 2 of the Electoral Act 2022 provides that INEC was established to carry out the following functions –

1. to conduct voter and civic education
2. to promote knowledge of sound democratic election processes
3. conduct any referendum required under the provisions of the Constitution or an Act of the National Assembly.

And just like the Electoral Commission of Nigeria, INEC has the responsibility of registering voters and conducting general elections in Nigeria.

➤ **Gender mainstreaming in policies, actions, and institutions.**

‘Gender mainstreaming’ is a concept that still does not enjoy public support, and its applications and purposes are often misunderstood. Among the uninitiated, it tends to elicit reactions ranging from amused bafflement to scepticism, irritation, and outright hostility.<sup>cxxxv</sup> Gender mainstreaming simply means strategizing to bring equality between men and women. It involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and institutions, with a view to promoting to promote equality between women and men and combating discrimination.<sup>cxxxvi</sup>

Gender mainstreaming is therefore essential in the Nigerian political structure because ensuring equality between male and female politicians is a way to get more women into the leadership space.

The idea that policies are developed to ‘solve’ social and policy problems is a commonsense proposition in most thinking about public policy.<sup>cxxxvii</sup> Mainstreaming gender in policy requires that due consideration be given to inequalities and implications at the outset and at every stage of the policy process.<sup>cxxxviii</sup> The core of the gender roles theory is that men and women are considered as different and opposite to each other; however, the argument is not that of biological or physical difference, it is that differences are automatically assigned in order to exclude people as members of a certain group from certain tasks or positions.<sup>cxxxix</sup> This is typical stereotyping. The unfortunate side of gender stereotyping in politics is that persons with the best skills are not necessarily elected, in other words, this is not a question of gender equality or dogmatic ‘feminist project’, but a question of efficiency.<sup>cxl</sup>

Institutional strategies are input-side actions aimed at structural change within governments and agencies including issues of responsibility for mainstreaming, accountability, coordination, monitoring and evaluation and personnel policy.<sup>cxli</sup> A mainstreaming approach goes beyond integration and implies what has been called an ‘agenda-setting’ – an approach which seeks to transform the development agenda itself, through the introduction of a gender perspective.<sup>cxlii</sup> This approach, which was central to the Platform of Action adopted at the 1995 Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women, calls for the promotion of a policy of mainstreaming. For some international agencies, like the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), mainstreaming included focused initiatives to support women’s empowerment while others like the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), adopted a twin-track approach: addressing gender issues as an integral part of all development activities and supporting specific activities to enhance women’s empowerment and gender equality.<sup>cxliii</sup> Nigeria can benefit from both models – supporting women’s empowerment and development activities to enhance gender equality, and gender mainstreaming in the leadership space.

- **Specific equality and mainstreaming policies and mechanisms for gender equality**

As already discussed above, gender mainstreaming is just one of the strategies for promoting gender equality. It is not all about adding a ‘woman’s component’ into an existing activity, it is about exhibiting the experience, knowledge and interest of women and men to bear in the development agenda.<sup>cxliv</sup> This will require changes in goals, strategies, and actions so that both men and women can influence, participate in and benefit from the development process.<sup>cxlv</sup> Thus, the goal of gender mainstreaming is the transformation of unequal social, political, and institutional structures into platforms that hold equal opportunities for both men and women.

#### Data gathering

As a mechanism, the UNDP introduced the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) in 1995, which evaluates the progress of women advancing in political and economic forums.<sup>cxlvi</sup> It examines the extent to which women and men can actively participate in economic and political life and involve in decision-making.<sup>cxlvii</sup> It gauges the relative empowerment of men and women, looking at their participation in political decision-making, women’s access to professional opportunities, and women’s earning power.<sup>cxlviii</sup> This mechanism can be adopted by Nigeria to gather data on women’s political and economic power as well as measure gender-based gaps to be able to design interventions that can increase the number of women in these sectors, towards achieving a balance between men and women.

#### Pro-women policies

Across the globe, women earn less over their lifetime than men for comparable employment.<sup>cxlix</sup> In Nigeria, women by virtue of a low access to higher education and better-paid jobs compared to the men, also lag in national statistics.<sup>cl</sup> According to PWC, women account for 41% of business ownership and 3.4% of employment within micro-enterprises.<sup>cli</sup> Nigeria requires policies that would promote women’s empowerment given that globally women only earn about 77% of what men earn for the same position and women are more likely to be unemployed than men (PWC, 2020). Empowering women economically boosts productivity, and increases economic diversification, and income equality.<sup>clii</sup> Studies have shown that gender gaps cost economies some 15% of their GDP.<sup>cliii</sup> Therefore, when women work, economies grow.

When women work, economies grow.

#### Legislative reform

An adequate legal framework is crucial to ensure equal or balanced participation of men and women in the political space. Nigeria’s government should ensure to undertake a legislative reform to ensure political parties’ rules and regulations do not disadvantage women.<sup>cliv</sup> For instance, a political party should not just reserve the office of the woman leader for the female members. The reform should introduce a quota system (affirmative

action) in the electoral laws like in the case of Senegal, which adopted a national law on parity in elective and semi-elective bodies in 2010.<sup>clv</sup> As a signatory to the CEDAW and Maputo Protocol, Nigeria just like Senegal is required to protect and promote the right to equality for women, as well as ensure that SDG 5 (gender equality) is met.<sup>clvi</sup> While Senegal has taken giant strides to pass the gender parity laws, Nigeria is yet to pass pro-women bills in at the legislature that would have given women equal citizenship with the men, and reserved seats for women in the legislature.

As part of a legislative reform, a quota system can be adopted just like in Senegal and codified to represent the minimum percentage of women that should be employed in government ministries, departments, and agencies.

### Social (behavioural) change

Gender stereotypes can hinder women's political representation and reduce women's likelihood of putting themselves forward as candidates, and of being selected within the party.<sup>clvii</sup> These stereotypes affect the voters as well as their decisions to elect women for specific political functions. However, these stereotypes can change and pose less challenges at all levels of the society if, -

1. Women are given equal visibility as the men by the media,
2. Women are featured in public debates and invited to make appearances at events, where they can have the opportunity to bolster their image,
3. Women are appointed into public offices so that they can show their abilities,
4. Women who have made remarkable achievements are represented in subjects in schools.<sup>clviii</sup>

These are some of the ways discriminatory and exclusionary practices can be dealt with – the process of mainstreaming.<sup>clix</sup> This behavioural change needs to start from the family unit – raising the next generation with a different mindset, reworking, disrupting, contesting, transgressing and transforming the dominant codes and behaviours of society.<sup>clx</sup> Farida Shaheed, the former UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, wrote in 2014 that no social group has a suffered greater violation of human rights in the name of culture than women. Heritage has been gendered and has perpetuated stereotypes for so long.

### ➤ **Gender-sensitive institutions**

Gender-sensitive institutions have been defined by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) as institutions that are founded on gender equality, where women and men have an equal right to participate without discrimination or recrimination.<sup>clxi</sup> Gender equality is in the interest of both men and women and a pre-condition for genuine democracy.<sup>clxii</sup> That is why it must be taken seriously in Nigeria, especially, as the country struggles to have a stable democratic government. Within developing countries like Nigeria, there are significant variations in gender equality across different income groups. For instance, women in the poorest income quintile have consistently higher fertility rates and more child marriages than those in the richest.<sup>clxiii</sup>

Gender-based inequality and exclusion of women have proven to be an intractable issue in Nigeria, despite being a signatory to the CEDAW. The Gender and Equal Opportunities (GEO) Bill, which seeks to domesticate certain provisions of the CEDAW, has made it before the Nigerian legislature severally for consideration and has continued to face rejection mainly by the male-dominated majority.<sup>clxiv</sup> In essence, despite so much having been done in the name of gender-sensitive social inclusion, the inadequate benefit has been felt by women on the ground, especially regarding women's representation in influential political and economic positions.<sup>clxv</sup>

Gender sensitivity in institutions is not just about treating men and women equally. It is about understanding the gender differences rationally and making the working atmosphere as comfortable for women as it is for men while being conscientious of these biological differences.<sup>clxvi</sup> It is time to accept that pregnancy and child-care are not shortcomings but rather, not knowing how to accommodate women going through these phases is a shortcoming on the part of the institution.<sup>clxvii</sup> In 2021, a female corporal, Olajide Omolola was dismissed from the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) for getting pregnant while being unmarried.<sup>clxviii</sup> Though Regulation 127 of the Police Force provides that an unmarried police officer shall be discharged if she falls pregnant while unmarried, and the corporal was dismissed in conformity with the regulation, it is a clear example of an institution that has failed to accommodate a woman's divine right to procreate; hence has this shortcoming.

An institution like INEC has a gender policy (2021 – 2025) and as part of its guiding principles, empowering and building the capacity of women as well as men to actively participate in all electoral processes in the pursuit of parity while promoting diversity.<sup>clxix</sup> Additionally, the institutions policy vision is to be one of the most gender-responsive and inclusive election management bodies in the world and strive to make the electoral process more inclusive.<sup>clxx</sup> Nigeria needs gender-sensitive institutions in order to thrive and create an environment where gender parity can be possible. An atmosphere of trust and collegiality is the hallmark of a healthy institution.

#### ➤ **Political parties and parity democracy**

Growth literature has shown that economic growth and human development can be explained by physical and human capital accumulation and technological change, as well as trade, governance and cultural factors such as gender inequality.<sup>clxxi</sup> Gender inequality in governance could affect growth via political decisions. Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2001) suggest that female policymakers tend to invest more in productive infrastructure, which in turn promotes growth.<sup>clxxii</sup> These factors may explain why some countries grow more rapidly than others.

A combination of structural and interpersonal factors has been blamed for women under-representation in Nigerian politics today.<sup>clxxiii</sup> These factors include cultural prejudice, reproductive life, lack of resources, the bad image of party politics and patriarchal hierarchies.<sup>clxxiv</sup> These parity challenges, nascent movements for political

parity have coalesced into affirmative action being pursued to achieve gender parity in politics.

#### PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2019<sup>clxxv</sup>

TOTAL NUMBER OF CANDIDATES	FEMALE	MALE	ELECTED
73	5	68	Male

#### GOVERNORSHIP ELECTIONS 2019<sup>clxxvi</sup>

STATE	TOTAL NUMBER OF CANDIDATES	FEMALE	MALE	ELECTED
Abia	32	2	30	Male
Adamawa	29	4	25	Male
Akwa Ibom	45	2	43	Male
Bauchi	31	1	30	Male
Benue	33	3	30	Male
Borno	32	0	32	Male
Cross River	26	2	24	Male
Delta	50	8	42	Male
Ebonyi	37	3	34	Male
Enugu	42	5	37	Male
Gombe	32	1	31	Male
Imo	70	4	66	Male
Jigawa	19	1	18	Male
Kaduna	38	2	36	Male
Kano	55	6	49	Male
Katsina	18	0	18	Male
Kebbi	32	1	31	Male
Kwara	35	1	34	Male
Lagos	45	6	39	Male
Nasarawa	29	1	28	Male
Niger	31	2	29	Male
Ogun	41	1	40	Male
Oyo	42	4	38	Male
Plateau	24	0	24	Male
Rivers	64	4	60	Male
Sokoto	51	2	49	Male
Taraba	30	2	28	Male
Yobe	13	1	12	Male
Zamfara	42	2	40	Male

#### CANDIDATES FOR THE 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS BY PARTY AND GENDER – GOVERNORSHIP ELECTIONS<sup>clxxvii</sup>

S/N	STATE	POSITION	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	AG. MALE	AG. FEMALE
1	ABIA	GOV	18	16	2	89%	11%
		Dep Gov	18	14	4	78%	22%

2	ADAMAWA	GOV	15	14	1	93%	7%
		Dep Gov	15	12	3	80%	20%
3	AKWA IBOM	GOV	17	15	2	88%	12%
		Dep Gov	17	11	6	65%	35%
4	BAUCHI	GOV	14	14	0	100%	
		Dep Gov	14	12	2	86%	14%
5	BENUE	GOV	16	14	2	87%	13%
		Dep Gov	16	11	5	69%	31%
6	BORNO	GOV	12	11	1	92%	8%
		Dep Gov	12	12	2	86%	14%
7	CROSS RIVER	GOV	11	10	1	91%	9%
		Dep Gov	11	9	2	82%	18%
8	DELTA	GOV	17	15	2	88%	12%
		Dep Gov	17	9	8	53%	47%
9	EBONYI	GOV	13	12	1	92%	8%
		Dep Gov	13	11	2	85%	15%
10	ENUGU	GOV	17	16	1	94%	6%
		Dep Gov	17	11	6	65%	35%
11	GOMBE	GOV	14	14	0	100%	
		Dep Gov	14	8	6	53%	47%
12	JIGAWA	GOV	12	11	1	92%	8%
		Dep Gov	12	10	2	83%	17%
13	KADUNA	GOV	14	14	0	100%	
		Dep Gov	14	10	4	71%	29%
14	KANO	GOV	17	15	2	88%	12%
		Dep Gov	17	16	1	94%	6%
15	KATSINA	GOV	13	13	0	100%	
		Dep Gov	13	13	0	100%	
16	KEBBI	GOV	15	15	0	100%	
		Dep Gov	15	13	2	87%	13%
17	KWARA	GOV	14	13	1	93%	7%
		Dep Gov	14	11	3	79%	21%
18	LAGOS	GOV	16	14	2	87%	13%
		Dep Gov	16	7	9	44%	56%
19	NASARAWA	GOV	14	13	1	93%	7%
		Dep Gov	14	11	3	79%	21%
20	NIGER	GOV	15	14	1	93%	7%
		Dep Gov	15	13	2	87%	13%
21	OGUN	GOV	12	12	0	100%	-
		Dep Gov	12	4	8	33%	67%
22	OYO	GOV	16	15	1	94%	6%
		Dep Gov	16	10	6	62%	38%
23	PLATEAU	GOV	18	18	0	100%	-
		Dep Gov	18	12	6	67%	33%



24	RIVERS	GOV	17	16	1	94%	6%
		Dep Gov	17	11	6	65%	35%
25	SOKOTO	GOV	17	17	0	100%	
		Dep Gov	17	15	2	88%	12%
26	TARABA	GOV	18	18	0	100%	-
		Dep Gov	18	18	0	100%	-
27	YOBE	GOV	11	11	0	100%	-
		Dep Gov	11	11	0	100%	-
28	ZAMFARA	GOV	14	13	1	93%	7%
		Dep Gov	14	12	2	86%	14%

Source: INEC

\*APC governorship candidate and deputy were excluded in Akwa Ibom state as of November 15, 2022

\*PDP governorship candidate and deputy were excluded from the list in Ogun state as of November 15, 2022

\*NRM party in Benue state fielded women for both governorship and deputy

#### CANDIDATES FOR THE 2023 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION BY GENDER<sup>clxxviii</sup>

POSITION	TOTAL NUMBER OF CANDIDATES	FEMALE	MALE	NOTES
President	36	1	35	APM fielded a female presidential candidate
Vice-President	36	0	36	

Source: INEC

#### ➤ Data on political participation disaggregated by gender

Nigeria's population is estimated a little over 200 million.<sup>clxxix</sup> About 49.4% of this number is estimated to be female; however, overall female political representation does not proportionately represent this percentage. Not only do women constitute almost half of the population of Nigeria, they make up about half of the voting population.<sup>clxxx</sup> Including women as actors in a narrative democracy and democratization is on the most basic level, a question of equity and what democracy actually represents (Mamdani; 1996).<sup>clxxxii</sup> Nigeria can be said to be resistant to the substantial representation of women due to their low participation in governance and decision-making. The inability of Nigeria to have inclusive governance can be attributed to the long period of military rule, weak democratic institutions and a host of other historical factors, which have led to a political culture characterized by monetized politics, violence and abuse of power.<sup>clxxxii</sup>

For Nigeria's democracy to be sustainable, all groups within the population must be actively involved in governance – either to vote or be voted for.<sup>clxxxiii</sup> In 2019, the percentage of women registered to vote, according to INEC was 47.14% compared to the men, which was 52.86% (see table below). These figures, however, do not translate to the actual leadership structure as women hold less than 5% of important decision-making positions in Nigeria.<sup>clxxxiv</sup>

**GENDER COMPOSITION OF REGISTERED VOTERS FOR THE 2019 ELECTIONS<sup>clxxxv</sup>**

S/N	STATE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE AGG.	FEMALE AGG.	TOTAL
1	Abia	971,205	961,687	50.25%	49.75%	1,932,892
2	Adamawa	1,075,265	897,818	54.50%	45.50%	1,973,083
3	Akwa Ibom	1,108,091	1,011,636	52.28%	47.72%	2,119,727
4	Anambra	1,215,828	1,232,168	49.67%	50.33%	2,447,996
5	Bauchi	1,412,898	1,049,945	57.37%	42.63%	2,462,843
6	Bayelsa	498,790	424,392	54.03%	45.97%	923,182
7	Benue	1,305,893	1,174,238	52.65%	47.35%	2,480,131
8	Borno	1,344,769	971,187	58.07%	41.93%	2,315,956
9	Cross River	772,395	754,894	50.57%	49.43%	1,527,289
10	Delta	1,462,558	1,382,716	51.40%	48.60%	2,845,274
11	Ebonyi	660,659	799,274	45.25%	54.75%	1,459,933
12	Edo	1,159,325	1,051,209	52.45%	47.55%	2,210,534
13	Ekiti	449,178	460,789	49.36%	50.64%	909,967
14	Enugu	896,317	1,047,699	46.11%	53.89%	1,944,016
15	FCT	743,238	601,618	55.27%	44.73%	1,344,856
16	Gombe	804,460	589,933	57.69%	42.31%	1,394,393
17	Imo	1,124,937	1,147,356	49.51%	50.49%	2,272,293
18	Jigawa	1,094,332	1,016,774	51.84%	48.16%	2,111,106
19	Kaduna	2,136,210	1,796,282	54.32%	45.68%	3,932,492
20	Kano	3,035,683	2,422,064	55.62%	44.38%	5,457,747
21	Katsina	1,649,766	1,580,464	51.07%	48.93%	3,230,230
22	Kebbi	985,834	820,397	54.58%	45.42%	1,806,231
23	Kogi	825,663	820,687	50.15%	49.85%	1,646,350
24	Kwara	734,061	672,396	52.19%	47.81%	1,406,457
25	Lagos	3,556,294	3,013,997	54.13%	45.87%	6,570,291
26	Nasarawa	845,931	771,855	52.29%	47.71%	1,617,786
27	Niger	1,390,483	999,552	58.18%	41.82%	2,390,035
28	Ogun	1,174,442	1,200,561	49.45%	50.55%	2,375,003
29	Ondo	925,892	896,454	50.81%	49.19%	1,822,346
30	Osun	797,953	882,545	47.48%	52.52%	1,680,498
31	Oyo	1,455,911	1,478,196	49.62%	50.38%	2,934,107
32	Plateau	1,257,251	1,223,204	50.69%	49.31%	2,480,455
33	Rivers	1,724,513	1,490,760	53.64%	46.36%	3,215,273
34	Sokoto	1,096,234	806,932	57.60%	42.40%	1,903,166
35	Taraba	970,266	806,839	54.60%	45.40%	1,777,105
36	Yobe	813,722	552,191	59.57%	40.43%	1,365,913
37	Zamfara	929,192	787,936	54.11%	45.89%	1,717,128
	<b>Total</b>	<b>44,405,439</b>	<b>39,598,645</b>	<b>52.86%</b>	<b>47.14%</b>	<b>84,004,084</b>

Source: INEC

While more women need to vote and be voted for, the INEC team that oversaw the conduct of the 2019 elections lacked equitable representation of women. Out of the 37 Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs), only one was a woman.<sup>clxxxvi</sup> Diversity is therefore needed in the management cadre of INEC.

### ➤ **Strengthening Women’s Leadership**

Nations seeking to advance global security, maximize the utility of their foreign aid and bolster stable and democratic partners should prioritize women’s advancement.<sup>clxxxvii</sup> Any country prioritizing strengthening women’s leadership needs to reform their aid and funding practices to glean the benefits that advancing gender equality promises.<sup>clxxxviii</sup> According to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), only 4 per cent of bilateral aid by OECD nations in 2015 – 16 was dedicated to gender equality programming, and barely 0.5% of such funds made it into the hands of local women’s rights groups.<sup>clxxxix</sup>

According to the United Nations, ‘good governance’ includes the rule of law, respect for human rights and the participation of all citizens in the decisions that affect their lives (UNDESA 2016: 142).<sup>cx</sup> A key component of good governance, therefore, is the participation of all, which means that strengthening women’s leadership is crucial to achieving good governance. Beaman et al argue that ‘exposure to own-gender experts can provide such role models, break stereotypes regarding gender roles and improve individual women’s aspirations and propensity to enter traditionally male-dominated areas.’<sup>cxci</sup>

### ➤ **Fighting discrimination, gender stereotypes and violence**

The social attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female and the relationships that exist between men and women, that constitute the term ‘gender’, according to UN-Women.<sup>cxcii</sup> Equality between both genders aims to ensure equal conditions, treatment, and opportunities for realizing their full potential (UNESCO, 2014).<sup>cxciiii</sup> Therefore, discrimination would mean ‘unequal conditions, treatment or access to opportunities’ resulting to one of the two having advantage over the other because of the group they belong to. In order to attain gender equality, equity measures (targeted actions to compensate for historical and socio-cultural disadvantages around gender) may be necessary.

How gender identities have been constructed in narratives of the past has perpetuated stereotypes. For instance, women have naturalized as always belonging to the private sphere as mothers and wives, which often results in the creation of barriers for women. Gendered stereotypes have the potential to undermine the performance of a woman in her duties and sometimes the performance of others around her.<sup>cxciiv</sup> Studies suggest that gender-role stereotypes influence the following: -

- The perceived abilities of the female;

- The initial socialization of children (male and female): the society perceives male and female children differently. These differences in turn illustrate the indiscriminate application of traditional gender roles;
- Camaraderie and opportunities for the girl-child (and a woman) for mentorship: As there are few females in leadership positions, there is little or no mentorship for aspiring women. Low visibility is disparaging as seeing few females at the top has a dramatic effect on the rest of the female population;
- A culture of double standards.<sup>cxv</sup>

Violence is a kind of social relationship between perpetrator and victim in the sense that both are necessary to the event.<sup>cxvi</sup> Actions (and intentions) and harm (and non-consent) are necessary to describe violence.<sup>cxvii</sup> While the CEDAW does not explicitly prohibit violence against women, it provides a gender-specific framework on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women that encompasses violence against women.<sup>cxviii</sup> This enabled the CEDAW Committee to interpret violence against women as a form of discrimination against women.<sup>cxix</sup>

The CEDAW introduced two fundamental innovations in human rights anti-discrimination law: firstly, it acts as an asymmetric instrument for the protection of women against all forms of direct and indirect discrimination; and secondly, it provides an obligation for State parties to adopt “all appropriate measures” to fully develop and advance women or to empower women.<sup>cc</sup> Consequently, State parties have an obligation to should ensure the political realization of gender equality. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, the ‘killing’ of the gender bills<sup>cci</sup> at the National Assembly has shown that the country is not ready to fulfil its obligation as a signatory to the CEDAW.

The most controversial and best-known measures in anti-discrimination law are “temporary special measures” (Article 4.1 of the CEDAW), which are often called “positive measures” or measures of “affirmative action” because are aimed at accelerating *de facto* equality between men and women.<sup>ccii</sup> Concerns of women and men must be integral to the design of the necessary interventions, and discriminatory and exclusionary practices must be acknowledged and dealt with as part of fighting gender stereotypes, discrimination, and violence.<sup>cciii</sup>

## CHAPTER FIVE – WOMEN AND EMERGING ISSUES

### ➤ Promoting Media sensitiveness to gender equality

The role of the media has been recognized as crucial in the advocacy for gender equality since the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which is the key global policy document on gender equality.<sup>cciv</sup> According to the Global Media Monitoring Project, only about 24% of persons heard, read about or seen on television is female, 46% of the news reinforces media stereotypes and only 4% clearly challenges gender stereotypes.<sup>ccv</sup> In fact, 73% of the management jobs are occupied by men compared to 27% occupied by women in the news media, which perhaps is the reason why only 4% of the content broadcast actually challenges the stereotypes.<sup>ccvi</sup>

Part of the strategic objectives of the 1995 Beijing Declaration are is ‘to increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision making in and through the media and new technologies of communication’, and ‘to promote a balanced and non-stereo-typed portrayal of women in the media’.<sup>ccvii</sup> However, when 46% of the news reinforces media stereotypes, with only 4% of the content clearly challenging these stereotypes, there can be no balanced messaging or non-stereo-typed portrayal of women in the media.

To promote media sensitivity to gender equality, paragraph 213 of the Platform of Action, adopted at the fourth world conference on Women in 1995, needs to be re-affirmed and advanced by the government beyond the status quo. The paragraph states that –

*‘The human rights of women and the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal rights’*

Furthermore, paragraph 215 states that governments must not only refrain from violating the human rights of women but must work actively to promote and protect these rights. Additionally, the government should aim at gender balance in the appointment of women and men to all advisory, management, regulatory or monitoring bodies of the media.<sup>ccviii</sup>

Finally, human rights training programmes should be made mandatory for media houses so as to make them more sensitive to the concerns of gender activists with regard to gender equality. The objective of gender equality as is articulated in the fifth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 5), goes beyond mere ‘equality’ but is central to both sustainable development targets and their related efforts that range in scope from the individual through macro-national and global political institutions.<sup>ccix</sup>

### ➤ Promoting Gender Sensitive Social Media space

Social media may be defined as a group of internet-based applications which build on the ideological and technical foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.<sup>ccx</sup> Social Media today, which is an basically online media, is more popular with young people and hugely influences their perceptions and ideas about the

role of girls and women in society. Some online media content tends to perpetuate gender inequality by portraying women and girls in a derogatory light. Research shows that from a young age, children are influenced by the gendered stereotypes that media present to them.<sup>ccxi</sup> Women are frequently portrayed in stereotypical and hypersexualized roles in adverts and videos, which has long-term social consequences.<sup>ccxii</sup> This is part of the reason why cyberbullying is on the rise, especially against women.

The very participative nature of the digital-media environment leads us to see this communicative environment as open, uncontrolled, and expansive.<sup>ccxiii</sup> Debates about the regulation of online content popularized the view that internet technologies are uniquely resistant to top-down control.<sup>ccxiv</sup> An Australian journalist, Heath Gilmore, popularly said that freedom of speech was fundamental to the internet's core design, making it more commonly a place where every perspective is visible and available.<sup>ccxv</sup> Its uncontrollable nature, therefore, makes both the positive and negative possible; it can either be used to encourage, promote or boost women's participation and inclusion, or smear any woman who dares to run for public office by spreading hurtful content.

However uncontrollable the digital media space may be, it can be used as a medium or platform to promote gender-sensitive content. Social media was used to call for justice for the death of Noor Mukadam in Pakistan<sup>ccxvi</sup> and for Ochanya Elizabeth Ogbanje in Nigeria<sup>ccxvii</sup>, what became *#JusticeForNoor* and *#JusticeForOchanya* respectively.

Social media was also used to protest the death sentence on Noura Hussein Hammad, a Sudanese who was forced into marriage at the age of 16 and while she did not want the union, she was raped by her much older husband.<sup>ccxviii</sup> She killed him as a result. The court in Sudan sentenced her to death but due to global outcry and social media campaign with *#JusticeForNourah*, the death sentence was quashed on appeal.

The internet has also changed the social conditions of speech. The UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Mr. Frank La Rue believes that the internet is 'inherently democratic' because it provides the public with access to information and enables individuals to actively participate in the process of communication.<sup>ccxix</sup> Marginalized or disadvantaged social groups can also obtain information and participate in public debates concerning social, economic and political changes affecting their circumstances<sup>ccxx</sup>

## **ix. ADVANCING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP DURING A PANDEMIC**

In the past two decades, women, peace and security (WPS) agenda has been a top priority of the international community. It was upended by the Covid-19 pandemic, which put the gains for WPS at risk.<sup>ccxxi</sup> One of the areas most at risk happens to be women's participation.<sup>ccxxii</sup> In the UN, the Covid-19 pandemic made it even more difficult for more women peacebuilders to participate in formal peace processes in places like Afghanistan and Yemen. The pandemic exacerbated the threats faced by women peacebuilders in many places. The UN and member states have a role to play in providing these

peacebuilders with both physical protection and international legitimacy and recognition. In Nigeria, the negative impact of the pandemic exacerbated the poor conditions of the populace, especially women in the informal sectors, because they depend on daily earnings for their survival.<sup>ccxxiii</sup>

The Covid-19- pandemic and eventual lockdown increased women's exposure to infectious diseases and vulnerability to family-based violence in Nigeria where the preexisting rates of violence against women and girls were already high.<sup>ccxxiv</sup> Women function as heads and health care frontline responders for the household, roles that place them at increased risk of infection.<sup>ccxxv</sup> Studies show that promoting transparency and accountability in government institutions is critical for the effective implementation of gender equality and service delivery.<sup>ccxxvi</sup> Women organizations in Nigeria organized resistance to government ineptitude, which led to women's participation in governance and accountability. Some of such organizations were Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA); Women International League for Peace and Freedom, and the Women Aid Collective, that which organized radio programs and webinars to raise awareness about response mechanisms during the lockdown.<sup>ccxxvii</sup>

Though women groups were not deliberately included in government programs to contain the virus, over 283 women's organizations proposed policy direction for government responses to GBV during the pandemic.<sup>ccxxviii</sup> The Nigeria Women Trust Fund (NUTF) organized a webinar on Covid-19 response and recovery to explore women's contributions, gaps and the need to think about gender as part of the recovery process.<sup>ccxxix</sup> Nigerian women built transnational coalitions with other African women's organizations; for example, the Women, Peace, and Security program hosted a webinar with its Peace and Social Change Fellowship participants that included leaders of grassroots women's organizations across Nigeria, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, and Sudan.<sup>ccxxx</sup> This is exemplary leadership, even in a pandemic.

Globally, women showed exceptional leadership while tackling the pandemic. In 2020, Forbes magazine published the achievements of women leaders under the headline – *“What do countries with the best Coronavirus responses have in common? Women leaders.”*<sup>ccxxxi</sup> This was in response to the study which showed that countries led by women had a six-time lower coronavirus death rate than countries led by men.<sup>ccxxxii</sup> The overall themes observed from the coverage of this study were –

1. Women leaders are risk-averse (e.g., they imposed early lockdowns)
2. Women leaders are empathic, compassionate, and caring (e.g. using social media messages, and honest communication); and
3. Women leaders listen to advice (e.g. using varied information sources, having the humility to listen to expert opinions).<sup>ccxxxiii</sup>

Unfortunately, global women leaders are only a small percentage, so these identified qualities are minimal in general in the leadership space.

➤ **Inspiring the young generation of women leaders.**

Women are still underrepresented in leadership, both globally and nationally, raising questions about the root causes for the persistence of gender inequity. Recognizing the root causes of the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions – that is, the gender stereotypes that inform cultural assumptions about leadership potential and effectiveness – is the first concrete step toward the elimination of the obstacle that women face.<sup>ccxxxiv</sup>

According to Carol Gilligan (1982)<sup>ccxxxv</sup>, observation shows that women arrive at their responsibilities through care and concern, a different path from the one of justice upon which men focus. To an extent, what women typically do as girls (e.g. taking turns) is a healthy preparation for becoming a leader.<sup>ccxxxvi</sup> However, their tight embeddedness in the institutions of family and community that is built upon the traditional gender division of labour inhibits their aspirations in pursuing non-family careers and has the effect of limiting women's access to channels of leadership.<sup>ccxxxvii</sup>

African history has given us accounts of great women leaders who led with distinction, for example, MaNthantisi during the rise of the Zulu kingdom.<sup>ccxxxviii</sup> Then there was the Ghanaian Queen Mother Yaa Asantwa who led and protected her chiefdom against British Colonists.<sup>ccxxxix</sup> The Empress Uelete Rutael from Ethiopia was also a strong leader in her own right. There are various other Various other example shows that women in Africa have the ability to lead with distinction. In Nigeria, there were notable historical figures like Queen Amina of Zaria, Queen Mother Idia of Benin, Queen Kambassa of Bonny and Iyalode Efunseran of Ibadan, whose exercise of power and authority affected the course of history.<sup>ccxli</sup> Other notable political figures were Mrs. Margaret Ekpo, Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, Miss R.T. Brown and many more who have etched their names in history.<sup>ccxlii</sup> These historical figures can inspire generations of women leaders to occupy the leadership space by their achievements. However, decades after their historical accomplishments, women are still underrepresented.

Scholars have written about a leadership concept, which they call 'midwifing'.<sup>ccxlii</sup> According to researchers, midwifing underscores feminine leadership and is necessary in governance because feminine leaders support a spirit of cooperation, not competition.<sup>ccxliii</sup> They have linked feminine leadership to compassionate and transformational leadership, which they said fosters the 'followers' commitment. Therefore, there is a need to grow the next generation of leaders who are transformational in their approach. Scholars like Verma and Krishnan argue that "transformational leaders motivate their followers to do more than they really expect they can do, increase the sense of importance and value of the tasks, as well as stimulate them to surpass their own interests..."<sup>ccxliv</sup>

Although there are a few women leaders who could inspire the next generation of women leaders in Nigeria, it has been argued that western influence created barriers for women in leadership.<sup>ccxlv</sup> As women are underrepresented, these barriers therefore, are still in existence.



# **ANALYSIS OF DATA BY THEMATIC AREAS**

One basic challenge that has continued to entrench gender disparity in Nigeria is poverty. As the country's poverty profile continues to worsen, as many as 4 in 10 Nigerians live below the national poverty line according to the World Bank, and a greater percentage of this number is female.<sup>ccxlvii</sup> Additionally, just 17 per cent of Nigerian workers hold the wage jobs best able to lift people out of poverty, which makes it difficult to exit poverty.<sup>ccxlviii</sup> Other major issues affecting women are analysed below.

## **X. WOMEN PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION**

### **➤ North Central Geo-Political Zone**

The region is known to host diverse groups of people and ethnic nationalities due to its strategic geo-position. Irrespective of the abundance of human and natural resources in the region, poverty has continued to affect the social, economic, and political growth of the region. Women are more affected by poverty than men, hence, the power imbalance.

The research conducted showed that the respondents believed that women's development and inclusion meant women advancement or equal participation of both women and men in government and acknowledged that it was crucial to the improvement of governance in Nigeria. However, the perception is that programmes meant to promote women's development were discriminatory as only a select group benefited from them. Consequently women's participation in governance is minimal in this Zone.

### **➤ North -East Geo-Political Zone**

In North-eastern Nigeria, women participation and inclusion in governance and politics have been a contentious issue since the Beijing Conference in 1995. The region has been plagued by several socio-economic and political challenges that have hindered the progress of women's empowerment. On whether any empowerment programmes for women are run for women, there were mixed responses about the level of women's participation and inclusion in governance in the region.

According to the responses from women leaders, the Government runs empowerment programmes for women, and the office of the first lady usually gets involved in such programmes. However, a significant number of respondents (30%) opined that the programmes were unproductive. This aligns with literature that suggests that the Nigerian Government has not fully committed to the implementation of policies and programmes aimed at increasing women's participation in governance (Adebayo, 2016).

Political actors who were interviewed had a different opinion. They disagreed that the state government runs any form of women empowerment programmes and stated that rigging of the selection process through religious sentiments leading to the marginalization of rural women serves as a bottleneck to the success of any women empowerment programmes. This aligns with literature that suggests that political

factors such as religion and ethnicity play a role in hindering women's participation in governance in Nigeria (Onyema, 2018).

Responses from traditional leaders indicate that empowerment programmes for women exist and the office of the first lady is usually involved in such programmes. However, they also reported that tribal sentiments serve as a major bottleneck.

Based on the responses from the Focused Group Discussion conducted in Adamawa State, there is a need for more pro-women laws and actions to encourage women's participation in governance. Participants from all three Senatorial zones emphasized the need for effective legislation, the implementation of 40:60% policies for women, and the encouragement of girl-child Education. They also highlighted the importance of involving women in policymaking, and increasing advocacy, orientation, and awareness of women's rights and existing laws. Additionally, all participants agreed that critical actors and stakeholders need to do more, and that nomination forms for political positions should be made free for women to encourage their participation in politics. Some participants also suggested that women should be involved in traditional leadership and grassroots politics. Despite this, the general belief is that enough actions have not been taken so far to improve the situation for women in governance.

#### ➤ **North -West Geo-Political Zone**

More awareness creation and passing legislation that would increase the number of women in governance were put suggested by the participants as ways by which women's participation and inclusion can improve.

With regard to the factors that inhibit women from participating in government, participants said that cultural and religious practices and beliefs were the major factors in the region. However, they believe that awareness creation and sensitization of traditional rulers can help change the behaviour pattern and belief systems. They also felt having more support from fellow women would help bring the much-needed change in mindset.

The participants unanimously agreed that the number of women participating in politics was low and that the reason was that men would not allow their wives to participate in politics. Although more women engage in politics currently when compared with the past, there is a need to do more of sensitization to change the thought pattern of the society for more women to serve in the governance space.

#### ➤ **South -East Geo-Political Zone**

There was an improvement in women's political participation between 2007 and 2015 according to the respondents but the numbers took a nosedive in 2019 with President Buhari's administration (at the federal level) and Engr. David N. Umahi's (Ebonyi State governor) starting their second term in office.

While women may have more access to Western education than men in the South-eastern part of Nigeria, men due to societal pressure, which accord more respect to the

rich as against than the educated, resort to activities and practices that would create quick wealth for their families. This is known as the “get-rich-quick-syndrome”. According to the participants at the FGDs, this is one of the reasons why fewer boys go to school in this part of the country as against their female counterparts. There is a popular narrative among the youth of the southeast that “*you do not need education to be rich*”. The government has not helped the situation by creating an enabling environment to facilitate employment for the educated females, so a lot of them resort to menial jobs or marry the poorly educated men who prefer to make money. Hence, women’s participation and inclusion in governance are is low.

#### ➤ **South-West Geo-Political Zone**

The respondents were of the opinion that governance in Nigeria will improve if more women were elected or given opportunity to hold public offices as follows:

Majority of the respondents culminating to a whopping 184 (91%) in number, convincingly attested to the fact that governance will improve in Nigeria if more women were given the opportunity to hold public offices. On the contrarily, a meagre 9% of the respondents did not believe that any improvement in governance would happen if more women held public offices. Even with this belief, women are still underrepresented in the governance space.

#### ➤ **South -South Geo-Political Zone**

The respondents gave their opinion on governance in Nigeria and its improvement if more women were admitted into the political space by election or appointment. This region agreed with the South-west on the positive impact more women’s inclusion would make as 91.3% of the respondents believed that more women in the political space would aid development in Nigeria, while 8.7% did not agree. Though the majority sample group is in favour of women’s inclusion and participation, it has not translated into the reality on ground.

Furthermore, there was an enormous support for male politicians to be required to choose women as running mates and vice versa. Using legislation to enforce women’s participation was supported by 76% of respondents, who believed that it was necessary to use legislation to reserve seats for women at both the National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly.

## XI. WOMEN DEVELOPMENT

### ➤ North Central Geo-Political Zone

The discussions held during the interviews and FGDs showed that the culture of patriarchy was responsible for women being seen as possessions of men – a clear reason why gender equality has no stance standing in the cultural practices across the region.

On women's development, respondents believed that development or improvement with regards to women in governance in Nigeria in the last decade had improved in the Zone. Though about 35% of respondents did not see any improvement, the majority that perceived some level of development in women, believed that it was low.

*For there to be **women's** development in governance, a law is necessary to require more women to get into political space.*

### ➤ North-East Geo-Political Zone

This research aimed to gain insights into the perceptions and experiences of women in Adamawa regarding women's development in governance. Participants viewed women's development in governance as being important for the overall development of the country. They believed that women have a “*unique wisdom*” and should be included in the formation of government. The respondents felt that Nigerian women have not made significant progress in terms of development in the past decade, however, noting that there was still room for improvement and that women need to actively fight for their rights and opportunities in order to fully develop.

Participants believed that the polity was still hostile to women and that the men continue to oppress women and prevent them from reaching their full potential. They believe that men were not fair to women and that this was hindering women's development. In general, the focus group discussion revealed that women in the Northern senatorial zone of Adamawa believe that women's development in governance was important for the overall development of the country. However, they also felt that women have not made significant progress in terms of development in the past decade and that the polity is still not receptive to women.

*Women need to actively fight for their rights and opportunities **in order to** fully develop.*

### ➤ North-West Geo-Political Zone

Participants in to the FGD believed that women's development meant having more women in administration starting from the State level. It entails having women at the

center of affairs in the State, to be part of lawmaking. However, some participants believed that women have already developed because –

- Women have access to education and more rights than before,
- Women are more outspoken and are now part of decision-makers in the state,
- Women are ministers of the Federal Republic.
- Parents who would not allow their daughters to study in tertiary institutions in the past, now allow them. Secondary school education used to be the limit but now parents are encouraging their girls to advance their education.

Other respondents believe that the equality and development gap between men and women has widened and that poor education was partly responsible. They further opined that despite the shortcomings, women were beginning to occupy senior positions in government, like, director positions and permanent secretaries. Additionally, the participants believe that there has been an increase in the number of women in politics, even though they fail to get elected, was progress being made.

#### ➤ **South -East Geo-Political Zone**

The respondents listed the obstacles to women's development in the state as an inferiority complex, poverty, fear, and insecurity. Women in this Zone are seen to feel inferior to the men and are largely impoverished and so cannot match the men in money politics. The insecurity in the Southeast is not helping matters as women detest violence. This has led to growing fear among the women to challenge the unfriendly polity. Even though, the majority believed that there was an improvement in terms of more women taking leadership roles, they still believe that these obstacles exist to stall further improvement.

From the discussions with the respondents, though the majority of them believe that there has been an improvement in women's development, however, the popular perception is that the level of development is low. Perhaps, the respondents expected a much higher level of development than they currently perceive it to be.

#### ➤ **South-West Geo-Political Zone**

Respondents in the South-West perceive women's development in governance as "unhindered participation in political leadership positions, elective or appointive". The respondents believed that women in Nigeria have developed since the 1995 Beijing conference and have made progress in the areas of formal education, career progression and diversification, though still politically backward.

However, just like the respondents from the other zones, they acknowledged that the outcome is still poor because women are still underrepresented.

### ➤ South -South Geo-Political Zone

The respondents considered women's development in governance as dependent on the political will and deliberate programmes of the government to make special provisions for women to be carried along and included in governance.

With respect to Concerning development, the respondents from Cross River Central described women in the past decade, to have 'partially' improved and attributed it to the government of the State, where the governor gave women a lot of opportunities. This is where women's development is seen as a kind of practical programme or complete programme done by the government or any parastatal to empower women for participation in politics.

The respondents argued that every administration pays lip service to the issues around women's empowerment. They accused the government of politicizing it by doling out items to citizens during election campaign periods to buy people's conscience. While some efforts can be seen, the respondents clarified that they are too little to be considered as empowerment. One of the respondents from CR-South noted that, "empowering people is like giving them a source of survival and so a paltry N5,000 is not empowerment".

*Empowering people is like giving them a source of survival.*

## **XII. Necessity for a New Gender Law that Would Promote Women's Participation in Governance**

### ➤ North Central Geo-Political Zone

The respondents believe that a law was needed to encourage more women to participate in governance. However, what they identified as a stumbling block to women's participation and inclusion was marriage. They opined that this was tied to the general cultural stereotype that women in politics were "women of easy virtues" and so the husbands often feel reluctant to allow their wives actively get involved in politics.

A factor which all the respondents agreed was important is money. They felt that since Nigeria operated money politics where elections were bought that women would not be able to match the men. Though more women are engaging in political activities in Nasarawa state, the respondents felt that women's exclusion from grass-root politics was a deterrent factor, especially if they belonged to minority ethnic or religious groups.

They raised the issue of rigging and falsification of results, which have become a culture in Nigeria as part of the reasons why women are not encouraged to take part in political activities. The violence involved in the political process as pointed out by the respondents is not what women want to get involved in.

However, there was a unanimous agreement on the issue of support for women's participation through political appointments.

#### ➤ **North-East Geo-Political Zone**

Based on the Focus Group Discussions held in the Northern, Southern and Central Senatorial Districts of Adamawa, there was a consensus among participants that the State Government was not doing enough to empower women. The identified gaps include insufficient funds for women's empowerment, lack of awareness for women's rights, inability for women to report cases of abuse, cultural beliefs, fear of stigma and lack of representation in government positions.

In the Northern Senatorial District, participants highlighted that there were not enough funds allocated for women's empowerment and that there was a lack of awareness of for women's rights. They also stated that many women do not know how and where to report cases of abuse and that cultural beliefs and fear of stigma were also major barriers for women. Additionally, the participants from the northern senatorial district noted that women were not well represented in government positions.

In the Central Senatorial District, participants at the FGD agreed that the State Government was not doing enough to empower women, with a lack of proper template for women's empowerment and few registered women's organizations. They also noted that there was a lack of political will from leaders. They suggested ways to address these issues, including educating women on how to register their businesses and eliminating money completely during campaigns.

In the Southern Senatorial District, participants highlighted that men were also benefiting from women's empowerment programmes. They identified gaps such as the lack of strong legislation for women's inclusion, lack of involvement of women stakeholders in decision-making, political instability, lack of women capital development programs, few registered women organizations, and lack of political will from leaders.

In addressing the identified gaps, participants from all districts suggested the implementation of strong legislation for the development of women, involving stakeholders from women-led organizations in decision-making, ensuring successive governments do not abandon policies or projects on women, making capital development for women a priority, allowing for the registration of women-led organizations freely, and making women development and empowerment a priority for the government.

#### ➤ **North-West Geo-Political Zone**

On whether a law was needed to increase the number of women in government, participants said, "no", because leadership is not a "do or die" affair. They further stated that the First Lady of the State has been openly encouraging women to participate in



politics. On the impact of the 2006 National Gender Policy, the participants stated that though the existence was known, it has not made any impact on women's participation.

➤ **South -East Geo-Political Zone**

Respondents agreed that there was an obvious need for a legislation to ensure equitable representation of women in politics, governance, and decision-making. They believe that legislation was needed to ensure compliance. In Ebonyi State, several gender-inclusive structures exist, according to the respondents but most of them are currently not implemented. More than 50% of respondents were not aware of the existence of these structures. Emphasis should be placed on creating awareness and sensitizing women, especially at the grass-root on the existence of these structures and working out mechanisms for their implementation of existing policies as well.

Though respondents majorly opted for a constitutional amendment as a means to getting more women into the political space, however; they do not believe that there is enough political will to implement the 35% affirmative action as provided in the 2006 National Gender Policy. This then begs the question as to whether legislation will be able to garner such political will needed for the implementation of an affirmative action.

Furthermore, while the majority of the respondents believe that affirmative action would improve women's participation, others had reservations or did not believe at all that there would be an improvement in women's participation.

With regards to legislation, respondents were in favour of a law to enforce opposite-gender running mates, which means that if the candidate is male, his running mate should be a woman and vice versa. While 58% were in favour of such a legislation, about 42% were not.

➤ **South-West Geo-Political Zone**

The respondents listed laws in Ekiti State that have been passed by the government to increase women's development as follows: -

- i. Ekiti State Equal Opportunity Law, 2013
- ii. Ekiti State GBV (Prohibition) Law, 2019
- iii. Administration of Criminal Justice Law, 2015
- iv. Victims Protection Law, 2022

They added that Ekiti state has a 2010 State Gender policy as well as some programmes targeted at women, like the mobilization of young women in politics through the office of the First Lady. While 80% of the respondents were aware of the existence of the Gender Policy, 20% were unaware.

➤ **South-South Geo-Political Zone**

On expanding the governance space for more women to enter, 44% of the respondents believed that a constitutional amendment to include affirmative action was necessary. On the issue of political will by the government to fully implement the 35% affirmative

action policy. The response was divided into three opinions, 64(32%) opined that there is political will by the government to fully implement the 35% affirmative action policy, 51(25%) claimed not to know whether the government is committed or not while the remaining 87(43%) emphatically said they do not think the government was committed to fully implement the 35% affirmative action policy.

### **XIII. Awareness of State Laws that have Impacted the Status of Women**

#### **➤ North -Central Geo-Political Zone**

The respondents were unaware of any law in the Zone that had impacted the status of women; however, the majority of the respondents were in favour of a law that would reserve specific seats for women at both the National Assembly and the State House of Assembly. While 79% said 'yes' to the passage of such a law, 21% said 'no' to reserving seats for women. Though the majority were in favour of the passage of a law in favour of reserving seats for women, they also noted that certain barriers would impede its passage, namely: -

- Male chauvinism in the society
- Lack of political will
- Cultural beliefs and practices
- Religious beliefs
- Misconception and misinformation
- Patriarchy

#### **➤ North -East Geo-Political Zone**

The Focus Group Discussion held showed that the participants were aware of three laws that have been passed in the last ten years: The Free Delivery Law, the Free Education Law, and the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law (VAPP). However, they stated that they were not seeing the impact of these laws as they were not being implemented effectively.

In the Central Senatorial District, the participants at the FGD stated that they were aware of one law - the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law (VAPP), which was passed in the last ten years. They stated that the law had impacted women by increasing their awareness of their rights.

In the Southern Senatorial District, the participants were not aware of any laws that have impacted the status of women in the state.

From the responses to of the Focus Group Discussion, it can be inferred that while laws have been passed in the last ten years to improve the status of women in Adamawa State, their impact had been limited due to poor implementation and lack of awareness

creation among the population. The suggestion at the end of the FGD was that the government and relevant stakeholders should take steps to ensure that these laws were effectively implemented and that awareness campaigns were carried out to educate women about their rights and how to access them.

affairs in the State, to be part of lawmaking. However, some participants believed that women have already developed because –

- Women have access to education and more rights than before,
- Women are more outspoken and are now part of decision-makers in the state,
- Women are ministers of the Federal Republic.
- Parents who would not allow their daughters **study** in tertiary institutions in the past, now allow them. Secondary school education used to be the limit but now parents are encouraging their girls to advance their education.

Other respondents believe that the equality and development gap between men and women **have widened**, and that poor education was partly responsible. They further opined that despite the shortcomings, women were beginning to occupy senior positions in government, like, director positions and permanent secretaries. Additionally, the participants believe that there has been an increase in the number of women in politics, even though they fail to get elected, was progress being made.

#### ➤ **South -East Geo-Political Zone**

The respondents listed the obstacles to women development in the state as inferiority complex, poverty, fear, and insecurity. Women in this Zone are seen to feel inferior to the men and are largely impoverished and so cannot match the men in money politics. The insecurity in the Southeast is not helping matters as women detest violence. This has led to growing fear among the women to challenge the unfriendly polity. Even **though**, the majority believed that there was an improvement in terms of more women taking leadership roles, they still believe that these obstacles exist to stall further improvement.

From the discussions with the respondents, though **majority** of them believe that there has been an improvement in women's development, however, the popular perception is that the level of development is low. Perhaps, the respondents expected a much higher level of development than they currently perceive it to be.

#### ➤ **South-West Geo-Political Zone**

Respondents in the South-West perceive women development in governance as “unhindered participation in political leadership positions, elective or appointive”. The respondents believed that women in Nigeria have developed since the 1995 Beijing conference and have made progress in the areas of formal education, career progression and diversification, though still politically **backwards**.

**However** just like the respondents from the other zones, they acknowledged that the outcome is still poor because women are still underrepresented.

➤ **South -South Geo-Political Zone**

The respondents considered women development in governance as dependent on the political will and deliberate programmes of the government to make special provision for women to be carried along and included in governance.

With respect to development, the respondents from Cross River Central described women in the past decade, to have ‘partially’ improved and attributed it to the government of the State, where the governor gave women a lot of opportunities. This is where women development is seen as a kind of practical programme or complete programme done by the government or any parastatal to empower women for participation in politics.

The respondents argued that every administration pays lip service to the issues around women empowerment. They accused the government of politicizing it by doling out items to citizens during election campaign periods to buy people’s conscience. While some efforts can be seen, the respondents clarified that they are too little to be considered as empowerment. One of the respondents from CR-South noted that, “*empowering people is like giving them a source of survival and so a paltry N5,000 is not empowerment*”.

*Empowering people is like giving them a source of survival.*

## **XII. Necessity for a New Gender Law that Would Promote Women’s Participation in Governance**

➤ **North Central Geo-Political Zone**

The respondents believe that a law was needed to encourage more women to participate in governance. However, what they identified as a stumbling block to women’s participation and inclusion was marriage. They opined that this was tied to the general cultural stereotype that women in politics were “women of easy virtues” and so the husbands often feel reluctant to allow their wives actively get involved in politics.

A factor which all the respondents agreed was important is money. They felt that since Nigeria operated money politics where elections were bought that women would not be able to match the men. Though more women are engaging in political activities in Nasarawa state, the respondents felt that women’s exclusion from **grassroot** politics was a deterrent factor, especially if they belonged to minority ethnic or religious groups.

They raised the issue of rigging and falsification of results, which have become a culture in Nigeria as part of the reasons why women are not encouraged to take part in political activities. The violence involved in the political process as pointed out by the respondents is not what women want to get involved in.

However, there was a unanimous agreement on the issue of support for women's participation through political **appointment**.

#### ➤ **North-East Geo-Political Zone**

Based on the Focus Group Discussions held in the Northern, Southern and Central Senatorial Districts of Adamawa, there was a consensus among participants that the State Government was not doing enough to empower women. The identified gaps include insufficient funds for women empowerment, lack of awareness for women's rights, inability for women to report cases of abuse, cultural beliefs, fear of stigma and lack of representation in government positions.

In the Northern Senatorial District, participants highlighted that there were not enough funds allocated for women empowerment and that there was a lack of awareness **for** women's rights. They also stated that many women do not know how and where to report cases of abuse and that cultural beliefs and fear of stigma were also major barriers for women. Additionally, the participants from the northern senatorial district noted that women were not well represented in government positions.

In the Central Senatorial District, participants at the FGD agreed that the State Government was not doing enough to empower women, with a lack of proper template for women empowerment and few registered women organizations. They also noted that there was a lack of political will from leaders. They suggested ways to address these issues, including educating women on how to register their businesses and eliminating money completely during campaigns.

In the Southern Senatorial District, participants highlighted that men were also benefiting from women empowerment programmes. They identified gaps such as the lack of strong legislation for women inclusion, lack of involvement of women stakeholders in **decision making**, political instability, lack of women capital development programs, few registered women organizations, and lack of political will from leaders.

In addressing the identified gaps, participants from all districts suggested the implementation of strong **legislations** for the development of women, involving stakeholders from women-led organizations in **decision making**, ensuring successive governments do not abandon policies or projects on women, making capital development for women a priority, allowing for the registration of women-led organizations freely, and making women development and empowerment a priority for the government.

➤ **North -West Geo-Political Zone**

On whether a law was needed to increase the number of women in government, participants said, “no”, because leadership is not a “do or die” affair. They further stated that the First **lady** of the State has been openly encouraging women to participate in politics. On the impact of the 2006 National Gender Policy, the participants stated that though the existence was known, it has not made any impact on **women** participation.

➤ **South -East Geo-Political Zone**

Respondents agreed that there was an obvious need for **a legislation** to ensure equitable representation of women in politics, governance, and decision-making. They believe that legislation was needed to ensure compliance. In Ebonyi State, several **gender inclusive** structures exist, according to the respondents but most of them are currently not implemented. More than 50% of respondents were not aware of the existence of these structures. Emphasis should be placed on creating awareness and sensitizing women **especially** at the **grassroot** on the existence of these structures and work out **mechanism** for their implementation of existing policies as well.

Though respondents majorly opted for a **constitution** amendment as a means to getting more women into the political space, however; they do not believe that there is enough political will to implement the 35% affirmative action as provided in the 2006 National Gender Policy. This then begs the question as to whether legislation will be able to garner such political will needed for the implementation of an affirmative action.

Furthermore, while the majority of the respondents believe that affirmative action would improve women’s participation, others had reservations or did not believe at all that there would be an improvement in women’s participation.

With regards to legislation, respondents were in favour of a law to enforce opposite gender running mates, which means that if the candidate is male, his running mate should be a woman and vice versa. While 58% were in favour of such **a legislation**, about 42% were not.

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They added that Ekiti state has a 2010 State Gender policy as well as some programmes targeted at women, like the mobilization of young women in politics through the office of the First Lady. While 80% of the respondents were aware of the existence of the Gender Policy, 20% were unaware.

### ➤ **South -South Geo-Political Zone**

On expanding the governance space for more women to enter, 44% of the respondents believed that a **constitution** amendment to include affirmative action was necessary. On the issue of political will by the government to fully implement the 35% affirmative action policy. The response was divided into three opinions, 64(32%) opined that there is political will by the government to fully implement the 35% affirmative action policy, 51(25%) claimed not to know whether the government is committed or not while the remaining 87(43%) emphatically said they do not think the government was committed to fully implement the 35% affirmative action policy.

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- Male chauvinism in the society
- Lack of political will
- Cultural beliefs and practices
- Religious beliefs
- Misconception and misinformation
- Patriarchy

### ➤ **North -East Geo-Political Zone**

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In the Southern Senatorial District, the participants were not aware of any laws that have impacted the status of women in the state.

From the responses of the Focus Group Discussion, it can be inferred that while laws have been passed in the last ten years to improve the status of women in Adamawa State, their impact had been limited due to poor implementation and lack of awareness creation among the population. The suggestion at the end of the FGD was that the government and relevant stakeholders should take steps to ensure that these laws were effectively implemented and that awareness campaigns were carried out to educate women about their rights and how to access them.

➤ **North -West Geo-Political Zone**

The respondents in the North-West did not believe that the laws passed in the last decade made any impact on the status of women. They acknowledged that a female deputy governor in one State was an encouraging political move, but the laws have done little or nothing. However, the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Law has impacted the State, especially in reducing Gender Based Violence (GBV).

➤ **South -East Geo-Political Zone**

Several laws have been passed in the last 10 (ten) years in Ebonyi State relating to the status of women, namely: Law against Female Genital Mutilation, Violence against Person's Law (VAPL), Violence against Women, Right to Freedom Act, etc. A study of the provisions of these laws shows the intention to protect women from all kinds of abuse, intimidation, spousal battery, cultural abusive practices and the **likes**; although the legislature in their wisdom did not title the law to exclusively provide for the rights of women alone, this is because **in** some few instances, the women are the ones abusing the rights of the man, thus the laws also protects the man. However, since the VAPL was passed, statistics show that the number has reduced by about 50% in 2020.

➤ **South-West Geo-Political Zone**

The respondents had listed laws that aim to protect persons against gender-based violence (GBV) like the Ekiti State GBV (Prohibition) Law, 2019, the only impact observed was that the awareness was on the rise in the society, and it is believed that it would reduce the number of GBV cases in the future. They claimed that they were yet to see how that would impact women politically.

➤ **South -South Geo-Political Zone**

There was literally no awareness of any laws in the State that had impacted women especially the political or development status of women among the respondents. In this light of this, they strongly recommended that the state requires a law to encourage more women's participation in governance.



#### **XIV. Women and Emerging Issues (insecurity, pandemic, & social media)**

##### **➤ North Central Geo-Political Zone**

**Majority** of the respondents to the questionnaire responded that the Covid-19 pandemic had an impact on women's development in the Zone. However, the respondents indicated that the State government had improved in healthcare delivery **especially** in maternal health but more needs to be done in healthcare facilities improvement in the rural communities in the State. The negative effect of the pandemic on the businesses of women was highlighted as well, especially as women dominated the informal economy. However, the awareness created about the pandemic by the government saved lives.

It was gathered from the discussions that the high rate of insecurity in the region had left women traumatized because they were mainly the victims of rape, kidnap and GBV. While being the main victims of all these violent acts, the respondents agreed that women have been agents of peace in the state.

##### **➤ North -East Geo-Political Zone**

Based on the responses gathered from the interviews, the Covid-19 pandemic had a negative effect on women's development in Adamawa State. The respondents mentioned that businesses owned by women collapsed, which led to increased poverty in households, and that there were difficulties in accessing healthcare. Additionally, there were also increased cases of domestic violence and gender-based violence due to the pandemic. Furthermore, the respondents also indicated that the state of the health sector had negatively impacted women's development in the state. Overall, the responses suggest that the pandemic had a detrimental effect on women's development in Adamawa state. There is a need for improved healthcare infrastructure and support for women's businesses in the state.

Overall, the responses from the Focused Group Discussion in Adamawa State indicate that the worsening security situation has had a negative effect on women's development in the State. Participants reported experiencing trauma and constant fear, and businesses owned by women were said to have collapsed because of the security situation. However, women's contributions to peace and security in the state were also acknowledged. Some participants mentioned that women play a role in good home training for their children and advocated for proper and deliberate inclusion of women in peace programs.

The interview results indicate that the media is seen as **an channel** and a means for raising awareness and encouraging women's participation in governance in north-eastern Nigeria. This is evident from the high number of respondents from all categories who acknowledged the media's role in this regard. Additionally, many respondents specifically noted the impact of various programs on issues of women's inclusion, which

suggests that targeted media initiatives have been effective in raising awareness and encouraging women's participation in governance. In terms of the impact of social media, the survey results are mixed, with some respondents noting its potential to reach a wider audience and others remaining neutral on the issue. Overall, it seems that the media has been successful in raising awareness and encouraging women's participation in governance in north-eastern Nigeria, but the impact of social media on this issue remains uncertain.

#### ➤ **North -West Geo-Political Zone**

On the role of the media, the participants believe that due to the government control of media outlets, **that there** has not been any significant role of the media with **regards** to women participation and inclusion. However, **the civil** society has been making significant strides to promote women's engagement in governance, **to** have more women making decisions on **health**, education and welfare of children.

Even though the lockdown caused by the pandemic led to **the high** rate of GBV, more women engaged on virtual platforms and reduced outdoor meetings. This was safe for them.

#### ➤ **South -East Geo-Political Zone**

**Majority** of respondents in this Zone believe that more women now have access to jobs due to the emergence of social media. Women entrepreneurs can now advertise their products online while others have become influencers, marketing brands. There is **therefore** a need to empower women and girls through education and mentorship; invest in funding opportunities for female politicians; and increase media sensitization on the role of women in economy building.

The insecurity in the South-East has affected the informal economy negatively, and as women are the majority stakeholders in the informal sector, many households have suffered as **result**. There was an upsurge **of** GBV cases during the pandemic and women were mostly the victims.

#### ➤ **South-West Geo-Political Zone**

In the **South -West**, emerging issues such as the pandemic, insecurity, and social media (new media) were believed to have affected women's growth and development. While 87% of the respondents believed that women's growth and development were stalled by these emerging issues, 13% disagreed that women's growth and development were affected. Some respondents opined that more women were in business due to the emergence of social media, but the pandemic did not encourage petty trading and other **small scale** businesses.

➤ **South -South Geo-Political Zone**

With regards to **the emerging** issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, insecurity, social/new media, **their** effect on women's growth and development, 89.4% of the respondents believed that emerging issues have affected women's growth and development, while 10.6% disagreed.

While 33.7% of the respondents said that these emerging issues, had provided more women access to job opportunities; 29.8% believe that more women had access to formal education because of the effect of these emerging issues; 15.4% of the respondents said that women were now equitably represented in government, and 21.2% believe that women are more active in politics now due to these emerging issues.

## **XV. Factors that Prevent Women from Venturing into the Political Leadership Space**

➤ **North Central Geo-Political Zone**

On the factors that hinder women's development, the respondents listed illiteracy among women, socio-cultural beliefs, religious beliefs, poverty, insecurity, and inadequate laws to protect women. Majority of the respondents (64%) believed that socio-cultural beliefs- hinder women the most.

➤ **North -East Geo-Political Zone**

Socio-cultural beliefs were identified as a factor that affects women development in this Zone. The belief system that sees women more as homemakers hardly want to see women competing with **the men** in the political leadership space. Other **factor** identified were – early marriage for girls, **the money** politics and illiteracy.

➤ **North -West Geo-Political Zone**

Socio-cultural factors were highlighted by respondents as major in preventing women's development. The respondents unanimously agreed that the number of women participating in politics was low and that the reason was that men would not allow their wives to participate in politics. Although more women engage in politics currently when compared with the past, there is a need to do more of sensitization.

However, the respondents were not in favour of a legislation to increase the number of women in government; they opined that leadership was not a "do or die" affair.

➤ **South -East Geo-Political Zone**

The respondents chose socio-cultural beliefs as what affects women's development the most in Nigeria.

The following factors were identified as militating against the participation of women in politics include the following: -

- Socio-cultural beliefs and Household inequality,
- Inherent Patriarchy and culture of preference of male over female.
- Indigeneship and identity of belongingness,
- Gendered Economy,
- Reluctance of government in implementing equal representation of female, insecurity

There is therefore a need to empower women and girls through education and mentorship; invest in funding opportunities for female politicians; and increase media sensitization on the role of women in economy building.

A quota system should be adopted to reserve certain slots for women and in specific cases, adopt a rotational structure to enable men and women take turns at contesting for public offices.

#### ➤ **South-West Geo-Political Zone**

Lack of camaraderie among women is a pattern of concern as females often see each other as competition rather than as members of a supportive network.<sup>ccxlviii</sup> Whereas men have other men as confidants and mentors and visualize brotherhood to be a large part of the power-play experience, women stand as individuals tied to no such idea. This has been highlighted as one of the obstacles to women's leadership climb.

#### ➤ **South -South Geo-Political Zone**

The respondents identified factors that prevent women from venturing into the political leadership space to include: inferiority complex; suppression by **husband** for fear of disrespect for them that may come with **political** success of their wives; lack of awareness and misconception of politics as manly; wrong conception of the origination status of a married woman from another tribe or ethnicity; the weaponization of low financial status of women; structure of stress and risks; and persistent deprivation of women of political benefits due them. These factors, they believed, can be curtailed by organizing conferences for both men and women at all **the levels** of political engagements; getting women involved in governance and mentoring them; economic empowerment of women; and ensuring equity such that women are not deprived of rights and privileges.

## **XVI. Factors that Aid Women's Development**

### **➤ North Central Geo-Political Zone**

On the factors that would aid women development, the respondents listed the following:

- Enforcing affirmative action policy in the public sector
- Ending child marriage
- Launching micro-credit schemes for only women-owned businesses
- Passing the GEO bill into law
- Allowing women **inherit** family assets.
- Addressing GBV
- Creating general awareness on women's rights and opportunities

Majority of the respondents felt that affirmative action entrenched in the Constitution would be most effective in increasing the number of women in public offices. However, they did not think that the government had the political will to fully implement the 35% affirmative action policy. This could largely be attributed to the fact that the majority of the respondents believed that implementing affirmative action would be very effective to improving women's participation in governance.

Furthermore, 69% of the respondents were in favour of requiring politicians who are running for office to choose the opposite gender as their running mate. The respondents believe that this should be codified to have the force of law. However, 31% disagreed with the notion of requiring politicians to choose the opposite gender as running mates.

### **➤ North -East Geo-Political Zone**

The survey conducted on the progress made in women's participation in governance in North-eastern Nigeria revealed that the majority of respondents across all categories were unaware of any mechanisms put in place by the state government to increase women's participation in governance. Specifically, youth leaders reported that 9 out of 10 were unaware of any mechanisms, and politicians reported that only 2 out of 10 were aware. Traditional leaders and religious leaders also reported similar results, with only a small percentage claiming to be aware of such mechanisms. This suggests that there may be a lack of effective communication and implementation of government initiatives to increase women's participation in governance in north-eastern Nigeria.

This suggests that the state government may not have been effective in communicating and implementing such initiatives to the people. This highlights the need for more effective and inclusive awareness campaigns by the government because **of** it is seen as a factor hindering women development.

➤ **North -West Geo-Political Zone**

Respondents from this Zone believe that the lack of awareness of the rights of women was a hindrance, therefore, educating women, especially in the rural areas was key. Additionally, they would prefer **a legislation** to enforce the 35% affirmative action and the passage of the GEO Bill into law.

➤ **South -East Geo-Political Zone**

On factors that aid women's development in Nigeria, the respondents believed that enforcing affirmative action policies, ending child marriage, passage of the GEO bill, creating general awareness **on** women's rights and opportunities, among others would aid women's development in Nigeria.

➤ **South-West Geo-Political Zone**

Like other geo-political zones, the respondents in the **South -West** want **a legislation** to enforce the affirmative action and a **constitution** amendment as well. They believe that it was the only way to ensure compliance.

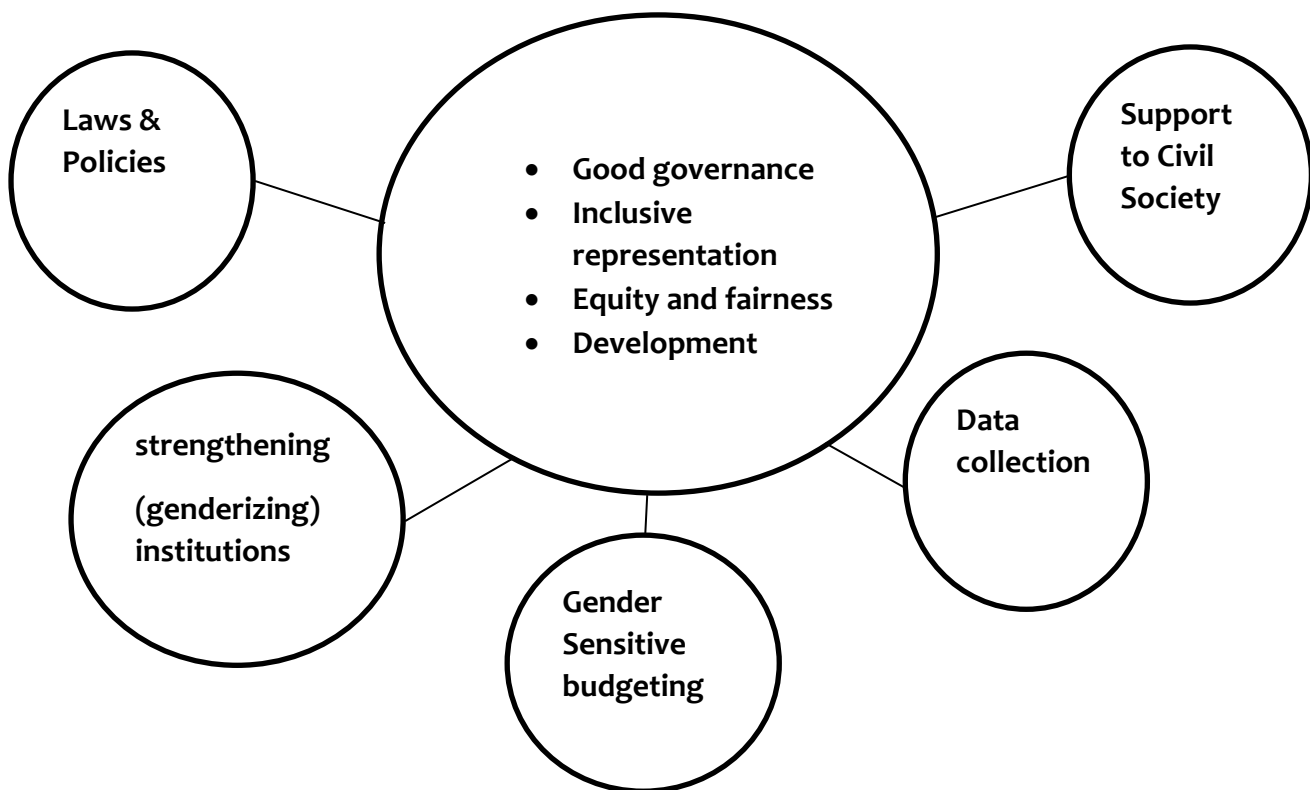
➤ **South -South Geo-Political Zone**

Respondents were of the view that enforcing affirmative action policy in the public sector should be the first step. Others include -

- 1) Ending child marriage
- 2) Launching micro-credit schemes for only women-owned businesses
- 3) Passing the GEO Bill into law
- 4) Allowing females to inherit family assets.
- 5) Addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV)
- 6) Creating general awareness of women's rights and opportunities

# THEORY OF CHANGE

From the data collected from all the geo-political groups, several points cut across and collectively forms a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen with **regards** to gender in the Nigerian polity.



- ✓ **Laws & policies** – passage of the Gender & Equal Opportunities Bill into law, constitution amendment to entrench affirmative action, and other laws that promote gender equity.
- ✓ **Strengthening (genderizing) institutions** – creating gender desks in public institutions, including more women in decision-making positions (equitably including women into appointive positions).
- ✓ **Gender Sensitive Budgeting** – preparing budgets and analyzing them from a gender perspective. In other words, structuring spending in such a way as to advance gender equality.
- ✓ **Data Collection** – conducting research to collect data on women inclusion and participation to further interventions that could bring about a balance.
- ✓ **Support to Civil Society** – responsiveness to the voice of the people is a crucial task of any responsible government. The government can support **the civil**

society by engaging in consultations and considering the perspectives of the people in decision-making.

## CONCLUSION

As the most basic and prevalent category in social life throughout the world, gender and women's position in gender discourse also play an important role in global politics which has traditionally been a male domain that many women have found unwelcoming or even hostile.<sup>ccxlix</sup> In Nigeria and in most countries, women face limited legal obstacles against their participation in different levels of political processes yet in comparison with their male counterparts, their political participation and inclusion are generally insignificant. The research has shown **in** great length, the negative impact of patriarchy **in** women's political participation as well as socio-economic and religious factors.

Lack of camaraderie is a pattern of concern as females often see each other as competition rather than as members of a supportive network.<sup>cci</sup> Whereas men have other men as confidants and mentors and visualize brotherhood to be a large part of the power-play experience, women stand as individuals tied to no such idea. This has been highlighted as one of the obstacles to women's leadership climb.

Gender mainstreaming is an essential strategy by which critical policies, strategies, plans, and activities in all other areas of development – political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental, can be influenced to ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women. Thus, gender mainstreaming is more of a process than a goal. It is not the end goal but rather a means to an end.

Indigeneship and identity belongingness **affects** women from specific parts of the country in their hometowns as they are seen to have lost their original identities because they are married. Another factor that is equally specific to certain locations is **gendered** economy, which inhibits a female from inheriting property belonging **their** father. This practice favours the male and puts the female at a disadvantage.

Women are institutionally discriminated against due to biological processes. They are made to see the menstrual cycle as an inhibition or a disadvantage, which breaks down the confidence level of a growing girl. This affects them, sometimes for the rest of their child-bearing years. This causes discrimination in employing young women because employers do not want to provide maternity leaves to their female workforce.

Money politics dominates Nigeria and as women are economically disadvantaged, this affects their chances of competing with the men.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

As gender mainstreaming is touted as the next step in the gender equality puzzle, as the most modern form of gender governance, Nigeria can benefit from adopting a twin-track approach model in gender mainstreaming: addressing gender issues as an integral part of all development activities and supporting specific activities to enhance women's empowerment and gender equality.

Nigeria can adopt a mechanism like the UNDP's 1996 Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), which evaluates **progress** of women advancing in political and economic forums as well as examines the extent to which women and men are able to actively participate in economic and political life and involve in decision-making.<sup>ccli</sup> This data is crucial for gender mainstreaming programs. It would simply inform decision-makers and program managers of the sort of intervention needed in any sphere to ensure inclusion and equitable representation.

Normalizing virtual convenings could be an opportunity to bring more women to the table in a pandemic, provided they are brought in from the beginning and given access to the required technology.

As funding projects was a big challenge faced by the government **especially** in the peak of the covid-19 pandemic, the budgeting process should be more gender-responsive; for instance, recognizing the role of women when deciding how to allocate funding.

Collecting sex-disaggregated data is essential to ensure that the response to a pandemic reflects an understanding of how the pandemic affects women. For instance, the data can inform the sort of palliative that should be provided to families with nursing mothers or women in child-bearing age groups (feminine products).

**Nigerian** government must also prioritize and invest in programs that foster social protection and opportunities, and guarantee access to essential services for women and girls during and after a pandemic—and women should be included in these conversations.

The 'gender bills' that were 'killed' at the National Assembly need to be revisited. The 5 bills would have led to a Constitution alteration and given women a sense of belonging in the country, especially, the bill that would give foreign husbands citizenship when they are married to Nigerian women.

A woman should be appointed as INEC chairman. No woman has ever been nominated as the chairman before, and so it is time to allow more diversity and inclusion into the leadership of INEC.

To recognize the crucial role of media in achieving gender equality in all domains, there should be regular publication of gender-sensitive and gender-transformative content in order to break gender stereotypes. To empower the media to do this in Nigeria, there has to be supporting policies, rules (or codes) and mechanisms regulating the media industry.

**Safety** of female media workers and the male as **well**, needs to be a key priority of the government. The frequent harassment of journalists and members of the media, either through unnecessary fines or **sanction**, and even physical arrest by security officials is not encouraging. A culture of safety needs to be created and effective mechanisms for complaints and redress need to be put in place.

Passage of legislations that would guarantee the right of a female child to inherit from her father's wealth/assets or property.

# **ANNEXES**

## **REPORT PRESENTATION ACCORDING TO GEO-POLITICAL ZONES**

## ANNEX 1

### XVII. THE NORTH-CENTRAL REGIONAL REPORT

#### 1. Introduction

One basic challenge that has continued to entrench gender disparity in the North-central region of Nigeria is poverty. The region is known to host diverse groups of people and ethnic nationalities due to its strategic geo-position. Irrespective of the abundance of human and natural resources in the region, poverty has continued to affect the social, economic, and political growth of the region. Women are more affected by poverty than men, hence, the power imbalance.

The gender in Nigeria study bears a national **coloration** given that strategic locations serve as **focal point** of reference. For the North-central region, Nasarawa State was selected as the focal state for the study. However, given certain emerging issues like the Covid-19 pandemic, social/new media, etc., the focus on gender representation especially in the post Covid-19 era, has broadened. This study is timely and significant as the 2023 general elections are gradually re-opening the conversation on gender disparity.

This study hopes to beam the light on the glaringly wide gender gap in the ballot, which points to the underrepresentation of women in governance, and this is evident in the slow pace of socio-economic development of the **north central** region and Nigeria in general.

#### 2. Background

In the North-Central part of Nigeria, statistics **has** shown that few women have been co-opted into the political space, and the available data is insignificant to hold as a threshold for adequate representation of women in governance and **decision making**. The **north central** states include Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, and Plateau states respectively. It was estimated that the **north central** region has about twenty (20) million people which constitute (11) percent of the total population of the country. The Federal **capital** City was carved out from the **north central** states. The region has the sixth, seventh, and eighth most populous cities in Nigeria (Wikivoyage, 2023).

The culture of patriarchy made it possible for women to be seen as possessions of men – a clear reason why gender equality has no **stance** in the cultural practices across the region. Particularly, the cultural practice allows for men to marry and own women except on rare cases where a woman's family is wealthy, in such a case, the situation is a bit complicated. Men are considered to be right always, especially when considered as the head of **household**. This and other cultural practices have been known to reduce women's freedom and career development in the region. The inhabitants of the region

are strongly attached to the orthodox cultural and religious practices which in turn affects gender orientation in the region.

### 3. General Analysis

Focus group discussions (FGDs) were held in the local government areas with the **grassroot** residents while the key informant interviews (KIIs) were with randomly selected stakeholders. The questionnaires were virtually distributed with a total of 227 (two hundred and twenty-seven) respondents (see demographic charts below).

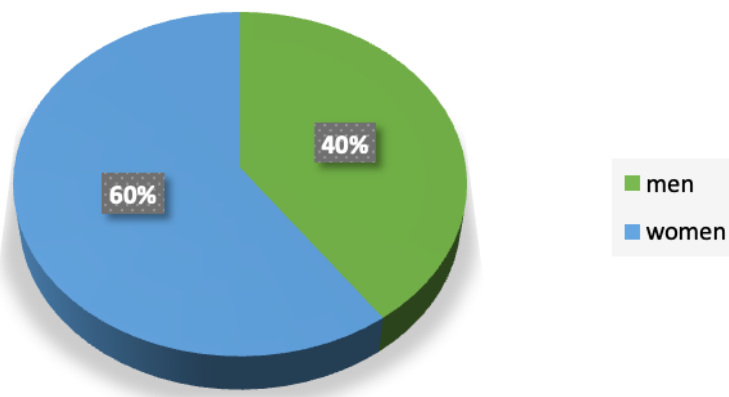


Fig. 1: Respondents' gender distribution

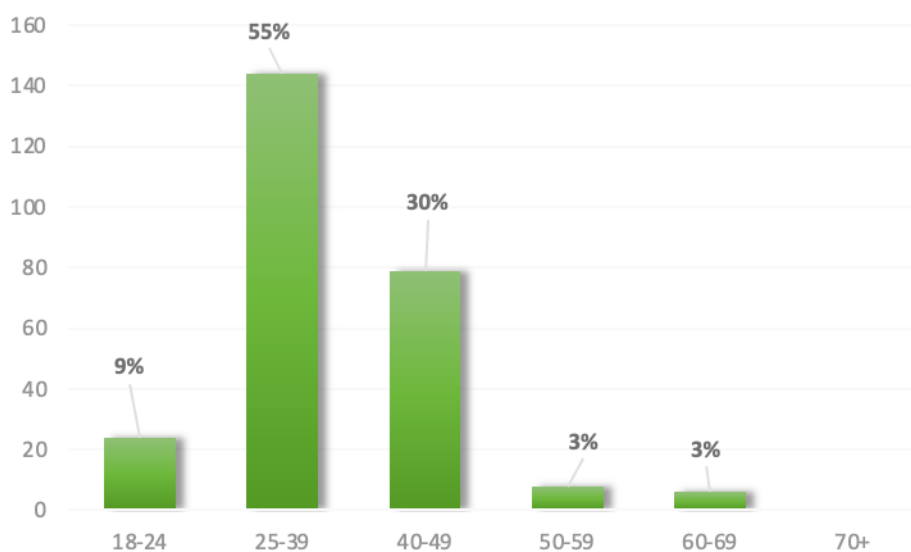


Fig. 2: Age distribution of respondents

The respondents acknowledged that **women** development and inclusion **was** crucial to the improvement of governance in Nigeria. When asked about their understanding of the term, ‘women development’ in governance, they believed that it meant **women** advancement or equal participation of women and men in government.

On whether the state government was doing enough to empower women, the respondents claimed that the government had invested a lot in women empowerment, though a few of **the** disagreed with the claim. One of the respondents who agreed with the claim that the government was empowering women, complained that the empowerment programme was discriminatory. She said that only persons who belonged to select groups were admitted into the programme to the exclusion of others.

It was most interesting to learn from all the respondents at the FGD in all the three local government areas that they were not aware of any state laws that had impacted women or could impact women development. They however, believed that if there was a law, it would help improve the development in women.

### **Women participation and Inclusion**

The respondents believe that a law was needed to encourage more women to participate in governance. However, a major obstacle that they identified as a stumbling block to women’s participation and inclusion was marriage. They opined that this was tied to the general cultural stereotype that women in politics were “women of easy virtues” and so the husbands feel reluctant to allow their wives actively get involved in politics.



**Participants at the FGD in Nasarawa State**

A factor, which all the respondents agreed to was money. They felt that since Nigeria operated money politics where elections were bought that women would not be able to match the men. Though more women are engaging in political activities in Nasarawa state, the respondents felt that women’s exclusion from grassroots politics was a deterrent factor, especially if they belonged to minority ethnic or religious groups.

They raised the issue of rigging and falsification of results, which has become a culture in Nigeria as part of the reason why women are not encouraged to take part in political activities. The violence involved in the political process as pointed out by the respondents is not what women want to get involved in.

However, there was a unanimous agreement on the issue of support for women’s participation through political appointment. They agreed that the current administration had appointed more women into offices within the state than previously.

On improving governance in Nigeria, majority of the respondents (89%) believed that having more women in public offices would cause an improvement, while 11% disagreed with the notion.

### **Women and Emerging Issues (insecurity, pandemic, & social media)**

**Majority** of the respondents (78%) to the questionnaire were of the opinion that the Covid-19 pandemic had an impact on women's development in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. However, the respondents indicated that the state government had improved in healthcare delivery **especially** maternal health but more needs to be done on improving healthcare facilities in the rural communities in the state.

The respondents opined that more women had access to jobs, more education and were more active in politics.

All the key informants during the interviews, unanimously agreed that the pandemic impacted the businesses of women, but the awareness created about the pandemic by the government helped save lives. However, the high rate of insecurity has left women traumatized because they are usually the main victims of rape, kidnap and GBV in general. While being the main victims of all these violent acts, the respondents agreed that have been agents of peace in the state.

### **Women Development**

Respondents to the questionnaire were asked their opinion on development or improvement with regards to women in governance in Nigeria in the last decade and 65% said that there has been an improvement. 35% of the respondents, however, did not believe that there has been any improvement. When asked to rate the level of development, only 1% opined that the level of development was high; 44% felt that the level is moderately high, and 55% said that the level is low. Apparently, the analysis showed that majority of respondents saw the development as low.

In order for there to be women development in governance, respondents opined that a law was necessary to encourage more women to get into political space. With reference to the Gender and Equal Opportunities (GEO) Bill, which would have been a legislation, had the National Assembly passed it, 75% of the respondents said that they had heard of it, while 25% had not. The Bill had been presented before the National Assembly multiple times but was thrown out each time by the male-dominated legislature.

On the factors that hinder women's development, the respondents listed illiteracy among women, socio-cultural beliefs, religious beliefs, poverty, insecurity, and inadequate laws to protect women. Majority of the respondents (64%) believed that socio-cultural beliefs- hinder women the most.

On the factors that would aid women development, the respondents listed the following:

- Enforcing affirmative action policy in the public sector
- Ending child marriage
- Launching micro-credit schemes for only women-owned businesses
- Passing the GEO bill into law
- Allowing women inherit family assets.
- Addressing GBV
- Creating general awareness on women's rights and opportunities

In order to bring more women into the political leadership space, respondents believed that the following were needed: -

- Constitution amendment to include affirmative action.
- Civil society protest/advocacy
- Political parties admitting more women into key positions.
- More awareness campaigns, especially social media campaigns

Majority of the respondents felt that affirmative action entrenched in the Constitution would be most effective to increasing the number of women in public offices. However, they did not think that the government had the political will to fully implement the 35% affirmative action policy. This could largely be attributed to the fact that majority of the respondents believed that implementing affirmative action would be very effective to improving women's participation in governance.

Furthermore, 69% of the respondents were in favour of requiring politicians who are running for office to choose the opposite gender as their running mate. The respondents believe that this should be codified in order to have the force of law. However, 31% disagreed with the notion of requiring politicians to choose the opposite gender as running mates.

On legislation that would encourage women development, majority of the respondents were in favour of a law that would reserve specific seats for women at both National Assembly and State House of Assembly. While 79% said 'yes' to the passage of the law, 21% said 'no' to reserving seats for women. Though majority were in favour of the passage of a law in favour of reserving seats for women, they also noted the barriers that would impede its passage as follows: -

- Male chauvinism in the society
- Lack of political will
- Cultural beliefs and practices
- Religious beliefs
- Misconception and misinformation
- Patriarchy



#### 4. Summary of Findings

The data analyzed revealed that most of the respondents involved in this survey were female and most of them were residents in Abuja and Nasarawa state. The study further revealed that 87.2% of the respondents were students and graduates from tertiary institutions employed in Government/public sector in the north central states.

The study revealed that majority of the participant have knowledge concerning improvement around women in governance during the study period. Even though, 125 of the respondents representing 55% indicated low improvement in the north central states of Nigeria.

The study further revealed that majority of the respondents 192(84.6%) embraced the idea that law is very necessary to improve women inclusion in governance in the north central states of Nigeria. This agreed with the response of the stakeholders interviewed in the study.

The result of the analysis revealed that 170(75%) of the respondents said “yes” that they are very much aware of the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill. Furthermore, 166(73.1%) of respondents pointed out that the objective of the bill is to protect women and girls from all forms of discrimination in the north central states of Nigeria.

The study revealed that 147(64.8%) of the respondents indicated that socio-cultural belief is one of the factors hindering women development in the north central states of Nigeria.

The study also revealed that 133(58.6%) of the respondents embraced that Passing the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill into law is the factor supporting women development in Nigeria,

Hence, 202(89%) of the respondents portrayed that majority of the respondents are in agreement that governance in the north central states of Nigeria will improve with more women in public offices.

The study revealed that 143(62.9%) indicated that Political parties admitting more women into key positions is the only solution to bring more women into political leadership space. While 101(44.5%) respondents indicated that they don't know if there is political will by the government to fully implement the 35% affirmative action policy in the north central states of Nigeria.

The study revealed that 114(50.2%) respondents believed that the affirmative action policy would improve women's participation in governance if properly implemented. As such 157(69.2%) said “yes” that there should be a law to require male politicians to choose a female running mate for elective offices to choose female running mates and vice versa.

The study revealed that 40(61.7%) respondents indicated that cultural beliefs and practices is the barrier to the passage of a law reserving seats for women in the legislature,

The study revealed that 178(78.4%) of the respondents indicated that “yes” the emerging issues such as the pandemic, insecurity, and social media (new media) has affected women’s growth and development in Nigeria,

Finally, the study revealed that 109(48.0%) of the respondents, indicated that more women have access to jobs and opportunities in recent decades that as was in the past.

## **5. Recommendations**

As a panacea to all research work, this study has made the following recommendations in view of the findings above:

- i. This study recommends that more progressive policies targeted at women development should be formulated to further increase the gains achieved so far from the previous policies formulated as a result conferences, symposium and other advocacies embarked on by women group in the North central region and Nigeria Generally.
- ii. The States governors in the North central regions should rally support for women in the respective States Houses of Assemblies and National Assembly to fully implement the affirmative action for a purposeful gender consideration in elective and appointive positions in the region. This will be more meaningful if the positions are paired with opposite sex in every elective position that requires a principal and deputy/vice.
- iii. The Gender and Equal opportunity Bill should be passed into and law and be fully implemented to enable effective inclusion of women in governance and decision making for better growth and development of the region.
- iv. It recommended that there is the need for social and cultural re-orientation of the people to enable women participate in governance and decision making in the north central region of Nigeria. This is given the finding that there would an improvement in governance if women are included in governance.
- v. The study recommend that women should be supported to attain the apex positions in the major political parties in Nigeria; this will boost the courage of other women to get involved in political activities in the grass-root and beyond.
- vi. The recommends that all existing pending and new bills targeted at improving women inclusion in governance in the States and National Assemblies should passed into law and implemented from 2023 to give the women population a sense of belonging given the low percentage of women in the 2023 ballot across the North Central region and the country generally.

## **6. Conclusion**

There is still wide gender gap in governance in the north central states of Nigeria in spite several advocacies, bills and other legal frameworks targeted at women inclusion in governance and decision making in the region. The situation has not changed especially when the statistics of women in governance are placed side by side the men; the picture is gloomy and does not speak well of the stakeholders in the region. This is because, the exclusion of women from governance decision making has continued to affect the

growth and development of the region and the nation at large. While women constitute a significant percentage of the voters during elections, they are not adequately represented in decision making particularly in the executive, Legislative and Judicial arm of the government. It is in lieu of the foregoing that implementing the recommendations of this study became sacrosanct for women inclusion in governance and decision making in the North Central Region of Nigeria.

## **ANNEX 2**

### **XVIII. THE NORTH-EAST REGIONAL REPORT**

#### **1. Introduction**

In recent years, there has been increased attention on the role of women in society, particularly in terms of their participation in governance and leadership positions. This is in recognition of the fact that women have historically been underrepresented and marginalized in these areas, even though they constitute a significant portion of the population.

Global efforts towards engendering women empowerment is championed by the United Nations. Four global conferences on women have been held so far<sup>1</sup>. The first was in Mexico City in 1975, the second in Nairobi in 1980, a third in Nairobi in 1985, and a fourth took place in Beijing in 1995. It is pertinent to note that it was the 4<sup>th</sup> world conference on women in Beijing, China, in 1995 that has put gender mainstreaming on the world stage. This is because it combined five decades' worth of legal advancements aimed at ensuring the equality of women and men in law and in practice, drew on political agreements made at the three previous worldwide conferences on women, and reinforced political accords made at those conferences. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action emphasized the importance of equal rights and opportunities for women and called for the elimination of discrimination and violence against women. The document also outlined specific steps that nations may take to effect change. For this transformation to be true for women and girls throughout the world, UN Women collaborates with partners and governments. Ever since the Beijing conference, a succession of five-year evaluations has consistently been held the gauge progress, challenges and way forward. Yet many countries especially in the developing world still face tremendous challenges in their bid to implementing the 12-point agenda of the World Conferences on Women.

In Nigeria, the situation is no different from other sister developing nations, as women have traditionally played secondary roles in politics and governance. However, there have been some efforts in recent years to empower women and promote the participation of women in politics and governance. The government has recognized the importance of gender equality and has made efforts to address the issue and promote women's empowerment through promulgation and implementation of various policies,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/intergovernmental-support/world-conferences-on-women>

such as the 35% Affirmative Action Policy<sup>2</sup> and the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill (yet to be enacted) by the Ministry of Women Affairs<sup>3</sup>. Most first ladies of Nigeria at the state and national level have (since 1987) championed many programmes in collaboration with governmental and non-governmental organizations aimed at empowering women<sup>4</sup>. An example of a program on women empowerment is found in the report by Ukwueze, et.al. (2019) suggesting that microfinance programs have been successful in increasing the economic empowerment of women in the region by providing them with access to financial resources, such as credit and training, which enables them to start and grow their own businesses<sup>5</sup>.

However, despite the progress made in advancing women's rights and opportunities, women in northeastern Nigeria still face significant barriers to their full and equal participation in society. Due to its strong cultural and historical traditions, northeastern Nigeria has its own distinct set of gender dynamics that have evolved over time. Religion, societal norms, economic situations, as well as recent conflicts, the COVID-19 epidemic, and the emergence of social media, all of which have compounded the situation further, are some of the variables that drive these dynamics.

One of the most significant factors shaping gender dynamics in northeastern Nigeria is religion. The majority-Muslim culture in the area strongly influences gender norms and interpersonal relationships. <sup>6</sup>For instance, women's modesty is stressed in traditional Islamic beliefs, which may restrict their engagement in public life and their access to education and career possibilities. In a similar vein, traditional Islamic law frequently favors men over women in terms of rights and benefits, particularly when it comes to matters like marriage, divorce, and inheritance.

The traditional social norms of the area are another element that influence gender dynamics in northeastern Nigeria. The interactions between men and women in northeastern Nigerian society are characterized by a strong patriarchal culture. Men are frequently assumed to be the household leaders and main breadwinners, while women are supposed to take care of the home and raise the children. This may result in less chances for women in sectors like work, leadership, and government, as well as a lack of financial independence for women.

Gender dynamics in northern Nigeria are also influenced by economic situations. The area is one of the poorest in the nation, and women and girls are disproportionately affected by this poverty.<sup>7</sup> Women in this region are less likely to have access to resources like

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.omicsonline.org/open-access/the-role-of-affirmative-action-on-empowering-womens-in-the-case-of-lhahale-2169-0170-1000226.php?aid=88029>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/blog/nigerias-struggle-gender-equality-gathers-pace-amid-protests>

<sup>4</sup> Iheanacho, N. (2016) First Ladies in Nigeria: The Rise of Amazon Crusaders for Better Life of the Vulnerable. *Advances in Applied Sociology*, 6, 134-146. doi: [10.4236/aasoci.2016.63011](https://doi.org/10.4236/aasoci.2016.63011).

<sup>5</sup> Ukwueze, E. R., Asogwa, H. T., David-Wayas, O. M., Emecheta, C., & Nchege, J. E. (2019). How Does Microfinance Empower Women in Nigeria?: A Study. In R. Das (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Microfinancial Impacts on Women Empowerment, Poverty, and Inequality* (pp. 1-22). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-5240-6.ch001>

<sup>6</sup> Makama, G.A. (2013), Patriarchy and Gender Inequality in Nigeria: The Way Forward. *European Scientific Journal* June 2013 edition vol.9, No.17 ISSN: 1857 – 7881 (Print) e - ISSN 1857- 7431, <https://core.ac.uk/>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file\\_attachments/cr-inequality-in-nigeria-170517-en.pdf](https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/cr-inequality-in-nigeria-170517-en.pdf)

loans and land, as well as less opportunities to participate in decision-making. They also less likely to have access to infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, and other services compared to men folk.

Northeastern Nigeria, in particular, has been affected by a number of emerging issues in recent years, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, insecurity, and the increasing use of social media.<sup>8</sup> These issues have had a significant impact on the lives of people in the region, and it is likely that they have also affected the development and inclusion of women in various spheres. As a result, women in northeastern Nigeria still face numerous obstacles to gender equality, women's empowerment, and their participation in governance and development. This is especially true in light of the ongoing conflict and insecurity brought on by the Boko Haram insurgency, traditional cultural and religious norms, and the country's economic situation. This highlights the need for more research to fully understand the specific ways in which these factors have affected the level of change in women empowerment in northeastern Nigeria over the past decade. Accordingly, this study evaluates the challenges that women continue to face in the region despite ongoing efforts to empower them and promote gender equality.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Women in Nigeria grossly lag behind the men in education, income, political power and often face violence solely because they are female. Despite the multiple years of struggle, advocacy, political engagement, and immense contribution to the development of Nigeria, women are still unable to equitably participate in the Nigerian leadership space. The critical question then is, 'why is women's equitable participation in governance in Nigeria seemingly unachievable and what can be done to change the situation?' Consequently, the problem addressed in this study is the lack of understanding of the current status of women's development, inclusion, and participation in governance, as well as the impact of emerging issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, insecurity, and social media on the growth and development of women in Northeastern Nigeria. The study aims to identify the challenges faced by women in Northeastern Nigeria and explore potential solutions to improve the status of women in the region.

This research will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the current situation and inform interventions to empower women and promote gender equality, inclusion and participation in governance in northeastern Nigeria. In other words, this study will inform planning, policy and development about gender and inclusion. It will serve as a resource for stakeholders in the gender and development community.

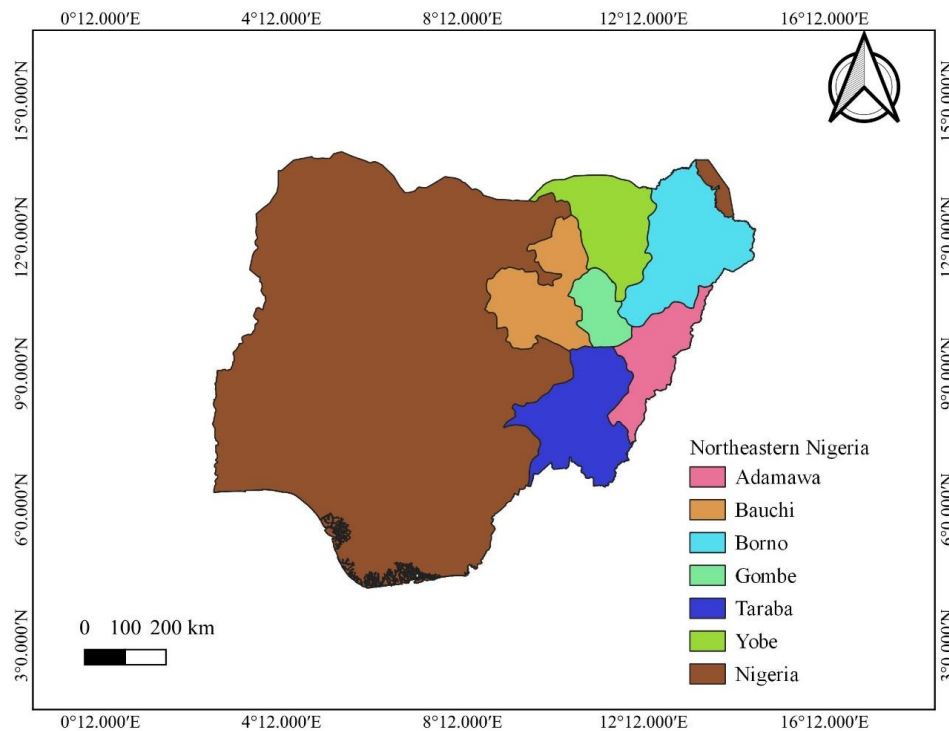
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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/gender/overview>

### 3. Study Area

The study area is the northeastern geopolitical zone of Nigeria located on Latitude:  $9^{\circ} 4' 55.1964''$  and Longitude:  $8^{\circ} 40' 30.9972''$  (Figure 1). It comprises the states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe. The region has a population of about 26 million demographically disaggregated into 49.5%-female and 50.5%-male (NBS, 2016).

#### Map of North-eastern part of Nigeria



### 7. Data Collection

The target population for this study comprised the resident population in three Local Government areas from each of the three senatorial zones of the states in the northeast geopolitical region.

The instruments and methods of data collection used comprise: a face to face Focused Group Discussions; face to face and telephoning Key Informants Interviews, and; a questionnaire via both paper and online media.

#### ➤ Focus Group Discussion:

A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted with stakeholder groups. Local Government areas were chosen on the basis of easy, safe and secure access and adequate representation. Accordingly, three Local Government Areas were chosen from each of the 3 senatorial districts of the northeastern States. Participants were drawn from each of the chosen Local Governments based on a target sample size of 10

participants from each Local Government; however, a total of 30 individuals participated in this FGD.

➤ **Key Informant Interviews (KII):**

The Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) centered on progress made in the last 10 years in narrowing the gender-based gaps in three thematic areas: women development, participation and inclusion, and emerging issues. Respondents chosen on gender basis of a 50/50 mix of male and female. Five categories of Key Informants were identified and two individuals from each of the identified categories were drawn from each senatorial zone of the each of the states on this study. The five (5) categories of key informants comprised: - Religious leaders, Traditional leaders, Women leaders, Youth leaders (age grade or group as is available) and Politicians. This sums up to a total of 10 key informants drawn from each of senatorial zones, which sums up to 30 Participants. Five categories of respondents were identified for this study on the gender basis of a mix of male and a female: Women Leaders, Youth Leaders, Politicians, Traditional Leaders, and Religious Leaders.

➤ **Questionnaire**

The selection of participants for questionnaire administration was done using a purposive sampling technique. This technique was chosen because it allows for the selection of participants who are most suitable for the research and who meet the specific criteria set by the study.

The first step in selecting participants was to determine the target population for the study. The target population for this study consists of men and women (with adequate contemporary knowledge on issues of women development in Nigeria) from various socio economic and cultural background living in the northeastern region of Nigeria who are involved in various forms of economic activities, which made it more interactive.

Next, a list of criteria was established for the selection of participants. These criteria included age, education level, and occupation. The age criterion for the study was set between 20 and 60 years old. The education level criterion was set to include men and women who have at least completed primary education. The occupation criterion was set to include men and women who are involved in various forms of economic activities such as public service, politics, farming, trading, and small business ownership.

Once the criteria were established, the researchers went to different communities in the northeastern region of Nigeria to identify eligible participants. The researchers approached women who met the criteria and explained the purpose of the study to them. Those who were willing to participate were given a questionnaire to fill out. The researchers aided those who needed it as well.

In total, 106 men and women responded online for the study. The sample size was chosen to be representative of the target population and to ensure that the findings of

the study would be generalizable to the larger population living in the northeastern region of Nigeria.

Overall, the participants for this study were selected in a systematic and rigorous manner to ensure that the sample was representative of the target population and that the findings would be accurate and reliable.

## ➤ **Result and Discussion**

The results are presented based on the methods of data collection using the following three themes: Women Development, Women Participation and Inclusion in Governance, and Emerging Issues. Accordingly, the presentation of analyzed results are in the following order: Focus Group Discussion, Key Informant Interviews, and Questionnaire.

### **8. Analysis of Focus Group Discussion**

#### **5.1. Women Development**

The Focus Group Discussion aimed to gain insights into the perceptions and experiences of women in Adamawa regarding women's development in governance in Nigeria. Four key questions were asked to guide the discussion: What does women development in governance in today's Nigeria mean to you? In the past decade, would you say that Nigerian women have 'developed'? Is the Nigerian polity more receptive to women now compared to ten years ago? Is a legislation necessary to enhance women's participation in political processes/women's public decision-making in anyway, for instance?

Participants viewed women's development in governance as being important for the overall development of the country. They believed that women have unique wisdom and should be included in the formation of government.

Participants felt that Nigerian women have not made significant progress in terms of development in the past decade. Participants noted that there is room for improvement and that women need to actively fight for their rights and opportunities in order to fully develop. They also pointed out that women have been more successful in the private sector, but that there is still a lack of representation of women in positions of power and decision-making roles. Additionally, some participants highlighted that the current political instability in the country has hindered the development of women.

Participants believed that the Nigerian polity is still not receptive to women and that men continue to oppress women and prevent them from reaching their full potential. They felt that men are not being fair to women and that this is hindering women's development.



Participants felt that legislation is necessary to enhance women's participation in political processes and decision-making. They suggested that laws should be put in place to ensure that women are given equal opportunities to participate in politics and that they are not discriminated against.

In general, the focus group discussion revealed that women in the Northern senatorial zone of Adamawa believe that women's development in governance is important for the overall development of the country. However, they also felt that women have not made significant progress in terms of development in the past decade and that the Nigerian polity is still not receptive to women. They suggested that legislation is necessary to enhance women's participation in political processes and decision-making. This report highlights the need for further research and interventions to address the issues raised by the participants and to promote women's development in governance in Nigeria.

## **5.2. Effectiveness of Government's Efforts at Women Empowerment**

Based on the Focus Group Discussion held in the Northern, Southern and Central Senatorial Districts of Adamawa, there was a general consensus among participants that the State Government is not doing enough to empower women. The identified gaps include insufficient funds for women empowerment, lack of awareness for women's rights, inability for women to report cases of abuse, cultural beliefs, fear of stigma and lack of representation in government positions.

In the Northern Senatorial District, participants highlighted that there were not enough funds allocated for women empowerment and that there was a lack of awareness for women's rights. They also stated that many women do not know how and where to report cases of abuse and that cultural beliefs and fear of stigma were also major barriers for women. Additionally, the participants from the northern senatorial district noted that women are not well represented in government positions.

In the Central Senatorial District, participants stated that the State Government is not doing enough to empower women, with a lack of proper template for women empowerment and few registered women organizations. They also noted that there is a lack of political will from leaders. They suggested ways to address these issues, including educating women on how to register their organizations and eliminating money completely during campaigns.

In the Southern Senatorial District, participants stated that the State Government is not doing enough to empower women, but that previous government had tried to empower women. They highlighted that men were also benefiting from women empowerment programs. They identified gaps such as the lack of strong legislation for women inclusive policies, lack of involvement of women stakeholders in decision making, political instability, lack of women capital development programs, few registered women organizations, and lack of political will from leaders.

In addressing the identified gaps, participants from all districts suggested the implementation of strong legislations for the development of women, involving

stakeholders of women-led organizations in decision making, ensuring successive governments do not abandon policies or projects on women, making capital development for women a priority, allowing for the registration of women-led organizations freely, and making women development and empowerment a priority for the government.

Overall, it is clear from the Focus Group Discussion that there is a need for the State Government to do more to empower women in Adamawa. The identified gaps and suggestions for addressing them provide a clear roadmap for the Government to follow in order to effectively empower and support women in the state.

### **5.3. Awareness of State Laws that have impacted the Status of Women**

The Focus Group Discussion was held in the Northern, Southern, and Central Senatorial Districts of Adamawa to assess the participants' awareness of any laws that have impacted the status of women in the State. The participants were also asked to provide information on the specific laws, when they were passed, and their impact on women.

In the Northern Senatorial District, the participants were aware of three laws that have been passed in the last ten years: The Free Delivery Law, the Free Education Law, and the Violence against Persons Prohibition Law (VAPP). However, they stated that they were not seeing the impact of these laws as they were not being implemented effectively.

In the Central Senatorial District, the participants were aware of one law, the Violence against Persons Prohibition Law (VAPP), which was passed in the last ten years. They stated that the law has impacted women by increasing their awareness of their rights.

In the Southern Senatorial District, the participants were not aware of any laws that have impacted the status of women in the state.

From the responses of the Focus Group Discussion, it can be inferred that while laws have been passed in the last ten years to improve the status of women in Adamawa State, their impact has been limited due to poor implementation and lack of awareness among the population. It is suggested that the government and relevant stakeholders take steps to ensure that these laws are effectively implemented and that awareness campaigns are carried out to educate women about their rights and how to access them.

### **5.4. Women's Participation and Inclusion**

#### **Mechanism to increase women's participation in Governance:**

Based on the responses from the Focused Group Discussion conducted in Adamawa State, there is a need for more laws and actions to be taken to encourage more women's participation in governance. Participants from all three Senatorial zones emphasized the need for effective legislation, the implementation of 40:60% policies for women, and the encouragement of Girl Child Education. They also highlighted the importance of involving women in policymaking, and increasing advocacy, orientation, and awareness of women's rights and existing laws. Additionally, all participants agreed that critical actors

and stakeholders need to do more, and that forms for political positions should be made free for women to encourage their participation in politics. Some participants also suggested that women should be involved in traditional leadership and grassroots politics. Despite this, some participants felt that not much has been done so far to improve the situation for women in governance.

### **Factor(s) that prevent women from venturing into the political leadership space:**

The Focused Group Discussion conducted in Adamawa State revealed that there are several factors that prevent women from venturing into the political leadership space. These factors include religious and cultural beliefs, lack of support from family and fellow women, fear of defeat, financial constraints, lack of support from husbands, fear and inferiority complex. The participants explained how these factors prevent women from venturing into the political leadership space, for example, cultural factors limit women's freedom to interact with society and keep them under the submission of their husbands, while religious factors restrict women's freedom to contest against men in an election. The participants also provided suggestions on how these factors could be curtailed, such as developing community networks that discourage money politics, advocacy to religious and traditional leaders, orientation and awareness campaigns, and organizing traditional festivals to honor women. Social media was also noted as a relevant tool in these curtailing efforts.

### **Perceived mechanisms for the management of the Factor(s) that prevent women from venturing into the political leadership space:**

From the responses of the Focused Group Discussion conducted in Adamawa State, it is clear that there are several factors that prevent women from venturing into the political leadership space. These factors include religious and cultural beliefs, financial constraints, lack of support from family, fear of defeat, lack of support from fellow women, and an inferiority complex.

These factors prevent women from venturing into the political leadership space by limiting their freedom and opportunities to interact with the society, keeping them under the submission of their husbands, and creating barriers for them to contest against men in elections.

To curb these factors, several mechanisms have been suggested. These include developing community networks that discourage money politics and influence governance, advocacy to religious and traditional leaders to portray the relevance and importance of women, creating and encouraging women to participate in political processes, orientation of the general public through aggressive and intentional awareness to make them see the active role women have to play in leadership, and organizing traditional festivals to honor women.

The social media was also seen as relevant in this regard as it can be used to promote and advocate for women's rights, create awareness, and mobilize women to participate in politics.

Overall, it is clear that there was a need for more laws and policies to be put in place to encourage more women's participation in governance. Critical actors and stakeholders also need to do more in terms of advocating for women's rights, creating opportunities for women, and encouraging their participation in politics.

#### **Existence of State Government's gender-inclusive administrative structures:**

The results of the Focused Group Discussion conducted in Adamawa State indicate that there is a lack of gender-inclusive administrative structures in the State Government. Participants from the Northern and Central senatorial zones reported that there are no such structures in place. Participants from the Southern Senatorial zone reported that there is a partial structure in place.

The participants suggest that policies for gender inclusion for women should be implemented to address this issue. They also call for women to push and advocate for their rights to promote greater gender inclusion in the state government's administrative structures.

It is important to note that the lack of gender-inclusive administrative structures can be a barrier for women's participation in governance. Such structures are necessary to ensure that women's perspectives and needs are considered in decision-making processes. Therefore, it is crucial for the state government to take steps to implement such policies and structures to promote gender equality and inclusion in governance.

### **5.5. Women and Emerging Issues**

#### **Effect of covid-19 pandemic on women's development:**

Based on the responses from the Northern, Central, and Southern Senatorial zones, it appears that the Covid-19 pandemic had a negative effect on women's development in Adamawa State. The respondents mention that businesses owned by women collapsed, which led to increased poverty, and there were difficulties in accessing healthcare. Additionally, there were also increased cases of domestic violence and gender-based violence as a result of the pandemic. Furthermore, the respondents also indicate that the state of the health sector is negatively impacting women's development in the state. Overall, the responses suggest that the pandemic had a detrimental effect on women's development in Adamawa state and that there is a need for improved healthcare infrastructure and support for women's businesses in the state.

#### **Effects of the security situation in the country on women's development:**

Overall, the responses from the Focused Group Discussion in Adamawa State indicate that the security situation in the country has had a negative effect on women's development in the State. Participants reported experiencing trauma and constant fear,

and businesses owned by women were said to have collapsed as a result of the security situation. However, women's contributions to peace and security in the state were also acknowledged. Some participants mentioned that women play a role in good home training for their children and in proper and deliberate inclusion of women in peace programs.

## 6. Analysis of In-depth/Key Informant Interviews

### 6.1. Women Development

The progress made by Nigerian women since the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 is a topic of debate among leaders in northeastern Nigeria. Issues of interest borders on the following: - level of progress in attaining equality, development and peace; level of progress in improving women's participation in governance, and: efforts being made at encouraging women participation in governance.

#### **Level of Progress in women development in terms of equality, development and peace:**

Responses from key informants in the region indicate a mixed perception of the progress made by women. Women leaders in the region report that there is no progress, with 7 out of 10 claiming that there is still a wide gap between men and women. However, 3 out of 10 believe that there has been very insignificant progress made, citing the presence of women leaders in states like Adamawa and Taraba.

Youth leaders in the region have a slightly more positive view, with 5 out of 10 claiming that there has been little progress because the gap has narrowed. However, 3 out of 10 claim there is no progress and 2 out of 10 did not respond to the question.

Politicians in the region also have a mixed view, with 4 out of 10 claiming that there has been little progress because the gap has narrowed and 4 out of 10 claiming there is no progress. 2 out of 10 did not respond to the question.

Traditional leaders in the region generally believe that there has been little progress, with 7 out of 10 claiming that the gap has narrowed. 1 out of 10 claim there is no progress and 2 out of 10 did not respond to the question.

Religious leaders in the region also have a mixed view, with 5 out of 10 claiming that there has been little progress because the gap has narrowed. 2 out of 10 claim there is no progress and 3 out of 10 did not respond to the question.

Overall, it can be surmised that the progress made by Nigerian women since the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 was perceived differently among leaders in Northeastern Nigeria. While some believe that there has been little progress because the gap has narrowed, others believed that there was no progress and the gap between men and women was still wide.

### **Level of progress in women's participation in governance:**

The progress of women in governance in Northeastern Nigeria, specifically in the States of Adamawa and Taraba, has been a topic of discussion among key informants. Responses from women leaders indicate that there has been a significant progress made in the last decade, with women holding various positions of leadership in the private and public sector, as well as a few in politics. However, 2 out of 10 women leaders claim that there has been no significant progress made, as there are only a few women leaders in Adamawa and Taraba, with no presence in Borno, Yobe, Gombe, and Bauchi states.

Youth leaders have a mixed perspective on the progress of women in governance, with 3 out of 10 stating that there has been a very little progress made, 3 out of 10 stating that there has been no progress, and 4 out of 10 not responding to the question. Politicians also have a mixed perspective, with 6 out of 10 stating that there has been little progress and 2 out of 10 stating that there has been no progress.

Traditional leaders tend to have a more optimistic view, with 7 out of 10 stating that there has been little progress, 1 out of 10 stating that there has been no progress, and 2 out of 10 not responding to the question. Religious leaders also tend to have a more optimistic view, with 5 out of 10 stating that there has been little progress, 2 out of 10 stating that there has been no progress, and 3 out of 10 not responding to the question.

Overall, while progress has been made in women in governance in northeastern Nigeria, there is still a significant gap between men and women in leadership positions and more efforts are needed to encourage women to participate in governance and politics.

### **Efforts being made at encouraging women participation in governance:**

The responses suggest that there is a mixed perception on the efforts made by the State government in Northeastern Nigeria to encourage more women to venture into the political leadership space. While most of the respondents from Women Leaders, Politicians, Traditional Leaders, and Religious Leaders believed that the government has made significant efforts to encourage women participation in governance and politics,

there are some respondents who claim that the government is not making any effort at all.

The responses from Women Leaders indicate that there has been some progress in the representation of women in leadership positions at the private and public sector and in politics. For example, in Adamawa State, a number of women have been appointed as Commissioners, Permanent Secretaries, Chairpersons of Boards and Parastatals, and a few have been elected as members of parliament since 2007. Additionally, the Gubernatorial aspirant of the All People's Congress is a female, and the Deputy Gubernatorial candidate of the People's Democratic Party is also a female. However, 2 out of 10 respondents claim that there is no significant progress made since there are only a few women leaders in States like Adamawa and Taraba with no presence in Borno, Yobe, Gombe, and Bauchi states.

Responses from Youth Leaders, Politicians, Traditional Leaders, and Religious Leaders suggest that government has made efforts to encourage women participation in governance and politics, but some respondents claim that there is no effort at all.

In order to improve the representation of women in leadership positions, the State Government could increase the number of women appointed to leadership positions in the private and public sector, create more opportunities for women in politics, and implement policies and programs to support and empower women. Additionally, awareness campaigns and sensitization programs targeting women and youth could be organized to increase their participation in leadership and decision-making roles.

## **6.2. Women's Participation and Inclusion**

Women's participation and inclusion in governance is an important issue in Northeastern Nigeria. Despite progress in recent years, women continue to be underrepresented in political and decision-making positions. This is due to a number of factors, including cultural and societal norms, lack of education and awareness, and lack of financial and structural support. However, there is a growing recognition of the importance of women's voices and perspectives in governance, and efforts are being made to address the barriers that prevent women from participating fully in the political process. This section of the report explored the current state of women's participation and inclusion in governance in Northeastern Nigeria, highlighting the challenges and opportunities that exist, as well as the mechanisms that are in place or should be adopted to encourage more women's participation in governance.

### **Adequacy of the current level of participation of women in the political space:**

This study found that most of the respondents, including women leaders, youth leaders, politicians, traditional leaders, and religious leaders believe that the current level of women's participation and inclusion in the political leadership space in northeastern Nigeria is not adequate. 80% of respondents from each of the 6 states surveyed believe that more needs to be done to improve the participation level of women in politics. Some suggestions for improving participation include implementing quotas for women in political positions, providing training and resources for women to run for office, and increasing awareness and education about the importance of women's representation in politics. There was a consensus among the respondents that government and political parties should lead the effort to improve women's participation in politics.

### **The need for a law to increase women's participation in political leadership:**

Based on the responses from the Key Informants, the majority of the respondents from Women Leaders, Youth Leaders, Politicians, Traditional Leaders and Religious leaders believe that there is a need for a law to increase women's participation in political leadership in Northeastern Nigeria. The reasons cited include the current inadequate level of participation and the need for affirmative action to address structural barriers and cultural attitudes that impede women's progress in politics. Some respondents suggested that the government, political parties, and civil society organizations should lead the effort in implementing such a law. However, a small percentage of respondents believe that there is no need for a law as they believe that women's participation in politics can be increased through other means such as education, mentoring and creating more opportunities for women to participate in politics. Overall, it is clear that there is a need to further explore the issue of women's participation in political leadership in northeastern Nigeria, and to consider the potential benefits of implementing a law to increase women's participation.

A majority of the women leaders, youth leaders, politicians, traditional leaders and religious leaders believed that there is a need for a new law to increase women's participation in political leadership. The reasons given for this include the need to address the current underrepresentation of women in politics, and to ensure that women have an equal opportunity to participate and lead in the political sphere. Some of the key suggestions for improving women's participation in politics include the use of quotas, the provision of training and support for women candidates, and the need for more women to be appointed to key positions in government. Overall, it is clear that there is a need for more action to be taken to promote and support women's participation in political leadership in northeastern Nigeria.

### **Mechanism to increase women's participation in governance:**

The survey conducted in 2022 on the progress made in women's participation in governance in Northeastern Nigeria revealed that the majority of respondents across all



categories were unaware of any mechanisms put in place by the state government to increase women's participation in governance. Specifically, women leaders reported that 3 out of 10 were aware of such mechanisms, while 5 out of 10 claimed ignorance. Similarly, youth leaders reported that 9 out of 10 were unaware of any mechanisms, and politicians reported that only 2 out of 10 were aware. Traditional leaders and religious leaders also reported similar results, with only a small percentage claiming to be aware of such mechanisms. This suggests that there may be a lack of effective communication and implementation of government initiatives to increase women's participation in governance in northeastern Nigeria.

From the responses of the interview, it can be inferred that the majority of the respondents from all categories are not aware of any mechanisms put in place by the State Government to increase women's participation in governance and politics in Northeastern Nigeria. This suggests that the state government may not have been effective in communicating and implementing such initiatives. Additionally, the responses from Women Leaders and Traditional Leaders show that out of 10, only 3 and 0 respectively are aware of any mechanisms put in place. This highlights the need for more effective and inclusive strategies to be implemented by the government to increase women's participation in governance and politics in northeastern Nigeria.

#### **Awareness of the 2006 Nigeria's National Gender Policy and its influence on the discussion around women in governance:**

The responses from the interview show that there is a general lack of awareness about the 2006 National Gender Policy among the Key Informants in Northeastern Nigeria. Many of the Women Leaders (7 out of 10) were aware of the policy, but there was a significant number of respondents across all categories who were not aware of it. The responses also indicate that there is a lack of understanding of how the policy has influenced the discussion around women in governance in the state.

The lack of awareness and understanding of the policy could be a major barrier to the effective implementation of the policy and the promotion of women's participation and inclusion in governance and politics in northeastern Nigeria. This highlights the need for more awareness raising and education on the policy and its implications for women's participation in governance and politics.

In order to improve the situation, it is important that the Government, Civil Society Organizations and other stakeholders work together to increase awareness of the policy and its potential to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. This could be done through targeted awareness raising campaigns, training and capacity building for key stakeholders, and the development of strategies for the effective implementation of the policy.

Overall, more needs to be done to increase awareness and understanding of the 2006 National Gender Policy in Northeastern Nigeria and to promote women's participation and inclusion in governance and politics in the region.

### **The role of the media in educating, raising awareness, or encouraging women's participation in governance:**

The interview results indicate that the media plays a significant role in educating, raising awareness and encouraging women's participation in governance in northeastern Nigeria. This is evident from the high number of respondents from all categories who acknowledged the media's role in this regard. Additionally, many respondents specifically noted the impact of various programs on issues of women's inclusion, which suggests that targeted media initiatives have been effective in raising awareness and encouraging women's participation in governance. In terms of the impact of social media, the survey results are mixed, with some respondents noting its potential to reach a wider audience and others remaining neutral on the issue. Overall, it seems that the media has been successful in raising awareness and encouraging women's participation in governance in northeastern Nigeria, but the impact of social media on this issue remains uncertain.

### **The nature of the relationship between government and non-state actors (like CSOs) in the State with regards to increasing the participation of women in governance:**

Women's participation and inclusion in governance and politics in Northeastern Nigeria has been a contentious issue since the Beijing Conference in 1995. The region has been plagued by several socio-economic and political challenges that have hindered the progress of women's empowerment. The responses to the question, "Does the State run any empowerment programmes for women? Is the office of the first lady involved? Do you see any bottlenecks in the implementation of such empowerment programmes?" reveal a mixed picture of the state of women's participation and inclusion in governance in the region.

According to the responses from women leaders, the State Government runs empowerment programmes for women, and the office of the first lady is usually involved in such programmes. However, a significant number of respondents (30%) opined that the relationship is cordial but unproductive.

The responses from youth leaders indicate that the State Government runs empowerment programmes for women and the office of the first lady is usually involved in such programmes. However, a significant number of respondents (40%) opined that the relationship is cordial but unproductive. This aligns with literature that suggests that the Nigerian Government has not fully committed to the implementation of policies and programmes aimed at increasing women's participation in governance (Adebayo, 2016).

Politicians' responses indicate that the State Government runs empowerment programmes for women and the office of the first lady is usually involved in such programmes. However, a significant number of respondents (20%) opine that the state government does not run any form of women empowerment programmes. They also opined that rigging of the selection process through religious sentiments leading to the

marginalization of rural women serves as a bottleneck to the success of women empowerment programmes. This aligns with literature that suggests that political factors such as religion and ethnicity play a role in hindering women's participation in governance in Nigeria (Onyema, 2018).

The major bottlenecks identified in the implementation of these programmes include lack of government will, corruption, favoritism, insufficient funds and biased selection process.

Political actors, on the other hand, reported that rigging of the selection process through religious sentiments leading to the marginalization of rural women serve as a bottleneck to the success of women empowerment programmes.

#### **The existence of state sponsored women empowerment programs:**

Based on the responses, factors such as lack of government will, corruption, biased selection process, favoritism, insufficient funds, religious sentiments, and tribal sentiments were cited as major obstacles to the success of these programs. It is also important to note that responses from religious leaders were less favorable than those from other leaders. Overall, it can be inferred that while there are some efforts being made to empower women in the Northeastern region of Nigeria, there is still much work to be done to ensure the effective implementation of these programs and to address the various bottlenecks that are hindering progress.

### **6.3. Women and Emerging Issues**

Women in Northeastern Nigeria are facing a multitude of emerging issues that are limiting their development and progress. These issues include the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, attack by bandits and the insecurity caused by the terrorist group, Boko Haram. Before the advent of COVID-19 and Boko Haram insurgency, it was poverty and marginalization. These challenges have had a significant impact on the lives of women in the region, affecting their ability to access education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Additionally, the pandemic heightened existing gender inequalities and further marginalized women. It is crucial to address these emerging issues to ensure the advancement and empowerment of women in Northeastern Nigeria. The perception of the people in the Northeast Nigeria of the impact of COVID-19 and Boko Haram insurgency on women development in the sub-region is negative.

#### **The Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on women's participation in governance:**

Based on the responses from various leaders in the Northeastern states of Nigeria, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on women's participation in governance in the region. Most respondents from women leaders, youth leaders, politicians, traditional leaders, and religious leaders all agreed that the pandemic has had a significant impact on women's participation in governance.

The main reasons cited for this impact include the crumbling of businesses and displacement of thousands of people, restrictions on movement and associated illnesses,

and difficulties for NGOs and CSOs to access women. These factors have likely hindered the ability of women to participate in governance and politics in the region and may have contributed to further marginalization of women in these areas.

It is worth noting that a small percentage of respondents (10%) did not believe that the pandemic had a significant impact on women's participation in governance. However, this minority viewpoint should be taken into consideration when considering the overall impact of the pandemic on women's participation in the region.

Overall, the responses suggest that the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on women's participation in governance and politics in Northeastern Nigeria. Further research and analysis would be needed to fully understand the extent of this impact and to develop strategies to mitigate it.

### **The impact of insecurity on women's empowerment**

The report on women's participation and inclusion in governance and politics in Northeastern Nigeria, based on responses to the question about the impact of insecurity on women's empowerment and development, shows that a majority of respondents across all groups believe that insecurity has had no significant impact on women's empowerment and development. The responses from women leaders, youth leaders, politicians, traditional leaders, and religious leaders all indicate that most respondents believed that women have played crucial roles in promoting peace and security through various means such as sensitization, advocacy, teaching, and training.

However, it is worth noting that a significant percentage of respondents, particularly among women leaders and youth leaders, did not respond to the question, indicating that more research may be needed to fully understand the impact of insecurity on women's empowerment and development in the region. Additionally, 30% of women leaders and 10% of youth leaders claimed that the impact of insecurity on women's empowerment and development was insignificant, indicating that there may be some impact, but it is not considered to be significant.

Overall, it appears that women in Northeastern Nigeria have been able to continue to participate in governance and politics despite the challenges posed by insecurity and have played an active role in promoting peace and security in the region. However, it is important to continue to monitor and study the situation to ensure that women's empowerment and development is not negatively impacted by insecurity.

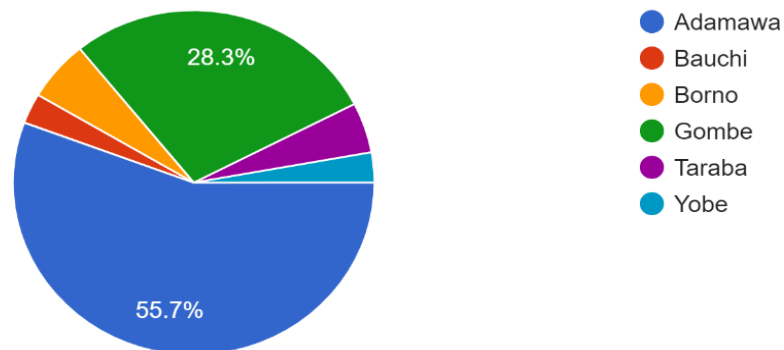
## **7. Analysis of Questionnaires**

### **7.1. Biodata and Demography of Respondents**

The biodata of respondents was presented based on the following elements: state of residence, gender, age range of respondents, highest level of education, and occupation of respondents. The distributions of each element of the biodata are presented in the form of charts in Figures 1-5.

## State of Residence

106 responses

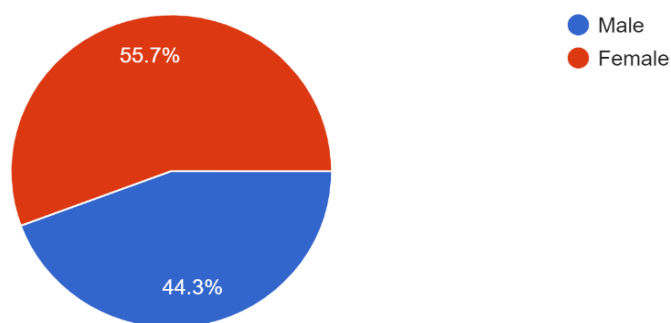


**Fig 1: State of Residence**

Figure 1 shows the distribution of respondents by state of residence. It can be seen that Adamawa State has the highest number of respondents (55.7%), followed by Gombe (28.3%) State. This may perhaps be attributed to the fact that since most of the questionnaire were accessed online, only respondents with online access and genuine interest participated. Furthermore, the limited access to participants in states like Borno and Yobe due to insecurity may be the reason for the low level of participation. Consequently, some of the participants were accessed via telephone.

## Gender

106 responses

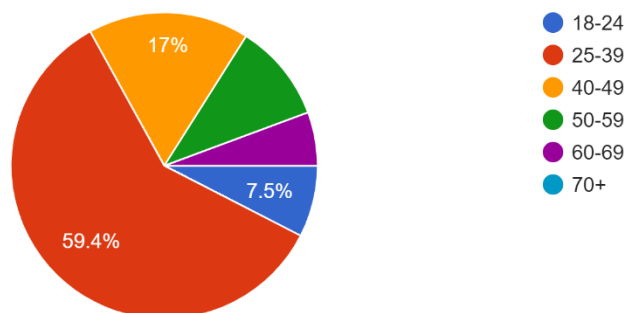


**Fig 2: Gender of Respondents**

Figure 2 on gender distribution of respondents shows an almost 50/50 distribution, which is line with the sampling design adopted for this study. It shows that more women were interviewed which represents 55.7% of responses while the male respondents were 44.3%.

### Age range

106 responses

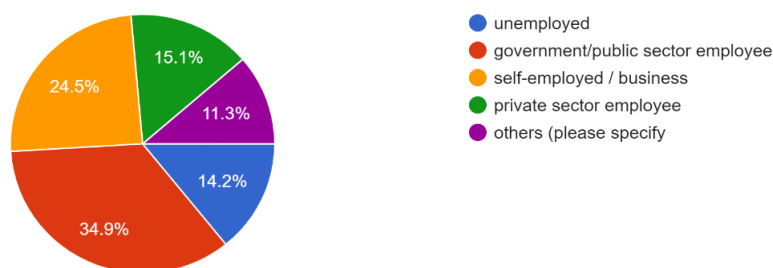


**Fig 3: Age range of respondents**

Figure 3 shows the age distribution of respondents. 59.8% of respondents fall within the range of 25-39 years; 17% of the respondents are in the age range of 40-49%; 7.5% of the respondents are in the age range of 18-24. This indicates that most of the respondents fall within the youthful working population and have adequate understanding of the issues raised in the questionnaire and the level of maturity to give valid responses.

### Occupation

106 responses



**Fig 5: Occupation of respondents**

Figure 5 above shows that most of the respondents are government/public sector employees constituting 34.9% followed by self-employed/business owner which constitutes 24.5% of the respondents. From the chart, 11.3% of the respondents do other occupations aside the ones mentioned here. This shows that since the highest number of respondents are government and public sector employee, the data obtained will be of relevance because it deals with the government and politics.

## 7.2. Women Development

### Progress with respect to women in governance in the last decade:

Responses from opinion polls with respect to the level of progress for women in governance is shown on the chart in Figure 6.

In your opinion, has there been any development (improvement) with regards to women in governance in Nigeria in the last 10 years?

106 responses

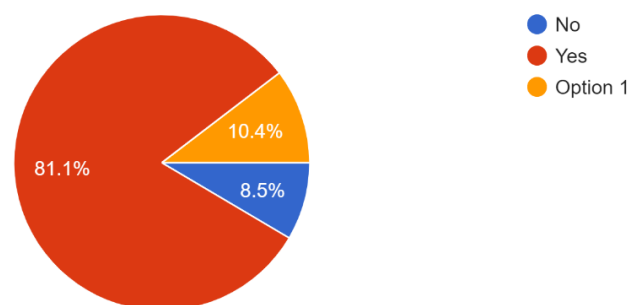


Fig 6: Showing if there is a gap between women and men in governance.

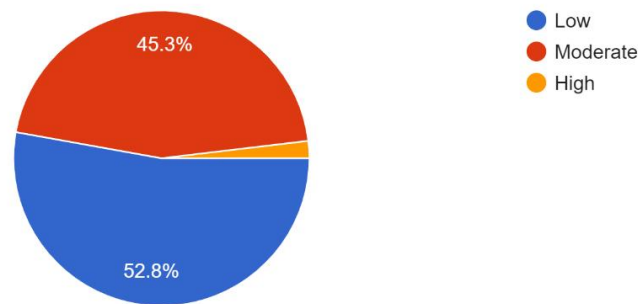
According to the opinion poll conducted in northeastern Nigeria, there is a strong indication that there has been improvement with regards to women in governance in the last decade. The poll results in Figure 6 show that 81.1% of respondents believe that there has been an improvement, while only 8.5% of respondents believe that there has not been any improvement. This indicates that most people in northeastern Nigeria believe that there has been progress in terms of women participating in governance in the last decade. This could be due to various initiatives and policies put in place to empower women in the region, and an increasing awareness and acceptance of women in leadership roles. However, it is important to note that the opinion poll results may not fully represent the reality of the situation, and further research and analysis should be conducted to fully understand the progress made and the challenges that still need to be addressed.

### Perception of the level of development with respect to women in governance

The perception of respondents on the level of development attained with respect to women in governance is shown in Fig. 7.

If yes, how do you rate the level of development?

106 responses



**Fig. 7: Level of development**

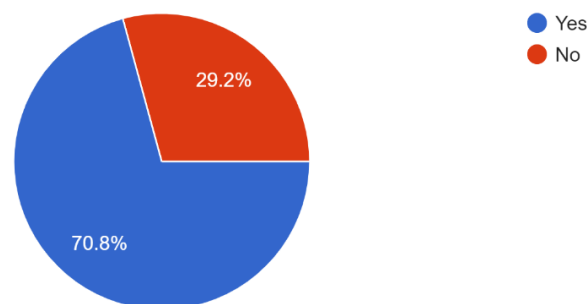
According to the statistics of the opinion poll conducted in northeastern Nigeria shown in Figure 7, the majority of respondents believe that there has been a high rate of development with regards to women in governance in the region in the last decade. This is demonstrated by the 62.8% of respondents who chose the "high" option. Additionally, a small percentage of respondents, 1.9%, believe that the rate of development has been moderate. However, a significant number of respondents, 45.3%, believe that the rate of development for women in governance in northeastern Nigeria in the last decade has been low. This highlights the need for further efforts to improve women's participation and empowerment in governance in the region.

### **Necessity of a new gender law that would promote women's participation in governance:**

Respondents' opinion on the necessity of a new gender law that would promote women's participation in governance is presented in Figure 8.

If you answered 'no' to (1), do you think a law is necessary?

106 responses



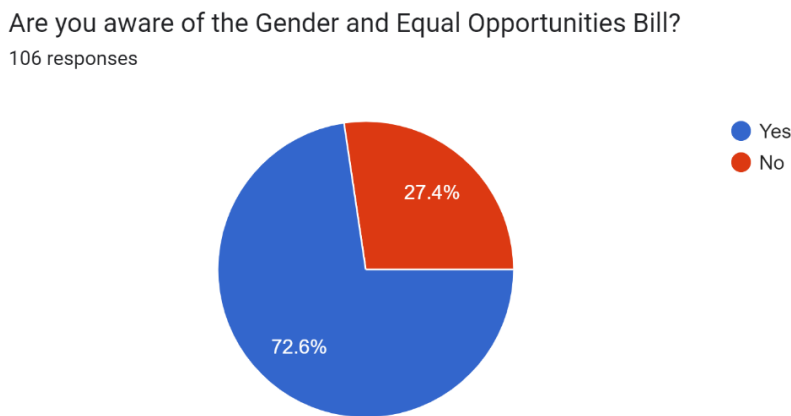
**Fig. 8: Shows if law is necessary to increase women participation.**



According to the opinion poll results in Figure 8, a majority of individuals in Northeastern Nigeria believe that enacting a new law for promoting women participation in governance would be necessary. Specifically, 70.8% of respondents answered "yes" to the question, indicating that they believe such a law is needed, while 29.2% answered "no," suggesting that they believe no new law is necessary. These results suggest that there is a significant number of individuals in northeastern Nigeria who believe that a new law would be an effective way to increase the participation of women in governance.

### **Awareness of the Gender and Equal Opportunities bill in Nigeria:**

Respondents' awareness of the gender and equal opportunities bill in Nigeria is shown in Figure 9.



**Fig. 9: Shows the level of respondents' awareness of gender equality bill.**

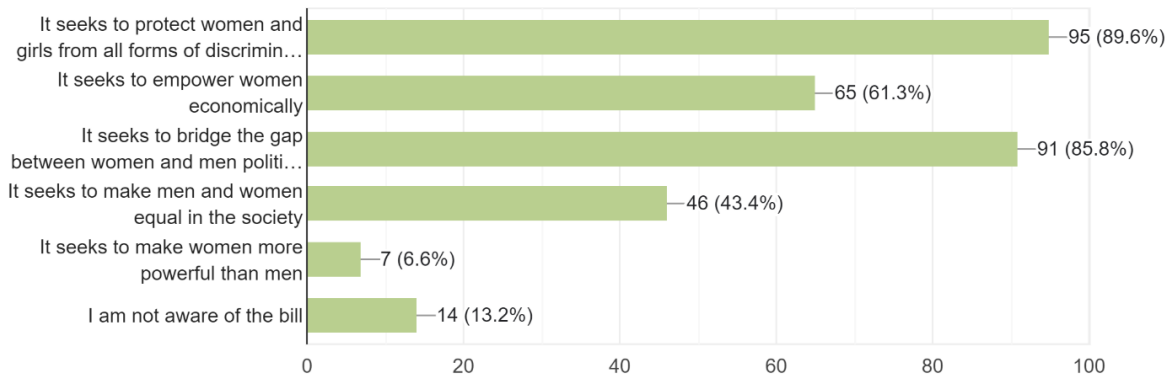
According to the opinion poll conducted in northeastern Nigeria shown in Figure 9, majority of the respondents (72.6%) were aware of the Gender and Equal Opportunities bill in Nigeria. This suggests that there is a high level of knowledge and awareness about the bill among the population in northeastern Nigeria. On the other hand, 27.4% of the respondents were not aware of the bill, indicating that there may be a need for more education and awareness campaigns to ensure that all members of the community are informed about the bill and its implications. Overall, the result of this poll highlights the importance of continuing to raise awareness about the Gender and Equal Opportunities bill and its potential impact on women's participation in governance in northeastern Nigeria.

### **Understanding of the objectives of the Gender and Equal Opportunities bill in Nigeria:**

Respondents understanding of the objectives of the gender and equal opportunities bill in Nigeria is presented in Figure 10.

If yes, what is your understanding of the objective of the Bill? (choose any 3 that best apply)

106 responses



**Fig. 10: Shows respondents understanding of the bill.**

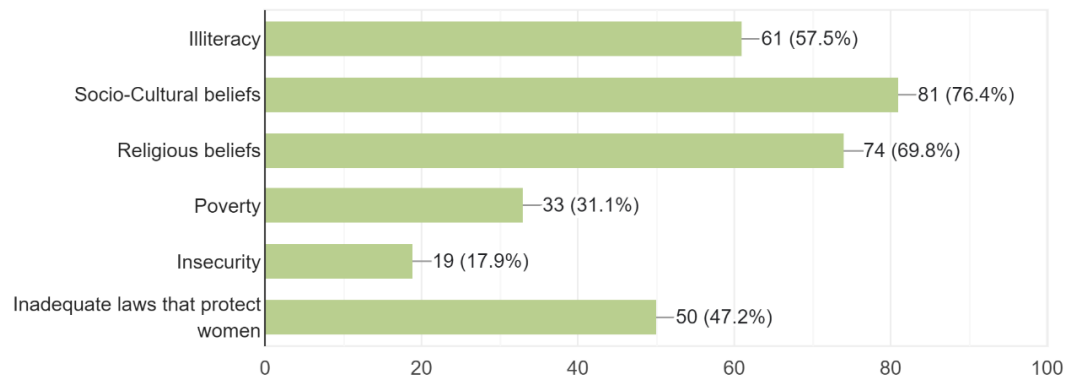
The result of the opinion poll in northeastern Nigeria shown in Figure 10, on the respondent's understanding of the objectives of Nigeria's Gender and Equal opportunities bill shows that a majority of respondents are aware of the bill and have a good understanding of its objectives. A large majority of 89.6% of respondents correctly identified that the bill seeks to protect women and girls from all forms of discrimination. Similarly, 85.8% of respondents correctly identified that the bill seeks to bridge the gap between women and men politically. A significant majority of 61.3% of respondents also correctly identified that the bill seeks to empower women economically. However, a relatively lower percentage of respondents correctly identified that the bill seeks to make men and women equal in society at 43.4%. A small percentage of 8.8% of respondents incorrectly believed that the bill seeks to make women more powerful than men. Additionally, 13.2% of respondents were not aware of the bill. Overall, the result of the opinion poll indicates that a majority of northeastern Nigerian respondents are aware of the Gender and Equal opportunities bill and have a good understanding of its objectives.

### **Factors that hinder women's development:**

Result of the opinion polls from the northeastern Nigeria on the factors that hinder women's development is presented in Figure 11.

Which of these, in your opinion, hinder women's development in Nigeria the most? (Choose 3 that apply the most)

106 responses



**Fig. 11: Perception of what hinders women development the most in Nigeria.**

The factors that hinder women development in Nigeria the most, according to Figure 11, include socio-cultural beliefs (76.4%), religious beliefs (69.8%), and inadequate laws to protect women (47.2%). Illiteracy also plays a significant role in hindering women's development with 57.5% of respondents identifying it as a major factor. Other factors identified include poverty (31.1%) and insecurity (17.9%). It is evident from these statistics that cultural and religious beliefs, along with a lack of legal protection, are major barriers to women's development in northeastern Nigeria. Additionally, the high percentage of respondents identifying illiteracy as a hindrance highlights the importance of education in empowering women and promoting their development.

### **Factors that aid women's development:**

The opinion poll conducted in northeastern Nigeria on factors that aid women's development has highlighted some key areas that are seen as important for promoting women's development in the region. The result is presented in Figure 12.

Which of these factors aid women's development in Nigeria? (Choose 3 that apply the most)

106 responses

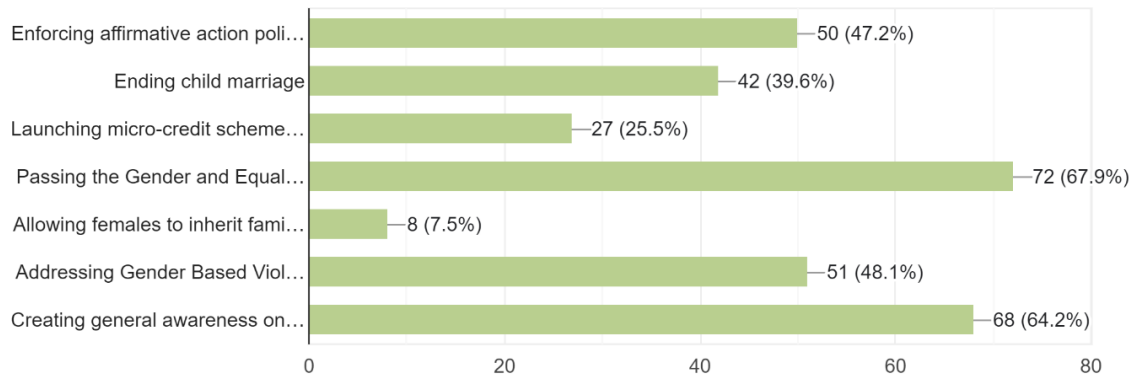


Fig. 12: Factors that aid women development in Nigeria.

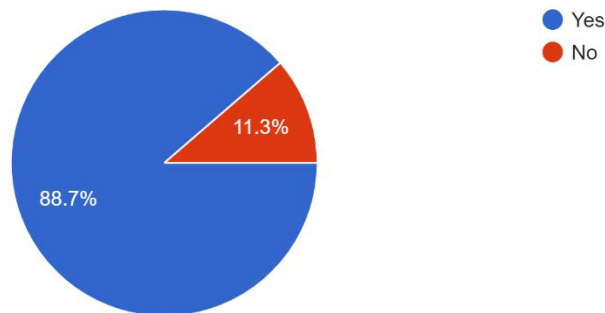
The results in Figure 12 show that enforcing affirmative action policy in the public sector is seen as an important factor by 47.2% of the respondents. Ending child marriage is also seen as an important factor by 39.6% of the respondents. Launching micro-credit schemes for only women-owned businesses is seen as an important factor by 25.5% of the respondents. Passing the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill into law is seen as an important factor by 67.9% of the respondents. Allowing females to inherit family assets is seen as an important factor by 7.5% of the respondents. Addressing Gender Based Violence is seen as an important factor by 48.1% of the respondents. Creating general awareness on women's rights and opportunities is seen as an important factor by 64.2% of the respondents. Overall, it appears that implementing policies and laws to promote gender equality and addressing socio-cultural and religious beliefs that hinder women's development are seen as important factors in aiding women's development in northeastern Nigeria.

### 7.3. Women Inclusion and Participation

Perception that more women in public offices will improve good governance in Nigeria.

The result of the opinion polls on the perception that governance in Nigeria will improve with more women in public offices is presented in Figure 13.

Do you think that governance in Nigeria will improve with more women in public offices?  
106 responses



**Fig. 13: Shows if women in governance will improve the quality of governance.**

According to the opinion poll conducted in northeastern Nigeria shown in Figure 13, 72.6% of respondents believe that governance in Nigeria will improve with more women in public offices. This is a clear indication that the majority of individuals surveyed believe that the presence of women in leadership roles can bring about positive change in the governance of the country. The remaining 27.4% of respondents, however, disagree with this statement and believe that the presence of more women in public offices will not necessarily lead to an improvement in governance. This suggests that there may be differing perspectives on the potential impact of women in leadership roles on the governance of Nigeria. Overall, the results of this poll suggest that there is a general belief among northeastern Nigerians that increasing the representation of women in public offices would have a positive impact on governance.

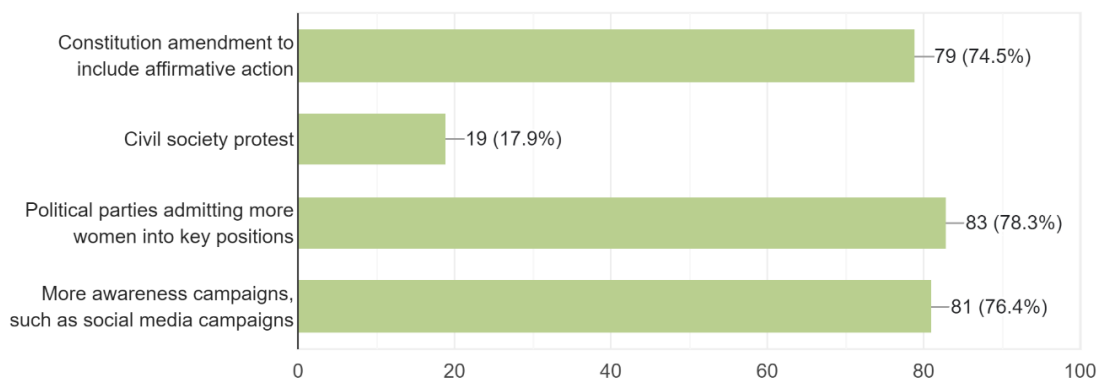
**Mechanisms that would bring more women into the political leadership space:**

The result of the opinion poll conducted in northeastern Nigeria on mechanisms to put in place that would bring more women into the political leadership space is presented in Figure 14.

What do you think should be done to bring more women into the political leadership space?

(Choose all that apply)

106 responses



It is clear from the statistics in Figure 14 that a significant majority of the respondents in northeastern Nigeria believe that affirmative action should be included in the constitution in order to bring more women into the political leadership space. This is the most popular suggestion, with 74.5% of respondents supporting this idea. Other popular suggestions include political parties admitting more women into key positions (78.3%), and more awareness campaigns such as social media campaigns (76.4%). A smaller percentage of respondents also suggested civil society protest (17.9%) as a way to bring more women into leadership positions. Overall, it appears that the majority of respondents believe that constitutional and institutional changes, as well as awareness campaigns, are necessary in order to increase the representation of women in political leadership in northeastern Nigeria.

### Perception on the readiness of the government to fully implement the 35% affirmative action

Respondents' opinion on governments political will to fully implement the 35% affirmative action is presented in Figure 15.

Do you think there is political will by the government to fully implement the 35% affirmative action policy?  
106 responses

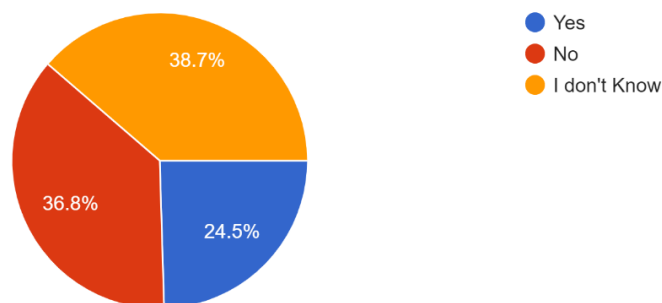


Fig. 15: Political will of the government

The results of the opinion poll in northeastern Nigeria on the question of whether there is political will by the government to fully implement the 35% affirmative action policy as presented in Figure 15 show a mixed response. A relatively small number of respondents, 24.5%, believe that the government does have the political will to fully implement the policy. A slightly larger number of respondents, 36.8%, believe that the government does not have the political will to fully implement the policy. The largest number of respondents, 38.7%, are uncertain about whether the government has the political will to fully implement the policy. This suggests that there may be a lack of clarity or understanding about the government's stance on this issue among the general public in northeastern Nigeria.

Perception that the affirmative action policy would improve women's participation in governance.

The result of the opinion polls on the effectiveness of the belief that the affirmative action policy would improve women's participation in governance is presented in Figure 16.

How effective do you believe that the affirmative action policy would be in improving women's participation in governance?

106 responses

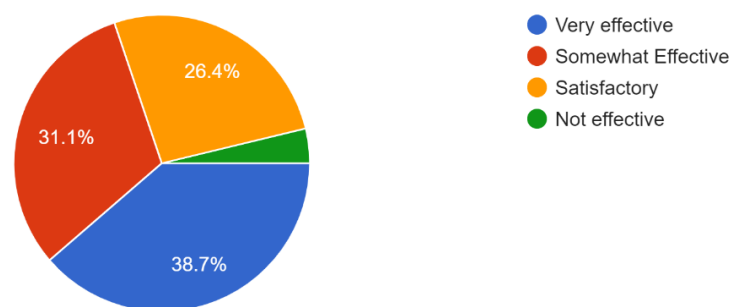


Fig. 16: Perception of the effectiveness of affirmative action

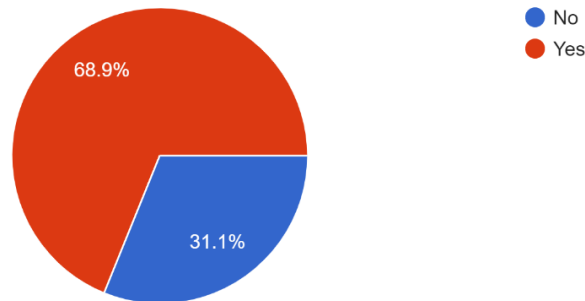
Figure 16 on the effectiveness of the 35% affirmative action policy in improving women's participation in governance revealed that many respondents (69.1%) believe that the policy is either very or somewhat effective. This suggests that a majority of the respondents believe that the affirmative action policy has the potential to improve women's participation in governance. However, a significant number of respondents (26.4%) believe that the policy's effectiveness is only satisfactory, and a small proportion of respondents (5.8%) believe that the policy is not effective. These results indicate that while a majority of respondents believe that the affirmative action policy has the potential to improve women's participation in governance, there is also a significant number of respondents who believe that the policy needs to be more effective.

### **Necessity of a law to require male politicians choose female running mates and vice versa.**

The result of the opinion polls on the need for a law that would make male politicians running for elective offices to choose female running mates and vice versa is presented in Figure 17.

Should there be a law to require male politicians running for elective offices to choose female running mates and vice versa?

106 responses



**Fig. 17: Should male candidates pick female running mates?**

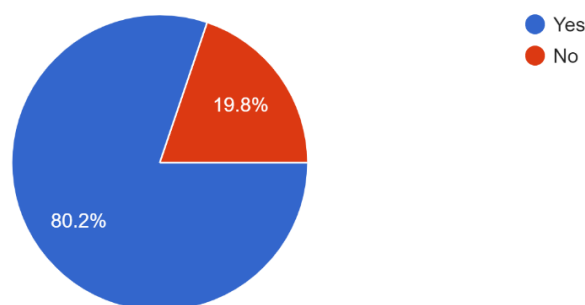
According to Figure 17, 68.9% of the respondents agreed that there should be a law that requires male politicians running for elective offices to choose female running mates and vice versa. However, a larger percentage of respondents, 31.1%, disagreed with the idea. These results suggest that there is a divided opinion among northeastern Nigerians on the effectiveness of such a law in promoting gender equality and increasing women's participation in governance. It may be important to further explore the reasons behind these differing perspectives to fully understand the barriers that exist for women in politics in northeastern Nigeria.

### **Necessity of a law to reserve seats at the National and State Assemblies for women:**

The result of the opinion polls on the need for a law a law to reserve seats at the National and State Assemblies for women is presented in Figure 18.

Should there be a law to set aside and reserve seats at the National/State Assembly for women?

106 responses



**Fig. 18: Reservation of specific seats for women at the National/State Assembly**



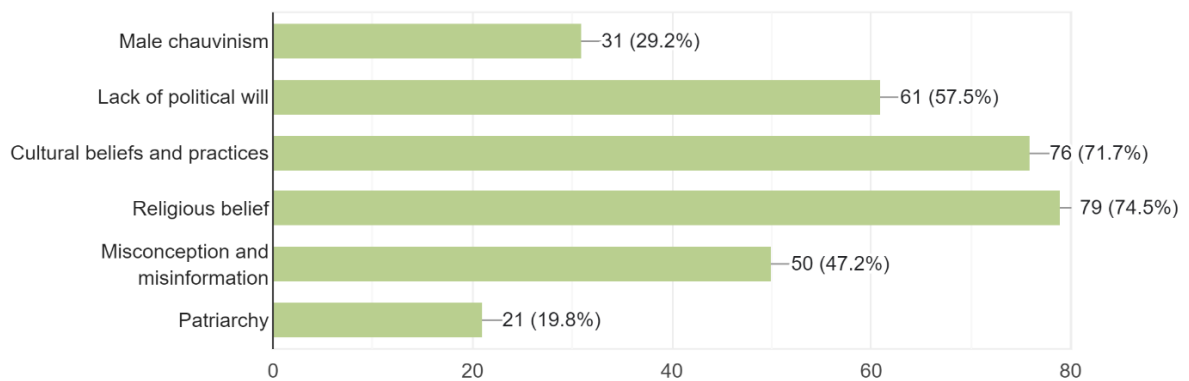
The result Figure 18 on whether there should be a law to set aside and reserve seats at the National/State Assembly for women shows that a majority of respondents, 80.2%, are in favor of such a law. This indicates that a significant portion of the population in northeastern Nigeria believes that reserving seats for women in the National and State Assembly would be beneficial in promoting women's participation in governance. On the other hand, 19.8% of respondents were against the idea of reserving seats for women in the National and State Assembly. This suggests that there is a minority of individuals who believe that such a law would not be necessary or would not have the desired effect in promoting women's participation in governance. Overall, the poll suggests that northeastern Nigeria population is largely in favor of laws that would promote the representation of women in governance.

**Perceived barriers to the passage of a law reserving legislative seats exclusively for women:**

The result of the opinion polls on the perceived barriers to the passage of a law reserving legislative seats exclusively for women is presented in Figure 18.

What do you see as barriers to the passage of a law reserving seats for women in the legislature?  
(Choose 3 that apply the most)

106 responses



**Fig. 19: Barriers to passage of legislation to reserve seats for women.**

The majority of respondents in Figure 19 believe that cultural beliefs and practices (71.7%), religious belief (74.5%), and lack of political will (57.5%) are the main barriers to the passage of a law reserving seats for women in the legislature. Other barriers identified include male chauvinism (29.2%), misconception and misinformation (47.2%), and patriarchy (19.8%). These results suggest that a significant number of respondents believe that cultural and religious attitudes towards women, along with a lack of political will, are major obstacles to increasing women's representation in the legislature. Additionally, some respondents also identified misconceptions and misinformation about women's capabilities and patriarchal attitudes as additional barriers to achieving this goal.

#### 7.4. Women and Emerging Issues

The impact of emerging issues such as the pandemic, insecurity, and social media (new media) on women's growth and development in Nigeria is in the front burner. The opinion poll conducted in northeastern Nigeria aimed to assess the impact of these emerging issues on women's growth and development in the northeastern region of Nigeria.

#### Perception of the effect or otherwise of the pandemic, insecurity, and social media on women's growth and development:

Have emerging issues such as the pandemic, insecurity, and social media (new media) affected women's growth and development in Nigeria?

106 responses

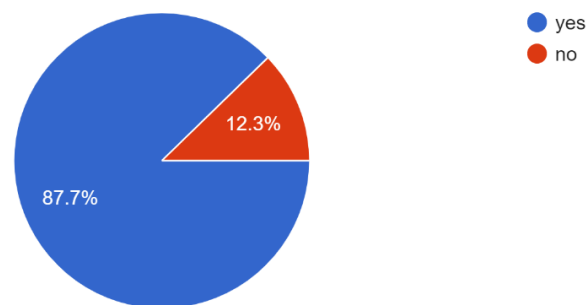
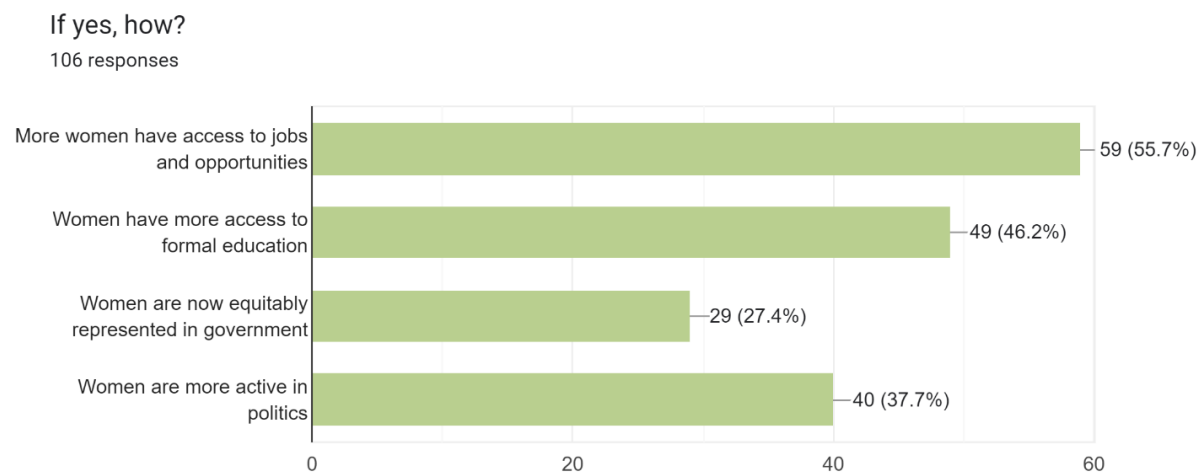


Fig. 20: Have emerging issues (pandemic, insecurity, social media, etc.) affected women in the last 10 years?

According to Figure 20, most of the respondents (87.7%) believe that emerging issues such as the pandemic, insecurity, and social media have affected women's growth and development in Nigeria. Only a small percentage (12.2%) of respondents do not believe that these issues have affected women's development in the country. This suggests that there is a widespread perception among the respondents that these emerging issues are having a significant impact on women's growth and development in northeastern Nigeria. This highlights the need for effective strategies and policies to address these challenges and ensure that women are able to fully participate in the development of the region and the country as a whole.

## How the pandemic, insecurity, and social media affected women's growth and development:



**Fig 21: Perception of the impact of emerging issues (insecurity, pandemic, etc.)**

The results in Figure 21 indicate that the majority of respondents (87.7%) believe that these emerging issues have had an impact on women's development in Nigeria. When asked about specific ways in which these issues have affected women, 55.7% of respondents believed that more women have access to jobs and opportunities as a result of the pandemic and insecurity. 46.2% of respondents believed that women have more access to formal education due to the increased use of technology and social media. 27.4% of respondents believed that women are now equitably represented in government as a result of these emerging issues, while 37.7% believed that women are more active in politics.

### 7. Summary of Findings

The study found that despite some progress in women's development in northeastern Nigeria over the past decade, there is still a significant amount of work to be done. Many respondents reported that socio-cultural beliefs, religious beliefs and poverty were major barriers to women's development in the region. Respondents also reported that enforcing affirmative action policies in the public sector and launching micro-credit schemes for women-owned businesses would be effective in promoting women's development.

In terms of women's inclusion and participation in governance, the study found that there is a need for more effective legislation and policies to encourage women's participation in politics. Many respondents also suggested that educating women about

their rights and opportunities, as well as involving them in traditional leadership roles, would be effective in promoting their participation in governance.

Finally, the study found that emerging issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, insecurity, and social media are having a significant impact on women's growth and development in northeastern Nigeria. Respondents reported that the pandemic has led to more women having access to jobs and opportunities, while social media has made it easier for women to access formal education and become more active in politics. However, it was also noted that insecurity has had a negative effect on women's development in the region.

The findings of this study imply that there has been some level of development for women in northeastern Nigeria in the past decade, however, full development is still in progress and there is a need for more progress. The mechanisms for encouraging women's participation in governance are clear and include effective legislation, girl child education, implementation of the 40:60 policies for women, and encouraging women to participate in grassroots politics and traditional leadership. There is also a need to address socio-cultural and religious beliefs that hinder women's development, as well as poverty and insecurity. The study also highlights the importance of the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill and the need for laws to reserve seats for women in the legislature. The findings also suggest that emerging issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, insecurity, and social media have affected women's growth and development in Nigeria, but have also provided more access to jobs, education, and representation in government.

## **8. Recommendations**

There is need to:

- Increase sensitization and awareness on the rights and opportunities available to women in northeastern Nigeria.
- Encourage girl-child education and empower young women to take up leadership positions.
- Implement policies and laws that promote women's participation in governance, such as affirmative action in the public sector and reserving seats for women in the legislature.
- Support the passage and implementation of laws that protect women and girls from discrimination and violence.
- Invest in micro-credit schemes and other initiatives that support women-owned businesses.
- Increase representation of women in the National and State Assemblies by reserving seats for them.
- Increase investment in addressing insecurity and other emerging issues that affect women's development through robust law enforcement and support for survivors in northeastern Nigeria.
- Address socio-cultural and religious barriers to women's development by engaging community leaders and traditional institutions to promote gender equality.

- Increase access to education and economic empowerment opportunities for women, particularly in rural and under-served areas.
- Address the impact of emerging issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic on women's economic and social participation.
- Increase funding for programs that support women's development and participation in governance.
- Encourage political parties to admit more women into key positions and adopt gender-sensitive policies.

## **ANNEX 3**

### **XIX. THE NORTH-WEST REGIONAL REPORT**

#### **1. Introduction**

Many Nigerians live in poverty today and its human development indicators are also worse than those of comparable lower middle-income countries. About 42% of Nigerian children are malnourished and while nearly 6 million women and men enter the labour market each year, only about 10% secure a job in the formal sector (more than half may be under-employment), and just one-third of them is female. This situation has dire consequences for human development and conflict mitigation. Investing in women and girls will increase productivity nationwide and will promote sustainable growth, peace, and better health for the next generation.

Patriarchy affects gender relations as is evident in the marginalization of women in both elective and appointive positions in Nigeria. Since the world conference on women in Beijing in 1995, global leaders have been making efforts to encourage more women to take up leadership positions and have even enacted laws to enforce quota systems in their countries. An in-depth study of the history of the governance structure, women's contribution to democracy and the challenges that restrict women's access into the leadership space is therefore essential, because having women as equal participants in the decision-making that affects their lives and communities, is both a human rights issue and an issue of democratic integrity.

#### **2. Research tools**

This research was designed to serve as a resource for stake holders in the gender and development communities. Two different questionnaires were designed for this research. The first one was treated as a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with ten participants (five men and five women) with the age range from 20-60 years.

The second one was treated as a Key Informant Interview (KII) which was administered to five people which include: Traditional Leader, Religious Leader, Political Leader, Women Leader and Youth Leader. All interviews were audiotape in local language and later transcribed into the content of this report in English as the official language.

During data collection, 3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held with 10 participants each (5 male and 5 female respondents) with the age range from 20-60 years and 5 Key Informant Interviews (KII) were conducted in 3 LGAs in Kebbi State. Participation in the

research was voluntary and the attainment of 18 years of age as at the time of the study was crucial. The participants also had a choice to fill out the questionnaire or be assisted.

Three Local Government Areas (LGAs) - Birnin Kebbi, Yauri, and Zuru were selected for the sampling from the three senatorial zones – Kebbi Central, Kebbi North and Kebbi South.

### 3. Analysis of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

#### ➤ Women Development

Participants to the FGD believed that women development meant having more women in administration of Kebbi State. It entails having women at the center of affairs in the state and part of lawmaking. However, some participants believed that women have already developed because –

- Women have access to education and more rights than before,
- Women are more outspoken and are now part of decision-makers in the state,
- Women are ministers of the Federal Republic.
- Parents who would not allow their daughters study in tertiary institutions in the past, now allow them. Secondary school education used to be the limit but now parents are encouraging their girls to advance their education.



Participants at the FGD session

#### ➤ Women empowerment

Participant at the FGD felt that a lot has been done to empower women and more is being done. For instance, they mentioned that there have been several programs targeted at small businesses and women have benefitted from the support. Some others felt that the few women in political office have been supported by the government as well as other political actors. Furthermore, the participants believed that the reduction of the cost of the application forms for women was a sign of support to the women to participate in government. In general, the participants believe that women are being empowered and even cited a program run by the government that gave loans to women farmers.

#### ➤ Laws that have impacted the status of women.

Participants noted that the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Law has impacted the state, especially in reducing Gender Based Violence (GBV).

#### ➤ **Women's Participation and Inclusion**

More awareness creation and passing legislation that would increase the number of women in governance were put suggested by the participants as ways by which women's participation and inclusion can improve.

With regards to the factors that inhibit women from participating in government, participants said that cultural and religious practices and beliefs were the major factors in the region. However, they believe that awareness creation and sensitization of traditional rulers can help change the behavior pattern and belief system. They also felt having more support from fellow women would help bring the much needed change in mindset.

#### ➤ **Women and Emerging Issues**

According to the participants at the FGD, the era of the Covid-19 pandemic came with a high rate of divorce and GBV. The effect on women was mostly economic as more women lost businesses and their homes due to divorces.

On the worsening security situation, the girl-child education has been drastically affected and women marketers, due to the fear of attacks, stopped moving around with their goods. Farmers as well stopped going to their farms for fear of being attacked.

### **4. Key Informant Interviews**

The participants believe that the equality and development gap between men and women have widened, and that poor education was partly responsible. They further stated that despite the shortcomings, women were beginning to occupy senior positions in government, like, director positions and permanent secretaries. The participants believe that the increase in the number of women in politics, even though not elected, was progress being made.

The participants unanimously agreed that the number of women participating in politics was low and that the reason was that men would not allow their wives to participate in politics. Although more women engage in politics currently when compared with the past, there is a need to do more of sensitization.

On whether a law was needed to increase the number of women in government, participants said, "no", because leadership is not a "do or die" affair. They further stated that the First lady of the state has been openly encouraging women to participate in



politics. On the impact of the 2006 National Gender Policy, the participants said that though the existence was known, it has not made any impact on women participation.

On the role of the media, the participants believe that due to the government control of media outlets, that there has not been any significant role of the media with regards to women participation and inclusion. However, the civil society has been making significant strides to promote women's engagement in governance, in order to have more women making decisions on health, education and welfare of children.

On whether the state runs empowerment programmes for women, the participants stated that though there were programmes, they were only beneficial to certain circles.

Even though the lockdown caused by the pandemic led to the High rate of GBV, more women engaged on virtual platforms and reduced outdoor meetings. This was safe for them.

### **5. Questionnaire: Summary of findings**

- Based on the responses, it was clear that women are still far behind in government and politics in this region due to religious and cultural factors.
- Additionally, most of the promises made by the Government in terms of Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) were only implemented in the main state capital not at local level, and the support was not given to those that really deserved them.
- Women are the ones mostly affected during the insecurity challenges in the communities and state at large.
- There are no laws that support women in participating in governance.

### **6. Recommendations**

- There is need for massive advocacy and awareness creation through social media on the issues of women participating in politics and decision-making.
- Laws should be in place to support women participation in politics and women should be free to contest for any position they want.
- Sensitizations and awareness creation should also be intensified in places of worship on the religious stand of women in politics.
- Government should ensure that all promises made on women empowerment are fulfilled and given to those who deserve them.

## ANNEX 4

### XX. THE SOUTH-EAST REGIONAL REPORT

#### 1. Executive Summary

This report is from a study of Gender in Nigeria in the Southeastern states: Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. The focal state was Ebonyi state where 30 interviews and three Focus Group Discussions were conducted in the three Senatorial zones of Ebonyi State – Ebonyi central, Ebonyi North and Ebonyi south.

Findings revealed that the 2006 National Gender Policy was not being implemented and as such women were grossly underrepresented in politics. Factors such as the following have been identified as responsible for the underrepresentation of women in politics - Socio-cultural beliefs and Household inequality; Inherent Patriarchy and culture of preference of male over female, Indigeneship and identity politics or cronyism; gendered economy, lack of political will in implementing gender equality, societal pressure, misconstruing education as scam, insecurity, and discrimination against females due to their reproductive function.

Suggestions were proffered on how to address these challenges. They are as follows: empowerment through the following ways: empowerment through education, funding, and the media campaigns; mentorship and advocacy targeted at young females. Furthermore, the study revealed the need for the state governments to reserve specific political positions for women; rotate seats / position between male and female politicians, which should be backed by law.

#### 2. Introduction

##### A. Women Development

Women are disproportionately represented in the Nigerian political space despite constituting nearly 50% of Nigerian populace and general voters. Grassroot political mobilization is often championed by women but over the years, but this has not translated to their equitable representation in politics and formal decision making.

There is however improvement from what the situation was a decade ago. Here below are tables with gender distribution of political seats in Ebonyi State in the 2011, 2015 and 2019 elections.

Posts	Male	Female	Total
Senate	3	0	3

House of Representatives	5	1	6
House of Assembly	21	3	24
State Commissioner	19	1	20
Local Government Chairperson	12	1	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>66</b>

Fig. 1: Political Representation of women in Ebonyi state in 2011.

<b>Posts</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Senate	3	0	3
House of Representatives	6	3	9
House of Assembly	20	2	22
State Commissioner	9	3	12
Chairmen of Local Government	10	3	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>59</b>

Fig. 2: Political Representation of women in Ebonyi in 2015

<b>Posts</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Senate	3	0	3
House of Representatives	6	0	6
House of Assembly	14	1	15
State Commissioner	20	3	23
Chairmen of Local Government	10	3	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>60</b>

Fig 3: Political Representation of women in Ebonyi in 2019

There was an improvement in women's political participation between 2007 and 2015 but the numbers took a nosedive in 2019 with President Buhari's administration (in the federal) and Engr David N. Umahi's (Ebonyi State governor) starting their second term in office.

There is an obvious need for a legislation to ensure equitable representation of women in politics, governance, and decision-making. Legislation is important to ensure compliance. There are several gender inclusive structures in Ebonyi but most of them are not implemented. More than 50% of respondents were not aware of the existence of these structures. Emphasis should be placed on creating awareness and sensitizing women especially at the grassroots on the existence of these structures and as well work out mechanism for their implementation of existing policies.

Some level of implementation of gender- inclusive structures were maintained in Ebonyi state mainly during the Chief Martin Elechi's administration (2007-2015) through the office of the Wife of the Executive Governor (although not constitutionally recognized) and the State Ministry of Women Affairs which were quite vibrant with women friendly programmes and activities. More Women were incorporated in the administrative structure of the state.

There are certain factors that have been identified that may have caused the decline of number of women representatives on the tables above. They are:

- i. Inferiority complex
- ii. Poverty
- iii. Fear
- iv. Insecurity

Questionnaires were administered virtually to respondents spread around Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States. More than half of the respondents (54%) is female, and the age range 40 – 49 years made up the largest sample group (38%). With regards to education, 97% of the sampled group have tertiary or university education.

### Analysis of Respondents

State of Residence

84 responses

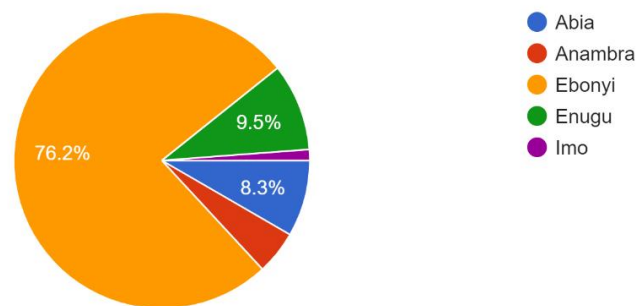
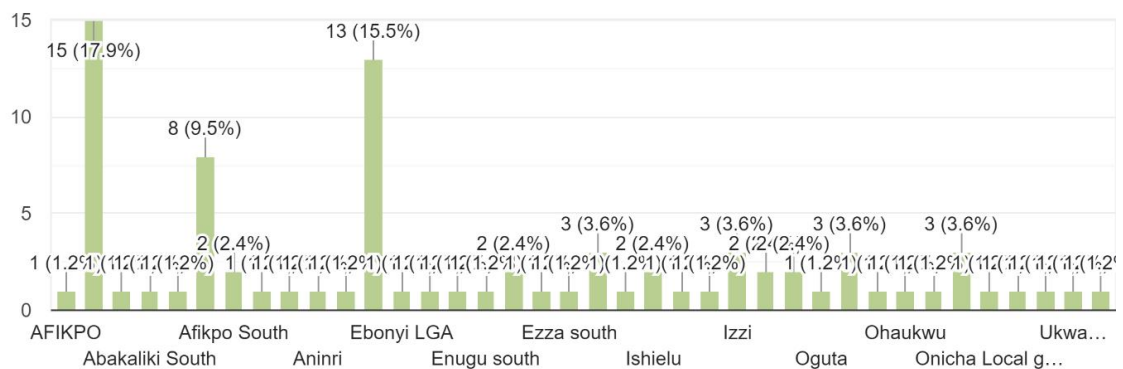


Fig. 4: State of Residence of Respondents

Local Government

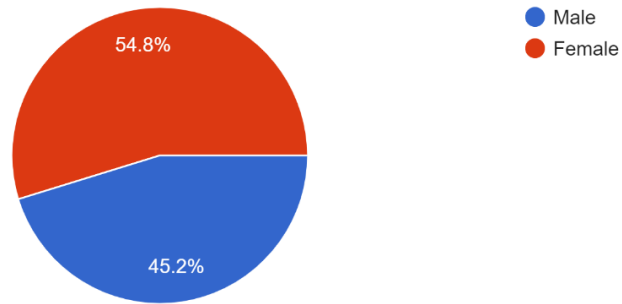
84 responses



**Fig. 5: Local government distribution**

Gender

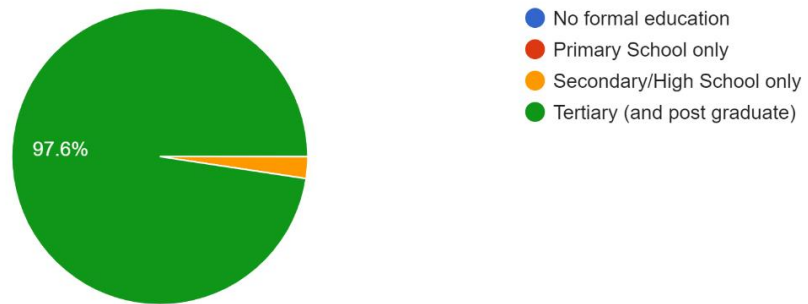
84 responses



**Fig. 6: Gender distribution of respondents**

Highest Level of Education

84 responses



**Fig. 7: Educational level of respondents**

Age range  
84 responses

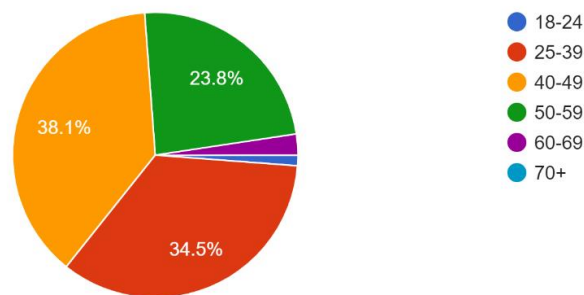


Fig. 8: Respondents by age distribution

### **B. Awareness of the impact of any State Law passed in the last 10 years on the status of women.**

Several laws have been passed in the last 10 (ten) years in Ebonyi State relating to the status of women, namely: Law against Female Genital Mutilation, Violence against Person's Law (VAPL), Violence against Women, Right to Freedom Act, etc. A study of the provisions of these laws shows the intention to protect women from all kinds of abuse, intimidation, spousal battery, cultural abusive practices and the likes; although the legislature in their wisdom did not title the law to exclusively provide for the rights of women alone, this is because in some few instances, the women are the ones abusing the rights of the man, thus the laws also protects the man. Additionally, the Constitution prohibits discrimination of all sorts irrespective of gender under section 42.

From the responses received from this study, Ebonyi state was rated 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in the practice of FGM with up to 75% women engaged in the practice. However, since the VAPL was passed, statistics shows that the number has reduced by about 50% in 2020.

### **✓ Women Development**

The respondents identified the following as gaps in the area of women development in the state: inferiority complex, poverty, fear and insecurity. Even though, the majority believed that there was an improvement, they still believe that these gaps exist to stall further improvement.

In your opinion, has there been any development (improvement) with regards to women in governance in Nigeria in the last 10 years?

84 responses

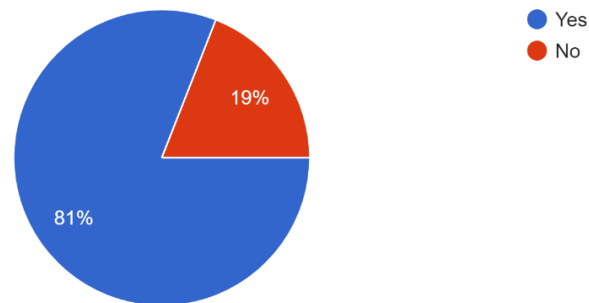


Fig. 9: Respondents' perception of women's development in the past ten years

From the discussions with the respondents, though majority of them believe that there has been an improvement in women's development, however, the popular perception is that the level of development is low. Perhaps, the respondents expected a much higher level of development than they currently perceive it to be (see fig. 10 below)

If yes, how do you rate the level of development?

84 responses

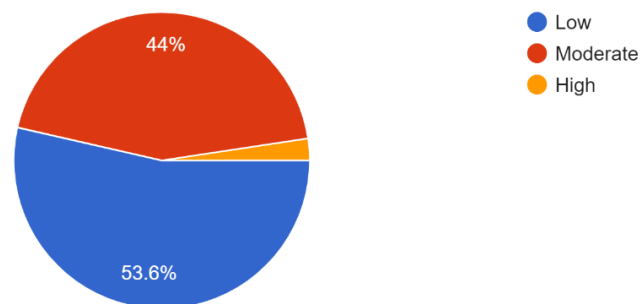


Fig. 10: Respondents' perception of the level of women development in the last decade

On whether a law was necessary to improve women's participation in governance, 67.9% replied, 'yes', while 32.1% stated that a law was not needed.

If you answered 'no' to (1), do you think a law is necessary?  
84 responses

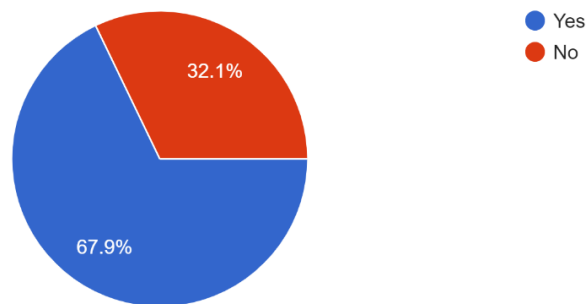


Fig. 11: Respondents' take on the necessity of a law to improve women's participation.

When asked whether they were aware of the Gender and Equal Opportunities (GEO) Bill that was thrown out by the male-dominated 9<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, 75% of the respondents said 'yes', leaving out 25% that had never heard of the Bill. The GEO Bill, if passed anytime in the future, would domesticate certain provisions of the CEDAW and the Maputo Protocol.

Are you aware of the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill?  
84 responses

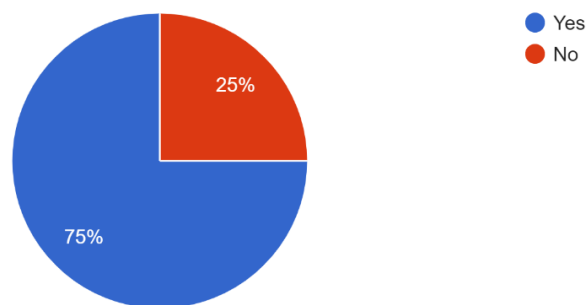


Fig. 12: Respondents' awareness of the GEO Bill

The respondents who said that they were aware of the GEO bill discussed their understanding of the objectives of the bill to include: -

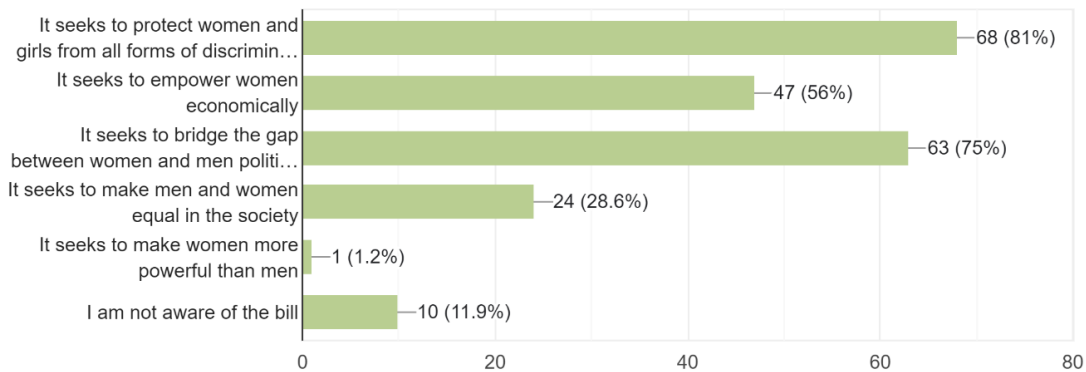
- The bill seeks to protect women and girls from all forms of discrimination.
- It seeks to empower women economically.
- It seeks to bridge the gap between women and men politically.
- It seeks to bring equality between men and women.



Only 1% of the respondents perceived that the bill, when passed, would make women more powerful than men. As this is not provided in the bill as part of the objectives, there is therefore a need to socialize the provisions to provide better clarity of the objectives.

If yes, what is your understanding of the objective of the Bill? (choose any 3 that best apply)

84 responses

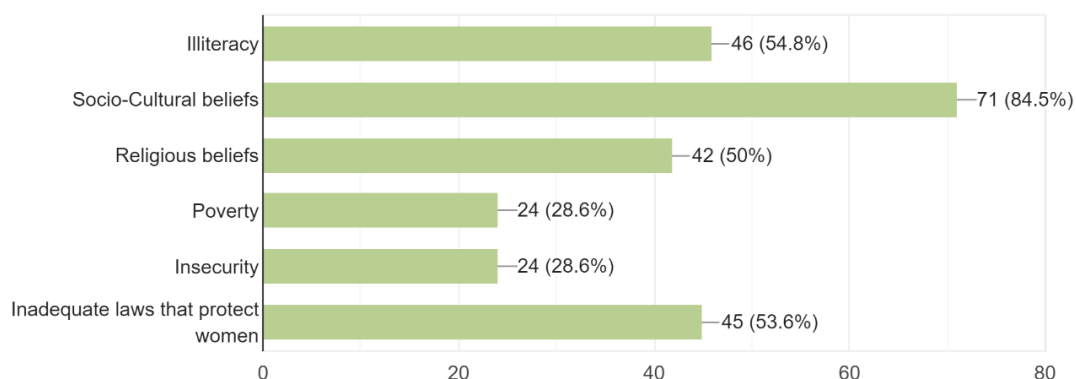


**Fig. 13: Perception about the objectives of the GEO Bill**

On what hinders women's development in Nigeria the most, a few factors were discussed with the respondents and most of them chose socio-cultural beliefs as what affects women's development the most in Nigeria. A behavioral change campaign may be required to convince the people of the gains of women development to their communities and to the country in the whole, as a means of curbing this cultural stumbling block.

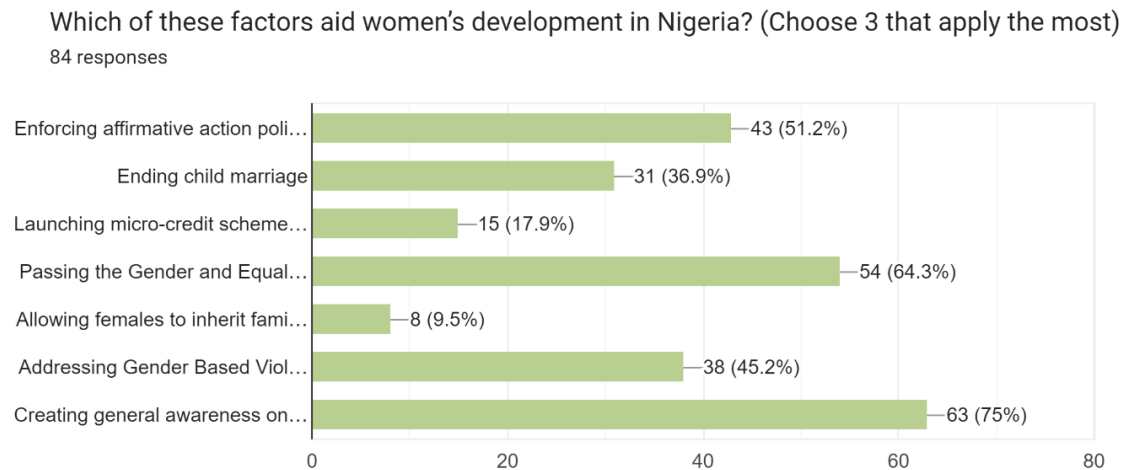
Which of these, in your opinion, hinder women's development in Nigeria the most? (Choose 3 that apply the most)

84 responses



**Fig. 14: Respondents' opinion about what hinders women development.**

On factors that aid women’s development in Nigeria, the respondents believed that enforcing affirmative action policies, ending child marriage, passage of the GEO bill, creating general awareness on women’s rights and opportunities, among others would aid women’s development in Nigeria.



**Fig. 15: Respondents’ perception about what aids women development in Nigeria**

### ✓ Women Inclusion & Participation

When the discussion on women inclusion came up, majority of the participants said that their spouses need to provide support to women. They believe that support of spouses would help increase inclusivity and participation because socio-cultural beliefs and household inequality cause the denial of the right of women to participate in governance.

While women may have more access to western education in southeastern Nigeria, men due to societal pressure, which accord more respect to the rich as against the educated, resort to activities and practices that would create quick wealth for them. This is known as the get-rich-quick-syndrome. This is one of the reasons why fewer boys go to school in this part of the country as against their female counterparts. There is a popular narrative among the youth of the southeast that “*you do not need education to be rich*”. The government has not helped the situation by creating enabling environment to facilitate employment for the educated females, so a lot of them resort to menial jobs or marry the poorly educated men who prefer to make money.

Women are discriminated against in employment, especially if they are in the child-bearing age range because they may need maternity leave along the way. Biological

factors that are part of a woman's anatomical process are treated as inhibitions and this affects their choices of starting a family.

Do you think that governance in Nigeria will improve with more women in public offices?

84 responses

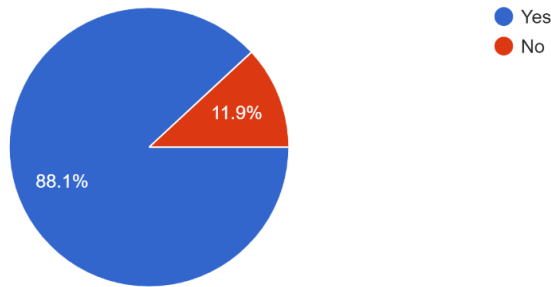


Fig 16: Respondents' perception about the effect of women in improving governance.

On the improvement of governance in Nigeria, 88% of the respondents believe that admitting more women into the government will improve governance. Though about 12% disagreed, the majority are inclined to believe that a legislative reform is needed; 75% of the respondents selected a constitution amendment or alteration, among other choices as a way to admit more women into the governance space.

What do you think should be done to bring more women into the political leadership space?

(Choose all that apply)

84 responses

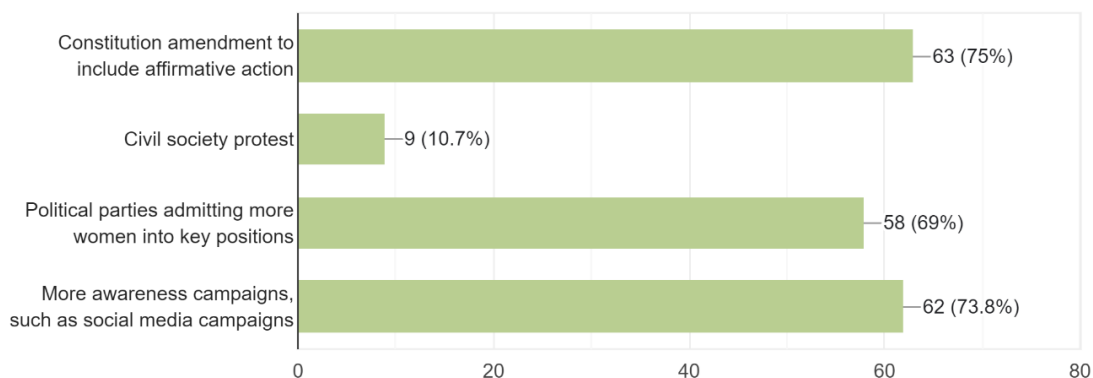


Fig. 17:

Do you think there is political will by the government to fully implement the 35% affirmative action policy?

84 responses

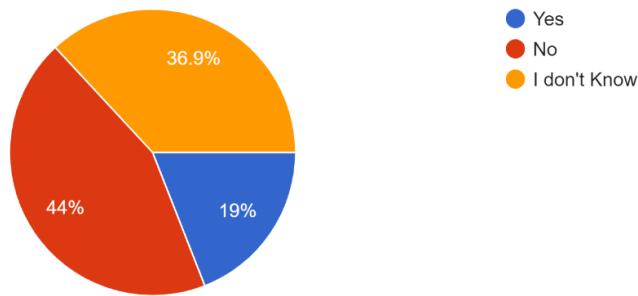


Fig. 18:

Though respondents majorly opted for a constitution amendment as a means to getting more women into the political space, however; they do not believe that there is enough political will to implement the 35% affirmative action as provided in the 2006 National Gender Policy. This then begs the question as to whether legislation will be able to garner such political will needed for the implementation of an affirmative action.

Furthermore, while majority of the respondents believe that affirmative action would improve women's participation, others had reservations or did not believe at all that there would be an improvement in women's participation (see fig. 19 below).

How effective do you believe that the affirmative action policy would be in improving women's participation in governance?

84 responses

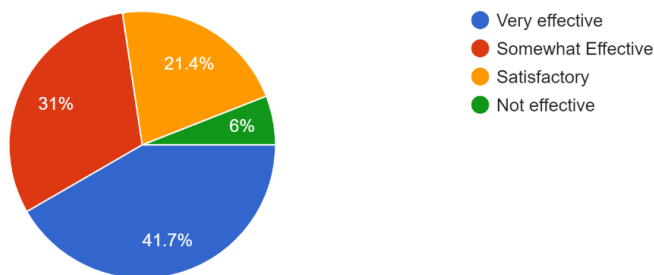
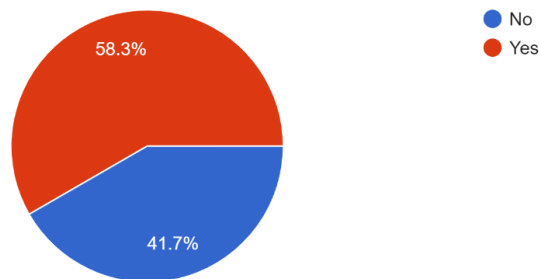


Fig. 19: Respondents' perception of the impact of affirmative action on women's participation

With regards to legislation, respondents were in favour of a law to enforce opposite gender running mates, which means that if the candidate is male, his running mate should be a woman and vice versa. While 58% were in favour of such a legislation, about 42% were not.

Should there be a law to require male politicians running for elective offices to choose female running mates and vice versa?

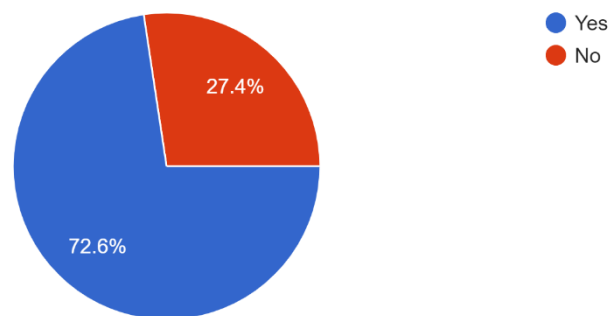
84 responses



**Fig. 20:** Respondents were in favour of legislation to require opposite gender running mates.

Should there be a law to set aside and reserve seats at the National/State Assembly for women?

84 responses

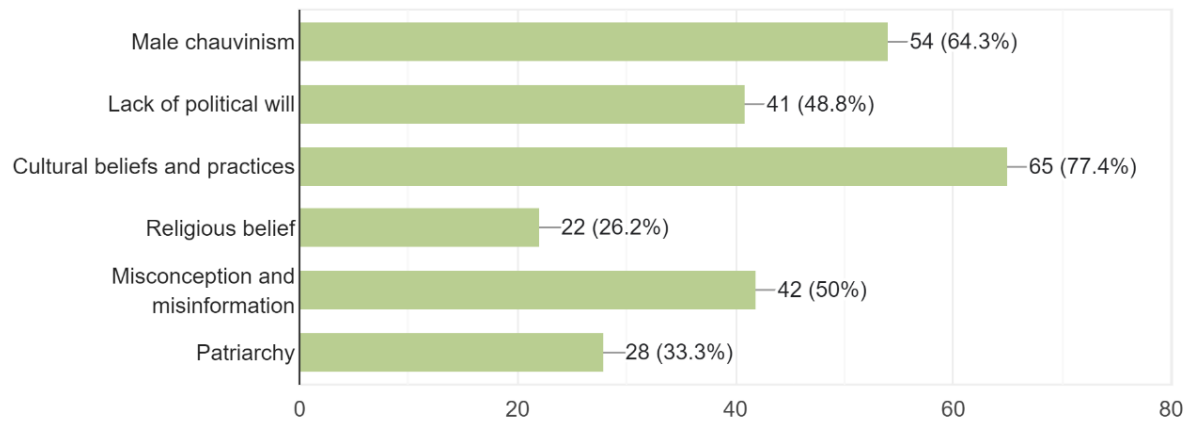


**Fig. 21:**

The push for seats to be reserved for women in both National and States Assembly

What do you see as barriers to the passage of a law reserving seats for women in the legislature?  
(Choose 3 that apply the most)

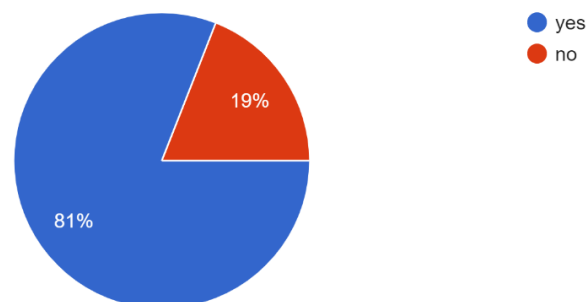
84 responses



### ✓ Women and Emerging Issues

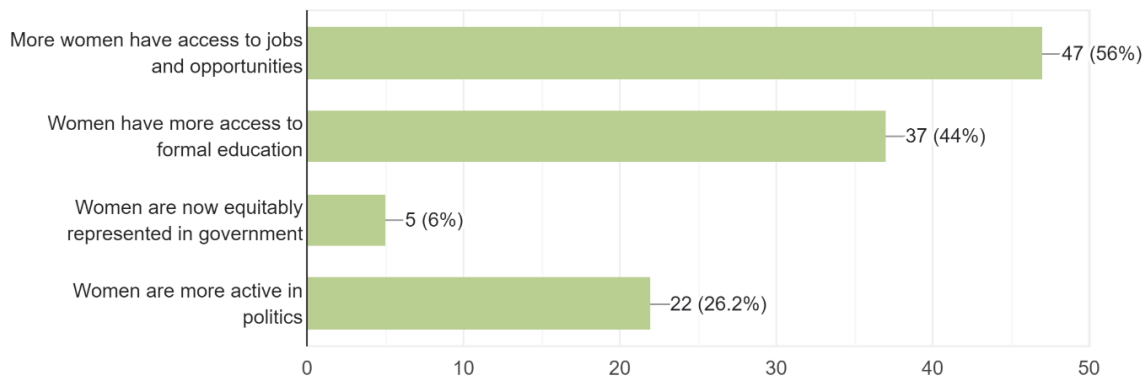
Have emerging issues such as the pandemic, insecurity, and social media (new media) affected women's growth and development in Nigeria?

84 responses



If yes, how?

84 responses



### 3. Summary and Recommendations

There is need for a legislation to ensure compliance in the representation of women in politics, governance, and decision-making. Emphasis should be placed on creating awareness and sensitizing women especially at the grassroots on the existence of these laws and as well work out mechanism for their implementation of existing policies.

The following factors were identified as militating against the participation of women in politics include the following: -

- Socio-cultural beliefs and Household inequality,
- Inherent Patriarchy and culture of preference of male over female.
- Indigeneship and identity of belongingness,
- Gendered Economy,
- Reluctance of government in implementing equal representation of female,
- Insecurity.

There is therefore a need to empower women and girls through education and mentorship; invest in funding opportunities for female politicians; and increase media sensitization on the role of women in economy building.

A quota system should be adopted in order to reserve certain slots for women and in specific cases, adopt a rotational structure to enable men and women take turns at contesting for public offices.

### 4. Conclusion

The need for women's inclusion in governance and politics in Nigerian cannot be overemphasized. It is evident that we are where we are today because women have been excluded from governance. To say the least, it is disheartening that women are still being marginalized, discriminated against and even continued to suffer gender based

violence by the men and Nigerian system despite the efforts made by the women themselves and non-governmental organizations as Oloyede (2016) noted that according to 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. Therefore, this study concludes that the government, non-government actors, stakeholders and women should advocate for the protection of women from gender-based violence, abuse (domestic, linguistic, rape etc.) Furthermore, women should be supported, encouraged and empowered; economically, religiously, socially and politically to get involved in governance.

## **ANNEX 5**

### **XXI. THE SOUTH-SOUTH REGIONAL REPORT**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This study was carried out in Yta in Cross River State. The team were divided into 3 groups, each covering a senatorial district. Each group conducted this research for two Local Government Areas per Senatorial district in the State, conducting FGD and KII and supported in the administration of the online survey questionnaires. Thirty (30) KIIs were carried out and three (3) FGDs were conducted in the three Senatorial Districts of Cross River State.

The qualitative and quantitative findings revealed that in the last 10 years, women have developed in several areas of life in Nigeria. It was also evidenced that more women are



now involved in governance, unlike what was obtainable a decade ago. It could also be seen that emerging issues had more effect on women than men, this the respondents said was because women were already vulnerable than their male counterparts.

The key recommendation is that women should be given economic empowerment by government and private bodies, as well as men being exposed to trainings that will ensure they give more women opportunities to excel in their chosen fields. Other aspects including, all forms of media, security policy and law formulation to ensure more women are involved in politics will go a long way in ensuring that women get their rightly placed in the society.

## 2. BACKGROUND

Women face a systematic disadvantage over a wide range of welfare indicators including health, education, nutrition, labour force participation and burden of household tasks. The British Council and United Kingdom Agency for International Development (UKAID), in their evaluation of Nigeria's policies on women and girl child, articulate their collective despair graphically when they declared:

*“Nigeria’s 80.2 million women and girls have significantly worse life chances than men and also their sisters in comparable societies... excellent policies and intentions have not translated into budgets or actions to make the changes required if women are to contribute effectively to Nigeria’s development. Some government policies are yet to bear significant result. Besides, several implementation policies of conventions as well as recommendations on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women have met with dead ends. For instance, The National Gender Policy has yet to bear fruit about 17 years after its development, while the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has been stalled”* (ActionAID, 2008; NDHS, 2018).

With the prevalence of gender discrimination, social norms and practices, girls become exposed to the possibility of child marriage, teenage pregnancy, child labour, sexual abuse, exploitation and violence. Because of these obstacles, it has generally been difficult for women to rise to key leadership positions in governance.

In some parts of the South-South region, upon the death of a woman's husband or her father, the issue of whether or not she is entitled to any inheritance becomes apparent. In **Sogunro-Davies v Sogunro-Davies & Ors**, the court was of the opinion that intestacy under native law and custom, the devolution of property follows the blood. Over the years the customary law has influenced the inheritance law. Therefore, a wife or widow, not being of blood, has no claim to any cause. It has even been held that where a husband in his lifetime allots a farm, a house or some other form of landed property to his wife for her use and enjoyment, the widow does not thereby acquire inheritance rights in it. These practices have become judicially noticeable.

However, the narrative has begun to change through different radical legislations, constitutional amendments, subjugation of customary laws to validity test and judicial activism of the courts. Governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers State signed into law, ***The Rivers State Prohibition of the Curtailment of Women’s Rights to Share in Family Property Law No. 2 (2022)*** where he said that he could not comprehend why it was considered a taboo in many parts of the state for female children to share in their family inheritance. The Cross-River State Female Person’s Inheritance Law (No.10 of 2007) stipulates that notwithstanding any native law or custom to the contrary a female person has the right to acquire and own property and share in the intestate estate of her deceased father, mother or husband in accordance with the provisions of this Law.

While gender equality is not just a human rights issue, it is essential for the achievement of sustainable development and a peaceful, prosperous society. In Nigeria, women represent about half of the population according to the 2006 population census (Rotimi & Agande, 34 cited in Nwagbara, Etuk & Baghebo, 212). Inequality between men and women varies depending on geographical settings, social class etc. However, the male sphere has traditionally been accorded more value in all parts of the country. In Nigeria, a woman is socialized with a culture of female subordination, she is not only subordinated to her husband and men in her own family of orientation, but also to members of her husband’s family. The kinship structure places men in an advantage position from historical past to present.

This study investigates the situation of gender issues in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria which consists of Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Bayelsa, Delta and Edo states respectively. The focal state for this study is Cross River State.

## **GENDER ISSUES IN CROSS RIVER STATE**

Cross River State is said to lead the chart on sexual and gender-based violence with a whopping 42% of cases of teenage pregnancies in the South-South region. The United Nations Population Fund’s Reproductive Health and Family planning analyst, Dr Abayomi Afe gave the statistics while stating that, *“Cross River State has one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates in the South-South region, about 42% and Cross River State is very diverse in terms of cultural practices and money marriage too is practiced in Cross River... so, bringing this advocacy to young people like this is to raise awareness about some of these harmful practices that are promoting Gender violence”*

### **3. DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **3.1. Focus Group Discussion**

The FGDs were held in Sankwala in Obanliku LGA under Cross River Northern Senatorial District (CR-N), Bateriko in Boki LGA under Cross River Central Senatorial District (CR-C), and in Calabar South LGA under Cross River Northern Senatorial District (CR-S). The findings from the guided discussions in the three locations are presented here –

### ➤ **Women Development**

Respondents shared their understanding of what women development in governance meant. According to them, women development in governance means women being empowered with requisite human and economic resources and being given the space and provisions to participate in governance and sharing political space with the men in terms of occupying elected and appointed offices. Here are some comments by respondents:

*“Women development is a kind of practical programme or complete programme done by the government or any parastatal to empower women for participation in politics, to become relevant to the society because they have been kept down for so many years of lack of opportunities.”* – FGD CR-North Respondent.

*“Women development in governance, is that the Nigerian context of politics has agreed that based on gender equality, women should also feature in politics. They should also take part in holding political offices.”* – FGD CR-Central Respondent

*“Women in governance simply means including women in the political affairs of either the nation or State. It means politicians or political leaders should try to create space and involve women in the development of the society.”* – FGD CR-South Respondent

Therefore, the respondents considered women development in governance as dependent on political will and deliberate programmes of the government to make special provision for women to be carried along and included in governance.

In the past decade, the respondents from Cross River Central described women development as having ‘partially’ improved and attributed it to the current administration in Cross River State where the governor gave women a lot of opportunities. They said that women have become councilors and local government chairmen.

### ➤ **Women Empowerment**

The respondents argued that every administration pays lip service to the issues around women empowerment. They accused the government of politicizing it by doling out items to citizens during election campaign periods to buy people’s conscience. While some efforts can be seen, the respondents clarified that they are too little to be considered as empowerment. A respondent from CR-South noted that, *“empowering people is like giving them a source of survival and so a paltry N5,000 is not empowerment.”*

## **3.2. Questionnaires**

In total, 104 responses out of 120 questionnaires shared, were received. The analysis showed that 73.1% of the respondents were from Cross River State, 11.5% from Rivers, Akwa Ibom had 5.8%, Bayelsa State had 2.9%, Edo State had 1.9% and Delta had 4.8% of the responses. Table 1 shows a distribution of the respondents by local government area –

S/No.	LGA	Number	Percentage (%)
1	Calabar South	9	8.7
2	Calabar Municipality	25	24.0
3	Boki	4	3.8
4	Bekwarra	6	5.8
5	Obubra	1	1.0
6	Yakurr	2	1.9
7	Akamkpa	2	1.9
8	Yala	5	4.8
9	Biase	4	3.8
10	Etung	2	1.9
11	Obudu	6	5.8
12	Ogoja	1	1.0
13	Ikom	6	5.8
14	Odukpani	1	1.0
15	Abi	1	1.0
16	Eleme	1	1.0
17	Ikwere	1	1.0
18	Bonny	1	1.0
19	Sagbama	1	1.0
20	Degama	2	1.9
21	Akuku Toru	1	1.0
22	Kolokuma/Opokuma	1	1.0
23	Obio/Akpor	2	1.9
24	Opobo	1	1.0
25	Ukwuani	1	1.0
26	Ukanafun	2	1.9
27	Uyo	2	1.9
28	Nsit Atai	1	1.0
29	Itu	1	1.0
30	Oshimili North	1	1.0
31	Amac	1	1.0
32	Ethiope East	1	1.0
33	Ndokwa West	1	1.0
34	Ughelli North	1	1.0
35	Esan West	1	1.0
36	Oredo	1	1.0
37	Yenegoa	1	1.0
38	Ogbia	1	1.0
39	Akpabuyo	2	1.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## Respondents by Gender

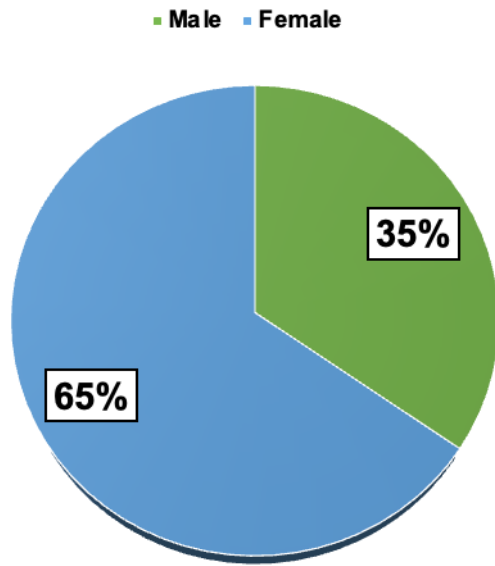


Fig 2: Gender Distribution

### Demographic Representation of Respondents

Number of Respondents	Age bracket (years)	Percentage
9	18 -24	8.7%
54	25 – 39	51.9%
18	40 – 49	17.3%
15	50 – 59	14.4%
8	60 – 69	7.7%

Fig 3: Demographic Representation

### Educational Qualification of Respondents

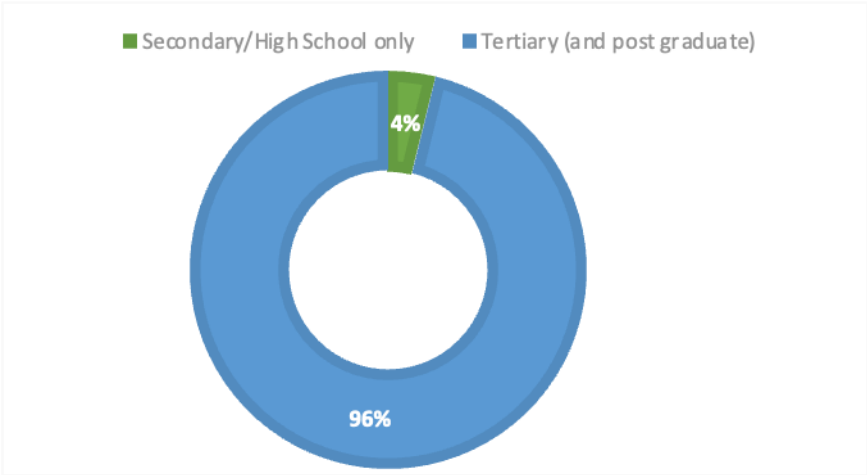


Fig 4: Level of education of respondents

**Employment Categories of Respondents**

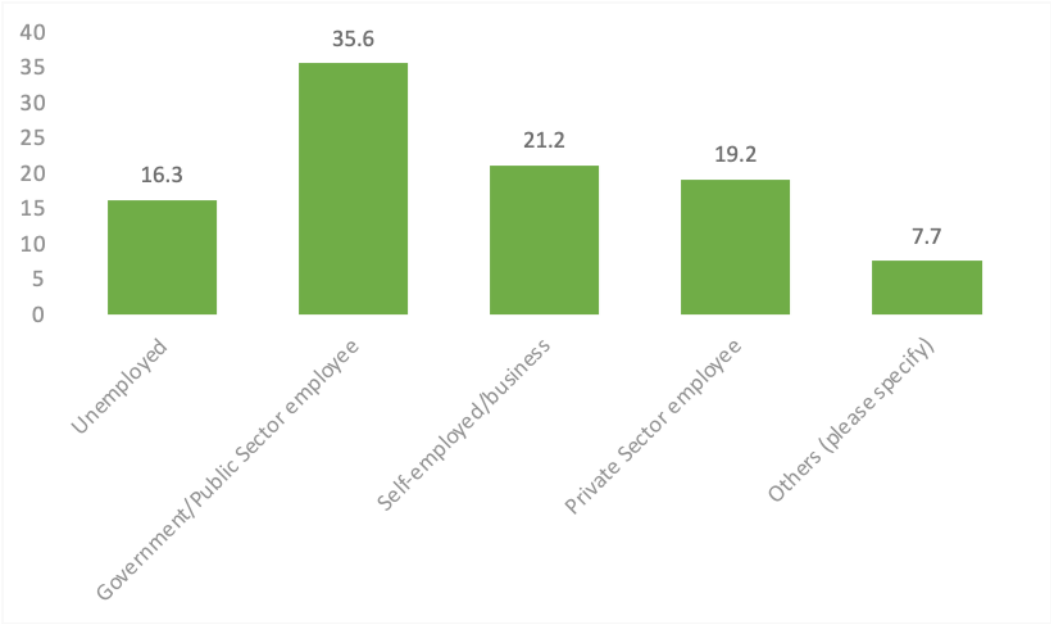


Fig 5: Respondents' occupation

On women's development, 73% of the respondents believe that there has been an improvement (see fig. 6 below)

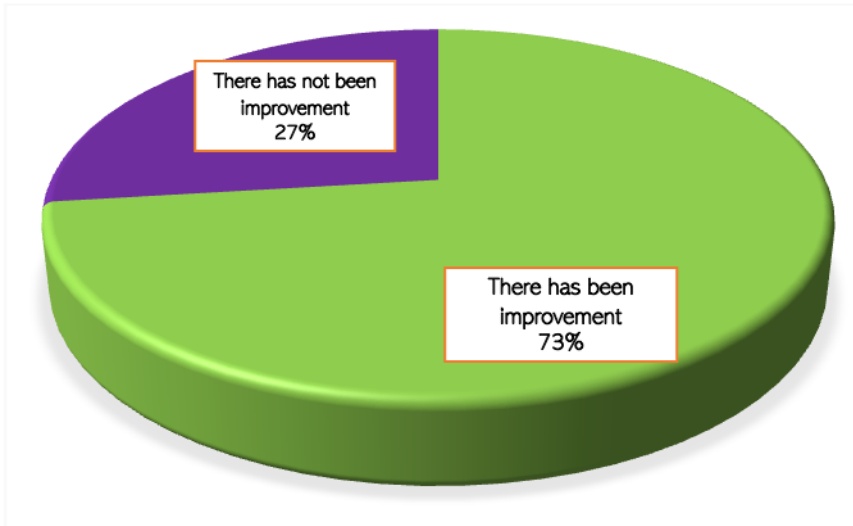


Fig. 6: Response to whether there has been improvement in the status of women in Nigeria in the last decade.

On the level of women's development in Nigeria over the last decade, 57.7% believe that it is low (see fig. 7 below)

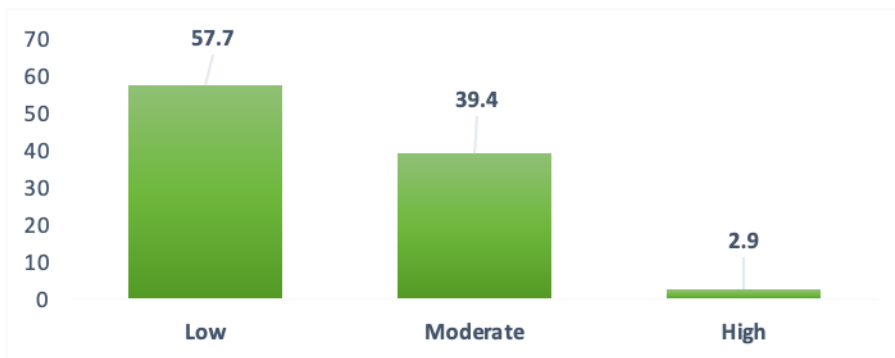


Fig. 7: Respondents' rating of the level of women's development

Is a law necessary to increase women's participation in government? 90.4% of respondents said that a law is necessary (see fig. 8 below)

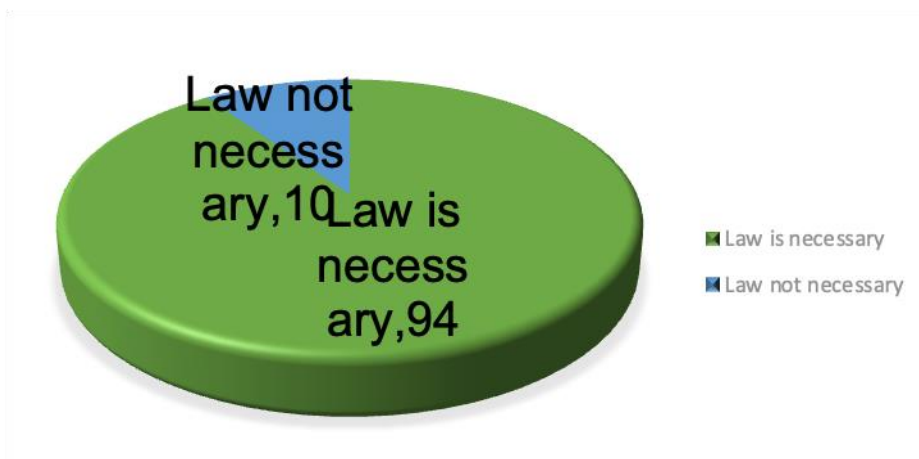


Fig. 8: Respondents' view on the necessity to have a law enacted

On whether the respondents were aware of the Gender and Equal Opportunities (GEO) Bill, only 66% had heard about it (See fig. 9 below)

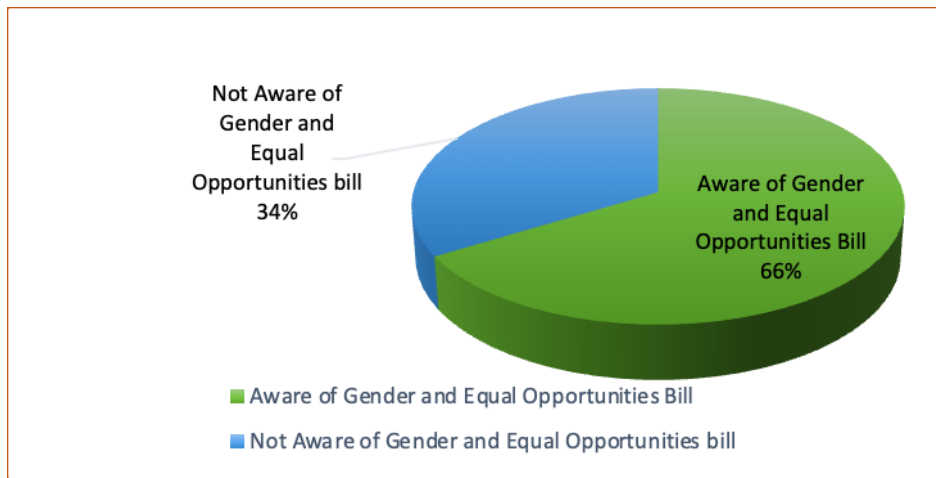


Fig. 9: GEO Bill

Assessing the respondents' understanding of the Gender and Equal Opportunities (GEO) Bill, there were varied opinions expressed (see fig. 10 below)

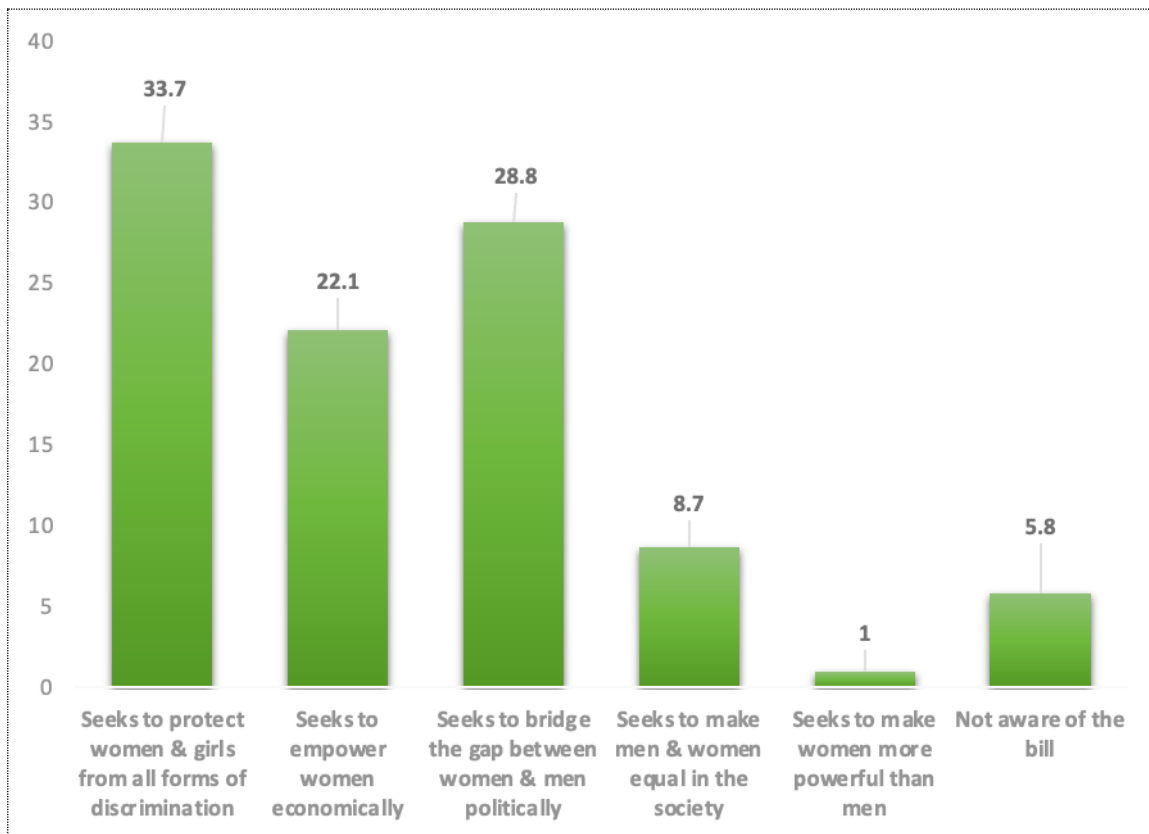
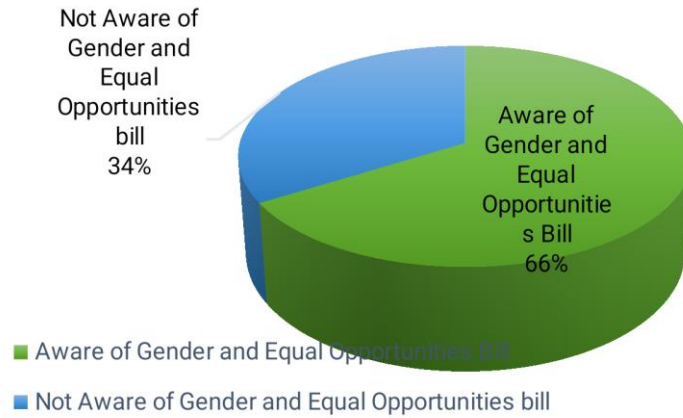


Fig. 10: Respondents' understanding of the objectives of the GEO Bill

On hindrances to women's development in Nigeria, respondents listed some factors (see fig. 11 below)

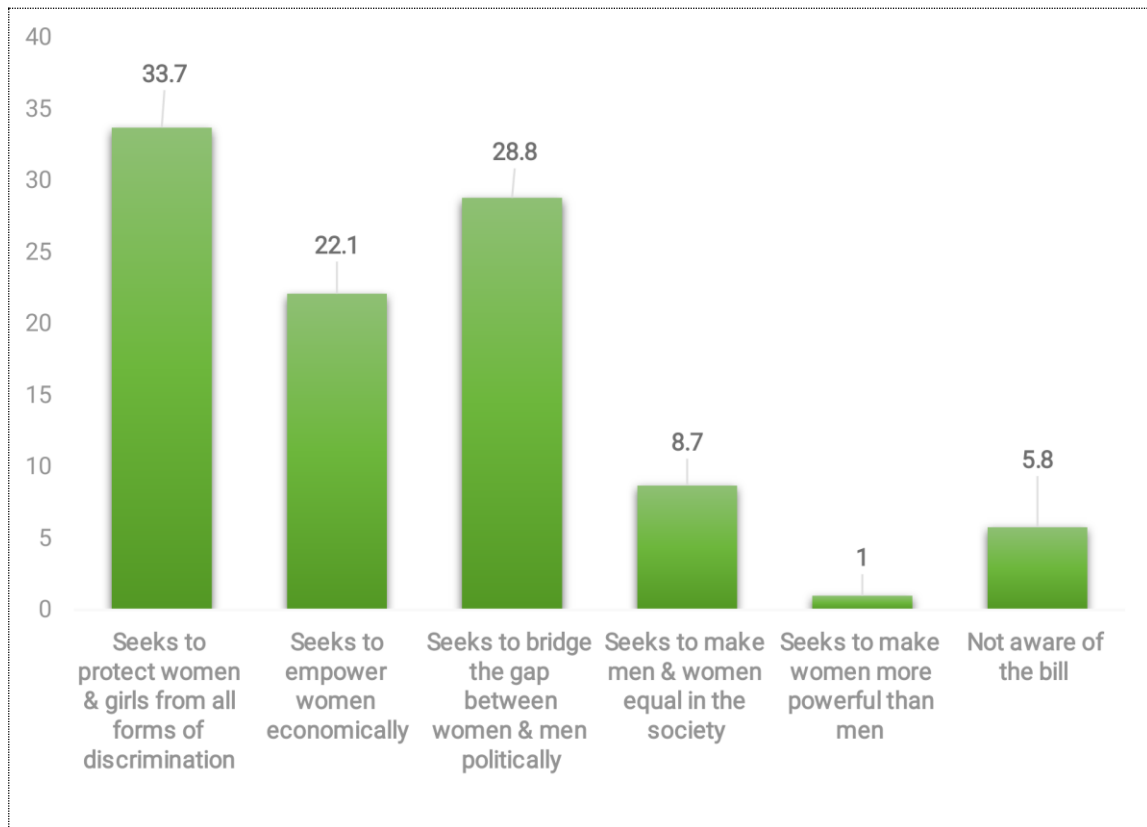
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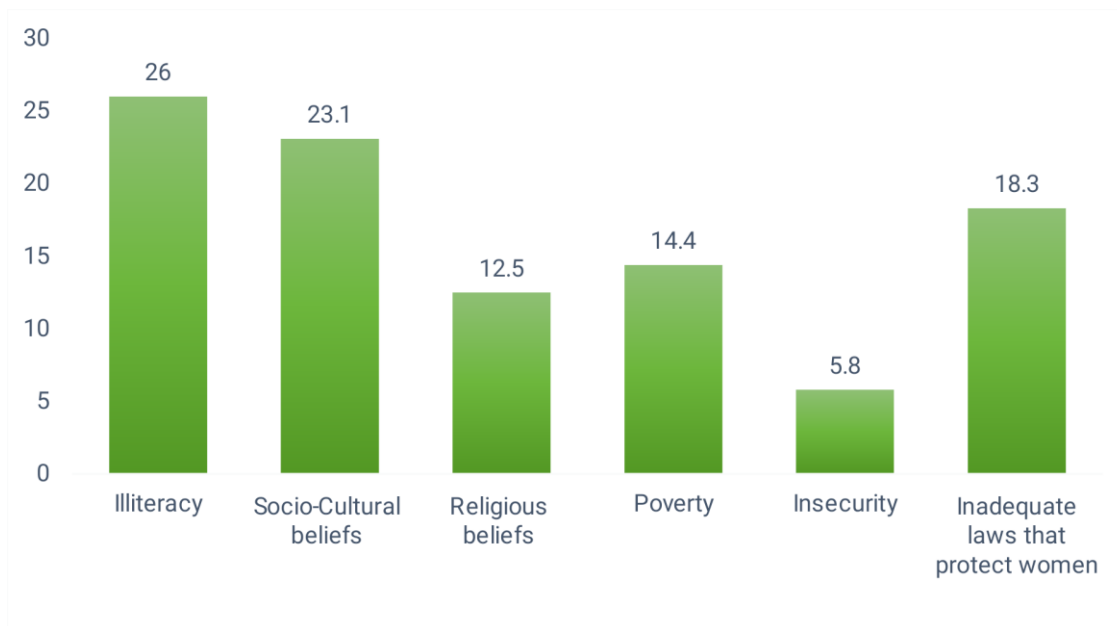
**Fig. 9: GEO Bill**

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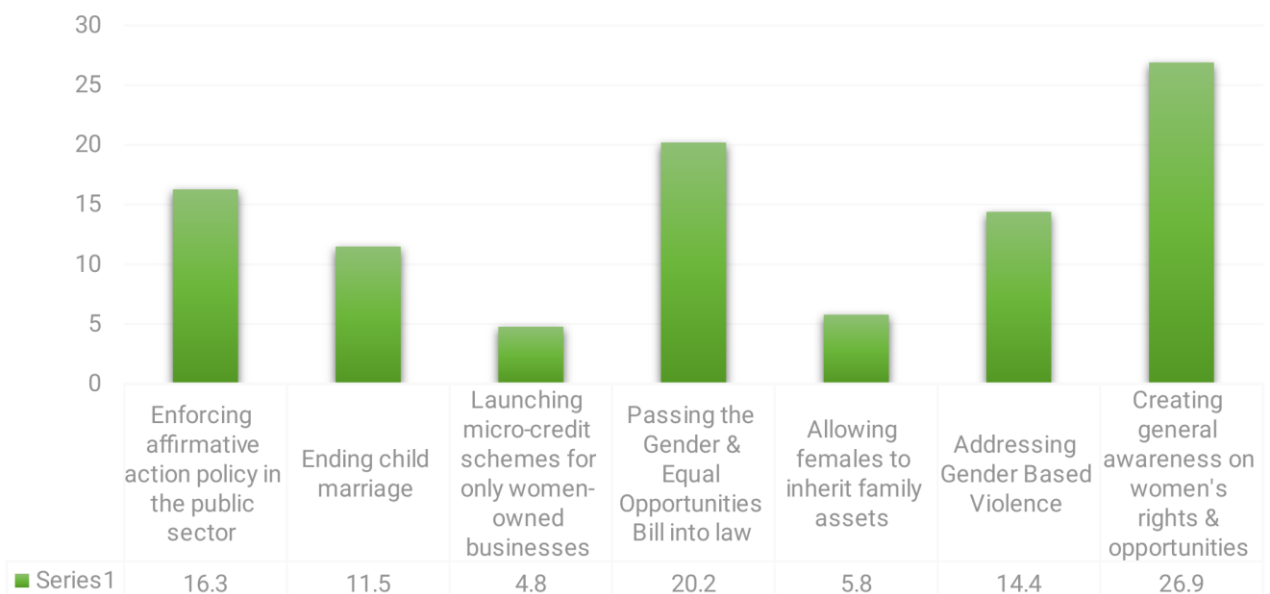
**Fig. 10: Respondents' understanding of the objectives of the GEO Bill**

On hindrances to women's development in Nigeria, respondents listed some factors (see fig. Fig. 11 below)



**Fig. 11: Respondents' opinion on factors that hinder women's development in Nigeria**

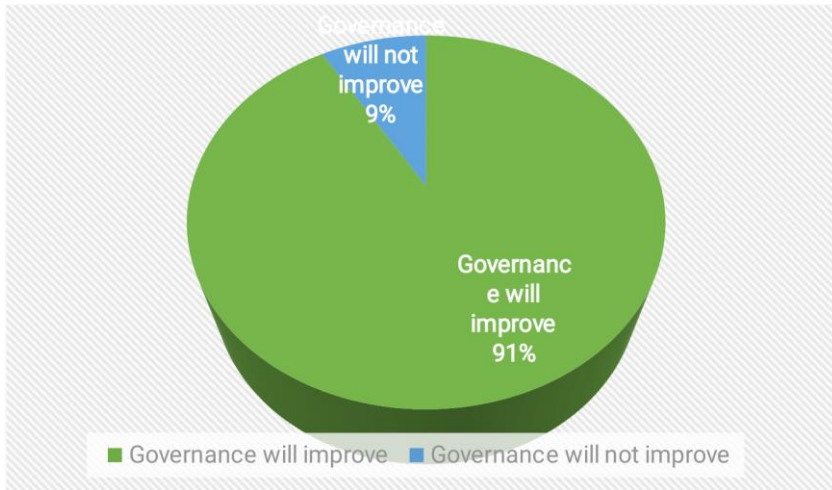
Respondents listed factors that they perceived would aid women's development in Nigeria (see fig. Fig. 12 below).



**Fig. 12: Respondents' understanding of factors aiding women in development in Nigeria**

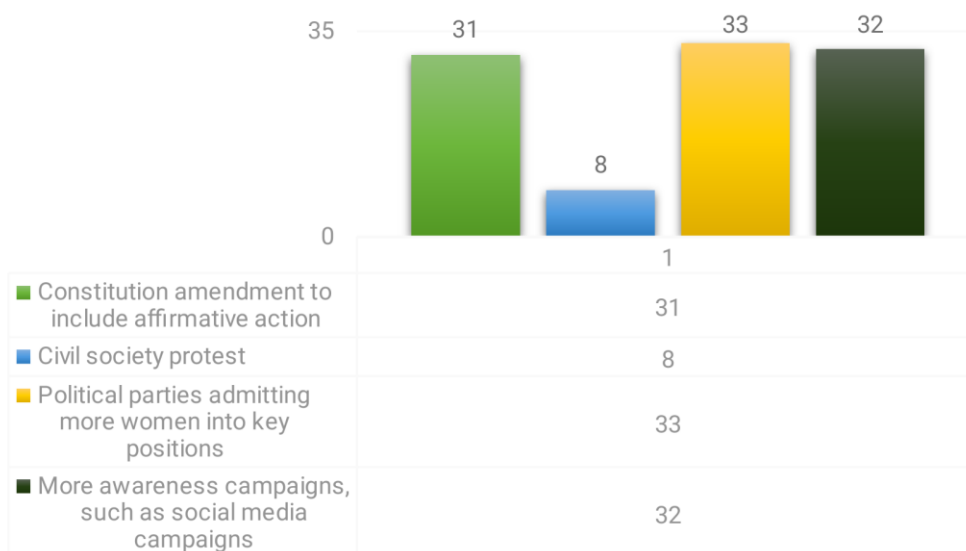
➤ **Women's Women Inclusion and Participation**

The respondents gave their opinion on governance in Nigeria and its improvement if more women were admitted into the political space by election or appointment. It was evident that most, 95(91.3%) of the respondents believed that more women in the political space would aid development in Nigeria, while 9(8.7%) did not agree with this statement (see Fig. 13 below).



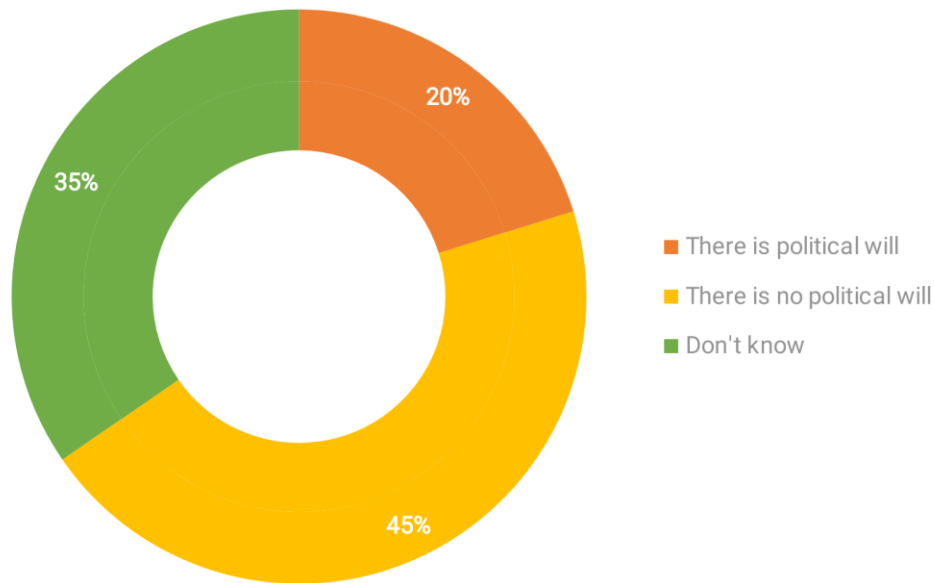
**Fig. 13: Governance improvement with more women in public offices**

On what could be done to increase the number of women in the political space, respondents believed that certain reforms were needed (see fig. Fig. 14 below)



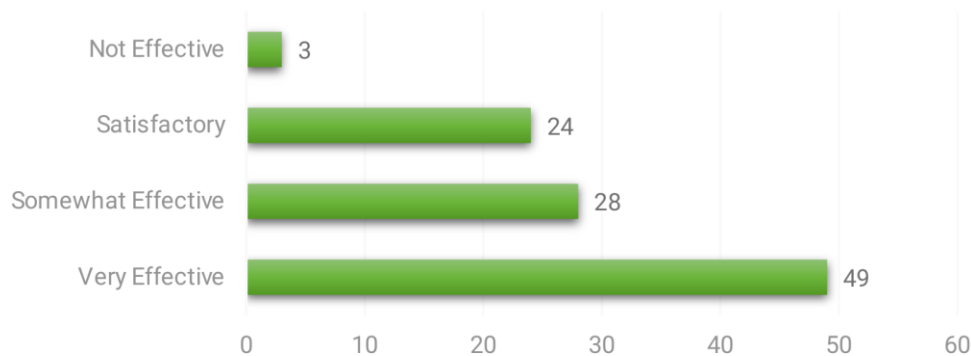
**Fig. 14: Respondents' Views on what could admit more women into the governance space**

On the political will on the part of the government to implement the 35% affirmative action, 45% of the respondents believed that there was (not) no political will (see fig. Fig. 15 below).



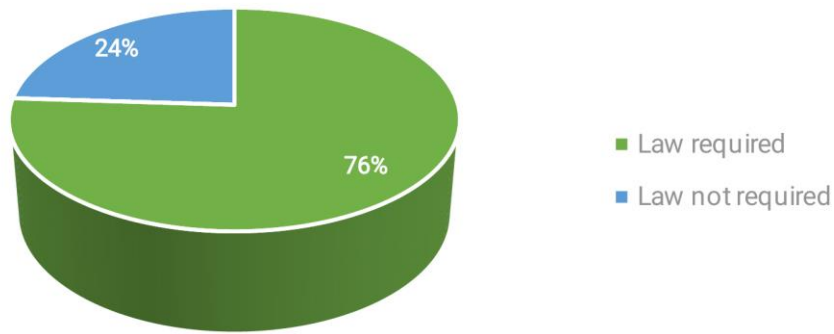
**Fig. 15: Political will of the government to implement 35% affirmative action**

When asked about affirmative action and how effective they perceive that it could be when implemented, 47.1% of the respondents, which is less than half of the sample size, believed that it would be very effective (Fig. fig. 16 below)



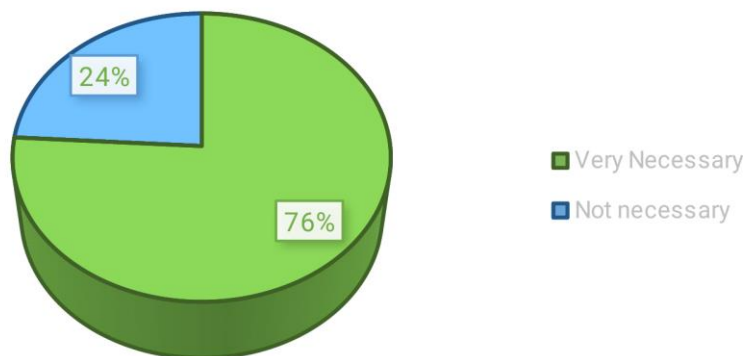
**Fig. 16: perception (about) of the effectiveness of affirmative action in improving women’s participation**

Respondents (apparently) believe that male politicians should be required to choose women as running mates and vice versa. 76% of the respondents were in favor of using legislation to enforce this (see fig. Fig.17 below).



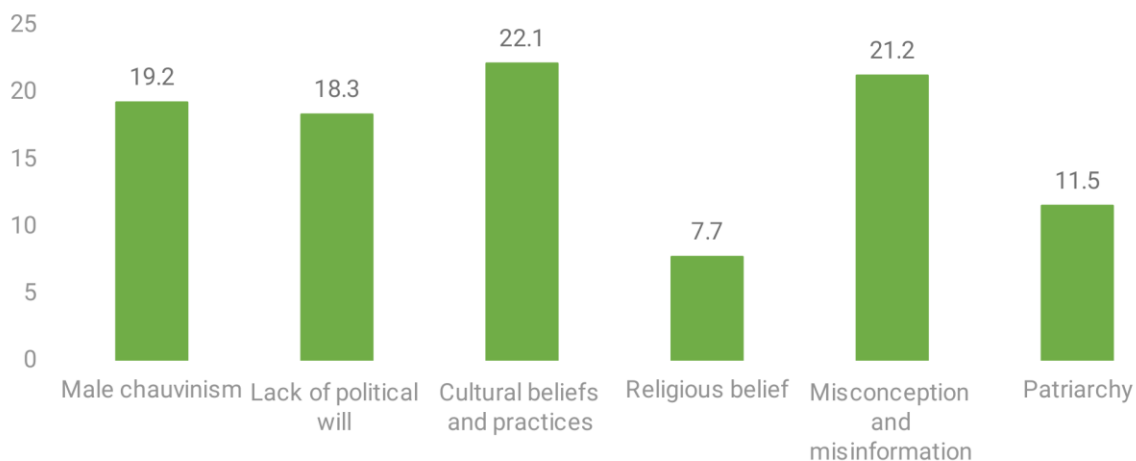
**Fig. 17: Respondents’ opinion on whether a law is needed to require men to choose women as running mates and vice versa**

Using legislation to enforce women’s women participation was discussed enormously as 76% of respondents believed that it was necessary to use legislation to reserve seats for women in both the (there was no “the”) National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly (see fig. Fig. 18 below).



**Fig. 18: Respondents’ view on whether a law should require reservation of seats for women in (at) the Legislature.**

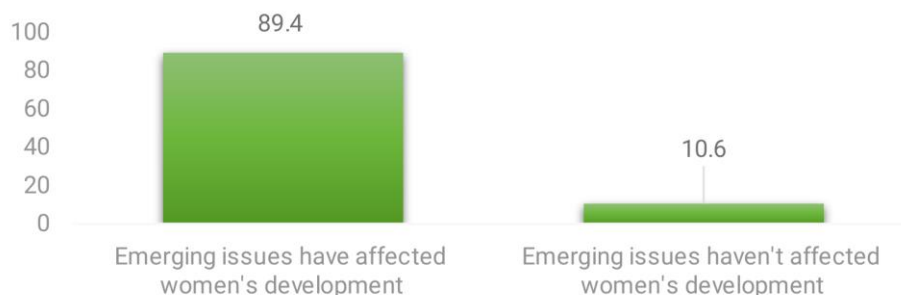
The respondents listed the factors that they believe pose a barrier to the passage of (‘a’ was removed) legislation that would require seats to be reserved for women in the National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly (see fig. Fig. 19 below).



**Fig. 19: Factors that respondents believe would hinder the passage of a law to reserve seats for women**

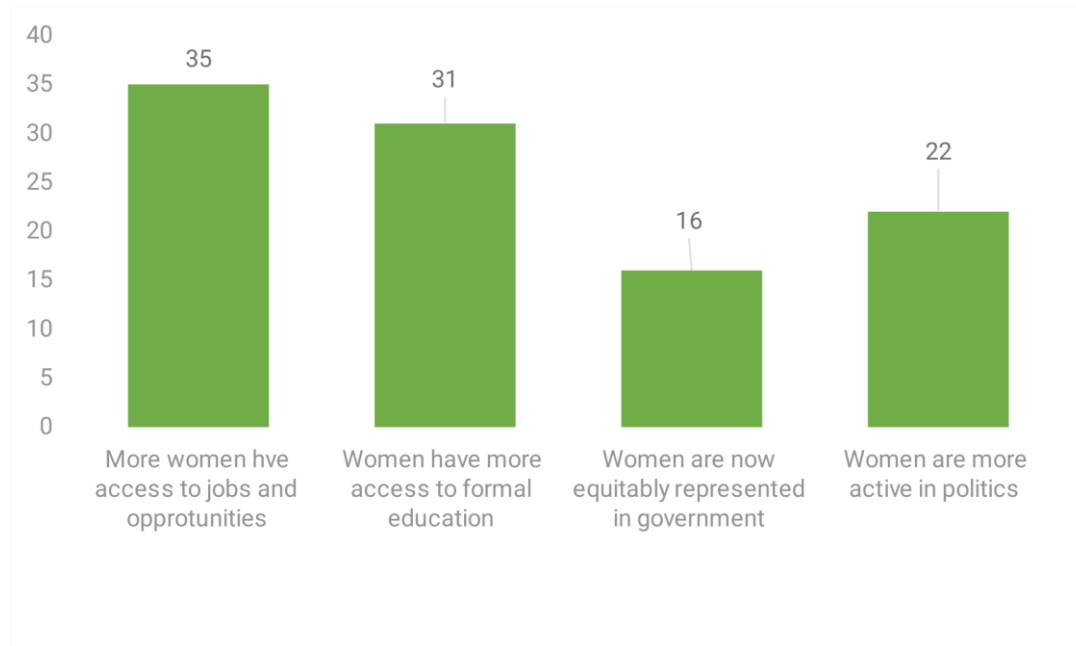
➤ **Women and Emerging Issues**

With regards to ('the' was removed) emerging issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, insecurity, social/(new) news media, and ('and' was added)their effect on women's growth and development, 89.4% of the respondents believed that emerging issues have affected women's growth and development, while 10.6% disagreed (see Fig. 20).



**Fig. 20: Respondents' perception of (on) the effect of emerging issues issue on women's growth and development in Nigeria**

The respondents further discussed how they felt that emerging issues had affected women’s growth and development. 33.7% of the respondents said that these emerging issues(,) had provided more women access to job opportunities; 29.8% believe that women have access to formal education as a result of the effect of these emerging issues; 15.4% of the respondents said that women are now equitably represented in government, and 21.2% believe that women are more active in politics now due to these emerging issues (Fig. 21).



**Fig. 21: Respondents’ views on how emerging issues impacted on women’s growth and development in Nigeria**

#### **Respondents’ comments on women women’s development and empowerment**

<b>S/No.</b>	<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency (N)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1	No comment	40	38.5
2	Women should support their fellow women's aspiration	9	8.7
3	Gender equality, equity, and justice should be supported	20	19.2
4	Give more empowerment, jobs and equal opportunities to women e.g. Internet access, skills, digital devices use knowledge, and possession	7	6.7
5	Give reorientation to women to change their mindset & suppress feminism	3	2.9
6	Lack of (women’s) Women’s motivation	4	3.8
7	Carrier women unable to cope because of family	4	3.8

	responsibilities and spousal pressure		
8	Socio-Cultural beliefs & practices against women plus GBV	4	3.8
9	Organizations & Institutions should mainstream gender equally in all their (programmes) programs areas	5	4.8
10	Lack of (political) politics to implement 35% affirmative action policy	1	1.0
11	The pandemic & insecurity contributes (is contributory) to (added 'to') inhibiting women's access to political participation	2	1.9
12	Women engage (engages) in financial misappropriation & fraud in Government	2	1.9
13	Health and lack of finance hinders them	1	1.0
14	Male control	2	2.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## 1. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

With the understanding of Women's (women) Development in governance as economic, educational and political empowerment of women to participate equitably in governance and politics, the respondents in (the) South-South Nigeria asserted that the pace of that development is unacceptably slow and lacking in the ('the') sincerity of purpose just as the running of gender-inclusive government in the region.

The respondents pointed out the gaps in women's development to include: Poor top (government level) and bottom (community level) supervision of empowerment (programmes) programs and projects; self-doubt or lack of self-confidence by women; lack of trust and confidence in women by fellow women; and women's susceptibility to manipulation by men greased by the emotional advantage men have over them. Therefore, they (they, therefore) maintained that the state governments are not doing enough to turn the tide and should ('therefore') follow, at least, the recommendations in this research to close up the gaps. There was ('literally') no awareness of any laws in the state that has impacted especially the political or development status of women among the respondents. In the (this) light of this, they strongly recommended that the state requires a law to encourage more women's participation in governance.

Additionally, the respondents identified factors that prevent women from venturing into the political leadership space (~~to including~~) including: (added 'an')an inferiority complex; suppression by husbands ('s') for fear of disrespect for them that may come with political success of their wives; lack of awareness and misconception of politics as manly; ('the') the wrong conception of the origination status of a married woman from another tribe or ethnicity; the weaponization of low financial status of women; structure of stress and risks; and persistent deprivation of women of political benefits due them. These factors, they believed, can be curtailed by organizing conferences ('s') for both men and women at all (~~the~~) levels of political engagements; getting women involved in Governance and mentoring



them; economic empowerment of women; and ensuring equity such that women are not deprived of rights and privileges.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Women play an important role in every society and community. The following recommendations were made:

### **➤ FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN**

This is a critical factor (øf) in women's lives. The government should design economic policies to make the lives of every woman better by empowering women with the following:

- Vocational skills
- Agricultural loans, equipment, and materials
- Seed funds for business
- Access to large facilities, lands, (s, and) assets for industries and huge projects.
- Basic infrastructure like electricity, storage facilities and water in rural areas.
- Private/ partnership for women-owned businesses.

### **➤ EDUCATION OF WOMEN**

This is very critical to the growth and development of women. (~~The~~) Formal, informal schools should be developed.

- School should be made safe for women
- The (the) toilet, sanitary pads and water should be provided for girls and women in every school.
- Fees, uniforms ('s') and books should be made free or subsidized for women.
- Reproductive health/Rights should be part of every school curriculum and not just (as) part of biology.
- States should deploy a certain percentage of (~~her~~) their budget to the education of girls and women.
- The education of men is a key factor in (~~to~~) the growth of women and men in communities should be trained in schools and other social settings,
- Organize community dialogue for chiefs, traditional rulers, faith-based rulers, (and) and young men in school on gender issues.

### **➤ MEDIA**

The media plays a critical role in the development of women. The media that should be deployed for this includes traditional, new/social media, print and electronic media.

- Increase of programs (programmes) targeting women's development
- Media should showcase some stories of successful women to encourage other women.
- Train media personnel on women on development and gender mainstreaming.
- Remove negative portrayals of women by media and adverts.
- Media should help in the dissemination of information about gender policy at the grassroots ('s').
- There should be awareness creation of the existence of (~~the~~) gender laws amongst (to) those who implement the law, for instance, the police.



## LAW

### AND POLICY

The existing laws on SGBV should be implemented and sanctions meted out to offenders. There are enough laws on SGBV but with little or no implementation of these laws.

- So many women do not know of the existence of the laws that prohibit SGBV like the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015 (VAPP), Cross River Female Person's Inheritance Law etc. Therefore the public should be sensitized about them.
- Women should be sensitized on Gender Bills before the National Assembly. If the women are sensitized on such bills they can then own it and properly canvass for its passage.
- Voter education is very important (so as) to sensitize (the) women. There should be (a) sustained advocacy for (a) huge female block votes.



## SECURITY

### RITUALS

- There should be adequate provision of security around women candidates.
- Promotion of leadership of more women at decision-making levels, both domestically and in international organizations.
- There should be financial support, sustained over time, to promote equality, women empowerment, conflict prevention and (the) the peace process, with a specific budgetary allocation and establishment of a minimum amount of the overall peace and security budget.
- Support to women mediators in the peace process, creating a women's (s) mediation network. Also help to identify women mediators, enhancing their visibility and training.
- Support to civilian organizations ('s'-z) involved in (the) the peace-building process, particularly to women's rights organizations ('s'-z), through dialogue, enhanced visibility, dialogue and regular interchange with Embassies and other national agencies in the field, as well as technical support and mediation training.

### 3. CONCLUSION

To build a gender-balanced (-) society, all hands must be on deck. Men and women need to question traditional practices that discriminate against women. Women can and have contributed immensely towards nation-building (-). Justice and equity demand that they be given equal opportunity to participate in governance. Gender discrimination is a monster that should have no place in the society. Its persistence in the South-South region of Nigeria is mainly due (~~due mainly~~) to archaic and unproductive traditionalism. Women's functions should be respected and fostered for a humanizing culture in the modern world.

## ANNEX 6

### XXII. THE SOUTH-WEST REGIONAL REPORT

#### Executive Summary

The research on gender in Nigeria ( gender in Nigeria research) aims to find out how women have fared in development for the past 10 years in Nigeria, and the effort of government in driving the process for this development. It is also important to note that development is not something that happens in space or the product of eventualities but a concrete phenomenon that requires all concerted effort to achieve. There is a specific role to play by both men and women to attain women's development. Therefore, gender issues with all that relates to it can impinge on societal development.

This research which covered South-west Nigeria with Ekiti state as a case study found that women in Nigeria had done considerably well in development in the last 10 years, especially in political participation, but a lot more (still) remains to be done by the governments of south-west states of Nigeria to ensure gender equality and women empowerment, especially with regards to women occupying more political and leadership (s) positions in (an) elected capacity.

#### 1. Introduction

Over the years, the dominant trend has assumed male superiority while women were seen as weak, subordinate and inferior, and this has led to the emergence of specific initiatives both at federal and state levels such as laws, policies and programs etc., for women's development, especially in the areas of women's political participation. The study was carried out through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KII) and questionnaires.

While the FGDs and KIIs were conducted physically, the questionnaires were majorly administered online across various social media platforms. It is hoped that this study report which covers South-west Nigeria with Ekiti state as a case study, will inform planning, policy and development, as well as serve as a resource for stakeholders in the gender and development community. The analysis and key findings from the research are presented below.

#### 2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Focused Group Discussion (FGD) was one of the tools used to elicit (a) a response from the three Senatorial Zones (SZs) of Ekiti State. This (was) was held in Ikere LGA (Ekiti South Senatorial Zone), Ado LGA (Ekiti Central Senatorial Zone), and Moba LGA (Ekiti Northern Senatorial Zone) respectively. On the FGD, 30 respondents drawn from across Ekiti State were engaged in a batch of 10 per senatorial zone respectively. The respondents were selected based on their knowledge of the research subject and how long they have lived or worked in the senatorial zone. Ikere LGA was used as the sample site for Ekiti South

senatorial zone, Ado LGA for Ekiti Central senatorial zone and Moba LGA for Ekiti North senatorial zone.

The respondents were selected from a diverse range of people, such as traditional/religious leaders, politicians, policymakers, civil servants, civil society organizations, women leaders, market women, persons living with disabilities, students, and youth leaders. The respondents comprised 5 males and 5 females in each batch of a mixed population of (the) poor, middle-class, upper-class, literate, illiterate, urban, rural, young and old persons. The findings are as follows: -

#### ➤ **Women Development**

Respondents discussed what women's development in governance in Nigeria Today meant to them according to their understanding. To the FGD respondents, women's development in governance means; women's unhindered participation in political leadership positions be it appointive or elected. Some of their views are as follows –

- Women are being recognized as important members of (the) society and have an important role to play in development and governance, and should be carried along (and) presently, I think women are making some progress,
- Women's development in governance today means giving women their rightful place (in order) for development to come in different areas - in terms of governance, political participation, their right to health, giving equal opportunity to women, (and ) the area of open contracting.
- It means the positive impact that women bring to (the) society, it means women being in good health, having a healthy economic and political stand in the society, and equally representing the people in government.

### **3. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)**

The respondents for the interviews consisted of traditional leaders, civil servants, the youth, business owners, politicians, and members of the judiciary. The respondents gave their views (of) on how well women in Nigeria have developed since the 1995 Beijing conference. 90% of the respondents believed that Nigerian women have made progress in the areas of formal education, career progression and diversification, but are still politically backward(s). The respondents listed laws in Ekiti State that have been passed by the government to increase women('s) development as follow: -

- i. Ekiti State Equal Opportunity Law, 2013
- ii. Ekiti State GBV (Prohibition) Law, 2019
- iii. Administration of Criminal Justice Law, 2015
- iv. Victims Protection Law, 2022

They added that Ekiti state has a 2010 State Gender policy as well as some (programmes) programs targeted at women, like the mobilization of young women in politics through the office of the First Lady. While 80% of the respondents (was) were aware of the existence of the Gender Policy, 20% (was) were unaware.

### **4. Analysis of Questionnaires**

Respondents to the questionnaire were spread across the South-western region of Nigeria, as follows: -

S/N	STATE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	EKITI	69	34%
2	LAGOS	24	12%
3	OGUN	52	26%
4	ONDO	28	14%
5	OSUN	15	7%
6	OYO	14	7%

**Fig. 1: Geographical spread of respondents**

A total of 202 respondents comprising (of) 149 females and 53 males were sampled for the study, ranging between ages 25 to 70+.

Age range	AGE RANGE OF RESPONDENT
25-39	54
40-49	68
50-59	43
60-69	25
18-24	7
70+	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>202</b>

**Fig. 2: Age range of respondents**

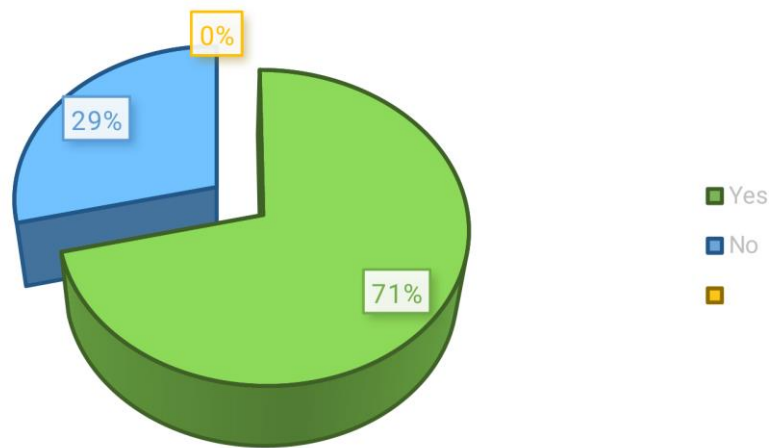
Highest Level of Education	Percentage
Tertiary (and postgraduate)	94%
Secondary/High School only	6%
Primary School only	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Fig. 3: Respondents' level of education**

Occupation	Number
Government/public sector employee	<b>65</b>
Self-employed / business	53
Others	33
Private sector employee	42
Unemployed	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>202</b>

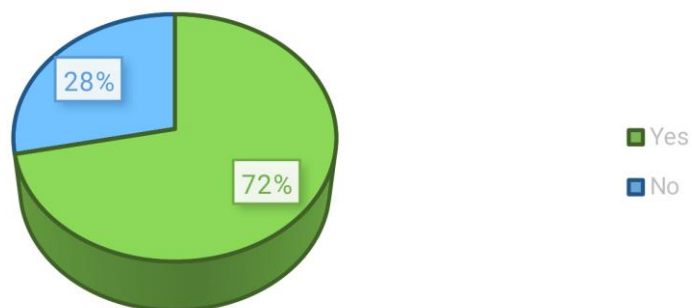
**Fig. 4: Respondents' occupation**

On women('s) development, 71% of the respondents affirmed that there has been an improvement (with regards to) concerning women in governance in Nigeria while 29% believed that there has not been any improvement.



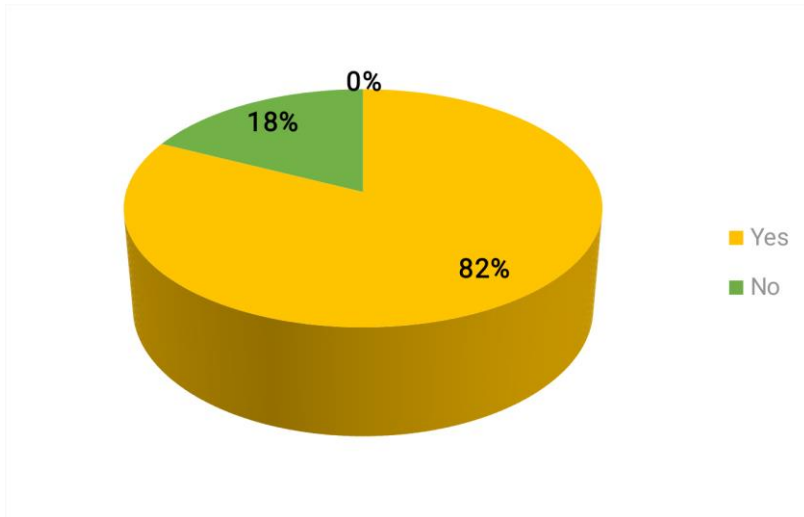
**Fig. 5: Respondents' view on whether there has been any development with regard(s) to women in governance**

On whether there is (a) necessity to have a law that would guarantee the participation of women in governance, 72% of the respondents believed such a law was necessary, while 28% held a contrary view.



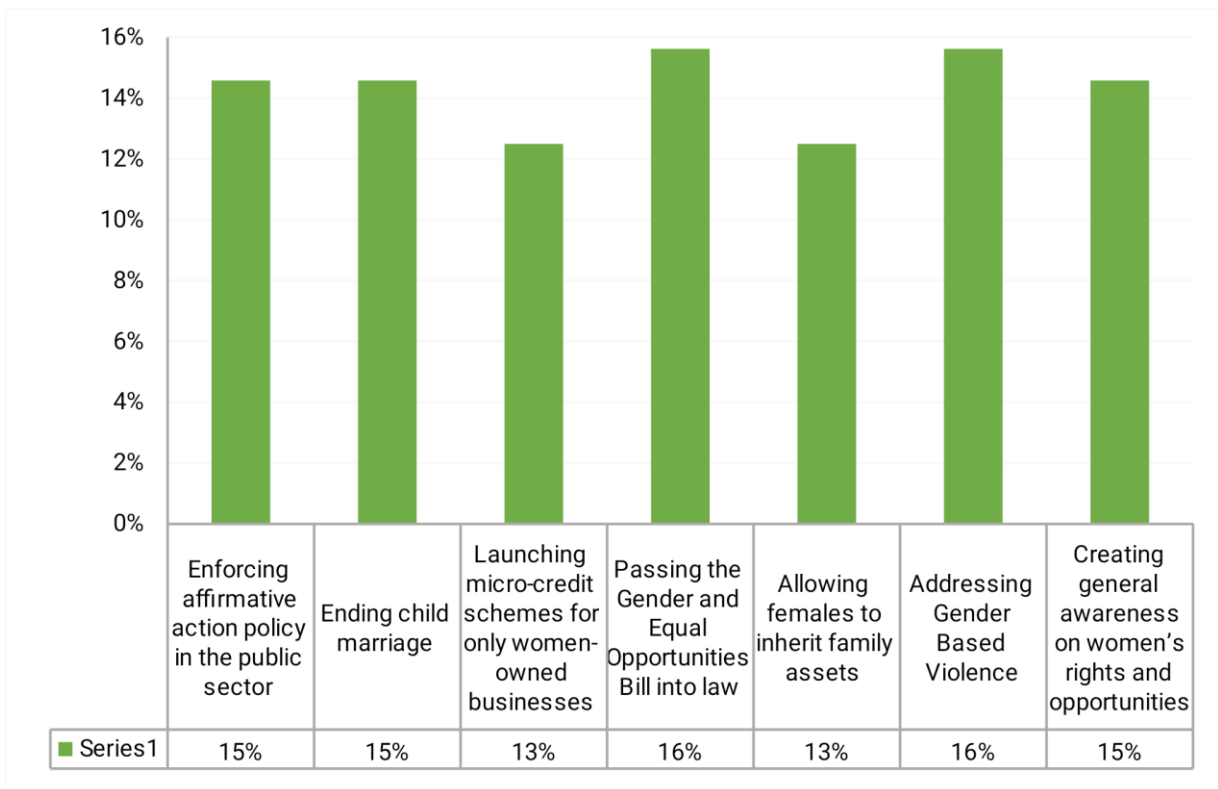
**Fig. 6: Respondents' view on the necessity of a law to guarantee women's participation.**

The respondents were asked about the Gender and Equal Opportunities (GEO) Bill, which has been thrown(-)out by members of the National Assembly in various assemblies. While 82% of the respondents knew about the Bill, 18% (was) were unaware that such a Bill existed.



**Fig. 7: Awareness of the existence of the GEO Bill**

On factors that would in the opinion of the respondents, aid women’s development, a lot of the responses bothered (on) by legislation (see Fig.8 below).

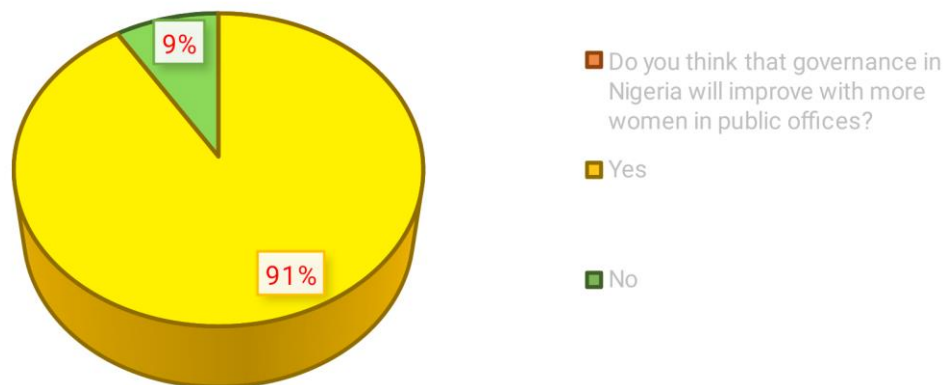


**Fig. 8: Factors perceived to aid women's development.**

## Women's Inclusion & Participation

The respondents responded that governance in Nigeria will improve if more women were elected or allowed (given opportunity) to hold public offices as follows:

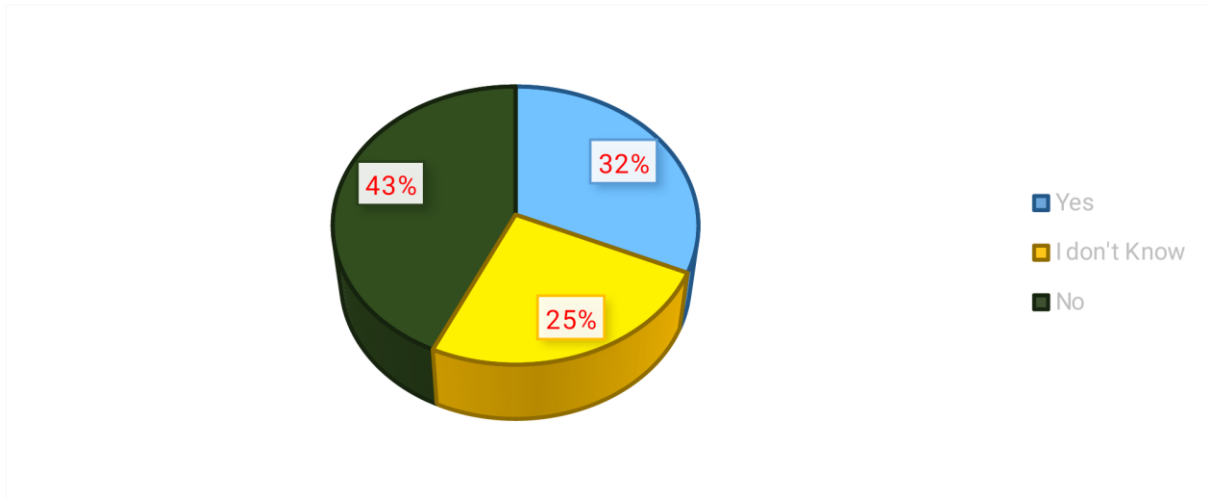
The Majority of the respondents culminating to a whopping 184(91%) respondents convincingly attested to the fact that governance will improve in Nigeria if more women were allowed (given the opportunity) to hold public offices, contrarily, a merger (e) 18(9%)engage respondent did not believe that any improvement in governance would happen if more women held public offices (see Fig. 9 below).



**Fig. 9: Respondents' perception of whether governance would improve with more women in governance.**

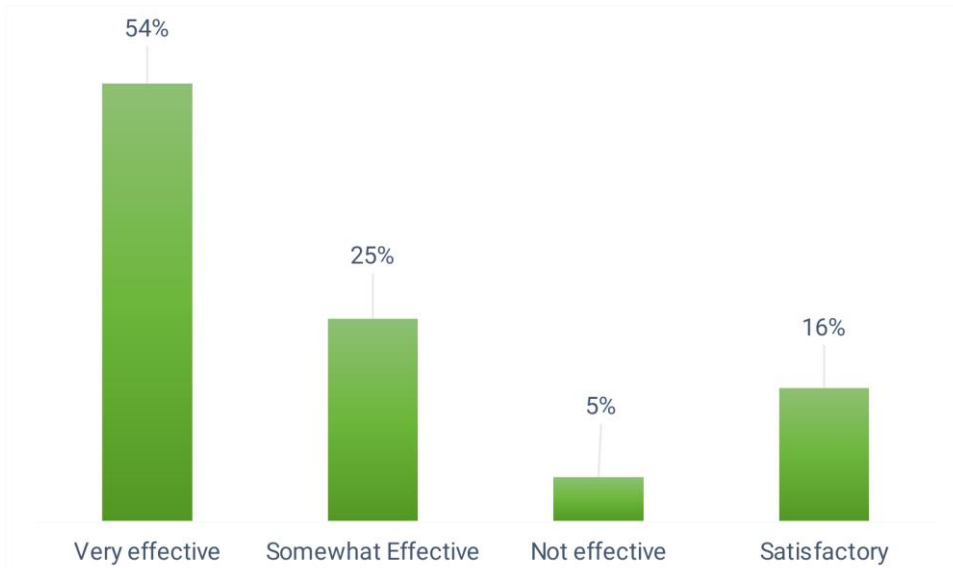
On expanding the governance space for more women to enter, 44% of the respondents believed that a constitutional amendment to include affirmative action is necessary. On the issue of political will by the government to fully implement the 35% affirmative action policy. The response was divided into three opinions, 64(32%) opined that there is political will by the government to fully implement the 35% affirmative action policy, 51(25%) claimed not to know whether the government is committed or not while the remaining 87(43%) emphatically said they do not think the government was committed to fully implement the 35% affirmative action policy (see fig. 10 below).





**Fig. 10: Respondents’ perception about the government’s political will to implement 35% affirmative action.**

Given (In view of) the outcome of this question, the respondents were further asked how effective they believed that the affirmation action policy would be in improving women's participation in governance. (?) 108 (54%) believed that it will be very effective, 50(25%) said it will be Somewhat Effective, 11 (5%) respondents said it is not effective and 33(16%) picked the option “Satisfactory” (see Fig. 11 below)

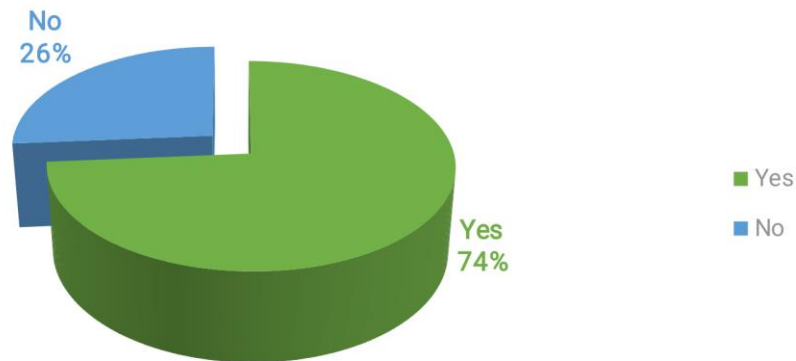


**Fig. 12: Respondents’ belief of the effectiveness or otherwise of affirmative action to improve women’s participation.**

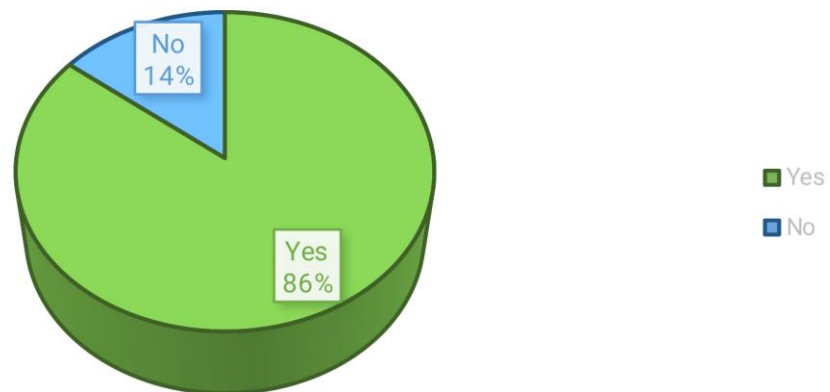
On whether there should be a law to require male politicians running for elective offices to choose female running mates and vice versa; the respondents majorly believed and

affirmed that such a law should be in place by 149 (74%) respondents but the remaining 53(26%) where of contrary opinion (see fig. 13 below)

On whether there should be a law to set aside and reserve seats at the National/State Assembly for women, 173 (86%) respondents affirmed yes to the question while (the) 29 (14%) implied that it was not necessary to reserve seats at the National/State Assembly for women (see fig. 14 below)



**Fig. 13: Should there be a law to require men to choose female running mates and vice versa?**

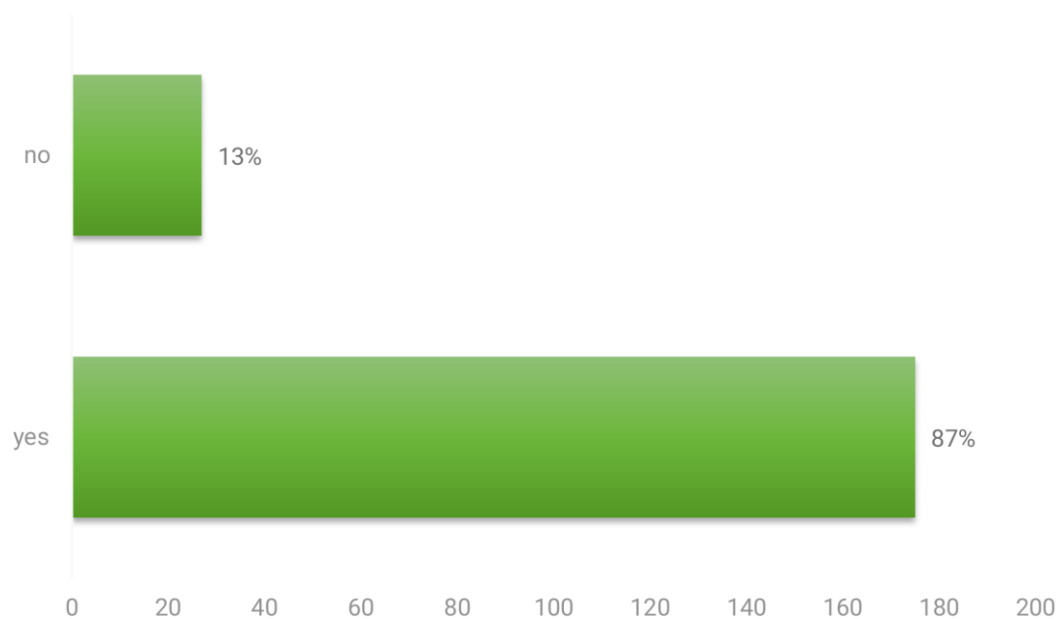


**Fig. 14: Respondents' view on whether seats should be reserved for women at the National/State Assembly**

## **WOMEN AND EMERGING ISSUES**

Emerging issues such as the pandemic, insecurity, and social media (new media) affected economies globally, and in Nigeria, 87% of respondents believed that women's growth and

development were affected by these emerging issues while 13% disagreed that women's growth and development were affected (see fig. 15 below)



**Fig. 15: Respondents' perception of whether emerging issues affect (affected) women's growth and development.**

## 5. Summary of Findings

- The government has put mechanisms in place to protect women from discrimination and gender-based violence (GBV). Several laws have been passed to this effect –
  - Ekiti State Equal Opportunity Law, 2013
  - Ekiti State GBV (Prohibition) Law, 2019
  - Administration of Criminal Justice Law, 2015
  - Victims Protection Law, 2022
- Despite the mechanism put in place by the government, women are still marginalized in the governance structure. Hence, respondents believe that there needs to be a constitutional amendment or alteration to include 35% affirmative action (,) so that more women can be part of the government.
- Additionally, respondents are in support of a law to enforce choosing the opposite gender as a running mate.
- Women's inclusion and participation is seen as a means to development. Respondents believed that there would be development in the polity if more women were to hold elective and appointive positions.
- Majority of the respondents are in support of the law to reserve seats for women in both National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly.

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