



RESERVED OR ADDITIONAL SEATS FOR WOMEN ?

**A REVIEW OF THE 35% AFFIRMATIVE
ACTION COURT JUDGEMENT AND THE PATH
TO INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA**

**From Court Ruling to Real Representation: Making Reserved Seats
for Women a Reality**



**ASSESSMENT OF THE APRIL 6TH 2022 COURT
JUDGEMENT ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN NIGERIA**

BY NIGERIAN WOMEN TRUST FUND (NWTf)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Affirmative action is a policy or program that seeks to promote diversity and inclusion by providing opportunities and resources to individuals who have historically been discriminated against or underrepresented. Globally, affirmative action has been used to address racial and ethnic disparities in settlement patterns, education and employment opportunities. In Nigeria, affirmative action policies have been implemented to address historical injustices and promote equality for marginalized ethnic groups. One key example is the Federal Character Commission, which was established to ensure that government appointments and resources are distributed equitably among Nigeria's diverse ethnic and regional groups. However, in spite of the success attained for promoting diversity, equity and inclusion across Nigeria, Nigerian women have not enjoyed their required space in the Nigerian political equation, this exposes the gender gap inherent in the Nigerian political system. The need to bridge the gaps between gender groups in Nigeria spur many stakeholders with the Nigerian Women Trust Funding championing the efforts to increase the carbon print of women in elective and appointive positions from the federal, state and community level. It is the drive towards attaining the common goal of gender mainstreaming in Nigeria that led to several advocacies and eventually legal actions that birthed the victory of the April 6th court victory for affirmative action in favour of the Nigerian women.

Conspicuously, this study was set out to investigate the level of women participation in governance (appointive/elective) since the court judgement in favour of the 35% appointive position for women in Nigeria, to ascertain the efforts made by the Nigerian government towards implementing the 35% affirmative action in line with the court judgement, to determine the perception of Nigerian women on the April 6th court victory favouring 35% appointive and/or elective positions for women in Nigeria, to investigate the likely impact of emerging factors (globalization, technological revolution, democracy, conflicts etc.,) on the 35% appointive position for women in Nigeria and to establish how the April 6th court victory has influenced women's access to opportunities for advancement in Nigeria. It is against the foregoing that this study was conducted in Nigeria to investigate the exact impact of the April 6th court victory for women in Nigeria.

BACKGROUND

Over the years, Affirmative Action (AA) has evolved into a vital mechanism for addressing systemic inequality, often referred to as positive or corrective policies. It is typically defined as temporary special measures designed to favor disadvantaged groups and reverse historical or structural discrimination, especially through government interventions (Eze & Umeh, 2023). It is aimed at remedying past discrimination, thereby preventing a continuum of inequity and/or injustice based on gender. Eze & Umeh (2023) further argued that women globally are burdened not only by physical limitations but also by deeply entrenched systemic barriers. These symbolic «**chains**» must be acknowledged and dismantled. Affirmative Action, therefore, goes beyond tokenism; it embodies equity and justice for all. It is also linked to principles such as federal character and the quota system. While revolutions and wars have historically been fought in pursuit of liberation, Affirmative Action offers a strategic, nonviolent pathway to achieving both equity and empowerment. It is anchored in the implementation of deliberate, progressive government policies and the political will to see them through.

However, since the official creation of nation state, the social institutions that forms the pillars of modern society have continued to thrive slowly without a sizeable proportion of women population. This is particularly appalling in Africa and Nigeria especially. The situation is worsening, and demands urgent attention to reverse the trend hence, the series of advocacies (legal suits, political movement, religious campaigns and educational expansion) aimed at reducing the gender gap between men and women in elective and appointive positions in governance across Nigeria. The 2 challenge of gender disparity is not limited to low representation of women in governance but adherence to traditional gender roles, which uphold patriarchal believes that has reduced women's involvement in governance.

Consequently, the social expectations are skewed towards domestic roles for women over public leadership, leading to adverse economic challenges that has limited women's potentials from the Federal, State and Community levels. Gender discrimination against women has generally reduced women's resourcefulness especially financial resources and social networks that would enable them to compete favourably. This is followed by the hostile and violent political culture, which often deter women from actively participating in politics. Corroboratively, several empirical reports by the media, scholars and critical stakeholders have indicated that women are more likely to be targets of violence and



intimidation, as such, it is risky for them to engage in active politics from the grassroots to the federal elections in Nigeria. The political parties and institutions often lack mechanisms to support and promote female aspirants/candidates before, during and after elections. Women do not have the same level of mentorship, sponsorship, and networking opportunities as their male counterparts due to cultural limitations. Notably, there is an improvement in women's educational attainment, but disparities still exist in girl child access to school especially in the northern region of the country. Women with less access to quality education and leadership training are less likely to pursue or succeed in political careers. There is still insufficient legal frameworks and policies to promote gender equity in Nigeria.

Persuasibly, the thirty-five percent (35%) quota for affirmative action measures has not been effectively implemented or enforced across the federation. This lack of visibility and biased representation has hindered women's political ambitions in Nigeria. It is against the background of the foregoing that this study has examined the April 6th 2022 Court judgement in support of the affirmative action and other related legal frameworks for women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming in Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study will answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of women participation in governance (appointive/elective) since the court judgement in favour of the 35% appointive position for women in Nigeria?
2. What are the efforts made by the Nigerian government towards implementing the 35% quota in line with the court judgement in Nigeria?
3. What is the perception of Nigerian women on the April 6th court victory favouring 35% appointive and/or elective positions for women in Nigeria?
4. What is the likely impact of emerging factors (globalization, technological revolution, democracy, conflicts etc.) on the 35% appointive position for women in Nigeria?
5. How has the April 6th court victory influenced women's access to opportunities for advancement in Nigeria?

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The major goal of this study is to examine the April 6th 2022 court victory in favour of 35% appointive positions for women in Nigeria.

The specific objectives were to:

1. Examine the level of women participation in governance (appointive/elective) since the court judgement in favour of the 35% appointive position for women in Nigeria
2. Ascertain the efforts made by the Nigerian government towards implementing the 35% quota in line with the court judgement in Nigeria
3. Determine the perception of Nigerian women on the April 6th court victory favouring 35% appointive and/or elective positions for women in Nigeria
4. Investigate the likely impact of emerging factors (globalization, technological revolution, democracy, conflicts etc.,) on the 35% appointive position for women in Nigeria
5. Establish how the April 6th court victory has influence women's access to opportunities for advancement in Nigeria

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

The study utilized a survey research design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative tools of data collection. This design enables the collection of extensive data from different respondents, facilitating a comprehensive assessment of the respondents.

Scope of the study

This study was focused on the April 6th court victory affirming the 35% quota for women in appointive position in Nigeria. The study was aimed at evaluating the gender gaps in governance in Nigeria. The geographical scope of this study is Nigeria. The time frame of the study is 2022-2024.

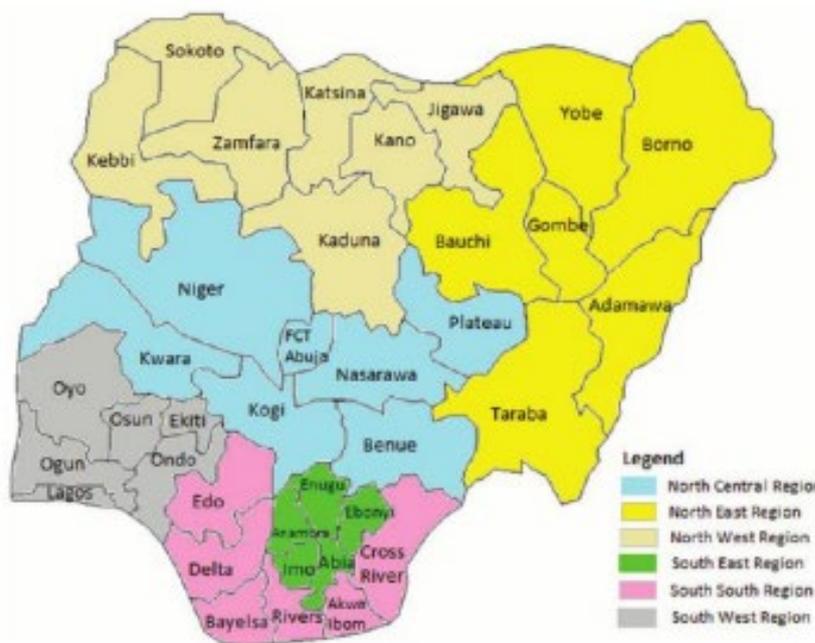


Figure 1: Map of Nigeria showing the 36 states and Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja

Source: Research Gate, 2024

Population of the study

The hard copies of questionnaires were distributed across six (6) states. Hence, the population of this study were drawn from some selected areas in Kano, Lagos, Nasarawa, Bauchi, Imo, and Cross River States respectively. The combined population of the selected study areas was 6,726, 011. However, the study focused on adult population from ages of 18 and above, resident in purposively selected state from the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria.

Sample Size

The sample size of this study is four hundred respondents. Using the Taro Yamane sampling determination method (as shown below) adopted by Omoniyi and Oladele (2023):

Demonstration of the method is given thus:

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

Where:

n= Sample Size Required

N= Total Population 6,726, 011

e= Margin of Error (0.05)²

Application of the formula:

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{6,726, 011}{1 + 6,726, 011 (0.05)^2} = \frac{6,726, 011}{1 + 6,726, 011 (0.0025)} \\ &= \frac{6,726, 011}{1 + 7,614.285} = \frac{6,726, 011}{16,816.0275} \end{aligned}$$

$$n = 399.9$$

Therefore, the sample size will approximately be 400.

LITERATURE REVIEW/ THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section provides a thematic analysis of relevant literature pertaining to the subject matter.

2.1. Conceptual Framework

Some key concepts in this study are clarified as follows;

2.1.1. Women



A woman is biologically defined as an adult member of the female sex; however, the social meaning of womanhood is contextually constructed and varies significantly across cultures and time. In Nigeria, womanhood is influenced by a complex intersection of indigenous pre-colonial norms, Islamic traditions, and colonial legacies, which continue to shape gender roles and expectations in both private and public life (Okeke et al., 2024).

Western views, influenced by Christian teachings, often portray women through the lens of Eve's role in the biblical story of Adam and the forbidden fruit, attributing her subsequent status, roles, and worth to this narrative (Gen 3: 2-12). Similarly, Islamic culture introduced concepts like Purdah, which confines women to domestic roles and limits their

mobility, underlining perceptions of female weakness and dependence on male decision-making authority. Regional and ethnic differences further shape the Nigerian woman's experience; for instance, Igbo women in the South face specific challenges such as harmful widowhood practices, while Yoruba women in the Southwest region generally have better access to education but still lack presence in governance because culture infused patriarchy.

Despite regional and cultural differences, Nigerian women continue to face systemic gender inequalities, often being positioned as subordinate to men in both private and public spheres. This subordination is marked by persistent challenges such as limited access to political power, economic marginalization, restricted bodily autonomy, and deeply rooted patriarchal norms (Eze & Odu, 2023; Onyewuchi et al., 2024). This societal framework perpetuates gender inequality, contributing to widespread poverty, illiteracy, and low self-esteem among women, who are socialized from a young age to accept their inferior position. In Nigerian politics, women continue to face significant underrepresentation despite constituting nearly half of the voting population. This disparity reflects deep-rooted socio-political inequalities and has fuelled ongoing debates, advocacy efforts, and legal challenges aimed at achieving gender parity in governance and decision-making spaces (Akiyode-Afolabi & Shittu, 2022; UN Women Nigeria, 2023).

In the context of the study, a woman is defined not only by biological characteristics but also by societal and cultural perceptions that influence her roles, rights, and status within the Nigerian society. She is viewed through the lens of diverse cultural influences, including European colonial

traditions, Arabic Islamic customs, and indigenous Nigerian practices. These perspectives shape her identity and determine her social roles, often emphasizing concepts of femininity, domesticity, and familial obligations. Additionally, societal norms and religious teachings often reinforce these roles, affecting her access to education, economic opportunities, and participation in political decision-making. Thus, the definition of a woman in this study encompasses both biological aspects and the broader socio-cultural constructs that define and constrain her position within the Nigerian society.

2.1.2. Gender Mainstreaming:



Gender mainstreaming entails systematically assessing how policies, programs, and activities affect individuals differently based on gender, with the goal of promoting equity at all levels. Integrating gender considerations into health systems is essential for improving sexual and reproductive health outcomes, reducing health disparities, and ensuring inclusive service delivery for all genders (UNFPA, 2022). However, in many societies, women and feminine attributes are often undervalued compared to men and masculine attributes. This disparity results in men exerting greater influence over decision-making in personal, social, and governmental spheres, often at the expense of women's needs and interests. In many communities, deeply rooted cultural beliefs that reinforce male dominance contribute to adverse physical and mental health outcomes for women, including increased vulnerability to gender-based violence, restricted autonomy, and chronic stress. Importantly, these same norms 8 also harm men by promoting unhealthy behaviors, emotional

suppression, and reduced healthseeking practices (Van Laar et al., 2024; Oyugi, 2024).

Societies that actively reduce gender power imbalances consistently experience better social cohesion, health outcomes, and economic growth. Advancing gender equality has been shown to improve maternal and child health, increase educational attainment, and drive inclusive economic development (World Bank, 2022; UN Women, 2023).

Gender equality refers to a condition in which women and men enjoy equal rights, responsibilities, opportunities, and outcomes across all areas of life. This concept continues to evolve, but three core elements remain central to its achievement:

- 1 Equitable Access and Utilization of Resources:** This involves ensuring that women and men have fair and meaningful access to economic, educational, health, and social resources, and the ability to utilize them without systemic disadvantage (UN Women, 2023).
- 2 Equitable Involvement in Various Spheres:** True gender equality requires equal participation in personal relationships, domestic roles, community engagement, and political processes. It means enabling both women and men to influence decisions and actions at all levels, free from structural or cultural bias (OECD, 2022).
- 3 Safety and Freedom from Violence:** A gender-equal society must provide a safe and secure environment for all, where individuals are protected from physical, emotional, sexual, and psychological harm. This includes tackling



gender-based violence and creating systems of accountability and care (UNFPA, 2022).

These pillars are widely recognized as essential for building inclusive societies and achieving sustainable development. Promoting gender equality not only improves individual well-being but also leads to broader social, economic, and public health gains.

On this note, it is pertinent to state that to achieve gender equality, it is essential to implement fair gender-related behaviors. The Interagency Gender Working Group (IGWG) defines gender equality as ensuring fairness across diverse genders (Interagency Gender Working Group, 2022).

In an unfair system, individuals do not have equal access to resources or opportunities, hindering their ability to function equally. The IGWG emphasizes the need for justice through procedures that compensate for historical and social impediments (Interagency Gender Working Group, 2022).

Gender equality demands equal treatment for all sexes. Feminist scholars and advocates use this concept to argue that rights, responsibilities, and opportunities should not hinge on whether someone is born male or female, but rather on their abilities and contributions. Recent scholarship emphasizes that gender equality entails acknowledging both the biological and socially constructed differences between men and women, while ensuring these differences do not translate into inequality. It promotes the equitable treatment of all genders, grounded in fairness rather than sameness, and responsive to the specific needs and circumstances of individuals (Myrntinen et al., 2025)

Achieving true gender equality requires systems to ensure all genders have equitable access to resources and opportunities, addressing historical and social barriers that have created disparities. By focusing



on individuals' inherent abilities rather than their gender, societies can foster a more equitable and just environment for everyone. Thus, gender mainstreaming encompasses the integration of gender perspectives into all phases of planning, implementation, and evaluation of social, political, and economic actions. It also involves transforming internal organizational cultures, systems, and procedures to align with gender equality goals and ensure that institutional structures actively promote inclusive outcomes (Wong et al., 2022; ILO, 2023). By restructuring policy and decision-making processes to actively incorporate gender perspectives, governments and institutions can challenge embedded biases and reorient policies toward more equitable outcomes. Such transformation is essential for shifting power dynamics and achieving long-term gender equality goals (True et al., 2022; O'Neil & Domingo, 2023).

Therefore, gender mainstreaming is essential for achieving gender equality and promoting good governance, measured by women's participation in decision-making processes within organizations.

In the context of this study, gender mainstreaming refers to the process of integrating gender perspectives and promoting equal opportunities for women and men within political, governmental, and organizational structures. It involves actively addressing barriers that prevent women from participating fully in decision-making processes, such as discriminatory practices, unequal access to resources, and cultural biases. The goal is to ensure that both women and men have equitable opportunities to contribute to and influence policies, programs, and decisions, thereby fostering gender equality and enhancing the representation of women in leadership roles.

2.1.3 Political Participation



Political participation refers to the wide array of actions through which individuals engage with political systems and influence governance. These include voting, running for office, participating in protests, political campaigning, engaging in policy discussions, and at times involvement in contentious or violent political activities. Contemporary scholarship defines political participation not only as formal engagement with electoral systems but also as informal, expressive, and sometimes disruptive acts that reflect citizens' attempts to assert agency within the political space (Norris & Inglehart, 2023; Riedl et al., 2025).

According to Dalton (2022), political participation encompasses the various actions individuals undertake to influence who holds power or how decisions are made within a political system. These actions can occur through formal mechanisms such as voting, contacting elected officials, or standing for office - or informal channels, including petition signing, online advocacy, protests, and civic mobilization. Recent studies emphasize that both conventional and non-conventional forms of participation are essential for democratic responsiveness and citizen empowerment (Dalton, 2022; Theocharis & van Deth, 2023)

However, previous findings continue to define political participation as the range of activities individuals undertake to directly influence government decisions or indirectly shape public policy through the selection of political representatives. This includes electoral behavior, civic engagement, policy advocacy, and digital mobilization, all of which reflect citizens' efforts to assert their voice in governance processes (Boulianne, 2023).

In this current study, political participation refers to the active involvement of women in various political activities aimed at influencing governance and policy-making processes. This includes women voting in elections, running as candidates for political office, engaging in political campaigns, participating in policy advocacy, and assuming leadership roles in governmental and non-governmental organizations

that influence public policy. Political participation for women also encompasses efforts to shape the agenda, policies, and outcomes of decision-making bodies, thereby contributing to gender equality and women's empowerment in political spheres.

2.1.4 Concept of Political Representation



Political representation is fundamental to democratic governance and is characterized by liberal and unrestricted principles. It is important to note that contemporary definitions of political representation have expanded beyond electoral engagement to include the freedom of expression, association, access to information, and the right to influence governance processes. Increasingly, the connection between meaningful representation and broader entitlements such as social justice, equitable access to health care, decent work conditions, and inclusive policymaking has been recognized (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2022; Gaventa & Oswald, 2023). It remains a cornerstone of democracy, widely conceptualized as a system characterized by meaningful competition among political actors, inclusive and equitable participation in leadership selection and policymaking, transparent electoral processes, and the protection of civil and political liberties. Contemporary scholars emphasize that these elements are essential for ensuring democratic legitimacy, accountability, and responsiveness (Bermeo & Haggard, 2022; Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2023).

Political representation refers to the process by which elected individuals serve in political offices on behalf of citizens who are not directly involved in decision-making. It is fundamental to democratic governance, enabling the translation of public interests into policy while fostering accountability and political inclusion (Urbinati, 2022; Mansbridge & Song, 2023).

According to Saward (2023), representation is the principle by which an individual or group acts on behalf of a broader population within

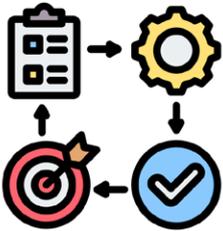


political processes, ensuring that diverse interests are conveyed in governance structures. This is reflected in the concept of descriptive representation also known as the “resemblance model” where elected representatives share visible characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, geographic origin, or occupation with the constituents they serve (Dovi, 2022). The effectiveness of representation is often assessed by how well elected officials reflect the demographics and interests of the populations they claim to represent (Celis, 2022).

Similarly, contemporary democratic theory identifies several foundational pillars essential to the functioning of a robust democracy. These include the protection of individual and collective rights, inclusive and equitable representation in public decision-making, government accountability to both the majority and marginalized groups, and the universal application of citizenship rights across political, economic, and social domains. These principles remain central to building just and resilient democratic systems (Merkel, 2023; Riedl et al., 2025).

In the context of women’s inclusion in elective and appointive positions in decision-making, political participation refers to the active engagement and involvement of women in various political activities. This includes women’s participation in electoral processes by voting and running for elected positions, as well as their appointment to governmental roles and advisory positions. Political participation also encompasses women’s efforts to influence policy-making, contribute to public discourse, advocate for gender equality, and address issues that affect women’s rights and welfare within political structures. It involves both formal roles in political institutions and informal activism aimed at achieving equitable representation and influence in decision-making processes at local, national, and international levels.

2.1.5 Affirmative Action



According to Akanni (2025), affirmative action refers to a policy strategy aimed at addressing systemic imbalances and reducing discrimination against marginalized groups in Nigeria, particularly based on gender, ethnicity, or religion.

It encompasses measures, strategies, and policy plans designed to ensure equal opportunities for access to political positions, employment, and other benefits, thereby addressing disparities among groups based on gender, status, race, religion, ethnic origin, and other criteria. Affirmative action policies incorporate considerations of gender, ethnicity, or other identity markers to promote equal opportunities in Nigeria's political, social, and economic spheres, aiming to redress historical exclusion and structural discrimination against marginalized groups (Onyewuchi et al., 2024). Affirmative action can be understood as the deliberate allocation of resources, such as funding, opportunities, and institutional support to prevent discrimination and promote equity across gender and ethnic lines in Nigeria (Adebanjo, 2022). Unlike equal opportunity policies, which are largely reactive and focus on prohibiting discrimination after it occurs, affirmative action is proactive designed to prevent discrimination and promote inclusion through targeted, institutionalized measures (Abdulraheem, 2023). With regards to gender politics, affirmative action serves as a strategy, measure, or policy intended to ensure equal opportunities for genders in accessing political positions and to prevent gender discrimination in leadership roles, thereby promoting adequate representation of women in political spheres.

In the context of women's inclusion in elective and appointive positions in decision-making, affirmative action refers to deliberate policy measures aimed at addressing historical and systemic barriers that have limited women's access to political roles. These measures are designed to ensure equal opportunities for women to participate in electoral processes, compete for political offices, and be appointed to decision-making positions within government and organizations. Affirmative action may involve quotas, special recruitment initiatives,

training programs, and supportive policies to enhance women's representation and participation, thereby correcting gender disparities and promoting gender equality in leadership and governance.

2.2 Empirical Review

This section presents a critical review of existing studies in alignment with the objectives of this study.

2.2.1 Level of women participation in governance (appointive/elective) positions



Previous findings by Domingo (2022) recognized that countries such as Rwanda, Sweden, South Africa, Nicaragua, Timor-Leste, Liberia, and Nepal have recorded groundbreaking progress in women's political participation, particularly in parliamentary elections, largely due to sustained gender-sensitive electoral reforms and quota systems which have proven to be highly effective in these countries. For instance, Nepal boasts the highest level of women's participation in parliament within the Asia-Pacific region, with women holding 33 percent of parliamentary seats. Additionally, women hold significant leadership positions globally in key areas outside of parliament. In Uganda, women's leadership roles, including the vice presidency and senior positions in the ministries of finance and planning, health, and education, have positively influenced social attitudes towards women's political participation.

Recent studies have explored women's participation and persistent gender inequalities in local governance in Nigeria, using empirical data from local councils such as Amuwo-Odofin in Lagos State and Ilorin West in Kwara State to highlight structural and socio-cultural barriers to inclusion (Adewunmi, 2023). Qualitative methods such as key informant interviews, personal observation, and focus group discussions were used to generate data for the study where the results showed that Nigerian society, operating largely on patriarchal sentiment, allocates sensitive and powerful political posts to men while deliberately marginalizing women at the local level.

Additionally, in the absence of gender policy, planning and budgeting did not target gender equity goals, and women's rights and empowerment programs were hardly implemented at the local level.

Based on findings by Akinyemi (2023), a recent study examined how women's participation in elective and appointive positions influences the political aspirations of female undergraduate students in Nigeria. The research involved 300 purposively selected female students from two universities in Ogun State, using a self-developed questionnaire for data collection. Both descriptive statistics (frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (t-test) were employed. Three hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance, and all null hypotheses were rejected. The findings revealed a statistically significant women's political ambitions.

Raji (2024) attest that women's participation in politics and governance is vital to national cohesion and stability, as studies have shown that states with low gender equality in political representation are more susceptible to intra-state conflict. This is because severe gender inequalities can foster ethnic mobilization, as gender relations play a crucial role in shaping group identities that influence inter-group dynamics. In essence, ethnic nationalism thrives where gender inequality is high and patriarchal norms dominate. Adamu (2023) also recognized the significance of ethnic identity in shaping political behavior and social relations in Nigeria which remains a critical concern, as it continues to influence access to power, resource allocation, and national cohesion.

Historically, women were active participants in political life and held inclusive roles in decisionmaking processes across many pre-colonial Nigerian societies. The colonial administration, however, introduced patriarchal policies that disrupted these egalitarian systems, transforming previously balanced political spaces into male-dominated structures. In various communities, women occupied high-ranking political positions, including kingship roles. Prominent female figures such as the Iyalode of Ibadan, Efunsetan Aniwura, Moremi of Ile-Ife, and Queen Amina of Zaria exemplified the extent of women's authority and influence in traditional governance systems (Usman, 2024).

Local politics often appeals more to women because of their deep familiarity with community needs, as they are the primary users of essential services such as water, electricity, health clinics, and waste management. Women also tend to participate actively in neighborhood-based organizations, which can be effectively mobilized into formal political processes at the local level (Nwokoro et al., 2025). However, in Nigeria, despite the proximity of local government councils to grassroots populations, women remain significantly underrepresented in leadership positions. For instance, out of 774 local government chairperson seats nationwide, only 13 were held by women in 1999, 18 in 2003, and 27 in 2011 (Adeola & Kimbu, 2024). Nigeria has significantly low rates of female representation in politics compared to global and regional standards.

Although the proportion of women in elected positions in Nigeria rose modestly from an average of 2.3% in 1999 to 7.8% by 2007, this progress plateaued by 2011. Following the 2015 general elections, only 20 of the 359 members of the House of Representatives (5.6%) and 7 of the 109 senators (6.4%) were women, placing Nigeria among the lowest-ranked countries globally for female parliamentary representation. By 2019, women held just 7.3% of Senate seats and 3.1% in the House of Representatives, with no woman elected as state governor (Omiya & Ojile, 2023). Women's representation in appointed executive and ministerial roles in Nigeria remains critically low, with only 11 out of 636 appointed executive positions (approximately 1.7%) held by women in 1999, and women occupying just 15% of ministerial positions by 2015 (Adebayo, 2023). According to the previous, World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap report, Nigeria ranks 139th out of 149 countries in terms of political empowerment, measured by the ratio of women to men in ministerial and parliamentary positions, and the number of years with a female head of state over the past fifty years which indicates the country's continuous poor ranking in global assessments of political empowerment, placing among the lowest countries in terms of the ratio of women to men in ministerial and parliamentary positions, as well as historical representation at the head-of-state level (Salaudeen, 2024).

Data obtained from the recent analysis of public sector leadership in Nigeria from 1999 to 2015 reveals that women comprised only 6% of local government councilors, 24% of federal court judges, and an average of 7% of senior government officials and administrators. Among the surveyed roles, the position with the highest female representation was that of special assistant (28%), while no woman had served as a central bank governor, and comprehensive data for lower civil service levels remained unavailable (Akinola, 2022). In Nigeria, political participation also occurs through appointments to public office, a pathway increasingly preferred by many women due to the high cost, violence, and structural barriers associated with electoral politics (Ette & Akpan, 2022). Although religion is often cited as a barrier to women's political representation in Nigeria, a combination of socio-economic, cultural, and geographical factors also significantly influence participation, with state-level data consistently showing lower levels of female representation in northern and rural areas (Usman, 2024). A recent quantitative analysis highlights postsecondary education as the strongest predictor of women's political participation in Nigeria, followed by factors such as geographic region, party affiliation, employment status, residential location, and religion (Ojo, 2023).

A recent study examining women's representation across Nigerian states between 2003 and 2015 found that factors such as institutional autonomy, political legitimacy, budgetary power, oversight capacity, and security of tenure significantly influenced outcomes. Lagos State recorded the highest levels of female representation, with some correlation observed between representation and state GDP, though exceptions like Kano and Edo States were noted (Jianguo, 2023). From the literature reviewed, several critical gaps in understanding and addressing women's participation in governance in Nigeria emerge. First, while international examples like Rwanda and Nepal demonstrate the effectiveness of quotas in enhancing women's representation in parliament, there is a lack of comprehensive policy analysis on the feasibility and impact of quota systems tailored to Nigeria's socio-political context. Second, despite localized studies highlighting patriarchal norms and cultural barriers in local governance that marginalize women, there is a dearth of systematic research on effective strategies to overcome these barriers and promote gender equity at the grassroots level. Third, existing data primarily focuses on quantitative metrics of women in elected and appointed positions without sufficient qualitative exploration of the socio-cultural, economic, and institutional factors hindering women's political ascent. Lastly, there is a need for longitudinal studies tracking trends in

women's political participation over time to assess the effectiveness of policy interventions and identify persistent challenges that inhibit gender parity in Nigeria's political landscape. Addressing these gaps through targeted research and policy initiatives could facilitate more inclusive governance and advance gender equality in Nigerian politics.

2.2.2 Efforts made by Nigerian government towards increasing the percentage of women in governance to achieve adequate gender mainstreaming



Efforts to reduce gender inequality in Nigerian politics have been driven by a combination of policy frameworks, institutional reforms, and advocacy efforts by government actors, international organizations, and civil society groups. Former President Goodluck Jonathan's administration received international recognition for its commitment to affirmative action, particularly the pledge to ensure a minimum of 30% female representation in government. However, despite this progress, significant barriers persist especially within political parties where women continue to face challenges related to nomination, financial exclusion, and limited structural support for electoral success (Salaudeen, 2024).

The current President of Nigeria, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has recently demonstrated a commitment to advancing gender equity by appointing women to 42% of his cabinet positions, signaling a serious effort toward implementing the National Gender Policy (Raji, 2024). Salihu (2022) argues that the push for gender parity must also extend into the public service sector, where women remain significantly underrepresented despite broader national inclusion efforts.

International organizations have played a crucial role in advocating for improvements in women's political participation globally. United Nations conferences, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), emphasize the importance of women's equal participation in political processes as integral to modern political systems. It is therefore recommended that all available measures be taken to enhance women's political participation.

According to Adebisi (2023), the 1995 Beijing Conference brought global attention to the structural and cultural barriers hindering women's political participation, including discriminatory practices, unequal power relations, political violence, and socioeconomic disparities. It emphasized the urgency of addressing women's marginalization in governance and the factors contributing to their political disengagement. This was also reiterated at the Generation Equality Forum (GEF) held in Mexico and France in the year 2021. As a result, governments were called upon to identify and reform political and institutional structures that perpetuate the marginalization of women in governance, ensuring equitable access to leadership and decision-making roles (Okeke, 2022). The conference advocated for genderbalanced representation by calling for increased participation of women in decision-making processes and the equitable distribution of power across all governance levels. While the original Beijing Platform for Action advocated for a minimum of 30% representation, recent global initiatives like WEDO's 50/50 campaign have raised the bar, pushing for full gender parity; a goal increasingly echoed in Nigeria's gender advocacy landscape (Oderinde et al., 2024), hence, the affirmative action was strongly recommended as a means to address women's underrepresentation and marginalization in decision-making processes. The platform recommended concrete actions for promoting gender equality in governance, urging governments to set measurable targets and implement strategies to increase the appointment of women to governmental and public administration roles, an approach increasingly reflected in Nigeria's National Gender Policy (Abiola, 2022).

The platform recommended concrete actions for promoting gender equality in governance, urging governments to set measurable targets and implement strategies to increase the appointment of women to governmental and public administration roles; an approach increasingly reflected in Nigeria's National Gender Policy (Abiola, 2022). Additionally, political parties have been called upon to review their internal structures and procedures to eliminate discriminatory barriers that hinder women's participation in decision-making bodies; an essential step toward institutionalizing gender-inclusive governance (Adeola & Kimbu, 2024). The platform further emphasized the need for collaborative efforts among governments, national institutions, the private sector, political parties, and civil society organizations to cultivate a critical mass of women leaders in strategic decision-making roles (Okonjo-lweala, 2022). It is recommended that restructuring recruitment and career development programs was enhanced to guarantee equal access for women

particularly young women to leadership, entrepreneurial, technical, and on-the-job training opportunities, as a means of closing gender gaps in management and governance roles (Adegbite, 2023).

As a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Federal Republic of Nigeria is obligated under Article 18 to submit periodic reports on its progress in implementing the convention's provisions (UN Women, 2023). The Nigerian Constitution of 1999, under Section 42, guarantees freedom from discrimination and aims to eliminate discriminatory practices against women, aligning with constitutional obligations outlined in Sections 13-15, 16(1)(b), 17-18, and 42. The Executive, Legislature, and Judiciary are recognized as competent organs for promoting and protecting women's rights in Nigeria. This commitment by the federal government to address women's underrepresentation and discrimination in politics, consistent with the Beijing conference resolutions, has been underscored in Nigeria's CEDAW periodic reports of 2003 and 2008. These reports indicate progress in bridging the gender gap in Nigerian politics, with increased political appointments of women at federal, state, and local levels, and significant gains in judicial appointments, including women serving as High Court judges across all states and the Federal Capital Territory. Efforts such as the establishment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Youth Development (FMWAYD), the National Action Committee on Women in Politics (NACWIP), and the National Consultative and Coordinating Committee (NCCC) demonstrate ongoing strategies to enhance women's political participation and eliminate discrimination. Additionally, political parties such as the People's Democratic Party (PDP) have adopted measures like waivers on registration and nomination fees for female aspirants, aiming to enhance women's participation in electoral processes and reduce financial barriers to entry (Ojo, 2023).

The National Gender Policy sets a 35% benchmark for women's representation in parliamentary seats, reflecting Nigeria's commitment to gender equity in political and public life (Adesoye, 2025). Nigeria has reaffirmed its commitment to gender equality on the international stage by ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1985 and endorsing the

2005 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, also known as the Maputo Protocol (UN Women, 2023).

Advocacy groups such as the Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre (WARDC) and the Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTF) have remained at the forefront of pushing for government accountability. Notably, they co-drafted the "Nigerian Women Charter of Demand" in 2014, calling for electoral law reforms that mandate affirmative action as a condition for political party registration and the implementation of a gender mainstreaming system targeting 35% representation of women across all tiers of government (NWTF, 2023).

According to Aliyu (2025), during General Ibrahim Babangida's administration, several affirmative action initiatives were introduced to promote women's inclusion in male-dominated sectors. One of the most notable efforts was the establishment of the Better Life for Rural Women Programme, championed by First Lady Maryam Babangida to empower women, particularly in rural communities.

Despite these strides, women's representation in key policy positions remained disproportionately low during General Abdulsalami Abubakar's transitional regime, with only three out of thirty-one federal executive council members being women, a reflection of systemic gender imbalance in high-level decision-making roles (Ogunyemi, 2023).

Throughout Nigeria's political history, efforts to improve women's participation in governance have gained traction, especially through sustained advocacy for affirmative action. The democratic administration of President Shehu Shagari (1979–1983) significantly increased the visibility of women in public office. These initiatives have since been reinforced by frameworks like the National Policy on Women, designed to strengthen women's engagement at all levels of governance and affirm their role in national development (Salaudeen, 2024). The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), introduced in 2004, initially proposed a 30% quota for women

in appointive positions, which was later revised to 40%. This shift reflects ongoing advocacy for gender parity, with increasing calls such as those by civil society and gender experts for equal representation of women, aiming toward a 50% benchmark in all decision-making roles (Usman, 2024).

Despite the absence of official quota policies, various initiatives aim to address the low level of women's participation in Nigerian politics. For instance, in the lead-up to the 2011 election, the Ministry of Women and Social Development launched the Nigerian Women Trust Fund, providing financial support to 230 female candidates. Additionally, the then First Lady, Patience Jonathan, introduced the Women for Change Initiatives to encourage women's political engagement. In 2014, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) adopted a gender policy reaffirming its commitment to inclusive political participation regardless of gender both within its institutional structure and in Nigeria's broader electoral processes under the leadership of its then Chairperson, Professor Attahiru Jega (Raji, 2024). Alongside national efforts, international civil society organizations have supported capacity-building programs to empower and mentor aspiring female politicians across Nigeria. For instance, UN Women facilitated a political party strategy conference focused on addressing women's marginalization and advancing their representation in party leadership structures (UN Women, 2023).

A major outcome of sustained advocacy was the development of the Nigerian Women Charter of Demands, which outlines three core political imperatives: **(a)** demonstrate strong political will and commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment; **(b)** enhance women's participation in politics and decision-making; and **(c)** promote principled and transformational leadership (NWTF, 2023).

All registered political parties except the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) endorsed the Nigerian Women Charter of Demands. However, despite this show of support and substantial advocacy investments, women's representation in the 2019 general elections remained largely stagnant, as documented by recent analyses on gender inclusion in Nigeria's electoral processes (Obani, 2023).

Gender gaps in political leadership persist similarly to those in business leadership. Despite an increase in the number of women holding political decision-making roles globally, achieving gender parity remains a distant goal with significant regional disparities.

As of 31 December 2024, approximately 30.2% of the global population, equivalent to 2.4 billion people, lived in countries with a female head of state or government. While progress in this area had plateaued between 2013 and 2021, the period from 2022 to 2024 saw renewed momentum. This increase was notably influenced by leadership transitions in populous countries such as India, Mexico, and Indonesia, each of which saw the election or appointment of female leaders. Since January 2022, a total of twelve women has assumed top national leadership positions, with nine still in office as of March 2025. However, the degree of influence these women wield varies based on each country's political structure, particularly the balance of power between ceremonial and executive roles (World Economic Forum, 2025).

A positive trend continues to emerge in the share of women in parliaments globally, weighted by population. In 2013, women comprised only 18.7% of parliamentary seats among the 76 countries with consistent data. By 2024, this figure had increased to 26.2%, reflecting a gradual but steady rise over the past decade. However, global averages obscure regional differences. Europe continues to lead with the highest proportion of female parliamentarians, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Southern Asia, Central Asia, East Asia and the Pacific have maintained stable yet modest representation levels in recent years. In contrast, the Middle East and North Africa remain the most affected by gender disparities in legislative bodies, with representation continuing to decline in some countries such as Algeria, where women's parliamentary participation dropped from 26% in 2020 to just 9% in 2024 (World Economic Forum, 2025).

In 2024, Paraguay, Finland, and Slovenia recorded the most substantial increases in the share of women in national parliaments, driven primarily by the enforcement of legislated gender quotas and targeted electoral reforms. Countries like Nicaragua have maintained global leadership in

women's parliamentary representation, with women comprising 51.9% of its National Assembly, making it one of the few countries to achieve near-parity in legislative representation (World Economic Forum, 2025). Mexico's Chamber of Deputies and New Zealand's House of Representatives have achieved gender parity. As of 2024, women comprised more than one-third but less than one-half of parliamentarians in 28 countries, including Iceland (47%), Costa Rica (47%), United Kingdom (35%), and Nepal (33%). In contrast, women's representation remains below one-third in 45 countries, such as Canada (31%), United States (29%), Japan (10%), and key emerging markets like China (25%), Brazil (18%), India (15%), and Turkey (17%). These statistics underscore both global progress and persistent disparities in achieving gender-balanced legislatures (World Economic Forum, 2025). Also, in West Africa, women's parliamentary representation continues to show mixed progress. As of 2024, Senegal leads the region with women holding 43% of seats in its National Assembly, largely attributed to its 2010 gender parity law. Cape Verde follows with 38%, and Ghana stands at 18%, showing a modest increase from previous years. Nigeria, the most populous country in the region, lags significantly behind with just 4.1% female representation in its National Assembly, ranking among the lowest globally. Sierra Leone has recently passed a Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act (2022), which contributed to a slight uptick in women's representation to 12% as of 2024 (World Economic Forum, 2025).

The equal political participation of women at all levels of government is recognized in international frameworks such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Traditionally, efforts to advance gender equality in politics have concentrated on national parliaments. However, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have expanded this focus by introducing a new indicator that tracks women's representation in local decision-making positions, thereby broadening the scope of gender inclusion to encompass the opportunities and structural barriers within local governance (World Economic Forum, 2025). Research shows that women in local decision-making roles significantly influence the reshaping of community priorities. They tend to emphasize inclusive governance, advocate for family-friendly policies, and promote gender equality in areas such as income distribution, employment opportunities, and parental leave. Their involvement helps build more equitable and responsive local communities (World Economic Forum, 2025).

Despite persistent regional disparities, notable progress has been made globally in women's representation in local government. As of 2024, among 117 countries with available data since 2017, only 19 countries have surpassed 40% representation of women in local decision-making. These include Bolivia (50.7%), India (44.8%), and France (42.5%). In contrast, 24 countries, primarily from the Middle East, North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa, still report less than 15% female representation. Examples include Saudi Arabia (1.4%), Ghana (4.2%), Turkey (10.4%), and Japan (14.6%). The remaining 74 countries fall within the 15%–35% range, including Brazil (16.1%), Indonesia (16.2%), China (28.4%), Ireland (24.2%), Germany (30.6%), and the United Kingdom (35.5%) (World Economic Forum, 2025).

As of 2024, nearly 3.2 million women have been elected to local deliberative bodies across 136 countries, reflecting steady global progress in women's political inclusion at the grassroots level. Notably, 85 countries have implemented legislated gender quotas for local elections; 66 through candidate quotas and 19 by reserving seats specifically for women (World Economic Forum, 2025). However, despite these positive developments, as of January 2024, women account for approximately 3.2 million out of 8.3 million elected members in local governments worldwide representing 38.5% of total representation. While this marks a higher percentage than the 26.2% observed in national parliaments, gender parity in local governance remains an unmet global goal and a critical area for continued advocacy and reform (World Economic Forum, 2025).

The literature on efforts to address gender inequality in Nigerian politics reveals significant gaps that merit further exploration. While policies like President Goodluck Jonathan's commitment to 30% women's participation and recent cabinet appointments achieving 42% representation have been celebrated, there remains a notable lack of empirical analysis on their actual impact and effectiveness. Existing research points to persistent challenges in increasing women's candidature and electoral success within political parties, yet there is limited exploration into the specific barriers women face within party structures, such as entrenched discriminatory practices and restricted access to leadership roles. Moreover, comprehensive evaluations are needed to assess the outcomes and compliance of gender policies and institutional mechanisms like the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the

National Action Committee on Women in Politics. Intersectional analyses that consider how gender intersects with factors such as ethnicity and socioeconomic status in shaping political participation are also noticeably absent. Comparative studies with other countries could offer valuable insights into effective strategies and challenges, providing enhanced policy recommendations to advance gender parity in Nigerian politics. Addressing these gaps is crucial for fostering a more inclusive and equitable political landscape that reflects the diversity and potential of all Nigerian citizens.

2.2.3 Perception of Nigerian women on the affirmative action right of women to 35% appointive and elective positions



Nwokoro et al., (2025) argues that resistance to women-based affirmative action (AA) continues to sustain systemic discrimination against women in Nigeria, despite the equality provisions of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN), as highlighted by recent legal and policy analyses. This ongoing resistance diminishes the authority of the Constitution, particularly section 42, which guarantees freedom from any form of discrimination. Affirmative action is upheld even in the most developed countries when necessary. In the current globalized context, countries must adhere to international treaties and norms, and Nigeria cannot afford to be left behind in global development. This discourse aims to highlight the critical importance of women-based Affirmative Action for Nigeria's development by eradicating discrimination against Nigerian women of all classes, using a review of laws, cases, and various literature. Research suggests that men and women allocate resources differently, with women more likely to prioritize redistributive policies that support education, health, and social services critical investments that drive inclusive and sustainable national development (UN Women, 2023). However, women, who are often more inclined to champion developmental policies related to education, health, and social welfare remain significantly underrepresented in democratically elected parliaments globally, a persistent gap that undermines inclusive governance (World Economic Forum, 2025).

In the modern era, spanning from the 1900s to the present day, women have evolved from traditional roles as homemakers to become integral builders of both homes and nations. Despite their proven ability to balance home and career responsibilities, there persists a puzzling

skepticism about their capacity to contribute equally to nation-building efforts. In Igbo culture, a woman traditionally known as Ori-Akudiya, meaning «one who enjoys her husband’s wealth,» now adapts to economic and societal changes as «OduziAkudiya,» signifying «one who manages her husband’s wealth.» These shifts underscore broader challenges that hinder women from achieving meaningful representation and leadership in politics. Notably, Nigeria has never elected a female president, vice president, senate president, or state governor, a reality that underscores the deep-rooted structural and cultural barriers hindering women’s political advancement (NWTF, 2023).

Studies by Nwadinobi (2023) indicated that many Nigerian husbands remain reluctant to support their wives’ political ambitions, citing cultural expectations, domestic responsibilities, and perceived societal backlash as key deterrents. Women, themselves fear that political involvement could disrupt their primary caregiving roles, potentially leading to ‘broken homes [and] breeding of irresponsible children’. According to the Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room (2023), political parties in Nigeria continue to pose major obstacles to women seeking electoral positions, particularly through non-transparent candidate selection processes and the dominance of male-dominated political structures. It was mentioned that women’s limited representation in party executive positions denies them crucial political experience, resulting in muted voices in decision-making processes. ActionAid Nigeria (2023) attributed women’s continued marginalization in Nigerian politics to deep-rooted socio-cultural norms that reinforce female subordination, with party structures and agendas often shaped by male dominance and patriarchal ideologies. Rahim (2024) highlighted similar challenges persist in countries like Pakistan, where patriarchal norms continue to limit women’s access to and influence within decision-making roles, despite constitutional guarantees and gender quotas aimed at promoting inclusion.

These dynamics underscore a pervasive masculinist orientation in Nigerian politics, reinforcing gendered disparities that privilege men’s access to public and political spaces, while relegating women to domestic and supportive roles (UN Women Nigeria, 2023).

According to ElectHER (2023), patriarchy remains a central barrier to women’s participation in Nigerian politics, as it reinforces male dominance in leadership

and decision-making spaces, limiting women's political ambition and visibility. Nigeria's deeply rooted patriarchal norms continue to frame women primarily as homemakers, limiting their influence in both household and political decision-making, and devaluing their contributions to public life (WARDC, 2023).

Moreover, during the 2023 general elections, none of the 36 states in Nigeria had a female elected governor, highlighting persistent societal resistance to female leadership even as women continue to contest high-profile positions, including the presidency (NWTF, 2023). Building on this observation, recent research emphasizes that Nigerian women must actively demand inclusion and push for a society where political, social, cultural, and religious institutions uphold principles of equality and fairness (WARDC, 2023). It is imperative that women assert their rights as Nigerian citizens and reject societal norms that undermine their status. The characterization of politics as a «dirty game» underscores the ruthless competition for power, where politicians resort to any means necessary to achieve their ambitions.

Jumbo et al., (2022) observed that the prevailing negative atmosphere in Nigerian politics deters individuals with genuine political aspirations who seek to advance the country's socio-economic and political sectors. This challenge is often framed as political stigmatization, where Nigeria's political arena is perceived as a space dominated by individuals who compromise integrity and disregard human rights for personal or partisan gain discouraging women and ethical candidates from active participation (ElectHER, 2023). This perception has normalized unethical practices within Nigerian politics, contributing to the view that women aspirants are often unfairly labeled as promiscuous.

Moreover, recent findings show that structural barriers within Nigerian politics continue to hinder women's participation, including the prevalence of late-night political meetings that pose personal safety risks. Women who attend such gatherings are often unfairly stigmatized as morally suspect, reinforcing a broader perception that female political ambition is incompatible with traditional expectations of virtue (WARDC, 2023). This stigmatization of women by fellow women further undermines their political engagement, especially in the absence of robust affirmative action measures that could support and encourage full participation of women as both candidates and voters (ElectHER,

2023).

Recent studies highlight that rising emancipative values in modern societies are driving greater women's empowerment and political participation, establishing a clear link between evolving cultural norms and women's increased presence in public life (World Values Survey, 2023). Cultural influences continue to play a critical role in shaping women's empowerment and political engagement, offering both enabling and constraining factors depending on the societal context (OECD, 2023).

Adebayo (2023) critiques the limited and unidirectional approach to gender mainstreaming in Nigeria's electoral processes, advocating for a multi-stakeholder and context-specific strategy. Drawing insights from the 2023 general elections, the study shows that despite growing gender awareness, women's political representation remains stagnant, particularly in states like Kano and Oyo. This suggests that merely mainstreaming gender lacks effectiveness unless it leads to substantial increases in both the number and influence of women in political arenas. According to NWTf (2023), despite Nigeria's ratification of international legal frameworks promoting women's political rights, the government has fallen short in enforcing these commitments, leading to persistent gender inequality in political leadership and low levels of women's political participation.

A previous qualitative study which employed Eagly's social role theory and Ayman and Korabik's leadership categorization theory to explore Nigerian women's perceptions and experiences regarding gender equality and their engagement in political leadership, focused on understanding how women describe their participation in politics and the obstacles they face. In the study, Ten Nigerian women in political leadership were purposefully selected for interviews, and data analysis involved coding, categorizing, and identifying themes. The study identified seven main themes: underrepresentation, gender inequality, male dominance, women's empowerment, spousal support/approval, financial support, and legislative reform. Overall, the findings underscored ongoing challenges of underrepresentation and limited political power for women in Nigerian politics, emphasizing the need for public education, policy advocacy, and legislative reforms to promote gender equity and enable women's full participation in the political process for positive societal change (Uzoma et al., 2022).

Uzoma et al., (2022) critically examined women's representation in Nigerian politics, focusing on both elective and ministerial positions. The study aimed to determine whether there has been any improvement in women's representation, assess if current representation meets affirmative action goals, and identify factors hindering women's rise in political positions in Nigeria.

Adopting the liberal feminist theory as its framework, the study utilized secondary sources through the documentary method and employed content analysis and simple percentage methods for data analysis. Findings indicated no improvement in women's representation in elective and ministerial positions, with levels still falling short of affirmative action targets. The study also highlighted funding issues, insecurity, cultural barriers, and male dominance within political parties as significant challenges limiting women's political representation in Nigeria.

According to Anyanwu (2025), Nigerian women historically resisted their political marginalization under colonial rule through organized actions such as boycotts, strikes, and protests, targeting not only colonial authorities but also missionaries and traditional leaders. Despite these efforts, women were largely excluded from political appointments, revealing the colonial administration's reluctance to support inclusive governance. Nigeria remains a deeply patriarchal society, where women are still widely expected to conform to norms of male dominance and female subservience, limiting their roles in both private and public spheres (Onyewuchi et al., 2024). Men have historically dominated Nigeria's political administration. For example, in the 1992 general elections under President Babangida's transition program, only 8 out of over 300 gubernatorial aspirants were women, and none succeeded in securing governorship positions, a trend that underscores the persistent gender imbalance in Nigeria's political landscape (NWTF, 2023). Men form the political parties and women are invited to join at a much later stage after the party structures have been put in place. Therefore, typically, men are political party executives, and this contributes to the marginalization of women especially during the party nomination process. Recent findings by the Nigerian Women Trust Fund (2023) examined the participation of men and women in Nigeria's political process, highlighting persistent gender disparities in candidacy, political appointments, and electoral outcomes. It highlighted the persistent underrepresentation of women in Nigeria's political administration. From 1980 to 2007 a span of 27 years women never surpassed 8.3% representation in the National Assembly. In 1980, the Senate had 57 seats, with 56 occupied by men and only one by a woman. Similarly, the House of Representatives

had 445 members, of which 442 were men and just three were women. This gender gap continued in 1992, where the Senate had 90 male and only one female member, while the House of Representatives recorded 575 men and 14 women. At the state level, this disparity remained evident: in 1999, 966 out of 978 State House of Assembly seats were held by men; in 2003, 912 out of 951; and in 2007, 936 out of 990, leaving women consistently underrepresented.

However, although women in Nigeria do not enjoy full equal rights, the proportion of the women to men in Nigeria is split in half. According to Nigeria's National Population Commission, women constitute approximately 49.5% of the national population, highlighting the importance of their full inclusion in political and developmental processes (NPC, 2023). Yet, Women in Nigeria face systemic marginalization across all spheres of life, particularly in the country's political administration. Globally, women make up nearly half of the population and serve vital roles as caregivers, economic contributors, community leaders, and political actors, underscoring their centrality in achieving sustainable development (UNDP, 2023). Before the rise of modern women's movements, societal norms sharply divided gender roles assigning productive and public responsibilities to men, while relegating women to reproductive and domestic roles reflecting deep-seated patriarchal values that framed men as the bearers of cultural and societal authority (UN Women, 2023).

Historically, Nigerian women have been marginalized within the political system, often perceived as the «weaker sex» and excluded from substantial political engagement, a narrative that continues to obscure their potential contributions to national development. Research shows that rigid gender-based labor divisions were not intrinsic to pre-colonial Nigerian societies but were introduced and reinforced by colonial rule, which embedded foreign patriarchal norms into local governance and social structures (Umunakwe, 2022).

The findings by Okeke et al., (2024) further revealed that the 1922 Sir Hugh Clifford Constitution significantly curtailed women's political rights by excluding them from voting, while simultaneously reinforcing elite male dominance, thereby deepening gender inequalities which reflects how deeply the marginalization of women in politics had gone, however, this shift was contrasted sharply with pre-colonial systems where women in Yoruba communities held influential titles like *Iyalode*, *Iyaloja*, and *Iyalaje*, which granted them substantial political



and economic power. The introduction of colonial governance systems institutionalized gender discrimination that had previously been less pronounced.

In Nigeria, while the constitution does not explicitly bar women from political participation, their enfranchisement often remains symbolic rather than substantive, as structural, cultural, and institutional barriers continue to hinder their full involvement in political processes (NWTF, 2022). Women's movements are working to address the issues that either prevent women from participating or hinder them as they seek to engage in Nigeria's political administration. However, greater awareness among women about the extent of their underrepresentation would be beneficial. Despite recent efforts and some progress, Nigerian women remain significantly underrepresented in political leadership compared to their male counterparts, particularly in elective and decision-making positions (UN Women, 2023).

Given that women make up half of the country's population, they should have an equal share in decision-making and governance, although the 1999 Nigerian Constitution grants equal rights to all citizens, including women, gender-based discrimination in politics remains pervasive. Between 2011 and 2023, the proportion of women in elected positions remained consistently low. In the 2011 general elections, women won only 7% of seats in the National Assembly; this declined to 5.8% in 2015 and dropped further to 4.47% in 2019. Despite modest gains in 2023, with women securing 8 seats in the Senate and 17 in the House of Representatives, the overall percentage remains below 10% (NWTF, 2023). Men continue to dominate public offices, reflecting deep-rooted patriarchal structures. As highlighted by Nigerian scholars and practitioners, gender roles reinforced within families and society contribute significantly to women's limited participation in governance, with patriarchal norms assigning leadership to men and confining women to the private sphere. Additionally, many women perceive politics as dirty and violent, further alienating them from mainstream politics.

Economic disadvantages also hinder women's political aspirations. The sexual division of labour has provided men with more financial

backing to pursue their political goals. Many Nigerian women depend financially on men and lack the resources to support their political endeavors. Discriminatory customs and laws further disadvantage women. Cultural practices often prioritize male education over female, leading to higher illiteracy rates among women and making political competition challenging. The absence of Affirmative Action or a quota system, along with certain religious doctrines, also limits women's political involvement. Patriarchy in Nigeria is often reinforced by religious interpretations within both Christianity and Islam, which have historically limited women's political engagement and leadership roles. These religious and cultural norms contribute significantly to the exclusion of women from formal political processes and decisionmaking spaces (NWTF, 2023).

The literature on women's political participation in Nigeria reveals critical gaps that need addressing. Despite constitutional provisions for affirmative action, persistent resistance has undermined its effectiveness, perpetuating gender discrimination. Cultural and societal barriers rooted in patriarchal norms significantly hinder women's political involvement, necessitating a deeper understanding of these dynamics. Economic disadvantages, including financial dependence on men, further restrict women's political aspirations. Political party dynamics also marginalize women, highlighting the need for reforms to make party structures more inclusive. Negative perceptions of politics as a «*dirty game*» and the stigmatization of women politicians deter participation, requiring efforts to change these views. Moreover, the impact of religious doctrines on women's political engagement remains underexplored. Comparative studies with other countries could provide valuable insights into effective strategies for increasing women's political representation. Addressing these gaps through targeted research and policy interventions is essential to enhance women's political participation in Nigeria.

2.2.4 Emerging factors that would likely affect women involvement (35% affirmative action) in governance



Recent studies have examined the persistent efforts and structural obstacles facing women's political participation in Nigeria, including barriers within party politics, socio-cultural constraints, and limited access to campaign financing (NWTF, 2023). Previous literature indicates that following the reintroduction of democracy, women's political participation in Nigeria experienced gradual improvement between 1999 and 2011, marked by an increase in appointments and elected positions, though progress remained uneven and limited (NWTF, 2023). This shift was due to efforts by government and non-governmental organizations to achieve the mandated 35% affirmative action. However, despite the increasing number of women in both elective and appointive positions during this period, women remain marginalized given the disparity in the proportion of men to women in political and decision-making positions. The authors identified several factors contributing to the lower levels of women's political participation, including socioeconomic and ecological issues, cultural practices, political violence, illiteracy among women, and the contradictory nature of government policies. These factors collectively obstruct the full realization of the 35% affirmative action in the Nigerian political system.

Gana & Audu (2023) examined women's participation in the electoral process in Nigeria and its impact on the country's democracy. Gender discrimination has emerged as a significant global concern, sparking various debates among authors on the subject of women's participation and its effects. This study utilized Liberal Feminist Theory and Gender Streaming Theory as its theoretical foundation and analytical framework. Data was collected from secondary sources and subjected to qualitative content analysis. The study found that factors such as zoning formulas, discrimination in laws and customs, intimidation, thuggery and violence, lack of financial support, and women's perspectives on politics have negatively impacted women's participation in Nigeria's electoral process. These obstacles make it difficult for women to vote, undermining Nigeria's ability to maintain a viable democracy.

Recent analysis highlights that Nigerian women continue to face systemic

barriers to political leadership and participation, despite their critical role in sustaining democratic governance. These challenges include the absence of legislative quotas within political parties, patriarchal norms, limited access to political networks and mentorship, religious and cultural constraints, financial barriers, and lower educational attainment among women candidates (NWTF, 2023). Despite numerous initiatives aimed at enhancing women's political participation in Nigeria, progress remains slow. Nigerian women continue to face deeply rooted barriers, including sociocultural and religious discrimination, financial exclusion, underrepresentation in political structures, an unsafe political environment, biased party systems, stigmatization, and limited support from family, peers, and the media. Additionally, the issue of indigeneity presents a unique barrier to women's candidacy and inclusion in governance (NWTF, 2023).

According to UN Women Nigeria (2023), the persistence of patriarchal structures and male dominance in Nigerian society has contributed to women's internalized inferiority and exclusion from mainstream political processes, reinforcing gender disparities in political participation. The Nigerian political culture of thuggery and gangsterism has made the political terrain too dangerous for most women to venture into. Additionally, the stigmatization of women politicians by their peers discourages political participation. Religious beliefs and institutional arrangements that restrict women to family responsibilities, coupled with the lack of genuine and decisive affirmative action to encourage women's political participation, have created a legacy that limits women's political involvement. The study emphasizes the need to address factors entrenching women's subordination in Nigerian politics, including the reformation of all religious, statutory, and customary laws and practices that perpetuate women's subordination, and the explicit specification and implementation of affirmative actions on women's political participation in the Nigerian constitution.

According to Yiaga Africa (2023), limited access to financial resources, systemic corruption, lack of transparency within party structures, and barriers to education remain significant obstacles to women's political participation in Nigeria. Additionally, electoral violence marked by thuggery, intimidation, and physical assaults continues to hinder women's political participation in Nigeria (CLEEN Foundation, 2023). Gender-blind political structures and institutions remain a significant barrier to women's political participation, while limitations in political communication skills and strategic engagement also contribute to the persistent gender gap in Nigeria's political

landscape (Balogun & Aruoture, 2024). Overall, there is a caution against essentialism, with scholars emphasizing the importance of intersectionality in understanding the complex and layered factors affecting women's political representation (Adeola & Kimbu, 2024). The literature used in this study consistently shows how women remain marginalized or the 'subaltern' in political representation (Adamu, 2023).

A recent study by Nwadinobi et al., (2023) explains that factors contributing to women's underrepresentation in political leadership include entrenched male dominance, sociocultural norms, financial constraints, low education levels, marital expectations, and electoral violence. These factors are compounded by weak institutional support for gender-inclusive political processes. UN Women Nigeria (2023) highlight that Nigerian women continue to face violence, harassment, and electoral malpractice, which undermine their participation and performance in elected offices

Ali & Shamsudeen (2025) conducted a study on women's political participation from 2019 to 2023, employing a descriptive research survey design. The study sampled two hundred respondents from the target population, using questionnaires for data collection. Simple frequency counts and percentages were utilized for data analysis. The findings highlighted that the patriarchal nature of Nigerian society excludes women from partisan politics, contributing to low political process participation among women due to violence during the study period. Cultural and religious barriers were identified as less significant hindrances to women's political participation. The study recommends constitutional reforms to promote gender equality and legislative measures to reduce male dominance in Nigerian politics. It also emphasizes the need for government intervention to curb electoral violence and encourage women's participation in political parties. The exclusion of women from Nigerian politics has been extensively studied, with numerous recent reports acknowledging persistent gender disparities. For instance, UN Women Nigeria (2023) underscores that full political participation of women remains critical for inclusive governance and national development, echoing decades-long advocacy for equitable representation.

Despite recommendations to reserve 5% of legislative seats for women across all government levels, this proposal was rejected by the Babangida Administration. The issue of

underrepresentation cannot be attributed to a lack of awareness or strategies aimed at enhancing women's presence in politics.

Recent insights on Nigerian politics continues to highlight the marginalization of women, identifying persistent barriers to their political engagement, particularly socio-economic constraints, patriarchal norms, and entrenched cultural beliefs (Onyewuchi et al., 2024). Specific challenges such as gender-based violence continue to exacerbate women's underrepresentation in Nigerian politics, creating a climate of fear and discouragement for potential female aspirants (UN Women Nigeria, 2023). Recent analyses reveal that media coverage of female political aspirants in Nigeria continues to reflect patriarchal biases, often focusing on their personal lives rather than policy competence, thereby undermining women's participation in politics (International IDEA, 2022). The persistent lack of media visibility for female politicians in Nigeria is reinforced by prevailing patterns of news production and consumption that prioritize maledominated narratives and sideline women's political voices (NWTF, 2022).

The GSAI Baseline Report (2022) highlighted significant shifts in women's political participation in Nigeria. During President Goodluck Jonathan's tenure (2011–2015), women's representation in government increased substantially, with 13 female Ministers appointed out of 40, marking a milestone of 32.5%. However, this achievement was not sustained by subsequent administrations. In 2015, the Federal Government of Nigeria appointed 6 women out of 36 ministers to the Federal Executive Council. However, following the resignation of Amina Mohammed to assume her role as UN Deputy Secretary-General in 2017, only 5 women remained. This limited representation highlights the persistent gender gap in executive leadership, as similarly noted in the 2023 Gender Policy Brief by the Nigerian Women Trust Fund, which emphasized the need for gender parity in federal appointments (NWTF, 2023).

President Muhammadu Buhari's administration appointed only 7 women as ministers out of 43, representing just 16.3% of ministerial positions. Despite a surge in women participating in political primaries across various parties ahead of the 2019 elections, the outcome remained disappointing, only 62 women were elected, accounting for just 4.17% of all elected officials, a decline from 5.65% in the previous cycle (UN Women, 2023).

The decline in women's political representation is stark, as highlighted by the CDD's Women in Nigerian Politics report, showing a 45% decrease in women taking office across all levels in 2019 compared to 2011, marking the lowest electoral performance since 2003. Women constituted less than 5% of all contested seats and held only 17% of ministerial appointments in 2019. The report attributes part of this decline to the limited number of women candidates on the ballot, with only 11% of all candidates in the 2019 elections being women. This underrepresentation of women candidates underscores a significant barrier to women's political inclusion well before Election Day. However, legislators have resisted implementing gender equality measures such as mandatory quotas. Several gender-focused bills, including the 2016 Gender and Equalities Bill, have faced repeated rejection by the Nigerian National Assembly, with opposition often grounded in claims that they contradict traditional cultural, Christian, or Islamic values (Nigeria Feminist Forum, 2022). The Nigerian Constitution does not explicitly guarantee freedom from discrimination based on gender in political participation. Current electoral laws do not reserve a specific percentage of seats or positions for women, and political parties are not legally mandated to adopt gender quotas (UN Women, 2023).

Political parties play a crucial role in facilitating access to political positions but often operate in a closed manner based on patronage. The high costs associated with politics likely deter many women from seeking office. The nomination forms alone can cost significant amounts, making it financially prohibitive for many. Although some political parties have waived nomination fees for female aspirants, this measure has not significantly increased the number of women contesting for elective positions. Recent findings highlight that these waivers fail to address other substantial financial burdens such as campaign logistics, mobilization costs, and informal party levies which continue to discourage women's participation in Nigeria's political process (YIAGA Africa, 2023).

Although Nigeria's two major political parties, the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) waived nomination fees for women in multiple election cycles, including 2015 and 2019, this gesture has not resulted in a substantial increase in women's electoral success. Structural barriers, lack of internal party democracy, and high campaign costs continue to limit female candidates' viability (YIAGA Africa, 2023). While political parties

in Nigeria often include gender equality and women's empowerment in their manifestos, their actual commitment to improving women's political representation remains superficial and largely performative. This was evident in the 2023 general elections, where despite public declarations, most parties failed to field a substantial number of female candidates or implement internal mechanisms to support women (YIAGA Africa, 2023).

As of 2023, there are still no legal requirements compelling political parties in Nigeria to ensure a minimum percentage of women in their executive or candidate lists. Most political parties have not implemented their internal gender policies, and critically, there are no sanctions or enforcement mechanisms to hold them accountable for non-compliance (YIAGA Africa, 2023). The internal structures of Nigerian political parties remain largely patriarchal, favoring maledominated patronage systems. Nomination processes often reflect male-centric norms, disadvantaging women particularly those lacking access to established networks and campaign resources within male-dominated political spaces (YIAGA Africa, 2023). Moreover, women in Nigeria continue to face significant challenges rooted in cultural norms and discriminatory legal frameworks particularly regarding marriage and indigene ship which can affect their eligibility to contest elections. These issues often render women politically «stateless,» limiting their ability to claim rights or representation in both their marital and natal communities (YIAGA Africa, 2023).

In some instances, political parties in Nigeria actively exclude women from contesting electoral offices. The use of indirect primaries where a select group of party elites determines candidates continues to hinder women's chances of emerging as nominees. This system entrenches male dominance and marginalizes women from meaningful participation in the electoral process (YIAGA Africa, 2023). For example, during the 2023 pre-election primaries, several female aspirants reported being unfairly excluded from the nomination process. In one case documented by YIAGA Africa (2023), a female aspirant from Katsina State, popularly referred to as Hajia Bakori, was sidelined when party leaders abruptly declared her male opponent as running unopposed, despite her meeting all requirements and actively campaigning. Female political candidates in Nigeria continue to face hate speech, threats, and gender-based violence. According to ElectHER's 2023 Post-Election Report, women were disproportionately targeted with online abuse, physical intimidation, and exclusion during campaigns and electoral



processes. These acts occurred both in public settings such as rallies and polling units and in private spheres, often discouraging women from running for office or actively participating in politics (ElectHER, 2023). Despite notable improvements in electoral transparency, violence against women in Nigerian politics remains a persistent challenge. A 2023 report by YIAGA Africa and ElectHER revealed that female political aspirants were subjected to systemic intimidation, online harassment, and physical violence during party primaries and election campaigns. These threats often discourage women from pursuing political office and undermine inclusive democratic processes (YIAGA Africa & ElectHER, 2023). In some instances, politicians have hired gangs and mobilized thugs to intimidate female candidates, underscoring the pervasive nature of gender-based violence in Nigeria's electoral processes. Reports from the 2023 general elections revealed targeted attacks on female aspirants, especially during party primaries and campaign events, with cases of physical assault, threats, and destruction of property widely reported (ElectHER, 2023).

Unlike men, women in politics often have to negotiate access to power through alliances with influential male figures, which can inadvertently reinforce patriarchal power dynamics. Many feel pressured to downplay their gender identity or adopt masculinized behaviours to be taken seriously in political spaces (UN Women, 2023). In Nigeria, access to political power remains heavily influenced by political godfathers, elite power brokers who determine candidacies and electoral success. These gatekeepers continue to pose significant barriers for women, who often lack the patronage networks required to gain political traction. According to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), this practice undermines inclusive democracy and limits the participation of women and marginalized groups (INEC, 2023).

While sponsorship from political godfathers can be crucial for aspiring politicians, particularly women, it often comes at a cost. Female beneficiaries may find themselves politically disempowered, serving as proxies for their male sponsors rather than autonomous actors. This compromises their decision-making power and reinforces patriarchal dominance within governance structures. Recent studies have shown that such dependencies limit women's ability to champion gender equity and transformative leadership once in office (Centre for Democracy and Development [CDD], 2023).

This dynamic is not unique to Nigeria, In Uganda for instance, recent research

reveals that women in politics often navigate male-dominated power structures by deferring to male authority figures in exchange for political support. Such arrangements reinforce hierarchical gender norms and constrain women's autonomy in political leadership (Mutebi & Tamale, 2023). The literature on factors influencing women's involvement in governance in Nigeria reveals several key gaps that merit attention. While existing studies highlight barriers such as socioeconomic constraints, cultural norms, political violence, and patriarchal attitudes, there is a noticeable lack of in-depth exploration into effective strategies or interventions that successfully mitigate these challenges. Future research could benefit from focusing on identifying and evaluating specific policies or initiatives that have demonstrably enhanced women's political participation despite these obstacles. Additionally, comparative studies across different regions within Nigeria would provide insights into regional variations in women's political empowerment. Longitudinal studies tracking changes over time could offer valuable perspectives on the impact of electoral reforms, policy shifts, and societal changes on gender equality in governance. Furthermore, deeper analyses incorporating intersectional perspectives examining how gender intersects with class, ethnicity, religion, and other identities could illuminate compounded barriers faced by marginalized women. Qualitative research could complement quantitative data by capturing nuanced narratives of women's experiences in politics, including their strategies for navigating patriarchal structures and resilience in the face of political challenges. Finally, there is a need for critical evaluation of existing legal frameworks and gender equality policies to identify implementation gaps and recommend improvements for more effective legislative measures promoting women's political representation.

2.2.5 How the April 6th court victory has influence women's access to opportunities for advancement in Nigeria



The April 6th, 2022 judgment by the Federal High Court in Abuja marked a critical turning point in the struggle for gender equity in Nigeria. The court's decision, which mandated the implementation of the 35% affirmative action policy for women's political appointments, revived momentum toward institutionalizing gender inclusion in governance. This legal victory was the result of a suit filed by Nigerian women's groups, including the Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTf), challenging the federal government's failure to meet the National Gender Policy benchmarks.

Since the ruling, there has been a measurable shift in both discourse and action around women's participation in politics and public service. For instance, following the court ruling, the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs reported increased collaboration with ministries and agencies to implement gender quotas in recruitment and appointments (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, 2023). Moreover, the Presidency under Bola Ahmed Tinubu made deliberate efforts in 2023 and 2024 to include more women in cabinet and sub-national roles, citing compliance with the court directive as a guiding principle (Vanguard, 2024).

Civil society organizations have capitalized on the ruling to push for accountability. The ElectHER Movement and WARDC have intensified their monitoring of government appointments and electoral processes to ensure women are not only included but meaningfully represented (ElectHER, 2023). At the sub-national level, states like Lagos, Kaduna, and Ekiti have reportedly increased women's representation in their executive councils, attributing these actions to the judicial precedent set by the 2022 ruling (UN Women Nigeria, 2024).

Furthermore, the court victory has emboldened more women to contest elections and seek leadership roles across sectors. According to the Independent National Electoral Commission's post-2023 election report, there was a 15% increase in the number of women aspirants in the 2023

general elections compared to 2019, though actual electoral success remains limited (INEC, 2023). Nonetheless, the psychological and symbolic impact of the judgment has challenged longstanding structural and cultural barriers, gradually reshaping societal norms on women's leadership potential. Still, experts argue that while the April 6th ruling is a landmark legal milestone, its implementation remains uneven. Without binding enforcement mechanisms, many political parties and government institutions continue to treat the 35% target as aspirational rather than mandatory (Salaudeen, 2025), hence, continued legal and advocacy pressure is tessential to translating judicial pronouncements into lasting institutional change.

In examining how women's inclusion influences access to quality healthcare, employment opportunities, and educational advancement in Nigeria, existing literature reveals several critical gaps. These include a limited focus on intersectionality, as studies often overlook how factors such as ethnicity, disability, or rural-urban divides intersect with gender to affect outcomes.

Moreover, there is a dearth of longitudinal studies tracking the sustained impact of affirmative action policies and interventions over time. Qualitative insights into women's lived experiences are also sparse, which are essential for understanding nuanced barriers. Geographical variability across Nigeria and its influence on access to these opportunities for women remains underexplored, alongside insufficient evaluations of policy effectiveness. Further research should delve deeper into the intersection of cultural norms and social expectations with gender inequalities, and comparative studies with other regions could offer valuable insights for targeted policy interventions and improvements in promoting gender equity.

2.2.4 Suggestions on the possible means for the implementation National Gender Policy



Recent evidence continues to affirm past arguments that women gain critical political experience at the local government level, which can serve as a springboard to national leadership roles. For instance, a 2023 report by UN Women Nigeria found that women who had previously served as councilors or local government chairpersons were significantly more likely to contest and succeed in state and federal legislative elections (UN Women

Nigeria, 2023). This reinforces the view that expanding women's access to grassroots political platforms is vital for building a pipeline of experienced female leaders capable of influencing national policy and governance.

The study identifies several factors hindering women's local political participation, with patriarchy being the most significant. It suggests that empowering women to participate at the local level is crucial for building their political experience, which in turn contributes to good governance and national development.

Recent findings emphasize that empowering Nigerian women economically, socially, and politically requires more than policy rhetoric, it demands intentional legislative reform, capacitybuilding, and protection from systemic abuse. The 2023 Gender and Inclusion Assessment Report by the Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTF) highlights the urgent need for gender-sensitive laws and a coordinated national framework to promote women's advancement. The report urges government actors, political parties, and civil society to work collaboratively in revising discriminatory laws and strengthening institutional accountability for gender equity. Such efforts are essential for dismantling structural inequalities and enabling women to access leadership roles and decision-making spaces (NWTF, 2023). This can be achieved by strengthening affirmative action and allocating quotas for women in politics and decision-making positions.

Political parties should more effectively promote women's participation, develop accountability mechanisms, and seek technical assistance from civil society to meet these objectives. The Independent National Electoral Commission should focus on female voter registration and run specific voter education campaigns for women during elections. Additionally, Nigerian civil society organizations should lead and promote gender training and orientation for political parties.

According to findings from the 2022 Women's Political Representation Review by the ElectHER Initiative, there is an urgent need to implement the 30% affirmative action benchmark consistent with the principles of the Beijing Declaration. The report also underscores that women in elective and appointive positions should actively serve as role models, mentors, and political coaches to support and inspire aspiring female leaders, thereby creating a cycle of empowerment and continuity in women's political participation (ElectHER, 2023). Recent advocacy efforts underscore the necessity of constitutionalizing affirmative action to address the

persistent marginalization of women in Nigerian politics. According to the Nigerian Women Trust Fund (2023), embedding the 35% affirmative action provision into the 1999 Constitution is essential for transforming gender-inclusive governance from a policy aspiration into a legally binding commitment. This approach would ensure that political parties and public institutions are held accountable for women's representation in elective and appointive positions, thereby strengthening institutional support for gender equity and setting a national precedent for inclusive democratic practices.

World Bank report on Women's Economic Empowerment in Nigeria suggested that access to formal financial services 'facilitates day-to-day living and helps families and businesses plan for everything from long-term goals to unexpected emergencies. Individuals are more likely to use formal financial services, such as credit and insurance, to start and expand businesses, invest in education or health, manage risk, and weather financial shocks, which can improve the overall quality of their lives' (World Bank, 2022).

Umar & Mustapha (2024) research assessed factors influencing women participation in community development activities in Sokoto State, Nigeria. A total of 270 respondents constituted sample of this study. Data collected were analyzed using percentage and frequency count. Finding reveals that, micro credit, material support, cash donation, and monthly contribution influenced women participation in economic development activities in the study area and donation of fund, political awareness and sensitization campaign of voters' registration influenced women participation in political development activities. Based on the findings, it was recommended that government and non-governmental agencies to provide support for women in the area of economic activities in the study area.

Recent findings from UN Women Nigeria (2023) emphasize the persistent and systemic nature of gender inequality in Nigeria. Despite legislative frameworks and advocacy efforts, women continue to face structural barriers rooted in patriarchal norms, limiting their access to political, economic, and social opportunities. The report highlights that cultural expectations and traditional gender roles still reinforce male dominance, contributing to the underrepresentation of women in decision-making spaces and sustaining gender-based social control. This situation is perpetuated by

cultural stereotypes, the misuse of religious and traditional practices, and the dominance of men in educational, political, and social spheres. Gender equality is a pressing concern in Nigeria, particularly among women, who view equality between men and women as fair and just. Achieving gender equality is not only a matter of human rights but is also seen as essential for sustainable development and national security in Nigeria. To address the challenges of gender inequality, it is crucial to identify the root causes of inequality between genders. The study employed a qualitative research methodology, using primary data collected through administered questionnaires and secondary data gathered from newspapers and journals. The research aimed to understand the major causes of gender inequality in Nigeria. The study also suggested strategies to ensure gender equality in all sectors in Nigeria, such as reviewing all gender discriminatory laws in Nigeria's statute books, uprooting obnoxious traditional practices that impede women's rights, economically empowering women by increasing their access to loans for businesses to reduce poverty and insecurity, enforcing and sustaining compulsory girlchild education, increasing political appointments for women to meet international standards, enacting gender-specific laws to curb gender violence, utilizing media for effective awareness programs at grassroots levels, and establishing more internet portals to foster dialogue for promoting gender equality.

Gana & Audu (2023) also suggested revising the current policy on women's empowerment to reflect the current situation, emphasizing the importance of appointing women to positions of authority to maintain a democratic government that fosters growth and development in Nigeria.

A recent UNDP policy brief (UNDP Nigeria, 2023) emphasizes the need for a comprehensive gender-responsive poverty alleviation strategy to enhance women's political and economic empowerment. The document recommends targeted actions such as improving access to education and credit facilities, expanding job opportunities, and dismantling discriminatory practices that hinder women's advancement. Crucially, it underscores the importance of inclusive governance reforms to ensure equitable political representation of women at all levels.

Recommendations by Ikoya (2022) included constitutional provisions ensuring women's involvement in politics across federal, state, and local governance levels, with the conclusion that women should earnestly fulfill leadership roles with integrity, akin to their responsibilities in the domestic



sphere. In the existing literature on women's inclusion in elective and appointive positions in decision-making, several gaps are evident. While studies often advocate for affirmative action, legal reforms, and economic empowerment as strategies to enhance women's political participation, there remains a lack of rigorous evaluation on the effectiveness of these measures in achieving sustained gender parity. Additionally, there is limited empirical research on the impact of role modeling, mentorship programs, and cultural barriers on women's political aspirations and leadership roles. Furthermore, there is a need for longitudinal studies and comparative analyses across diverse contexts to understand the evolving challenges and successes in implementing constitutional amendments and policy reforms aimed at advancing gender equality in political representation. Addressing these gaps would provide in-depth insights and evidence-based recommendations for fostering inclusive governance and equitable political participation for women globally.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks provide the foundation for examining the existing legal frameworks in favour of women inclusion in elective and appointive positions to increase women footprint in decision making. This research is grounded in both the Liberal Feminist Theory and the Capability Approach, which are deemed essential for achieving the study's objectives.

2.3.1 Liberal Feminist Theory



This study adopts liberal feminism as its analytical framework. Rooted in Enlightenment ideals of individual rights and equality, liberal feminism advocates for women's access to the same legal and political opportunities as men. While its intellectual foundation dates back to classical thinkers, it gained momentum with Mary Wollstonecraft's seminal work *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in 1792. Contemporary interpretations emphasize the removal of institutional barriers that hinder women's participation in public life, including politics and governance (UN Women, 2023; Okoli & Agbakwuru, 2023).

Liberal feminism argues that improving women's status requires their full and active participation in public life, especially in political and decision-making spaces. It focuses on the need for institutional reforms that ensure equal access to civil rights, education, and leadership opportunities for women. According to recent feminist scholarship, women's political marginalization is not a result of biological difference but stems from systemic legal and educational inequalities that limit their empowerment (UN Women, 2023; Okoli & Agbakwuru, 2023). Liberal feminism thus advocates for incremental change within the existing political framework to ensure gender parity and civic equality.

Liberal feminist theory posits that women's subordination is primarily rooted in systemic inequality in access to legal, political, economic, and social rights. It emphasizes the importance of reforming the public sphere to enhance women's legal and political status, educational

opportunities, and access to economic resources, rather than challenging private or domestic structures (UN Women, 2023; Okoli & Agbakwuru, 2023). This theoretical approach advocates for institutional reforms such as anti-discrimination laws, gender quotas, and educational equity as essential mechanisms for achieving gender parity in political and public life. By doing so, liberal feminism maintains that empowering women through civic and legal rights is foundational to their full societal participation. Thus, liberal feminism emphasizes the importance of political and legal changes to achieve gender equality and advocates for reforms to address issues such as reproductive rights, sexual harassment, voting rights, education, equal pay, affordable healthcare, and domestic violence against women.

Relevance of the Theory to the Study

The application of this theory in the study aims to explore whether the underrepresentation of women in Nigerian politics and governance is linked to existing legal, political, and social constraints. It seeks to analyze the root causes of women's marginalization and limited participation in governance, highlighting how removing socio-cultural, political, economic, and legal barriers could bolster women's involvement in the Nigerian political system. Historically, women have been significantly underrepresented in both elective and appointive political positions in Nigeria, a situation often attributed to various challenges within the political, sociocultural, economic, and legal spheres. Addressing these challenges is crucial for enhancing women's status and their ability to actively participate in politics, ultimately aiming to improve women's representation in governance.

2.3.2 The Capability Approach



The Capability Approach, originally developed by Amartya Sen and expanded by Martha Nussbaum, remains a relevant and evolving framework for assessing human well-being and promoting gender equity. This approach emphasizes expanding individuals' substantive freedoms, their capabilities to lead lives they value, particularly in terms of health, education, political participation, and social inclusion (Burnham & Nussbaum, 2023). In the context of women's political participation in Nigeria, the Capability Approach highlights the need to address structural inequalities that limit women's real opportunities to engage in public life, beyond mere formal rights or resource allocation. By focusing on what people are able to do and be, it underscores the importance of removing cultural, institutional, and legal barriers to women's empowerment. Unlike traditional economic measures such as income or GDP, the Capability Approach focuses on individuals' capabilities that is, their real freedoms and opportunities to achieve valuable functioning in life, including access to education, healthcare, and meaningful participation in society (Burnham & Nussbaum, 2023; UNDP, 2023). It shifts the focus from merely assessing outcomes to understanding and enhancing the range of choices people have and the freedoms they enjoy leading lives they value.

Central to the Capability Approach is its recognition of the diversity in human values and contexts. It acknowledges that people experience different levels of capability due to various factors including gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, and cultural norms. For instance, women may face specific challenges in accessing education or healthcare compared to men due to entrenched societal norms and discriminatory practices. By emphasizing capabilities, the approach urges policymakers to address these disparities by removing barriers that limit individuals' freedoms and opportunities.

Moreover, the Capability Approach underscores the importance of evaluating well-being beyond material wealth, advocating for a holistic assessment that considers social, political, and cultural dimensions. It encourages a nuanced understanding of human development that



goes beyond economic growth, highlighting the significance of social inclusion, personal agency, and dignity. This holistic perspective is crucial in contexts like Nigeria, where disparities in healthcare access, educational opportunities, and economic participation persist, particularly affecting marginalized groups. In essence, the Capability Approach offers a robust theoretical framework that aligns with principles of human rights and social justice, guiding efforts to enhance individuals' capabilities and expand their opportunities to flourish in diverse social and cultural contexts. It promotes policies and interventions aimed at fostering inclusive development and reducing inequalities, thereby contributing to more equitable and sustainable societies.

In the context of gender equality, the Capability Approach is particularly pertinent for understanding women's empowerment. It emphasizes expanding women's real freedoms their ability to choose and achieve desired functioning, as central to sustainable development and social justice (Burnham & Nussbaum, 2023). By prioritizing capabilities over mere outcomes, the approach calls for dismantling structural inequalities and discriminatory practices that constrain women's freedoms and opportunities. This includes policies that promote access to education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and political participation, aiming to empower women to lead lives they have reason to value (UN Women, 2023; UNDP, 2022).

The Capability Approach also recognizes the intersectionality of gender with other social identities such as race, ethnicity, and class, acknowledging how these interconnected factors shape individuals' capabilities and function in diverse and unequal ways (UNDP, 2022). It provides a comprehensive framework for assessing the real freedoms people have to pursue lives they value, making it especially relevant for evaluating gender-sensitive policies and development interventions (UN Women, 2023). Despite its relevance, the approach faces implementation challenges, such as the difficulty of capturing multidimensional inequalities and the need for strong political will to dismantle structural barriers and enhance women's access to justice, education, healthcare, and leadership (UNDP, 2022). Nevertheless, the Capability

Approach remains influential in advocating for policies that expand human freedoms and advance inclusive development, particularly concerning gender equality and women's empowerment.

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

This section of the study focuses on data interpreting, analyzing and presentation data gathered utilizing both online and physically methods from the field. The analysis encompasses qualitative data collected for the study. Four hundred (400) instruments were administered while 381 were valid, duly completed, and returned for the study

Table 1. Socio-demographic data of the respondents

Age Distribution by Gender

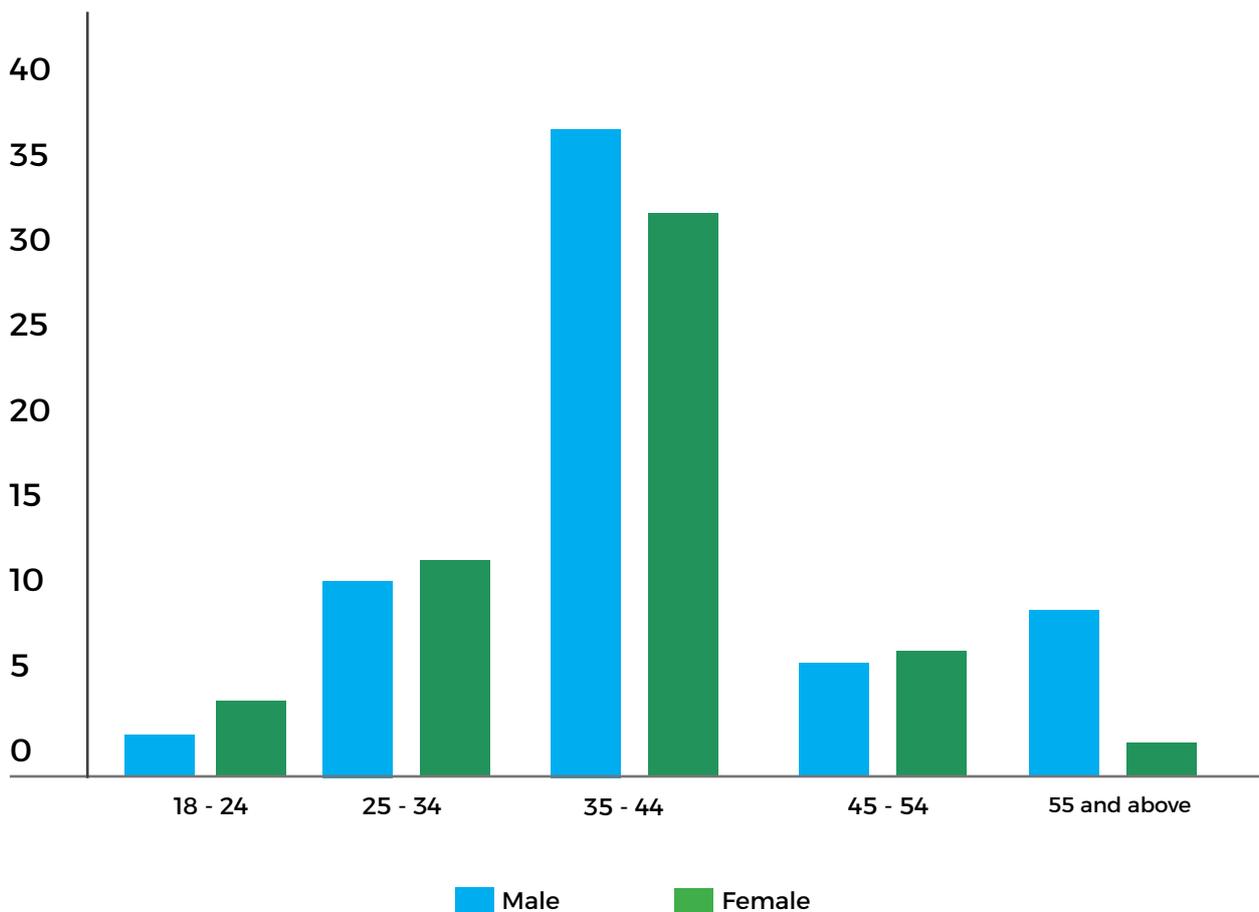


Figure 2: Age disturbution by gender

Table 1.1 Age Distribution by Gender

Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55 and above
Male	1.3	7.0	35.1	4.1	7.0
Female	2.6	7.6	29.1	4.7	1.0
Total	3.9	14.6	64.2	8.8	8.0

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 1.1 and Figure 2 presented the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The table indicates that (64%) of the participants were in between the age of 35 & 44. This suggests that the majority of respondents are in their mid-career years, which could reflect a focus on individuals who are likely to be established in their professional lives and potentially have more stability in their personal and financial situations. Furthermore, 16% of the respondents, which is a significant but much smaller portion compared to the age between 35-44 age group. This suggests a moderate representation of individuals who are in the early to mid-stages of their careers. Finally, 9 % of respondents, in this group is smaller compared to the 45 and 54 age range, indicating fewer participants are in the later stages of their careers before approaching retirement.



Education Qualification by Gender

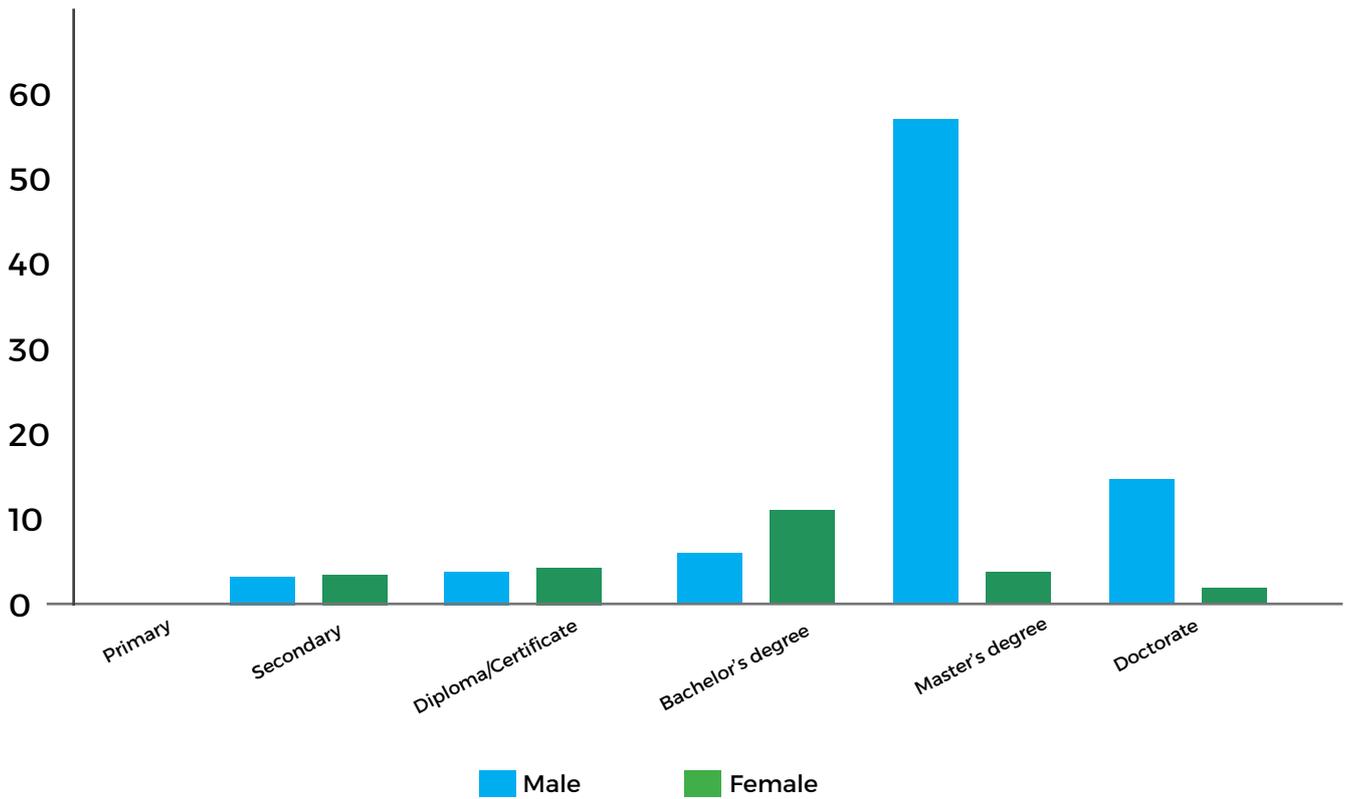


Figure 3: Education qualification by gender

Table 1.2 Educational Qualification by Gender

Education Qualification	Primary	Secondary	Diploma/Certificate	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Doctorate
Male	0	1.5	1.3	4.9	52.7	16.5
Female	0	2.3	2.1	11.0	3.9	3.4
Total	0	3.9	3.4	15.9	56.6	19.9

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 1.2 and Figure 3 as well indicated the majority of respondents (57%) hold a Master's degree. This is a significant portion and indicates that the sample is highly educated, with many individuals having advanced academic qualifications. It was also noted from the analysis result that 20% of respondents have a Doctorate, which further emphasizes the high educational level within the sample. This suggests that the study includes a substantial number of individuals with the highest academic credentials. Furthermore, it was noted from table 1 that only 4% of respondents have completed secondary school, which is a relatively small proportion. This reflects a focus on individuals who have pursued higher education beyond the basic level. The analysis result reveals that the participants are highly educated, with a strong emphasis on advanced degrees. This could indicate that the study is likely to have participants who are well-versed in their fields and potentially in positions that require or value higher education.

Education Qualification by gender



Occupational distribution of respondents

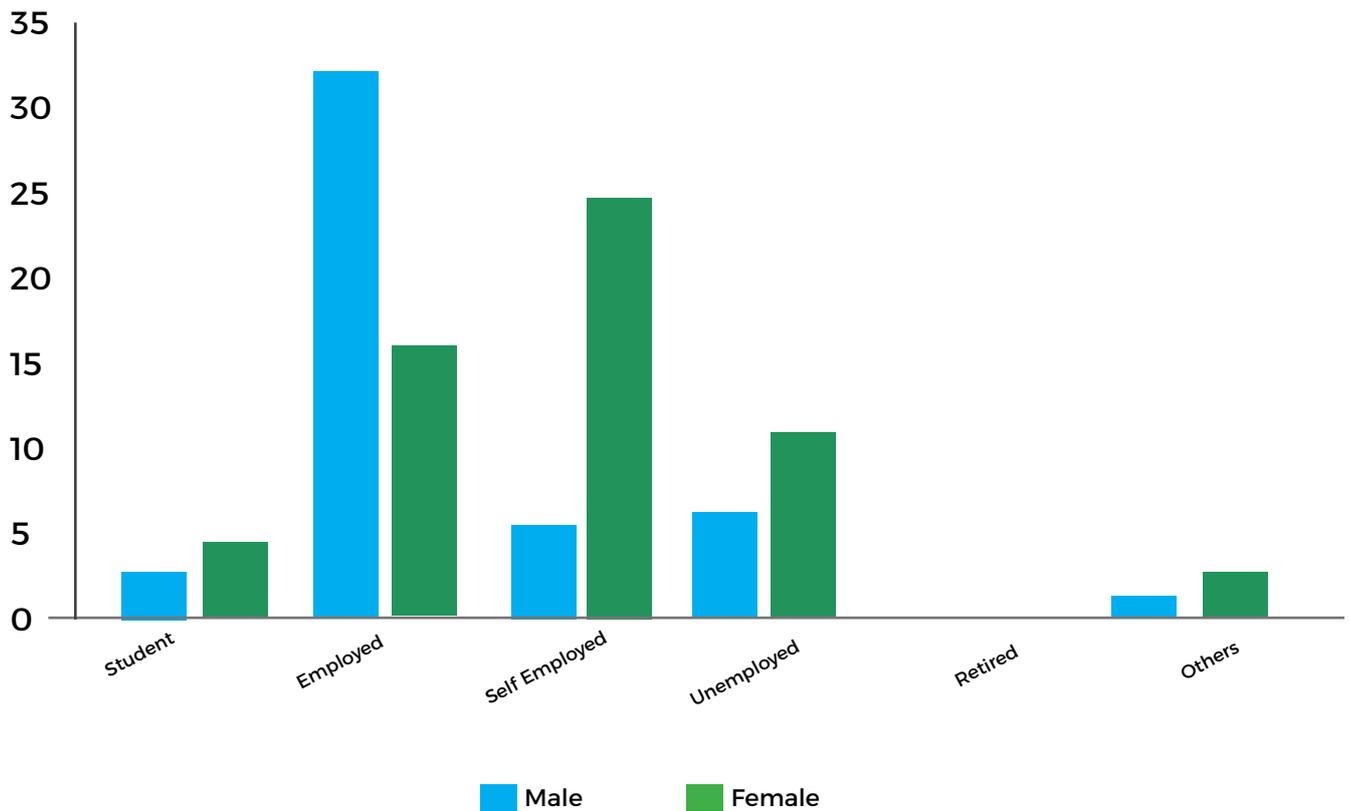


Figure 4: Occupational distribution of respondents

Table 1.3 Occupational Distribution of respondents

Occupation	Student	Employed	SelfEmployed	Unemployed	Retired	Others
Male	3.1	31.7	4.7	4.9	0	1.5
Female	4.7	18.3	25.1	11.0	0	3.4
Total	7.8	50.1	29.8	15.9	0	4.9

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 1.3 and Figure 4 shows that the largest group of respondents are employed with (50%). This indicates that a substantial portion of the sample is engaged in regular employment, which suggests a focus on individuals who are active in the workforce. Another significant portion (30%) of the respondents is self-employed. This group represents individuals who run their own businesses or work independently, adding diversity in terms of work arrangements and possibly providing insights into entrepreneurial or independent professional perspectives. Just 8% of the participants are students. This could indicate that the study may not be particularly focused on younger individuals or those currently in educational institutions.

Occupational distribution

from:

Student

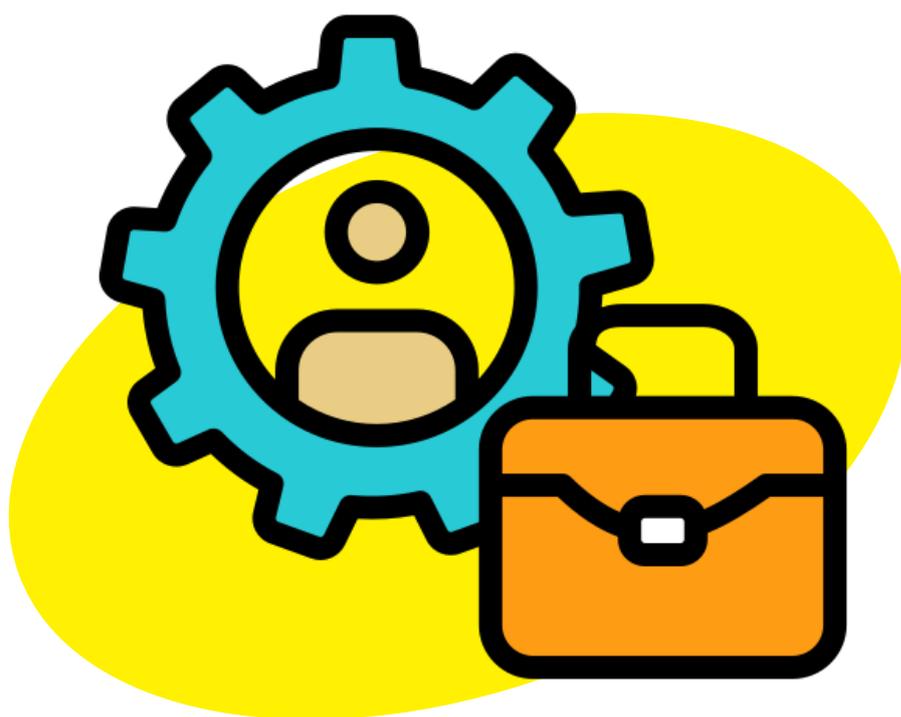
Employed

SelfEmployed

Unemployed

Retired

Others



Distribution of respondents by religious practice

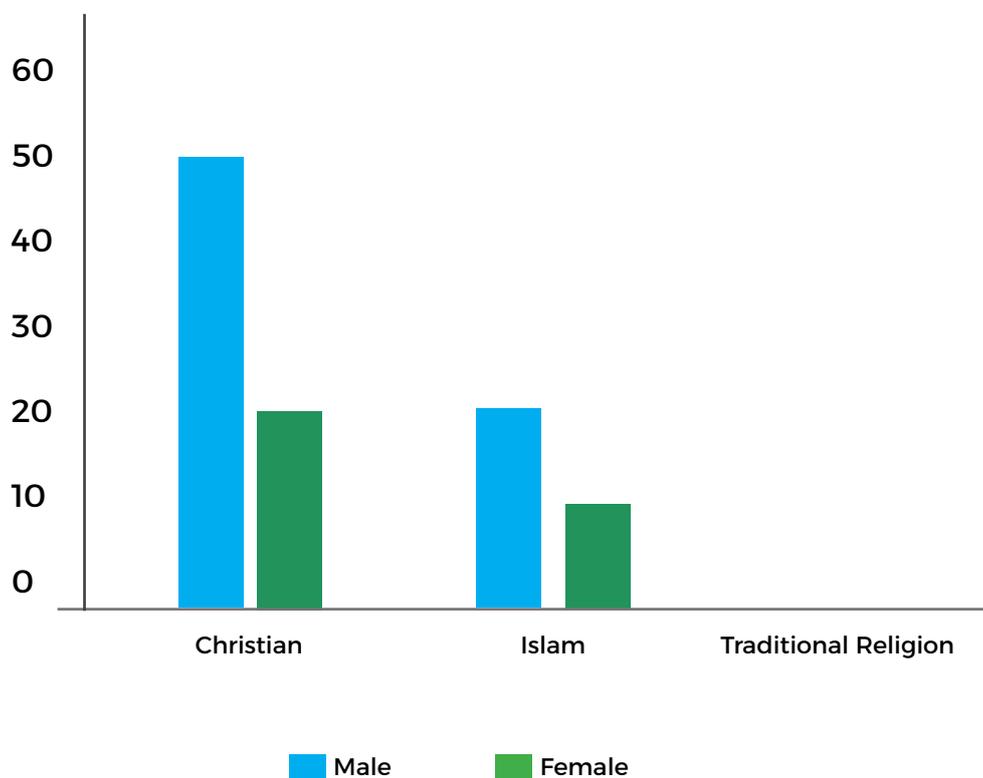


Figure 5: Distribution of respondents by religious practice

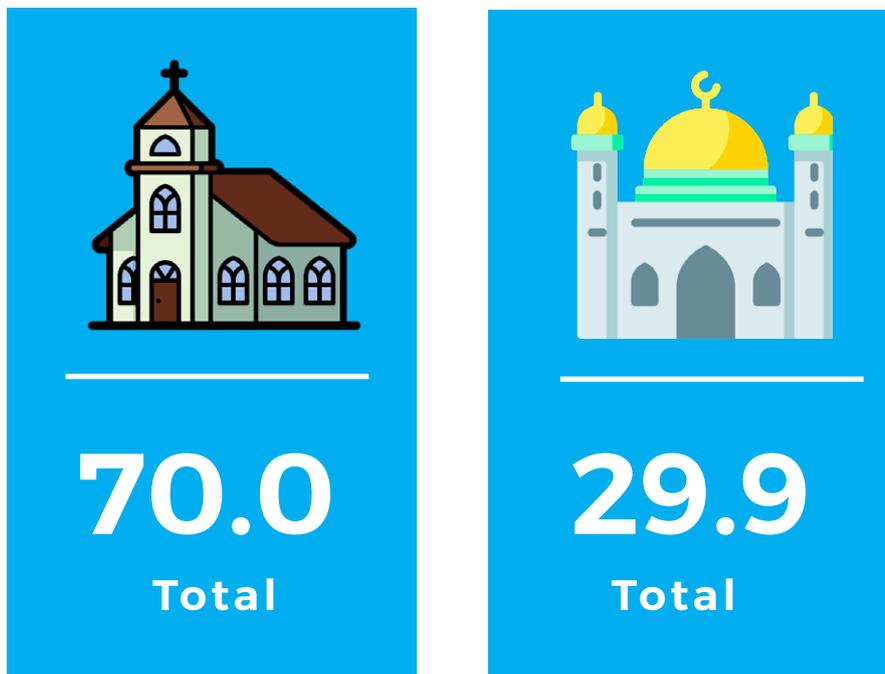
Table 1.4 Distribution of respondents by religious practice

Religion	Christian	Islam	Traditional Religion
Male	49.6	20.2	0
Female	20.4	9.7	0
Total	70.0	29.9	0

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 1.4 and Figure 5 shows that a significant majority of the respondents (70%) identify as Christian. This indicates that the participants are predominantly Christian, reflecting a strong influence of Christian beliefs and practices within the respondent pool. 30% of respondents identify as Muslim. While this is a smaller proportion compared to Christians, it still represents a substantial portion of the participants, suggesting a notable presence of Islamic perspectives within the study. The religion distribution shows a predominance of Christian respondents with a notable presence of Muslims but lacks representation from those practicing Traditional African religions.

Distribution of respondents by religious practice



Marital Status

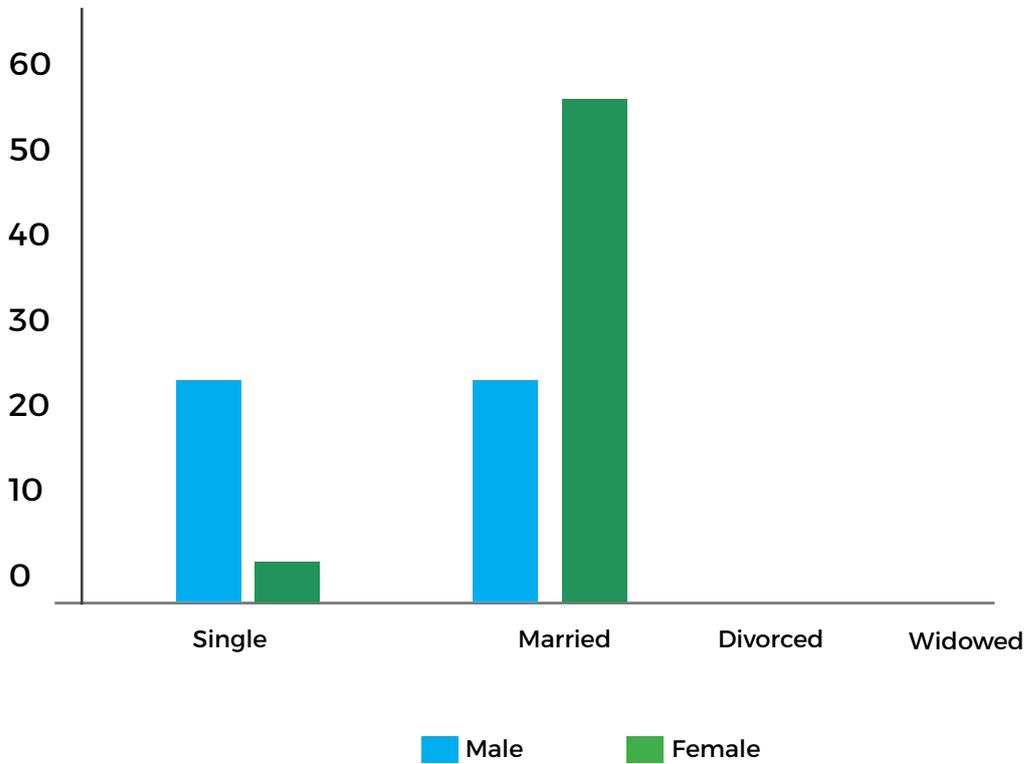


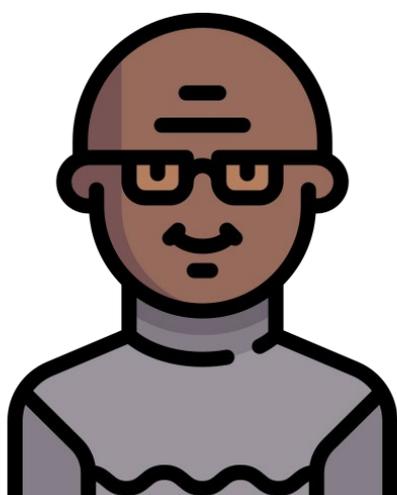
Figure 6: Distribution of participants by marital status

Table 1.5 Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status	Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed
Male	23.0	23.3	0	0
Female	3.4	50.1	0	0
Total	26.4	73.4	0	0

Source: Field survey, 2024

Table 1.5 and Figure 6 shows that significant majority of the respondents (73%) are married. This indicates that the respondents are predominantly composed of individuals who are in long-term, legally recognized relationships. This could reflect a more stable demographic or one that has settled into established life stages. While 27% of respondents are single. While this group is smaller compared to the married respondents, it still represents a substantial portion of the sample. This group includes individuals who are not currently in a marital relationship but could be at various stages of their personal lives. There are no respondents who identify as divorced. This complete absence suggests that either the study did not include individuals in this category or that this demographic is not well-represented in the sample.



Male: 23.0



Female: 3.4



Respondent's Gender

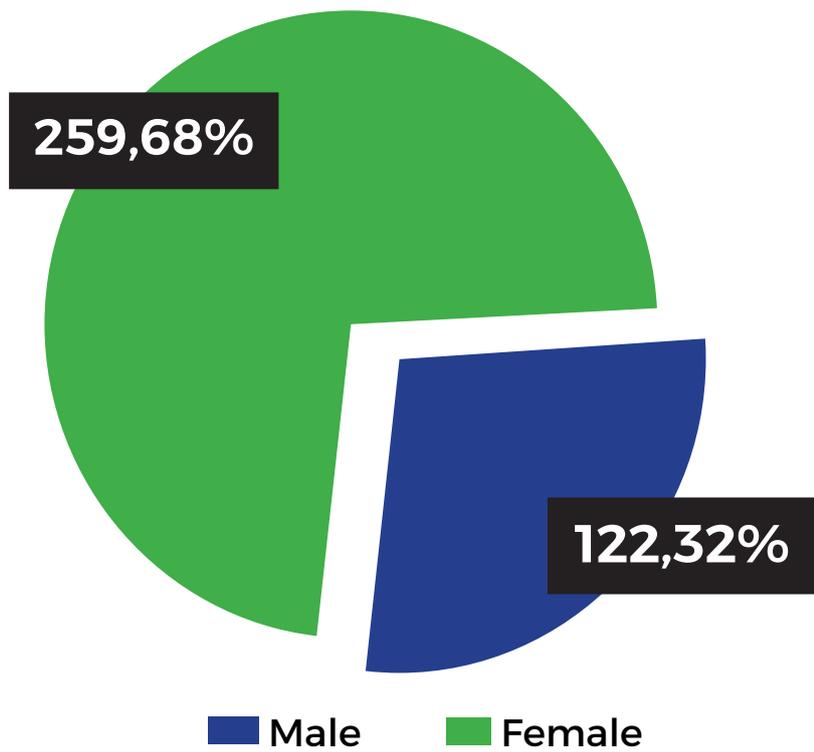


Figure 7: Representation of the overall respondent's gender

Respondent's age

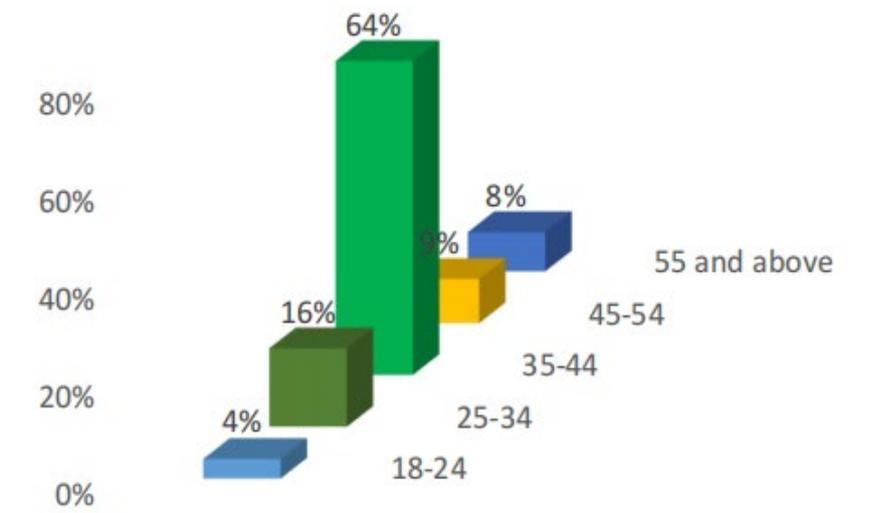


Figure 8: Representation of overall respondents' age

Respondents qualification

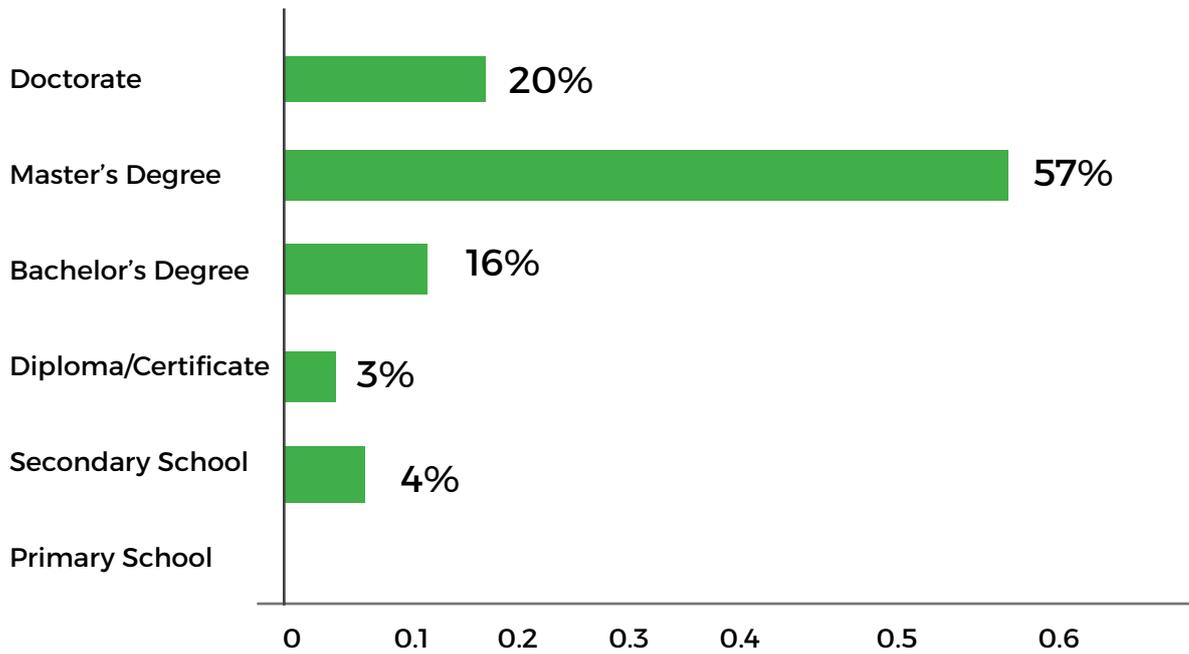


Figure 9: Representation of overall respondents' qualification

Respondent employment status

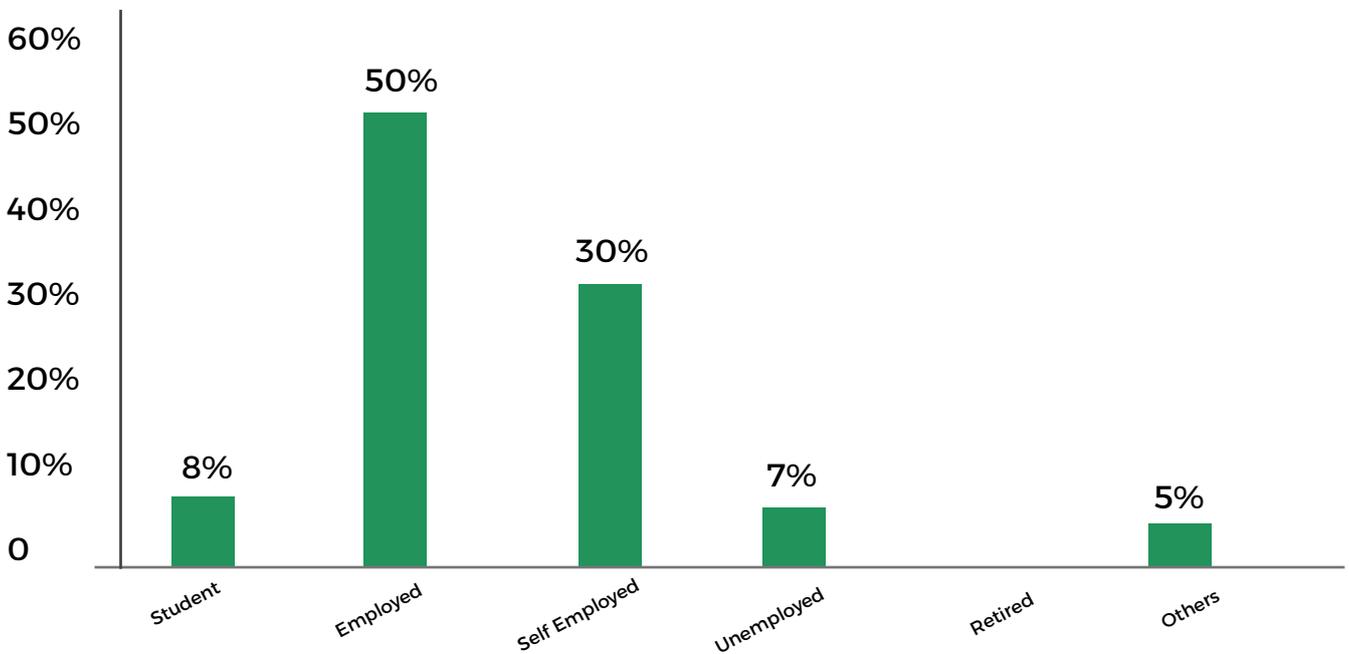


Figure 10: Representation of overall respondents' employment status

Respondents Religions

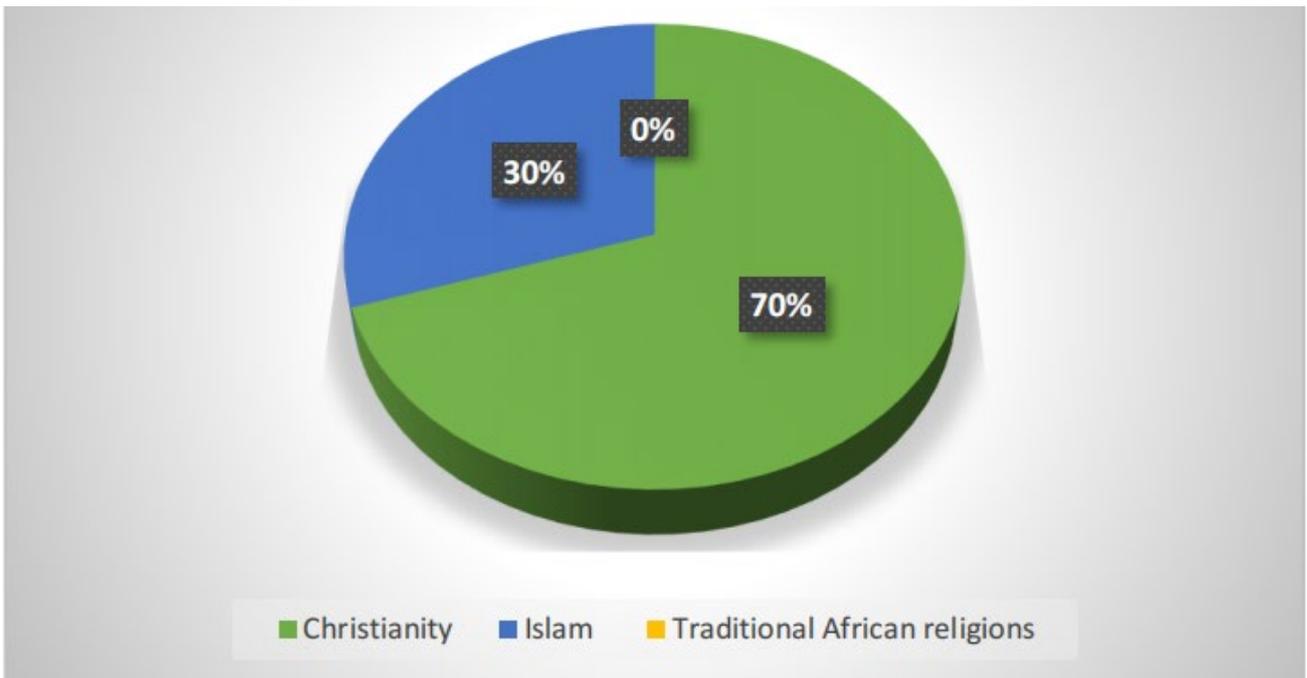


Figure 11: Representation of overall Respondent's Religions

Respondents marital

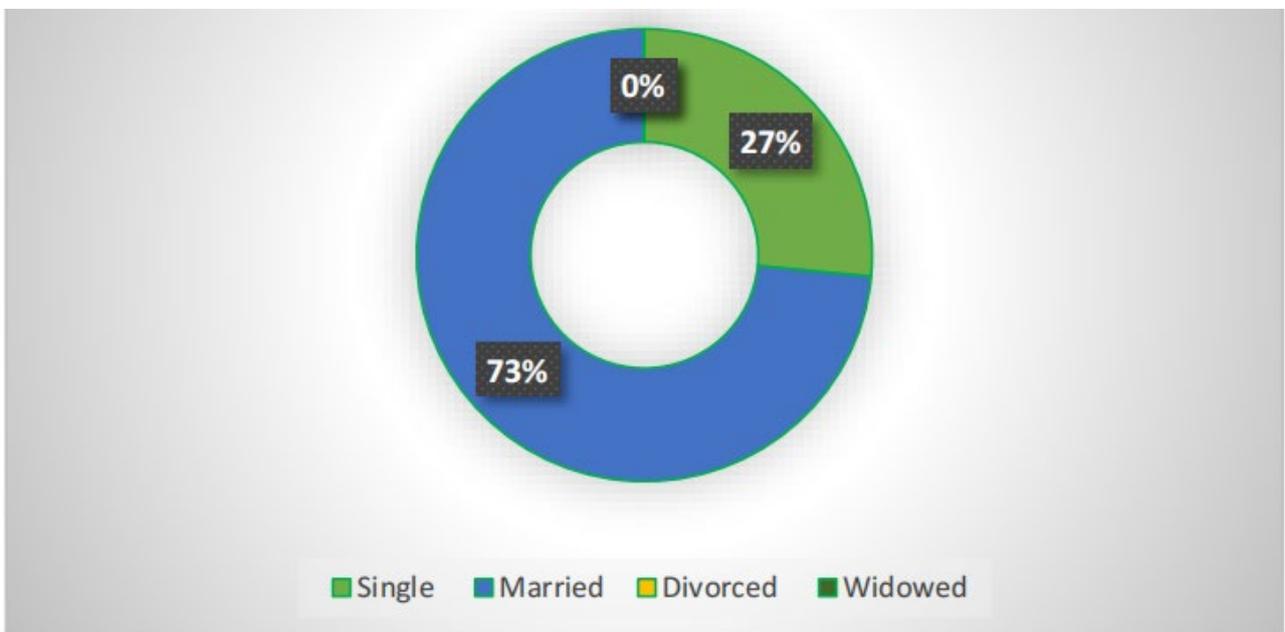


Figure 12: Representation of overall Respondents' Marital status

SECTION B:

The level of women participation in governance (appointive/elective) positions for 12 months in Nigeria

Table 2. Knowledge of women appointed in governing positions in the last 12 months in Nigeria

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
None	7	2
1-2	49	13
3-5	233	61
More than 5	92	24
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Respondents were asked how many women they personally know who have been appointed to governance positions in Nigeria within the past 12 months. A majority (85%) reported being aware of at least 3 to 5 women who had received such appointments. This suggests that female representation in governance is both visible and salient among the respondents. The data reflects a relatively high level of awareness of women's involvement in governance roles, with a notable proportion indicating knowledge of more than five women appointed to such positions. These findings may indicate a positive trajectory in women's participation in governance, and suggest that recent appointments are sufficiently prominent to be recognized within the surveyed population. Overall, the table demonstrates that most respondents are aware of some degree of female inclusion in governance, reinforcing the perception of increasing gender representation in public leadership roles.

Table 3. In the respondent’s opinion, has the level of women’s participation in appointive positions increased, decreased, or remained the same over the last 12 months

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Increased	45	12
Decreased	178	46
Remained the same	79	21
Not sure	79	21
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Analysis of the data reveals that the largest proportion of respondents (46%) perceive a decline in women’s participation in appointive positions over the past 12 months. This suggests growing concern about a potential regression in efforts to close the gender gap in governance. In contrast, 21% of respondents believe that women’s participation has increased, indicating some recognition of progress, albeit among a smaller segment of the sample. A considerable number of respondents perceive the level of participation to have remained stable, reflecting a degree of ambivalence or perceived stagnation in gender representation efforts. Overall, these divergent perceptions point to a complex and mixed understanding of the current state of women’s involvement in governance, underscoring both the perceived challenges and varying awareness levels regarding gender inclusion in appointive roles.

Table 4. Do the participants believe that the current level of women’s participation in governance (appointive/elective) positions in Nigeria is adequate?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	21	6
No	257	67
Not sure	103	27
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024



Respondents were asked whether they believe the current level of women's participation in governance both appointive and elective positions in Nigeria is adequate. A significant majority (67%) indicated that women's representation in governance is inadequate. This reflects a strong perception among respondents that there is a pressing need to enhance female involvement in political and leadership roles. Additionally, 27% of respondents reported uncertainty regarding the adequacy of women's participation, suggesting a possible gap in awareness, access to information, or clarity about existing gender representation in governance structures. Overall, the data points to widespread concern about the insufficient inclusion of women in governance, reinforcing calls for more deliberate and sustained efforts to promote gender parity in political leadership and decisionmaking positions.

SECTION C:

The existing efforts made by government towards increasing the percentage age of women in governance to achieve adequate gender mainstreaming in Nigeria

Table 5. Are the respondents aware of any government initiatives aimed at increasing the percentage of women in governance in Nigeria?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	7	19
No	310	81
Total	380	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

When asked about their awareness of government initiatives aimed at increasing the percentage of women in governance, a substantial majority of respondents (81%) indicated that they were unaware of any such efforts. This finding highlights a significant gap in public awareness and possibly in the visibility or communication strategies of government programs designed to enhance female representation in political and leadership roles. Only 19% of respondents reported being aware of such initiatives, suggesting that existing interventions (if any) may not be effectively publicized or widely disseminated. The analysis points to a critical need for improved communication, outreach, and engagement strategies to raise public awareness about governmental efforts to promote gender inclusion in governance. This lack of visibility may undermine the potential impact and public support for these initiatives.

Table 6. How effective do the respondents think the government’s efforts have been in promoting gender mainstreaming in governance?

Rankings	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very effective	7	2
Somewhat effective	54	14
Not effective	275	72
Not sure	45	12
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Respondents were asked to assess the effectiveness of government efforts in promoting gender mainstreaming within governance structures. A significant majority (72%) perceived these efforts as ineffective, indicating widespread dissatisfaction with the implementation and outcomes of current initiatives. Only a small proportion of respondents considered the efforts to be “very effective” (2%) or “somewhat effective” (14%), highlighting a prevailing sentiment that existing strategies are falling short of expectations. Additionally, 12% of respondents expressed uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of these initiatives, which may reflect limited awareness or lack of clear communication about government actions and their results. Overall, the data suggests a critical public perception of the government’s gender mainstreaming agenda, revealing a notable disconnect between policy intentions and perceived impact on women’s inclusion and participation in governance.

Table 7. Which of the following government initiatives do the participants believe have been most impactful in increasing women’s participation in governance? (Select all that apply)

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender quotas in political appointments	17	4
Leadership training programs for women	75	19
Financial support for female political candidates	88	22
Public awareness campaigns on gender equality	201	50
Other	19	5
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

On which examines government initiatives are believed to be most impactful in increasing women’s participation in governance. The majority of respondents (50%) believe that public awareness campaigns on gender equality have been the most impactful initiative. This indicates a strong perception that increasing public knowledge and awareness about gender issues plays a crucial role in enhancing women’s participation in governance. The next most frequently cited impactful initiative is financial support for female political candidates, chosen by 22% of respondents. This suggests that providing financial resources to women running for office is also seen as an important factor in increasing their participation. Leadership training programs for women are considered impactful by 19% of respondents. While this is a smaller percentage compared to public awareness campaigns and financial support, it still highlights the value of preparing and equipping women with leadership skills. Gender quotas in political appointments are seen as the least impactful by only 4% of respondents. This relatively low percentage may reflect skepticism about the effectiveness of quotas or the belief that other initiatives are more effective in promoting women’s participation. A small percentage of respondents (5%) selected “Other,” which may include additional or less common initiatives not listed in the options. The analysis result suggests that public awareness campaigns are perceived as the most effective in increasing women’s participation in governance, followed by financial support and leadership training.

Table 8. Do the participants believe the government is doing enough to support women’s participation in appointive positions in governance?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	19	5
No	237	62
Not sure	125	33
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Regarding perceptions of whether the government is doing enough to support women’s participation in appointive positions in governance. A significant majority of respondents (62%) believe that the government is not doing enough to support women’s participation in appointive positions. This reflects a widespread concern that current efforts or measures are insufficient in ensuring greater female representation in these roles. Furthermore, a notable portion of respondents (33%) are not sure whether the government is doing enough. This uncertainty might stem from a lack of information, awareness about existing support measures, or mixed perceptions about the effectiveness of current efforts. Only 5% of respondents believe that the government is adequately supporting women’s participation in appointive positions. This low percentage indicates that very few people feel that the current level of support is sufficient. The data shows a strong perception that the government’s efforts to support women in appointive governance positions are inadequate. The large percentage of respondents who think more needs to be done, combined with the significant proportion who are uncertain, suggests a general lack of confidence in the current measures and a possible need for more effective or visible initiatives to enhance women’s participation in governance.

Table 9. Have the participants noticed an increase in the number of women in appointive positions in governance over the past 12 months?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	57	15
No	179	47
Not sure	145	38
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

On which assesses perceptions of whether there has been an increase in the number of women in appointive positions in governance over the past 12 months. Nearly half of the respondents (47%) do not believe there has been an increase in the number of women in appointive positions over the past year. This suggests that a significant portion of the population perceives no noticeable progress in female representation in these roles. A substantial percentage of respondents (38%) are «not sure» whether there has been an increase. This uncertainty could reflect a lack of information or visibility regarding changes in women’s representation in appointive positions. Only 15% of respondents believe there has been an increase in women’s participation in appointive positions. This relatively small percentage indicates that while some people have noticed improvements, it is not a widespread perception. The analysis result indicates that most respondents do not perceive an increase in the number of women in appointive governance positions over the past 12 months. The high level of uncertainty among a significant portion of respondents suggests that there may be limited awareness or visibility of changes in female representation.

Table 10. How satisfied are the participants with the current level of women’s representation in governance as a result of government efforts?

Rankings	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very satisfied	11	3
Satisfied	17	4
Neutral	37	10
Dissatisfied	271	71
Very dissatisfied	45	12
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

On the examination of satisfaction with the current level of women’s representation in governance as a result of government efforts. The overwhelming majority of respondents (71%) are dissatisfied with the current level of women’s representation in governance. This high level of dissatisfaction suggests significant discontent with the results of government efforts in improving female representation. An additional 12% of respondents are very dissatisfied, further emphasizing the depth of dissatisfaction among a substantial portion of the population. Only a small percentage of respondents are very satisfied (3%) or satisfied (4%) with the current level of women’s representation. This indicates that very few people feel positively about the outcomes of government initiatives in this area. The data reflects a strong sense of dissatisfaction with the current level of women’s representation in governance, despite government efforts. The predominant dissatisfaction and limited satisfaction highlight a perceived gap between government actions and public expectations regarding gender representation.

SECTION D:

The perception of women on the April 6th judgement affirming the right of women to 35% appointive and elective positions in Nigeria

Table 11. Respondent's level of awareness of the April 6th judgment affirming the right of women to 35% appointive and elective positions in Nigeria

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very aware	31	8
Somewhat aware	75	20
Not aware	275	72
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

On the assessment of the awareness of the April 6th judgment affirming the right of women to 35% appointive and elective positions in Nigeria. A large majority of respondents (72%) are not aware at all of the April 6th judgment. This indicates a significant gap in awareness regarding this important ruling on women's rights to appointive and elective positions. A smaller proportion of respondents are somewhat aware (20%) of the judgment. While this group has some knowledge, it is still a relatively small percentage compared to those who are not aware at all. Only 8% of respondents are very aware of the judgment. This low percentage suggests that detailed knowledge or understanding of the judgment is quite limited among the respondents. The data reveals that awareness of the April 6th judgment, which affirms women's right to 35% of appointive and elective positions, is very low among the respondents. The majority are not aware of the judgment at all, and even among those who are aware, knowledge is generally limited. This indicates a need for better dissemination of information and public awareness campaigns to ensure that key legal rulings related to gender equality are more widely known and understood.

Table 12. Respondents' opinion on the April 6th judgment affirming the right of women to 35% appointive and elective positions in Nigeria?

Rankings	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly supported	16	4
Supported	75	20
Neutral	207	55
Not supported	67	18
Strongly not supported	13	3
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

On which gathers opinions on the April 6th judgment affirming the right of women to 35% appointive and elective positions in Nigeria. A majority of respondents (55%) were neutral, and 18% did not support because they were not aware of the 35% affirmative action for women in governance. This large percentage suggests that many people may have mixed feelings, lack strong opinions, or feel indifferent about the judgment. A total of 24% of respondents are supportive of the judgment, with 4% strongly agreeing and 20% agreeing. This indicates a segment of the population that is in favor of the judgment and supports the idea of women having 35% of appointive and elective positions. Very few respondents strongly agree (4%) or strongly disagree (3%) with the judgment, indicating that extreme positions are less common compared to the more moderate or neutral responses. The data shows a significant degree of neutrality regarding the April 6th judgment on women's representation in governance, with more than half of the respondents holding a neutral stance. While a portion of the population supports the judgment, a notable number also expresses disagreement. The high level of neutrality may reflect a lack of strong opinions, awareness, or understanding of the judgment's implications. The mixed responses suggest that while there is some support for the ruling, there is also considerable ambivalence or opposition.

Table 13. Do the participants believe the 35% target for women’s participation in governance is sufficient to ensure gender equality in Nigeria?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	79	21
No	213	56
Not sure	89	23
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

On which assesses whether the 35% target for women’s participation in governance is considered sufficient to ensure gender equality in Nigeria. A majority of respondents (56%) believe that the 35% target for women’s participation in governance is not sufficient to ensure gender equality. This suggests that many people view 35% as an inadequate measure for achieving true gender parity in governance roles. A significant portion of respondents (23%) are not sure» whether the 35% target is sufficient. This uncertainty may reflect a lack of clarity about what constitutes adequate gender representation or differing opinions on the effectiveness of this specific target. Only 21% of respondents believe that the 35% target is sufficient for ensuring gender equality. This indicates that while there is some support for the target, it is not the prevailing opinion. The data indicates that a substantial majority of respondents do not believe that the 35% target for women’s participation in governance is sufficient to ensure gender equality. The high percentage of those who think it is inadequate, combined with the notable level of uncertainty among respondents, suggests that there is a significant debate about the effectiveness of the target. The findings imply that achieving true gender equality may require more ambitious targets or additional measures beyond the 35% threshold.

Table 14. How do the participants think the April 6th judgment will impact women’s participation in governance in Nigeria?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very positively	45	12
Positively	54	14
No impact	191	50
Negatively	72	19
Very negatively	19	5
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

On which assesses opinions on how the April 6th judgment will impact women’s participation in governance in Nigeria. A significant majority of respondents (50%) believe that the April 6th judgment will have no effect on women’s participation in governance. This indicates a prevailing view that the judgment might not bring about meaningful changes or improvements in this area. A combined total of 26% of respondents believe the judgment will have a positive impact, with 12% seeing it as having a very positive effect and 14% viewing it as positive. This suggests that there is some optimism about the judgment’s potential to positively influence women’s participation. A total of 24% of respondents anticipate a negative impact, with 19% believing it will have a negative effect and 5% thinking it will be very negative. This indicates that a portion of the population is concerned that the judgment might lead to adverse outcomes for women’s representation. Very few respondents believe the judgment will have a very positive (12%) or very negative (5%) impact, suggesting that extreme opinions are relatively rare. The result reveals a dominant view that the April 6th judgment is expected to have little to no impact on women’s participation in governance. While there is some optimism about the potential positive effects, a significant portion of respondents foresee no change or potential negative consequences. The findings highlight a general skepticism about the effectiveness of the judgment in driving substantial improvements in women’s governance roles and suggest that further measures may be needed to achieve meaningful progress.

Table 15. Do the participants think the government will effectively implement the 35% appointive and elective positions for women as mandated by the judgment?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	101	26
No	213	56
Not sure	67	18
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

On which assesses opinions on whether the government will effectively implement the 35% appointive and elective positions for women as mandated by the April 6th judgment. A majority of respondents (56%) do not believe that the government will effectively implement the 35% mandate for women’s appointive and elective positions. This indicates a significant level of skepticism about the government’s commitment or capability to enforce the judgment effectively. About 26% of respondents are optimistic that the government will effectively implement the mandate. While this is a minority view, it still represents a considerable portion of people who have confidence in the government’s ability to follow through on the judgment. A notable percentage of respondents (18%) are «not sure» whether the government will effectively implement the mandate. This uncertainty might reflect a lack of information, mixed perceptions, or doubts about the government’s readiness or resources to meet the target. The data reveals a predominant concern that the government will not effectively implement the 35% mandate for women’s positions. The significant proportion of respondents who are skeptical, combined with the notable uncertainty among others, suggests a lack of confidence in the government’s ability to fulfill the mandate as required by the judgment. The findings highlight a need for greater transparency, accountability, and communication regarding the implementation process to build public trust and ensure the successful achievement of gender representation goals.

Table 16. What challenges do the respondents foresee in the implementation of the 35% appointive and elective positions for women? (Select all that apply)

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Resistance from political parties	227	58
Cultural and societal norms	76	19
Lack of awareness and advocacy	56	18
Insufficient qualified female Candidates	19	5
Other	14	4
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

On which identifies perceived challenges in the implementation of the 35% appointive and elective positions for women. The most commonly cited challenge, identified by 58% of respondents, is resistance from political parties. This indicates a strong perception that political parties might obstruct or resist the implementation of the 35% target, possibly due to entrenched interests or reluctance to change. Cultural and societal norms are seen as a significant challenge by 19% of respondents. This suggests that traditional attitudes and societal expectations could hinder progress toward achieving gender parity in governance. A smaller proportion of respondents (14%) believe that a lack of awareness and advocacy is a challenge. This reflects a perception that insufficient efforts to educate and promote the benefits of gender representation may impact the implementation process. Only 5% of respondents view the lack of qualified female candidates as a major challenge. This suggests that, while some might see it as an issue, it is less commonly viewed as a primary barrier compared to other factors. A small percentage of respondents (4%) identified other challenges, which could include a variety of additional or less common obstacles not covered by the other option. The data indicates that resistance from political parties is perceived as the primary challenge to implementing the 35% target for women’s appointive and elective positions. Cultural and societal norms also pose significant barriers, while lack of awareness and advocacy and insufficient qualified candidates are seen as less critical issues. Addressing these challenges, particularly the resistance from political parties, will be crucial for the successful implementation of gender representation policies.

Table 17. How confident are the participants that the April 6th judgment will lead to meaningful changes in women’s representation in governance?

Rankings	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very confident	19	5
Confident	87	23
Neutral	73	19
Not confident	111	29
Not confident at all	91	24
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

On which gauges confidence in whether the April 6th judgment will lead to meaningful changes in women’s representation in governance. A combined total of 53% of respondents are either «not confident (29%) or not confident at all (24%) that the April 6th judgment will lead to meaningful changes in women’s representation in governance. This indicates a significant level of skepticism regarding the judgment’s effectiveness in bringing about substantial improvements. A total of 28% of respondents are either confident (23%) or very confident (5%) in the judgment’s potential to effect meaningful change. This shows that there is some optimism, but it is relatively limited compared to the level of doubt expressed by the majority. A notable percentage of respondents (19%) are «neutral,» which suggests that they may be unsure or have mixed feelings about the judgment’s potential impact. The data shows a predominant level of skepticism regarding the potential of the April 6th judgment to lead to meaningful changes in women’s representation in governance. While a segment of respondents is optimistic, the majority either lack confidence or are completely doubtful about the judgment’s effectiveness. This indicates that there may be significant concerns about the implementation or impact of the judgment, suggesting a need for further efforts to address these concerns and build confidence in the effectiveness of gender representation initiatives.

Table 18. How do the participants feel about the current level of women’s participation in governance in Nigeria?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very satisfied	8	2
Satisfied	99	26
Neutral	85	22
Dissatisfied	97	26
Very dissatisfied	95	24
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

On which captures respondents’ feelings about the current level of women’s participation in governance in Nigeria. A significant proportion of respondents (50%) are either «dissatisfied» (26%) and very dissatisfied (24%) with the current level of women’s participation in governance. This indicates a strong sentiment of discontent regarding the progress and representation of women in governance roles. A total of 28% of respondents are either satisfied (26%) or very satisfied (2%) with the current level of women’s participation. This suggests that while there is some level of satisfaction, it is limited compared to the dissatisfaction expressed by others. A noteworthy percentage of respondents (22%) are «neutral» about the current level of women’s participation. This indicates that some individuals may feel indifferent or uncertain about the effectiveness and impact of current gender representation efforts. The data reveals that the majority of respondents are dissatisfied with the current level of women’s participation in governance in Nigeria, with a notable segment expressing strong dissatisfaction. Although there is some satisfaction among a smaller group, it is overshadowed by the overall sense of discontent.

SECTION E:

The emerging factors that would likely affect women involvement (35% affirmative action) in governance in Nigeria.

Table 19. In the participants opinion, what are the key benefits of implementing the 35% affirmative action for women in governance?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Increased gender equality	97	25
Bette representation of women's issues	92	24
Enhance governance effectiveness	175	46
Other	17	5
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

On which identifies the key benefits perceived from implementing the 35% affirmative action for women in governance. The most frequently cited benefit is «enhanced governance effectiveness,» mentioned by 46% of respondents. This suggests that a significant portion of people believe that increasing women's participation will improve the overall effectiveness of governance, possibly through diverse perspectives and improved decision-making. The next most common benefit identified is increased gender equality, reported by 25% of respondents. This indicates that many people see the affirmative action as a critical step towards achieving greater equality between genders in governance. A total of 24% of respondents believe that the affirmative action will lead to better representation of women's issues. This reflects a perception that having more women in governance will ensure that issues specifically affecting women are better addressed. A small percentage of respondents (5%) identified other benefits, which could encompass additional advantages not specified in the provided options. The data highlights that the majority of respondents believe the 35% affirmative action for women

in governance will primarily enhance governance effectiveness, followed by increased gender equality and better representation of women’s issues. The significant support for enhanced governance effectiveness suggests that many people see practical improvements in governance as the primary benefit of this affirmative action. While there is also substantial support for gender equality and representation of women’s issues, these are seen as secondary benefits compared to the effectiveness of governance.

Table 20. What do the respondents think are the main factors that could hinder the successful implementation of the 35% affirmative action for women in governance?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Resistance from political parties	76	20
Cultural and societal norms	14	4
Lack of political will	122	32
Insufficient support from male counterparts	78	20
Other	91	24
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

On which identifies the main factors that could hinder the successful implementation of the 35% affirmative action for women in governance. The most frequently cited hindrance is a lack of political will, mentioned by 32% of respondents. This suggests that many people believe that without strong commitment and drive from political leaders and institutions, the implementation of the 35% affirmative action will struggle. A significant portion of respondents (20%) also point to resistance from political parties as a key factor. This indicates concerns that political parties may actively oppose or obstruct the affirmative action, which could impede its successful execution. Another 20% of respondents believe that insufficient support from male counterparts could be a major obstacle. This reflects concerns that male colleagues or leaders may not support the affirmative action, potentially undermining its effectiveness. A smaller percentage of respondents (4%) view cultural and societal norms as a hindrance. While this factor is less commonly cited compared to others, it still represents an important consideration, indicating that traditional attitudes may affect the acceptance and implementation of the affirmative action. A notable 24% of respondents identify «other» factors as potential obstacles. This category

could include various additional challenges not specified in the other options. The data reveals that the most significant barriers to implementing the 35% affirmative action are perceived to be a lack of political will, resistance from political parties, and insufficient support from male counterparts. Cultural and societal norms are considered less critical but still relevant. The substantial proportion of respondents citing other factors indicates that there may be additional, less defined challenges that could impact the successful implementation of the policy. Addressing these key issues, particularly the lack of political will and resistance from political parties, will be crucial for the effective realization of the affirmative action.

Table 21. How likely do the participants think that the 35% affirmative action will be fully implemented in appointive positions in governance?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very likely	21	6
Likely	71	19
Neutral	101	26
Unlikely	123	32
Very unlikely	65	17
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

On which assesses how likely it is that the 35% affirmative action will be fully implemented in appointive positions in governance. A combined total of 49% of respondents believe that full implementation of the 35% affirmative action is either unlikely (32%) or very unlikely (17%). This indicates significant skepticism about the likelihood of successfully achieving the 35% target in appointive positions. A total of 25% of respondents are either likely (19%) or very likely (6%) to think that the affirmative action will be fully implemented. This reflects a more cautious optimism, though it is less prevalent compared to the skepticism. A notable percentage of respondents (26%) are neutral regarding the likelihood of full implementation. This neutrality suggests uncertainty or a lack of strong opinion about whether the affirmative action will be fully realized. The analysis result indicates a prevailing skepticism about the likelihood of the 35% affirmative action being fully implemented in appointive positions in governance. With nearly half of the respondents doubting its full implementation, there is significant concern about whether the policy will be effectively executed. Although a quarter of respondents hold a more optimistic view, and another quarter remain neutral, the overall sentiment leans toward uncertainty

or doubt regarding the successful realization of the affirmative action. Addressing these concerns and providing clearer pathways for implementation could help improve confidence and outcomes.

Table 22. Do the partakers believe that the current political climate in Nigeria is conducive to achieving the goals of the 35% affirmative action for women in governance?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	39	10
No	253	67
Not sure	89	23
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

On which evaluates whether the current political climate in Nigeria is conducive to achieving the goals of the 35% affirmative action for women in governance. A significant majority of respondents (67%) believe that the current political climate in Nigeria is not conducive to achieving the goals of the 35% affirmative action. This indicates widespread concern that the existing political environment may hinder the successful implementation of gender representation policies. Only 10% of respondents think that the current political climate is conducive to meeting the goals of the affirmative action. This small percentage reflects a low level of confidence in the political environment’s support for achieving gender parity in governance. Considerable Uncertainty: A notable percentage of respondents (23%) are not sure about the suitability of the current political climate for achieving the 35% target. This uncertainty suggests that some people may be unsure about the political dynamics or may not have sufficient information to form a definitive opinion.

Table 23. How important do the participants think it is for women to actively participate in political parties to ensure the success of the 35% affirmative action?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very important	97	25
Likely	153	40
Neutral	37	10
Not important	56	15
Not important at all	38	10
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

On which assesses the perceived importance of women actively participating in political parties to ensure the success of the 35% affirmative action. A significant majority of respondents, 65%, view women’s active participation in political parties as either very important (25%) or «important» (40%) for the success of the 35% affirmative action. This indicates a strong belief that women’s involvement in political parties is crucial for achieving gender representation goals. A smaller percentage of respondents (10%) are neutral about the importance of women’s participation in political parties. This suggests that a few individuals may be unsure or indifferent about how critical this factor is for the success of the affirmative action. A combined total of 25% of respondents believe that women’s participation in political parties is either not important (15%) or not important at all (10%). This minority perspective indicates that some people do not see a strong connection between women’s involvement in political parties and the success of the affirmative action. The data clearly shows that a substantial majority of respondents consider women’s active participation in political parties to be important for the success of the 35% affirmative action. With 65% of respondents acknowledging its significance, there is a strong consensus that women’s engagement in political party activities is essential for achieving the desired outcomes in gender representation. While there is a small minority that sees less importance in this aspect, the overall sentiment highlights the need for increased involvement of women in political parties to support the affirmative action effectively.

SECTION F:

Respondents views whether the April 6th court judgement would influence access to quality healthcare, employment opportunities and educational advancement for women in Nigeria

Table 24. In the respondent's opinion, how do they think the April 6th court judgment will impact access to quality healthcare for women in Nigeria?

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Positive impact	36	9
Negative impact	67	18
No impact	175	46
Not sure	103	27
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

The majority of respondents (46%) believe that the April 6th court judgment will have no impact on access to quality healthcare for women. This indicates a prevailing view that the judgment is not expected to influence healthcare services for women. A notable percentage of respondents (18%) think that the judgment will have a negative impact on healthcare access for women. This suggests concerns that the judgment could potentially lead to adverse outcomes in this area, though this view is less common compared to those who perceive no impact. Only 9% of respondents believe that the judgment will have a positive impact on access to quality healthcare for women. This low percentage indicates that there is limited optimism about the judgment's potential to improve healthcare services for women. A substantial portion of respondents (27%) are not sure about the impact of the judgment on healthcare access. This uncertainty reflects a lack of clear understanding or information regarding the potential effects of the judgment on healthcare services. The data suggests that most respondents do not expect the April 6th court judgment to significantly affect access to quality healthcare for women in Nigeria. While a small

portion of respondents see potential positive outcomes, and a notable segment anticipates negative effects, the majority anticipate that the judgment will have no meaningful impact. The considerable level of uncertainty among respondents indicates that the connection between the judgment and healthcare access may not be clear or well-understood, highlighting a need for more information or clarity on how the judgment might influence healthcare services for women.

Table 25. How do the participants think the April 6th court judgment will affect employment opportunities for women in Nigeria?

Rankings	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Increase opportunities	102	29
Decrease opportunities	57	16
No significant change	123	35
Not sure	69	20
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

A significant portion of respondents (29%) believe that the April 6th court judgment will increase opportunities for women in employment. This reflects optimism that the judgment could create more job opportunities or improve conditions for women in the workforce. A smaller percentage of respondents (16%) think that the judgment will decrease opportunities for women. This indicates some concern that the judgment might lead to fewer employment opportunities or potentially negative impacts on women’s job prospects. A substantial number of respondents (35%) believe there will be no significant change in employment opportunities as a result of the judgment. This suggests that many people do not expect the judgment to have a substantial impact, either positive or negative, on women’s employment prospects. Considerable Uncertainty: A notable percentage of respondents (20%) are not sure about how the judgment will affect employment opportunities. This reflects uncertainty or a lack of clarity about the potential impact of the judgment on the job market for women. The data reveals a mixed outlook on how the April 6th court judgment will impact employment opportunities for women in Nigeria. While a significant portion of respondents are hopeful that the judgment will lead to increased opportunities, there is also a concern that it might decrease opportunities

for some. However, many people do not anticipate any significant change, and a considerable number are uncertain about the judgment's effects. This suggests that the potential impact of the judgment on employment opportunities is perceived to be varied, and further clarification or analysis may be needed to better understand its implications.

Table 26. What role can the respondents play to increase women's representation in governance, as mandated by the April 6th judgment, in Nigeria

Rankings	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Significant advancement	56	15
Some advancement	78	20
No significant impact	149	39
Not sure	98	26
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

On which examines the perceived impact of increased women's representation in governance, as mandated by the April 6th judgment, on advancing educational opportunities for girls and women in Nigeria. A combined total of 35% of respondents believe that increased women's representation in governance will lead to either «significant advancement» (15%) or «some advancement» (20%) in educational opportunities for girls and women. This indicates that a segment of respondents is hopeful that more women in governance could positively influence educational opportunities. A substantial portion of respondents (39%) believe that there will be «no significant impact» on educational opportunities as a result of increased women's representation in governance. This suggests that many people do not see a direct or strong link between the representation of women in governance and improvements in educational access or quality. A notable percentage of respondents (26%) are «not sure» about how increased women's representation will affect educational opportunities. This reflects uncertainty or a lack of clarity regarding the potential effects of women's governance roles on education. The analysis result indicates that opinions are divided on the impact of increased women's representation in governance on educational opportunities for girls and women in Nigeria. While there is some optimism that this representation could lead to advancements in

education, a significant portion of respondents believe it will have no significant impact.

Table 27. How important do the participants think it is for government policies to actively promote gender equality in healthcare, employment, and education as a result of the April 6th judgment?

Rankings	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very important	73	19
Important	98	26
Neutral	123	32
Not important	87	23
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

On which assesses the perceived importance of government policies actively promoting gender equality in healthcare, employment, and education as a result of the April 6th judgment. A combined total of 45% of respondents view it as either «very important» (19%) or «important» (26%) for government policies to actively promote gender equality in healthcare, employment, and education following the April 6th judgment. This reflects a significant portion of the population that acknowledges the crucial role of gender equality policies in these areas. A substantial percentage of respondents (32%) are «neutral» on the importance of such government policies. This neutrality suggests that while some people may recognize the relevance of gender equality in these sectors, they might not have strong opinions on the direct impact or necessity of active promotion. A notable percentage of respondents (23%) feel that it is «not important» for government policies to focus on gender equality in these areas. This indicates that a portion of the population may not see the immediate relevance or benefit of such policies, or may prioritize other issues. The data shows a divided opinion on the importance of government policies promoting gender equality in healthcare, employment, and education as a result of the April 6th judgment. While a significant portion of respondents recognizes the importance of such policies, there is a considerable level of neutrality and a notable minority who do not view it as important. This indicates a range of perspectives on the impact and priority of gender equality initiatives, suggesting that further engagement and awareness may be needed to build a more unified understanding of their significance.

Table 28. What do the participants see as the potential long-term benefits of women’s increased representation in governance for healthcare, employment, and educational advancement in Nigeria?

Rankings	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Improved public health outcomes	121	32
Enhanced economic growth	8	2
Higher educational attainment rates for girls	161	42
Other	91	24
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

On which explores the potential long-term benefits of increased women’s representation in governance for healthcare, employment, and educational advancement in Nigeria. The most frequently identified long-term benefit is «higher educational attainment rates for girls,» with 42% of respondents highlighting this as a key advantage. This reflects a strong belief that increased women’s representation in governance will significantly enhance educational opportunities and outcomes for girls in Nigeria. A substantial percentage of respondents (32%) see «improved public health outcomes» as a major benefit. This suggests that many believe that having more women in governance could lead to better health policies and practices, positively impacting public health. A notable 24% of respondents selected «other» benefits, indicating that there are various additional advantages perceived, which may include aspects not listed in the provided options. This suggests a recognition of diverse potential impacts of increased women’s representation in governance. Only 2% of respondents view «enhanced economic growth» as a key benefit. This minimal percentage indicates that, while economic growth might be a potential outcome, it is not seen as the primary long-term benefit compared to improvements in education and health. The result highlights that the most significant long-term benefits perceived from increased women’s representation in governance are higher educational attainment rates for girls and improved public health outcomes. There is also recognition of other potential benefits, though economic growth is seen as less directly related. The predominant focus on education and health underscores the importance of these areas in the discourse around women’s governance roles

and their potential impact on societal advancement.

Table 29. How optimistic are the respondents about the overall impact of the April 6th court judgment on the lives of women in Nigeria, particularly in terms of healthcare, employment, and educational opportunities?

Rankings	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very optimistic	74	19
Optimistic	125	33
Neutral	67	18
Pessimistic	101	26
Very pessimistic	15	4
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

On which measures optimism about the overall impact of the April 6th court judgment on the lives of women in Nigeria, particularly in terms of healthcare, employment, and educational opportunities: A combined total of 52% of respondents are either «very optimistic» (19%) or «optimistic» (33%) about the impact of the April 6th court judgment. This suggests that a majority of people hold a positive view about the potential for the judgment to bring beneficial changes to women’s lives, particularly in healthcare, employment, and education. A significant percentage of respondents (18%) are neutral regarding the impact of the judgment. This neutrality indicates that some individuals may be uncertain or indifferent about how the judgment will affect women’s lives, possibly due to a lack of information or clear expectations. A total of 30% of respondents are either «pessimistic» (26%) or very pessimistic (4%) about the judgment’s impact. This reflects concerns or doubts that the judgment may not achieve the desired outcomes or may face significant challenges in effecting positive change. The data reveals a generally optimistic outlook among respondents about the impact of the April 6th court judgment on women’s lives in Nigeria. While a substantial portion is hopeful about its potential benefits, there is also a notable level of pessimism and uncertainty. This mixed sentiment underscores the complexity of the judgment’s anticipated effects and suggests that while there is optimism, there are also concerns and doubts about the judgment’s ability to bring about meaningful improvements in healthcare, employment, and educational opportunities for women.

SECTION G:

Possible means for the implementation of the April 6th court judgement affirming the right of Nigerian women

Table 30. In the participants opinion, what possible measures can be taken for the implementation of the April 6th court judgement affirming the right of Nigerian women

Measures	Yes (%)	No (%)
Enactment or amendment of laws to enforce the 35% affirmative action	81.7	19
Increase gender quotas further	81.7	18.3
Implement stronger penalties for noncompliance with gender policies	85.0	15
Launching nationwide campaigns to educate the public	96.7	3.3
Enhance mentorship and support networks for women	100	0
Provide more financial support for female candidates	86.7	13.3
Encouraging the media to increase coverage of women politicians and their achievements	96.7	3.3
Engaging civil society to monitor compliance	93.3	6.7
Strengthening electoral institutions support	90	10
Adopting successful strategies from other countries	91.7	8.3

Source: Field survey, 2024

On which evaluates various measures for implementing the April 6th court judgment affirming the right of Nigerian women to 35% representation in governance. A significant majority believes that enacting or amending laws to enforce the 35% affirmative action is a necessary measure. 18.7% of the respondents said yes that Enactment or amendment of laws to enforce the 35% affirmative action is the only way. This reflects a strong consensus on the importance of legal frameworks to ensure compliance and implementation. Similarly, there is substantial support for increasing gender quotas beyond the current levels. This indicates a belief that more aggressive quota measures might be needed to achieve the desired level of women's representation. There is strong support for implementing harsher penalties for those who fail to comply with gender policies. This suggests that many see strict enforcement as crucial for ensuring adherence to the affirmative action goals. Almost universally, respondents support the idea of nationwide campaigns to raise public awareness about gender equality and affirmative action. This reflects a consensus on the importance of public education and awareness in driving change. There is unanimous agreement on the need for enhanced mentorship and support networks for women. This highlights the recognition of the value of support systems in empowering women and facilitating their participation in governance. A large majority supports increasing financial support for female candidates. This indicates a belief that financial barriers are significant, and that targeted funding is crucial for boosting women's political participation. There is strong support for encouraging the media to cover women politicians more extensively. This suggests that media visibility is seen as important for promoting and recognizing the contributions of women in politics. There is broad support for involving civil society in monitoring compliance with gender policies. This reflects the view that external oversight can help ensure accountability and effectiveness in implementing the affirmative action. A strong majority believes in the need to strengthen support for electoral institutions. This indicates recognition of the role that robust electoral systems play in supporting gender representation efforts. There is significant support for adopting successful strategies from other countries. This suggests that respondents see value in learning from international best practices to enhance the implementation of the affirmative action. Overall, there is a strong consensus on several key measures to implement the April 6th court judgment, particularly the need for legal frameworks, financial support, public education, media coverage, and mentorship. The overwhelming support for enhancing mentorship and support networks, as well as public education campaigns, underscores the importance of both structural and supportive interventions in advancing women's representation in governance. The broad agreement on these measures highlights a collective understanding of the multifaceted approach required to achieve the goals of the affirmative action.

APPENDICES

QUALITATIVE DATA/KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW

The interview conducted are presented below:

1. Do you think women should be given more opportunities in governance?

An interviewee A in Nasarawa State said:

Yes, I think women should be given more space in the political space to enable them contribute their ideas in governance. This thing I know, it has been long debated across many functions and stakeholders in the traditional spheres have been included to promote girl child education across the country (KII/Commissioner/male/age 52/Nasarawa/2024).

Another interviewee B said:

I think women deserve to be given more opportunities in governance, in the precolonial and colonial era, women were recognized, the name of Nigeria was given by a woman why not we give them better opportunity (KII/Traditional Leader/male/age 52/Bauchi state/2024).

Interviewee C

As a female, I believe women should be given equal opportunities as men because everyone has potential to contribute political development. We have a lot to add to social and economic development. The economic growth in Nigeria is being driven by women in small and medium scale enterprise hence, we have a lot to add in the political space (KII/Head Teacher/female/age 49/Imo State/2024).

Interviewee G and the others unanimously agreed that:

Women deserved to be given equal rights as men in the public spaces. We need more women in leadership position across the states. Women should be encouraged to participate and fair ground should be created to enable

them cope with their realities (KII/Unanimous response /male/female/age 21-above/2024).

Interviewee H

Women deserved to be given equal right and opportunity as men in Nigeria, we need an equal standard for everyone to grow and be successful (House wife/female/Age 27/Kano State/2024)

One of the interviewees said:

I think I am much aware of women situation and the legal framework that is backing the affirmative action movement. Let me make this clear at once, affirmative action was meant for Nigerians alone, at some point, in Europe and America, less privileged people are underrepresented in governance and all that seem like decision making and this realization birthed the movement which Martin Luther King Jnr bought into the struggle until victory was attained. You see we found ourselves in the last angle of civilization that is why ours that is, the female struggle is coming now and I can see the light its just all about time, we will attain the goal of ones and equal opportunity for all (Kii/Lawyer/female/age41/Cross River State/2024).

2. Have you heard of Affirmative action for women 35% inclusion in appointive position in Nigeria?

Interviewee A

Indeed, I have heard of affirmative action. I supposed it was meant to help women amplify their voices where needed right? However, there is limit to my knowledge of the many other activities that follows (KII/Commissioner/male/age 52/Nasarawa/2024).

Interviewee B

I have heard of affirmative action but I have not really given it a deep thought, but I have the believe that it meant well for us as people. Whatever it is, I think I will do more digging into it to know more (KII/Traditional

Leader/male/age 52/Bauchi state/2024).

Interview C

I am aware of the affirmative action for women inclusion in governance and socio-economic development. There has been a lot of advocacies targeting this area and Gods willing, the results are already showing up (KII/Head Teacher/female/age 49/Imo State/2024).

Interviewee G and the others unanimously agreed that:

Agrees that they are aware of the affirmative actions for women (KII/Unanimous response/male & female/age 21 above/2024).

Interviewee H noted that:

I do not have much knowledge about the issue surrounding affirmative action but I can tell you that I know and have heard of many gender empowerment efforts from within and outside the country (Housewife/female/Age 27/Kano State/2024).

3. Are you aware of the April 6th court victory for minimum of 35% appointive position in Nigeria?

Interviewee F

Basically, not aware of the date of the victory but I am very aware of the advocacies that targeted at improve the chances of women in the political space and others. The victory is for all men and women inclusive (House wife/female/age 57/Kano State/2024).

Interviewee A

I don't think I am aware of the April 6th court victory for women, like I told you, I am aware of affirmative actions for women but some other details are sketchy. I am either here or there for one stakeholder meeting or the other (KII/Commissioner/male/age 52/Nasarawa/2024).

Interviewee B

Sincerely, I am not aware of any such court judgement of victory for women but I am positive about women like I told you earlier (KII/Traditional Leader/male/age 52/Bauchi state/2024).

Interviewee C

I am very aware and I have been part of this movement for several years. We are aimed at breaking the ceiling and ushering new dawn for women emancipation. A lot of non-governmental organization are already involved and are doing just well in funding and increasing the media presence of women in Nigeria and the globe (KII/Head Teacher/female/age 49/Imo State/2024).

Interviewee H noted that:

I am not really informed about it (House wife/female/Age 27/Kano State/2024).

4. Have there been a change in the attitude of people towards women in governance?

I think we have had many changes in the attitude of men towards women in leadership that is to start with, we have seen women heading institutions and doing well. Besides, there many platforms now that women are using to advance their course, as such, I think women are now visible than before (KII/Commissioner/male/age 52/Nasarawa/2024).

Interviewee B

Yes, there have been improvement in women in the public space but what I cannot tell you is the percentage, I am not too good in figures but I can talk and analyze things like other experts do (KII/Traditional Leader/male/age 52/Bauchi state/2024).

Interviewee C

There has been a lot of changes as per women visibility but not as we have anticipated. We can still do more and I believed having you in my office today speaks a lot about women development (KII/Head Teacher/female/age 49/Imo State/2024).

Interviewee H noted that:

Yes change is happening but its taking much time than expected. We should

try more (House wife/female/Age 27/Kano State/2024).

An interviewee said:

I think change in attitude is relative, they can change their attitude and not do the right. I think the institution or system is faulty and until that broken link is properly established and addressed, we may not get it right in this part of the global south. Although, I cannot be too pessimistic, the right step is already ongoing, it's all about time and change in leadership. It may not take the right-thinking person a year to fix it and until then (Kii/Lawyer/female/age41/Cross River State/2024).

5. Has the appointment of women increased in Nigerian governance since the April 6th 2022 court victory?

For appointment I cannot say exactly about the current leadership of the country, but we look forward to more appointment of women hopefully. Although, in the past, we had many women in elective and appointive positions and they left positive marks, the like of Dorah Akiunyili, Ngozi Okonjo, Stella Odua among many others (KII/Commissioner/male/age 52/Nasarawa/2024).

Interviewee B

Noted that as for ministerial position in the current administration, women have not been really considered compared to the near past government (KII/Traditional Leader/male/age 52/Bauchi state/2024).

Interviewee C

In past yes, but presently I think it we have a lot work to do.

Interviewee E

Well, I will say yes it has improved, given the numbers of women in public spaces, things are changing already even though it not has been how we want but the ship is set sail (Head Teacher/female/aged 51/Imo State/2024).

The Other Interviewees unanimously said:

They cannot tell specifically because the appointive level of women in

governance is not stable for some times now, we need more inclusiveness of women **(Unanimous Responses/male & female/2024)**.

6. What can you do to improve women's' presence in appointive and elective positions in Nigeria?

For me, at my personal capacity, I have increase efforts at educating my female children to aspire for the best, for my community, I have mounted the podium several times encouraging parent to support all girl child to acquire education. For the country wide, I have contributed my voice at several fora call for women to be supported in all ramifications of life, I think I have done some effort with these **(KII/Commissioner/male/age 52/ Nasarawa/2024)**.

Interview B

I have been very supportive of my wife in all that bring growth economically and politically **(KII/Traditional Leader/male/age 52/Bauchi state/2024)**.

Interviewee C

We have a lot to do, I have been mentoring my students and teachers to always stand on their ground for recognition, we have continued to do our best in the best of our capacities as head teacher, sister and mother and perhaps, grandmother as the case may be **(KII/Head Teacher/female/age 49/ Imo State/2024)**.

Interviewee E

Observed that although, we are being encouraged to go into more public space and make our impact felt. Yes, we the educated ones can push but my utmost concern is for the rural women whose husbands has used cultural and religious tradition to reduce their quest to pursue good life or emancipation, I am glad to be part of this your study however, I want to use this medium to advise the government to do more for women in this era, we need more women in leadership positions. We can do good in authority, it is because historians have not been fair to women else, the world would have seen the catalyst in women that drives change. When we speak of change especially in my state Benue, women are the backbone of agricultural production but how many people knows that, I think women need to start blowing their trumpet and I trust you can assist us in doing so with this kind of your research **(Head Teacher/female/aged 51/Imo State/2024)**.

Also, interviewee E further stated that:

The victory attained for the affirmative action is a win for all Nigerian women by extension African women, this is because, Nigerian policies are like spring balls for other African states. We look forward to seeing the women in places making decisions for our collective growth and development (**Head Teacher/female/aged 51/Imo State/2024**).

I want to encourage studies like this because many women are not aware of what affirmative action mean. I cannot tell if it was deliberate or it was because they do not belief in the system for change, that I cannot say specifically but I trust we can do more to educate women to know more about the law especially the affirmative actions that guarantee their right to a whopping 35% representation in governance. For me think we are breaking the ceiling already, I want to thank the initiators of this study and we look forward to better tomorrow (**Head Teacher/female/aged 51/Imo State/2024**).

Interviewee D said:

I have heard of affirmative action and I have been following up with the development so far so good. The victory attained is a victory for all and sundry. But what I do not have a clear understanding is that, what are the mechanisms to be used to enforce the implementation of such policies in Nigeria? Considering that most of the politician and by extension the political parties are patriarch in nature. One thing to me is to win in the court another thing is to enforce the law. I supposed you understand what I am saying. The legal system is in shamble as such we are just living in the system as the political class want it to be run (**Civil Servant Fed. Min. of Labour/female/age 43/Lagos State/2024**).

Interviewee F observed that:

Well, I have not herd of the court victory but I am very aware of the advocacies that have been targeted towards improving women's number in the three arms of government. It is a welcome development for me and I believed if this

may not serve to aid my growth, I trust my daughters may not need to pass through the dungeon I went through in the name of marriage. My case was peculiar because my husband while alive never wanted me to work or enter the public spaces for reasons best known to him. You can imagine, at my age, with my certificate I am forced to look for job with little formal experience when my mates are preparing to retire from the service. Should there be strong advocacies and laws then I would have had a voice to fight my way through. However, I give God all the glory and adoration for I am still alive and heal and hearty to carter for my children. The efforts put into the struggle shall not be in vain **(House wife/female/age 57/Kano State/2024)**.

More so, an interviewee added that:

For me women are not asking to take over the men's positions in the society but there should be a level playground for all. You see, I am a lawyer and ordinarily, most men ought to be willing to work with me but my presence intimidates them especially my counterparts in the bench. I think it is easy, we can start from our girl child at home, tell her to see herself her contemporaries and the domestic chore should not be placed on her shoulders as our parent did. Technologies are already doing most of the domestic works, women should be allowed to participate in the public space so that everyone can contribute their quota to the unreserve expanse of development space in life. Life is too precious and short for one cultural and religious norms to hold one back. **(Kii/Lawyer/female/age41/Cross River State/2024)**

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- i The study revealed that (64%) of the participants were in between the age of 35 & 44. This suggests that the majority of respondents are in their mid-career years, which could reflect a focus on individuals who are likely to be established in their professional lives and potentially have more stability in their personal and financial situations. Majority of respondents (57%) hold a Master's degree. This is a significant portion and indicates that the sample is highly educated, with many individuals having advanced academic qualifications. The largest group of respondents are employed with (50%). This indicates that a substantial portion of the sample is engaged in regular employment, which suggests a focus on individuals who are active in the workforce. The study further revealed that majority of the respondents (70%) identify as Christian. This indicates that the participants are predominantly Christian, reflecting a strong influence of Christian beliefs and practices within the respondent pool. It concluded that majority of the respondents (73%) are married. This indicates that the respondents are predominantly composed of individuals who are in long-term, legally recognized relationships.

- ii The study revealed that majority of respondents (85%) are aware of at least 3-5 women who have been appointed to governance positions, indicating that female representation in governance is a noticeable issue within this sample. It further revealed that the largest proportion of respondents (46%) believes that the level of women's participation in appointive positions has decreased over the last 12 months. This indicates a strong decline in the efforts to reduce the gender gaps in governance. The study showed that overwhelming majority of the respondents (67%) believe that the current level of women's participation in governance positions is not adequate. This suggests a strong sentiment that there is a need for greater female representation and involvement in political and governance roles.

- iii The study revealed that a substantial majority of respondents (81%) are not aware of any government initiatives aimed at increasing the percentage of women in governance. This suggests a significant gap in public awareness regarding the efforts or programs that may be in place to promote female representation in governance. It further indicated that majority of respondents (72%) believe that the government's efforts in promoting gender

mainstreaming in governance have been not effective. This indicates widespread dissatisfaction with the impact and outcomes of these efforts.

- iv The majority of respondents (50%) believe that public awareness campaigns on gender equality have been the most impactful initiative of government on women empowerment. This indicates a strong perception that increasing public knowledge and awareness about gender issues plays a crucial role in enhancing women's participation in governance.

- v The study further revealed that majority of respondents (62%) believe that the government is not doing enough to support women's participation in appointive positions. This reflects a widespread concern that current efforts or measures are insufficient in ensuring greater female representation in these roles. Nearly half of the 100 respondents (47%) do not believe there has been an increase in the number of women in appointive positions over the past year.

- vi The study revealed that an overwhelming majority of respondents (71%) are dissatisfied with the current level of women's representation in governance. This high level of dissatisfaction suggests significant discontent with the results of government efforts in improving female representation. It further indicated that a large majority of respondents (72%) are not aware at all of the April 6th judgment. This indicates a significant gap in awareness regarding this important ruling on women's rights to appointive and elective positions. However, the study shows that majority of respondents (55%) are neutral regarding the April 6th judgment. This large percentage suggests that many people may have mixed feelings, lack strong opinions, or feel indifferent about the judgment. It also indicated that majority of respondents (56%) believe that the 35% target for women's participation in governance is not sufficient to ensure gender equality. This suggests that many people view 35% as an inadequate measure for achieving true gender parity in governance roles. It finally concluded that a significant majority of respondents (50%) believe that the April 6th judgment will have no effect on women's participation in governance. This indicates a prevailing view that the judgment might not bring about meaningful changes or improvements in this area.

vii

The study revealed that majority of respondents (56%) do not believe that the government will effectively implement the 35% mandate for women's appointive and elective positions. This indicates a significant level of skepticism about the government's commitment or capability to enforce the judgment effectively. The most commonly cited challenge, identified by 58% of respondents, is resistance from political parties. A combined total of 53% of respondents are either «not confident (29%) or not confident at all (24%) that the April 6th judgment will lead to meaningful changes in women's representation in governance. A significant proportion of respondents (50%) are either «dissatisfied» (26%) and very dissatisfied (24%) with the current level of women's participation in governance. The most frequently cited benefit is «enhanced governance effectiveness,» mentioned by 46% of respondents. This suggests that a significant portion of people believe that increasing women's participation will improve the overall effectiveness of governance, possibly through diverse perspectives and improved decision-making. The study revealed that the most frequently cited hindrance is a lack of political will, mentioned by 32% of respondents. This suggests that many people believe that without strong commitment and drive from political leaders and institutions, the implementation of the 35% affirmative action will struggle. T further revealed that a combined total of 49% of respondents believe that full implementation of the 35% affirmative action is either unlikely (32%) or very unlikely (17%). This indicates significant skepticism about the likelihood of successfully achieving the 35% target in appointive positions.

viii

The study revealed that majority of respondents (67%) believe that the current political climate in Nigeria is not conducive to achieving the goals of the 35% affirmative action. This indicates widespread concern that the existing political environment may hinder the successful implementation of gender representation policies. Furthermore, A significant majority of respondents, 65%, view women's active participation in political parties as either very important (25%) or «important» (40%) for the success of the 35% affirmative action. The study further indicated that majority of respondents (46%) believe that the April 6th court judgment will have no impact on access to quality healthcare for women. This indicates a prevailing view that the judgment is not expected to influence healthcare services for women. Thus, a substantial number of respondents (35%) believe

there will be no significant change in employment opportunities as a result of the judgment. This suggests that many people do not expect the judgment to have a substantial impact, either positive or negative, on women's employment prospects. This indicates that a segment of respondents is hopeful that more women in governance could positively influence educational opportunities. A substantial portion of respondents (39%) believe that there will be «no significant impact» on educational opportunities as a result of increased women's representation in governance.

ix

A substantial percentage of respondents (32%) are «neutral» on the importance of such government policies. This neutrality suggests that while some people may recognize the relevance of gender equality in these sectors, they might not have strong opinions on the direct impact or necessity of active promotion. The most frequently identified long-term benefit is «higher educational attainment rates for girls,» with 42% of respondents highlighting this as a key advantage. This reflects a strong belief that increased women's representation in governance will significantly enhance educational opportunities and outcomes for girls in Nigeria. A combined total of 52% of respondents are either «very optimistic» (19%) or «optimistic» (33%) about the impact of the April 6th court judgment. This suggests that a majority of people hold a positive view about the potential for the judgment to bring beneficial changes to women's lives, particularly in healthcare, employment, and education. Majority believes that enacting or amending laws to enforce the 35% affirmative action is a necessary measure.

CONCLUSION

Affirmative action policies in Nigeria are designed to promote improve gender equity and increase the carbon footprint of women in governance and decision making through active involvement in elective and appointive positions. In spite several active advocacies and ratification of local, regional and international treaties by the federal government of Nigeria, the national gender policy that aimed at securing 35% space for women in elective and appointive position has not been implemented in Nigeria. Women are consistently kept out of critical policies and programme development. Irrespective of the growing voices and advocacies of the civil society organizations and the global call for increasing women's' participation in governance, the political leadership of Nigeria is still hell bent on perpetuating the reduction and indirectly silencing the voices of women in governance. Current statistics shows that out of the 109 senators only 9 were female and 27 female houses of representative members against 360 male counterparts. Conspicuously, if African countries like Rwanda, and Senegal reserves minimum numbers of seats for female parliamentarians and the law requires the political parties to nominate an equal number of men and women as candidates during elections those countries, it becomes obvious that the Nigerian government is deliberate in denying women the said 35% affirmative positions in governance. The foregoing exposes the point that the implementation of the affirmative action lacks the political will in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings of this study, we wish to recommend that:

- i The Federal Government of Nigeria should queue into the other nations who had adopted the internal best practice by adopting the April 6th 2022 court judgement and develop a suitable guideline for implementing the 35% affirmative action policy across the three tiers of government in the country this is given that the study revealed that majority of Nigerians were not aware of what government is doing to reduce the gender disparity in Nigeria.
- ii Government should mandate all political parties to create equal opportunities for male and female political aspirant in all levels of elections in the country while encouraging women through empowerment, training, mentorship initiative and support from civil organizations within and outside Nigeria. This will help reposition the public opinion on the effort of government to reduce the gender gap between men and women in governance and decision-making positions.
- iii Government and other critical stakeholders should intensify efforts at addressing the cultural and social barriers that is hindering women from participating in politics. This involves creating awareness on the importance of women's involvement in decisionmaking from the grassroots through the federal level for social, economic and political development to be attained
- iv Government and civil society organizations should design an evaluation mechanism to monitor progress and adjust the national gender policies where necessary to enable the smooth integration with other related policies and programme in the country.
- v Government and other stakeholders should conduct a national town hall meeting with various constituencies to create awareness and to listen to the yearnings and aspiration of the women groups on the national gender policy as well as sponsor this kind of research to provide hands on reports on the development attained thus far with the implementation of the 35% affirmative action for women inclusion in decision making in Nigeria.

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ANNEXES OF TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

Instruction

You are hereby requested to provide answers to this questionnaire by ticking the box and reflect

your opinion or view in the space provided. Your response will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thank you for your cooperation

SECTION A: Demographic Information:

1. Gender:

- a. Male ()
- b. Female ()

2. Age:

- a. 18-24 ()
- b. 25-34 ()
- c. 35-44 ()
- d. 45-54 ()
- e. 55 and above ()

3. Educational Qualification:

- a. Primary school ()
- b. Secondary school ()
- c. Diploma/Certificate ()
- d. Bachelor's degree ()
- e. Master's degree ()
- f. Doctorate ()

4. Occupation:

- a. Student ()
- b. Employed ()
- c. Self-employed ()
- d. Unemployed ()
- e. Retired ()
- f. Other ()

5. Religion:

- a. Christianity ()
- b. Islam ()
- c. Traditional African religions ()

6. Marital Status:

- a. Single ()
- b. Married ()
- c. Divorced ()
- d. Widowed ()

SECTION B: The level of women participation in governance (appointive/elective) positions for 12 months in Nigeria

7. How many women do you know who have been appointed to governance positions in the last 12 months in Nigeria?

- a. None
- b. 1-2 ()
- c. 3-5 ()
- d. More than 5 ()

8. In your opinion, has the level of women's participation in appointive positions increased, decreased, or remained the same over the last 12 months?

- a. Increased ()
- b. Decreased ()
- c. Remained the same ()
- d. Not sure ()

9. Do you believe that the current level of women's participation in governance (appointive/elective) positions in Nigeria is adequate?

- a. Yes ()
- b. No ()
- c. Not sure ()

SECTION C: The existing efforts made by government towards increasing the percentage of women in governance to achieve adequate gender mainstreaming in Nigeria

10. Are you aware of any government initiatives aimed at increasing the percentage of women in governance in Nigeria?

- a. Yes ()
- b. No ()

11. How effective do you think the government's efforts have been in promoting gender mainstreaming in governance?

- a. Very effective ()
- b. Somewhat effective ()
- c. Not effective ()
- d. Not sure ()

12. Which of the following government initiatives do you believe have been most impactful in increasing women's participation in governance? (Select all that apply)

- a. Gender quotas in political appointments ()
- b. Leadership training programs for women ()
- c. Financial support for female political candidates ()
- d. Public awareness campaigns on gender equality ()
- e. Other _____

13. Do you believe the government is doing enough to support women's participation in appointive positions in governance?

- a. Yes ()
- b. No ()
- c. Not sure ()

14. Have you noticed an increase in the number of women in appointive positions in governance over the past 12 months?

- a. Yes ()
- b. No ()
- c. Not sure ()

15. How satisfied are you with the current level of women's representation in governance as a result of government efforts?

- a. Very satisfied ()
- b. Satisfied ()
- c. Neutral ()
- d. Dissatisfied ()
- e. Very dissatisfied ()

SECTION D: The perception of women on the April 6th judgement affirming the right of women to 35% appointive and elective positions in Nigeria

16. How aware are you of the April 6th judgment affirming the right of women to 35% appointive and elective positions in Nigeria?

- a. Very aware ()
- b. Somewhat aware ()
- c. Not aware at all ()

17. What is your opinion on the April 6th judgment affirming the right of women to 35% appointive and elective positions in Nigeria?

- a. Strongly agree ()
- b. Agree ()
- c. Neutral ()
- d. Disagree ()
- e. Strongly disagree ()

18. Do you believe the 35% target for women's participation in governance is sufficient to ensure gender equality in Nigeria?

- a. Yes ()
- b. No ()
- c. Not sure ()

19. How do you think the April 6th judgment will impact women's participation in governance in Nigeria?

- a. Very positively ()
- b. Positively ()

- c. No impact ()
- d. Negatively ()
- e. Very negatively ()

20. Do you think the government will effectively implement the 35% appointive and elective positions for women as mandated by the judgment?

- a. Yes ()
- b. No ()
- c. Not sure ()

21. What challenges do you foresee in the implementation of the 35% appointive and elective positions for women? (Select all that apply)

- a. Resistance from political parties ()
- b. Cultural and societal norms ()
- c. Lack of awareness and advocacy ()
- d. Insufficient qualified female candidates ()
- e. Other _____

22. How confident are you that the April 6th judgment will lead to meaningful changes in women's representation in governance?

- a. Very confident ()
- b. Confident ()
- c. Neutral ()
- d. Not confident ()
- e. Not confident at all ()

23. How do you feel about the current level of women's participation in governance in Nigeria?

- a. Very satisfied ()
- b. Satisfied ()
- c. Neutral ()
- d. Dissatisfied ()
- e. Very dissatisfied ()

SECTION E: The emerging factors that would likely affect women involvement (35% affirmative action) in governance in Nigeria

24. In your opinion, what are the key benefits of implementing the 35% affirmative action for women in governance?

- a. Increased gender equality ()
- b. Better representation of women's issues ()
- c. Enhanced governance effectiveness ()
- d. Other _____

25. What do you think are the main factors that could hinder the successful implementation of the 35% affirmative action for women in governance?

- a. Resistance from political parties ()
- b. Cultural and societal norms ()
- c. Lack of political will ()
- d. Insufficient support from male counterparts ()
- e. Other _____

26. How likely do you think it is that the 35% affirmative action will be fully implemented in appointive positions in governance?

- a. Very likely ()
- b. Likely ()
- c. Neutral ()
- d. Unlikely ()
- e. Very unlikely ()

27. Do you believe that the current political climate in Nigeria is conducive to achieving the goals of the 35% affirmative action for women in governance?

- a. Yes ()
- b. No ()
- c. Not sure ()

28. How important do you think it is for women to actively participate in political parties to ensure the success of the 35% affirmative action?

- a. Very important ()
- b. Important ()
- c. Neutral ()
- d. Not important ()
- e. Not important at all ()

SECTION F: How the April 6th court judgement would influence access to quality healthcare, employment opportunities and educational advancement for women in Nigeria

29. In your opinion, how do you think the April 6th court judgment will impact access to quality healthcare for women in Nigeria?

- a. Positive impact ()
- b. Negative impact ()
- c. No impact ()
- d. Not sure ()

30. How do you think the April 6th court judgment will affect employment opportunities for women in Nigeria?

- a. Increase opportunities ()
- b. Decrease opportunities ()
- c. No significant change ()
- d. Not sure ()

31. What role do you believe increased women's representation in governance, as mandated by the April 6th judgment, will play in advancing educational opportunities for girls and women in Nigeria?

- a. Significant advancement ()
- b. Some advancement ()
- c. No significant impact ()
- d. Not sure ()

32. How important do you think it is for government policies to actively promote gender equality in healthcare, employment, and education as a result of the April 6th judgment?

- a. Very important ()
- b. Important ()
- c. Neutral ()
- d. Not important ()
- e. Not important at all ()

33. What do you see as the potential long-term benefits of women’s increased representation in governance for healthcare, employment, and educational advancement in Nigeria?

- a. Improved public health outcomes ()
- b. Enhanced economic growth ()
- c. Higher educational attainment rates for girls ()
- d. Other _____

34. How optimistic are you about the overall impact of the April 6th court judgment on the lives of women in Nigeria, particularly in terms of healthcare, employment, and educational opportunities?

- a. Very optimistic ()
- b. Optimistic ()
- c. Neutral ()
- d. Pessimistic ()
- e. Very pessimistic ()

SECTION G: Possible means for the implementation of the April 6th court judgement affirming the right of Nigerian women

35. In your opinion, what possible measures can be taken for the implementation of the April 6th court judgement affirming the right of Nigerian women

Measures	Yes	No
Enactment or amendment of laws to enforce the 35% affirmative action		
Increase gender quotas further		
Implement stronger penalties for non-compliance with gender policies		
Launching nationwide campaigns to educate the public		
Enhance mentorship and support networks for women		
Provide more financial support for female candidates		
Encouraging the media to increase coverage of women politicians and their achievements		
Engaging civil society to monitor compliance		
Strengthening electoral institutions support		
Adopting successful strategies from other		



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