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VAbdulummin Musa Omiya

Federal University Birnin Kebbi (Nigeria)

Esther A. Ojile

Federal College of Education (Technical) (Potiskum, Nigeria)

Women Political Participations: A Study of Nasarawa State from 1999 to 2022

ABSTRACT. Gender equality is the 5th Sustainable Development Goals that aims at providing a necessary foundation for a peaceful, equal, prosperous and sustainable institutional participation for men and women alike globally. Despite local and international efforts by the concerned authorities, patriarchal discriminatory laws and social norms remain pervasive. As women continue to be under-represented at all levels of politics. This study tries to examine the level and status of women involvement in the politics of Nasarawa State from 1999 to 2022. These challenges make the female gender incapable of contributing their quarter to national development. The study relied on existing official record to elicit data such as National electoral Commission (INEC). Findings show that only 4% of women participated in the Federal House of Representative, 0% of women represented in Nasarawa state speakers, only 4% of women participated in the house of assembly, and most unfortunately, 0% participation in local government chairperson from 1992 to 2022. Among the 60 women interviewed on their perception on women participation in politics, 53% responded that they are not satisfied, 41% of the women responded that they are satisfied with the level of women participation in politics. The remaining 6% responded indifference. Reasons for poor women participation based on the outcome of the result in include traditional and spiritual discriminatory laws/practices that limit women participation in politics. Others are poverty, low educational attainment, social isolation, personal factors, stigma and discrimination, lack of role models and legal barriers. No doubt, the study concludes that there has been poor women representation Nasarawa state politics since 1999. The study recommends majorly that harmful traditional law/practices that halt women free participation in the society should be abolished through sustained sensitization to ensure women contribute their quota towards national development and achieving SDGs.

KEYWORDS: women, politics, participation, Nasarawa State, SDGs

Introduction

In order to ensure women involvement in politics, the need for empowerment cannot be over compromised. The connection between

the empowerment of women and development is generally taken to be a truism. Empowering women is intrinsically valuable, as are freedoms for all social groups in general. Indeed, the empowerment of all people should be an *objective* of development beyond economic growth and the accumulation of physical capital (Hornset and Soysa, 2021). For women to be empowered, they must free to venture into all social endeavor of their choice. A Nobel laureate, Amartya Sen (1999), once argued that development is driven by the institutional environment that allows “freedoms” to flourish, where people have “agency” to follow their desire for doing well (Sen 1999). This means freedom is a precursor to development. Additionally, women access to health care, education, security, markets and investment, public space, work, politics is determined by men who usurp the position of “stronger” sex (Waylen et al., 2013). The main constraints of women are political participation, violence, high level of illiteracy, existing patriarchal harmful laws and lack of funds (Orisadare, 2019).

It should be noted that most of the patriarchal conclusions on women weakness are mirage, prejudice and unscientific. The findings of Gneezy et al (2009) shows that it is possible to nurture women into being more competitive. Women’s unwillingness to compete is due to societal norms and bottle-necked traditional gender roles. Hence, the conclusion of Fox and Lawless (2004) that though equally qualified and experienced women end up running for office less often than their male counterparts simply because the men are explicitly programmed, encouraged and favored by society to run while the women are not.

In his bid to bring governance closer to people, the military administration of late General Sani Abacha created six states. Among these is Nasarawa state which was carved out from Plateau State on October 1st 1996 (Onimisi, 2014). Though there are several clashing accounts on why the state was created, but a vital and neglected aspect accruing meager attention of scholars and analysts on Nasarawa State is women involvement in the governance since her creation in 1999. The level of women involvement in the politics and governance of Nasarawa State is crucial because Ette and Patience (2022) affirmed that women relevance in societal governance cannot be over emphasized as they have unique role they can put in place in bringing sustained development in any human society. Also, Sen (1999) affirmed that the causal effects of gender empowerment remain somewhat speculative; there is a powerful role for gender empowerment for increasing societal development.

Nevertheless, the extent to which women participate in politics differs widely across regions of the world. So does the extent to which they (can) influence policymaking. This study tries to ascertain the level and status of women political participation in Nasarawa state form 1999 to 2022.

Literature review

The need for women involvement in politics have drawn so much attention that underrepresentation of women in politics and factors that constrain their participation are core concerns for many scholars and analysts (Ette & Patience, 2022). There is a need for women inclusion in politics as their absence has high societal set back (Corbett et al., 2022). Among the core factors that instigate the underrepresentation of women in modern era is lack of clear understanding of these concepts; Sex and gender. Lack of understanding of these two concepts and using both interchangeably has further flamed up the ordeals of women involvement in politics. What then is Gender and Sex?

Sex refers to as having canal knowledge of a woman or a man. It can also mean a naturally programmed characteristic of a woman or a man. The issue of sex role surfaces here. Sex roles are natural and can only be performed by a sex category that possesses such qualities not the other way round. For example, it's only a man that has penis and arrogate the role of impregnation. Only women have vagina, big breasts, and breast feed. So men and women have their roles to play that cannot be interchanged as regards to sex role.

Gender is a societal designed methodology of how men and women should behave. Here the eminent issues are gender roles. Gender roles can be performed by men and women interchangeably unlike sex role. Political participation is among the examples of gender roles. Other examples include: engaging in business, farming, cooking, baby seating, school enrolment, and joining the army etc. Liu Yang was the first Chinese astronaut to go to space. What many thought was a men affairs.

The point here is that in most instances, people naturalize gender roles as if they are sex roles. People tend to see them as fixed but in reality, can be performed by both men and women.

Level of women Political participation and factors that hinders them

An assessment of women's groups in politics by Orisadare (2019), identified challenges confronted by women and also explores its implication for economic development in Osun state, Nigeria. The study revealed that women lack political agenda; their aims mainly do not align with any political agenda, although women according to the author can be seen occupying certain political positions, there exist a high illiteracy rate among women's groups and most of them are ignorant of existing national or international gender equality laws or affirmative action. Thus, illiteracy serves as impediment to women political participation in the study area.

As 2023 election draws nearer, women formations are revamping measures in ensuring a sustained and satisfied women involvement in the Nigerian politics, though facing some legislative setbacks. As Awodipe (2022) reported that one of the bills, the affirmative action bill seeks to amend section 223 of the Constitution, to ensure women occupy at least 35 percent in appointive positions. Another bill, which was rejected is the bill on ministerial or commissioner nomination, which seeks to amend sections 147 and 192, so that at least 35 percent of nominees are women while the last bill, the reserved seat bill is to among others, amend sections 48, 49 and 91 of the Constitution to create additional 37, 74 and 108 seats for women at the Senate, House of Representatives and state House of Assemblies. Awodipe (2022) further reported that the CEO, Women Radio, Toun Okewale-Sonaiya said Nigeria's male-dominated National Assembly have spoken that Nigerian women do not matter, therefore the latter have no choice than to commit to be deliberate and intentional in working together to ensure more women emerge as candidates and win elections next year. Sonaiya urged women to vote for women, campaign for and fund women. In line with this, a study by Ngwu, Iwuagwu, Ogar, Eyang, Iyani, & Okafor (2022) on Socio-demographic predictors of gendered political participation in Enugu state blamed women level or access to educational attainment, economic status, religion, Marital status, political godfatherism as among the major setback of women in politics. Also, Majeed (2022) reported that out of the 27 APC Gubernatorial winners in the just concluded primary elections, 26 are male while only Aishatu Dahiru Ahmad Binani from Adamawa became the only and first woman to be selected as a governorship candidate in APC in just concluded primary elections. The election

which court in Yola nullified As for Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), all the Gubernatorial primary election winners are men. They are as follows.

Table 1. Gubernatorial primary election winners in Nigeria

S/N	State	PDP	APC	Sex
1	Adamawa	Umaru fintiri	Aisha Dahiru Ahmad Binani	nullified
2	Oyo	Seyi makinde	Teslim Folarin	M
3	Benue	Titus Uba	Hyacinth Iornem Alia	M
4	Enugu	Peter Mbah	Uche Nnnaji	M
5	Abia	Prof. Eleazor Ikonne	Ikechi Emenike	M
6	Delta	Sherrif Oborevworì	Ovie Omo-Agege	M
7	Rivers	Fubara siminialayi	Tonye Cole	M
8	Akwa Ibon	Pastor Umoh Basssey Eno	Obon Akanimo Udofia	M
9	Lagos	Olajide Jandor	Babajide Sanwoolu	M
10	Jigawa	Mustafa Lamido	Umaru Namadi	M
11	Gombe	Jibrin Barde	Muhammad Inuwa Yahaya	M
12	Nasarawa	David Ombugadu	A. A. Sule	M
13	Borno	Muhammad Ali Jajari	Prof B. Zillum	M
14	Kaduna	Isah Ashiru	Uba Sani	M
15	Kwara	Yahman Abdullahi	Abdulrahman Abdurrazaq	M
16	Plateau	Caleb Mutfwang	Nentewa Yilwada Goshwe	M
17	Bauchi	Ibrahim Kashim	Saddique Abubakar	M
18	Sokoto	Saidu Umar	Ahmed Aliyu	M
19	Kano	Muhammad Abacha	Nasir Yusuf Gawuna	M
20	Katsina	Yakubu Lado	Dikko Umaru Radda	M
21	Zamfara	Dauda Lawan	Bello Matawalle	M
22	Cross River	Sandy Onor	Bassey Out	M
23	Ogun	Segun sowunmi	Dapo Abiodun	M
24	Ebonyi	Sam Egwu	Ogbonna Nwifuru	M
25	Niger	Liman Kantigi	Umar Bago	M
26	Kebbi	Aminu bande	Nasir Idris	M
27	Taraba	Agbu Kefas	Emmanuel Bwacha	M
28	Yobe	Sharrif Abdu	Mai Mala Buni	M

Source BBC (2022), International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR, 2022). Tabled by the author

In Commemoration of the International Women's Day, Abel (2022) reported that National Council for Women Societies (NCWS), Nasarawa State Chapter led by its president in Nasarawa state Mrs. Mary Samuel Meshi,

staged a peaceful protest demanding for more inclusion of women in governance in the state. The women besieged the state assembly complex carrying placards with different inscriptions such as inclusion for Women, Break Constitution Bias; the future is female among others.

Intimidation of women and their poor economic status are among the major contributing factors of women failure in politics as Ukumba (2022) expressed that Dorathy Asheazi Gabriel, a federal house of representative of Akwanga/NassarawaEggon/Wamba constituency under the platform of APC complained that it has not been easy from the beginning up to now. Most men I solicit support from were not accommodating. They resort into scaring me away from the race. In fact, there has been intimidation here and there from the men on me. "However, their intimidation is giving me more courage and determination to continue with my aspiration. Also, economic was acknowledged by Nwachukwu (2022) as one of the core factor that influence Nigerian women failure in politics. Nwachukwu further asserted that Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA), in a statement by its National Coordinator, Comrade Emmanuel Onwubiko, said that there was undue monetization of the just concluded nationwide presidential primary elections in Nigeria.

Violence against women in Politics

As participation of women in politics has increased, so has the violence against them. studies showed that this is due to more women speaking out about the scourge, but also as a result of insufficient counter measures to address violence (United Nations, 2022). In a meeting of UN on violence against women in politics with societies, Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed said that violence against women in politics is a violation of human rights that aims to undermine governance. Also, the congress council for Europe (2020) reported fighting sexist violence against women in politics at local and regional level. The report builds on previous Congress and Council of Europe texts on both women's political participation and violence against women, in order to look at the specific case of sexist violence perpetrated against women in politics at the local and regional level, when they are candidates or holding elected posts. It takes stock of the increase of incivility, insults and attacks notably via social media from both peers and citizens against women who become visible in the political arena. It also underlines how the attitudes which underline sexist violence

undermine women's right to fully and equally participate in political and public life, also compromising the foundations of democracy and the exercise of democratic institutions. The report further calls on local and regional authorities to take a strong stand as political leaders against sexist attacks targeting women, introduce or revise codes of conduct explicitly prohibiting sexist behavior and speech in their assemblies. It also invites them to be vigilant during election periods with regard to sexist attacks against women and to monitor candidate nomination procedures for inequalities. It invites the governments of the member States to provide support and resources to local and regional level authorities,

Methodology

Research Approach

The case study for the article is limited to women participation in the politics of Nasarawa state from 1992 to 2022. The data collected for the study include oral interviews, observations, analysis of primary and secondary results from Media, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and other official sources and documents. A mixture of qualitative and quantitative statistics has been applied in the analysis of data. The descriptive data describes the sample characteristics.

The study area

Nasarawa state is located in Middle Belt of Nigeria. It was created out of Plateau state on 1st October, 1996 by the military administration of General Sani Abacha. Nasarawa state has 13 Local Government Areas (LGAs), Comparing of Lafia (the state capital), Obi, Keana, Awe, Doma, Nasarawa, Toto, Kokona, Karu, Keffi, Akwanga, Wamba, and Nasarawa eggon. Five Fedral representatives are elected to represent Nasarawa state from; Akwanga/NasarawaEggonWamba, Awe/Doma/Keana, Keffi/Karu/Kokona, Lafia/Obi, and Nasarawa/Toto. Three senators are elected to represent Nasarawa state at the senate from Nasarawa South, Nasawara North and Nasarawa West. Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) founded in 1998, Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) created in 2009, and All Progressive Congress (APC) created in 2013 were the only political parties that ever won the governorship seat in Nasarawa state. Nasarawa state shares border with Plateau and Taraba states at the eastern part, north by Kaduna state, south

by Benue and Kogi States and at the western axis by Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory. The people of Nasarawa are mainly crop producers with pockets of others engaging in sole or combination of fishing, pottery, knitting and mining etc. It is a home of at least 25 expensive solid minerals. The state has several ethnic groups such as Akye, Alago, Eggon, Mighili(Koro), Tiv, Idoma, Gade, Gbagyi, Mada, Nungu(rindre), Ninzoh, Gwandara, Yeskwa, Agatu, Basa, Mama, and Kanuri etc. Islam, Traditional and Christianity are the main religions found in the state.



Nasarawa has a projected population of 2,523,395 as at 2022
(National Bureau of Statistics, NBS, 2022)

A survey design was used to elicit data. The population of the study are women, indigene of Nasarawa state who are 18 years and above. Qualitative and quantitative data were used to get data between 25 April 2022 and 5th October, 2022.

Results

Women and Gubernatorial Seat in Nasarawa State

The findings of the study revealed that all the governors since its creation have been men 100% (n=6) two of which were military administrators Wing Commander Abdullahi Ibrahim (1st October 1996 to 8th May, 1998) and Col. Bala Mande (8th August, 1998 to 29th May, 1999). The four civilian Governors that governed Nasarawa from 1999 till data are; Abdullahi Adamu (29th May, 1999 to 29th May 2007), Aliyu Akwe Doma (29th May, 2007 to 29th May 2011), Tanko Almakura (MAY 29 2011 to 29 May 2019), A. A. Sule (2019 till date). The findings also showed that the percentage of women in both the military and civilian government cabinet is too meager. The relegated position of women in the governance of the state continued as the current governorship candidates for all the parties that won primary elections for 2023 general election are all men. The wife of Abdullahi Adamu, the current National APC Chairman, Fatima Abdullahi got only 3 delegates out of 701, while A. A. Sule who got 698 votes was announced as the winner (Channels TV, 2022). The study also revealed that no woman has ever been a deputy governor.

Table 2. Nasarawa State women in Federal House of Representative (1999–2022)

S/No.	Constituency	2019	2015	2011	2007	2003	1999
1	Akwanga/NasarawaEggonWamba	M	M	M	M	F	M
2	Awe/Doma/Keana	M	M	M	M	M	M
3	Keffi/Karu/Kokona	M	M	M	M	M	M
4	Lafia/Obi	M	M	M	M	M	M
5	Nasarawa/Toto	M	M	M	M	M	M

M=Male, F=Female

Source: Author

Table 2. revealed that Nasarawa State Representation in the House of Representatives in 1999, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 were all male dominated except in 2003–2007 when Mrs. Patricia Naomi Akwashiki represented Akwanga/NasarawaEggon/Wamba in the house of representative. This means since 1999 women had only one representative in the National House of Representative 3.3% (n=1). Though some contestants had two tenures but this study care much on a suppose four years term.

Table 3. Nasarawa State women in Senate 1999–2022

S/N	Zone	2019	2015	2011	2007	2003	1999
1	Nasarawa West	M	M	M	M	M	M
2	Nasarawa North	M	M	F	F	M	M
3	Nasarawa South	M	M	M	M	M	M

M=Male, F=Female

Source: Author

The table presented that the senators for the three (3) senatorial zones in Nasawa State were all men since 1999 except in Nasarawa North were a woman became a senator between 2007 and 2015 (two tenures) this is the same zone that a woman became a member House of representative between 2003 and 2007. This means only Nasarawa North ever produced female representative in the Senate and House of Representative. Note that though “F” in the table above, appeared twice both in 2007 and 2011 it is still one person who was reelected.

State House of Assembly

Table 4. Women and Nasarawa State Speaker’s seat since 1999

Regime	Sex	LGA	Party
1999–2003	Male	Keana	PDP
2003–2007	Male	Doma	PDP
2007–2011	Male	Nasarawa central	PDP
2011–2015	Male	Nasarawa central	PDP
2015–2019	Male	Umaisha/Ugya(2x)	PDP
2019–till date	Male	Umaisha/Ugya(2x)	PDP

Source: Author

Based on the data, the seat of speakers of Nasarawa state house of Assembly is 100% male affairs since 1999

Table 5. Women and State house of Assembly membership from 1999 till date

S/N	CONSTITUENCY	1999	2003	2007	2011	2015	2019
1	Ugya / Umaisha	M	M	M	M	M	M
2	Akwanga North	M	M	F	M	M	M
3	Akwanga South	M	M	M	M	M	M

4	Awe North	M	M	M	M	M	M
5	Awe South	M	M	M	M	M	M
6	Kokona East	M	M	M	M	M	M
7	Kokona West	M	M	M	M	M	M
8	Obi I	M	M	M	M	M	M
9	Obi II	M	M	M	M	M	M
10	Nasarawa Eggon East	M	M	M	M	M	M
11	Nasarawa eggon West	M	M	M	M	M	M
12	Lafia North	M	M	M	M	M	M
13	Lafia Central	M	M	M	M	M	M
14	Doma North	M	M	M	M	M	M
15	Doma South	M	M	M	M	M	M
16	Uke/Karshi	M	M	M	M	M	M
17	Gitata Karu	M	M	M	M	M	M
18	Keffi West	M	M	M	M	M	M
19	Keffi East	M	M	M	M	M	M
20	Nasarawa cetral	-	-	-	-	-	-
21	Udege/Loco	M	M	M	M	M	M
22	Wamba	M	M	M	M	M	M
23	Keana	M	M	M	M	M	M
24	Toto/Gadabuke	M	M	M	M	M	M

Table 6. Women and Local Government Chair in Nasarawa state (1999–2022)

S/N	LGA	Chairmen	Male	Female	Total
1	Lafia		5	0	5
2	Obi		5	0	5
3	Keana		5	0	5
4	Awe		5	0	5
5	Nasarawa eggon		8	0	8
6	Akwanga		18	0	18
7	Doma		11	0	11
8	Keffi		9	0	9
9	Karu		-	0	-
10	Kokona		-	0	-
11	Nasarawa		7	0	7
12	Toto		-	0	-
13	Wamba		10	0	10

Table 7. House of Representative primary election winners 2022

S/n	Zone	APC	PDP
	Karu/Kokona/Keffi	M	M
	Keana/Awe/Doma	M	M
	Nasarawa/Toto	M	M
	Akwanga/NasarawaEggon/Wamba	M	M
	Lafia/Obi	M	M

Table 8. Senate Primary election winners in Nasarawa State2022

S/N	Zone	APC	PDP	Sex
1	Nasarawa West	M	M	M
2	Nasarawa North	M	M	M
3	Nasarawa South	M	M	M

All PDP primary election winners to the state House of Assembly are men in nasarawa state

Satisfaction with the level of women participation in politics

53% (n=) percent of the 60 interviewed 20 each in the three senatorial zones; specifically in Lafia, Keffi and Akwanga LGAs located in the three zones expressed that they are not happy with number and participation of women in the politics of their political zones. As 40% percent said they are satisfied with the way men are taking political positions in their zones instead of women. While 7 percent expressed indifference.

Factors that hinder women political participation in Nasarawa State

A respondent said that:

Religion doesn't permit women to come to public, lead when men are around, her voice is sexual and hence should be heard her husband only. If women join politics they will mingle with men and that's against our culture and religion.

Another respondent expressed that:

If a woman takes a mantle of leadership she doesn't respect her husband anymore. This will eventually lead to divorce.

A female respondent further asserted that:

I am currently a toddler in politics, I am optimistic I will progress towards my dream. But one of the most disturbing thing is I have to seek approval from my husband before attending any political meeting .if he is not in good mood he at times disapprove my wish to attend meetings. My female colleagues lament severally that they either had to seek for their husband's, fathers, Brother's or any masculine figure in order attend political gathering or function.

Implicating school enrolment, another respondent posited that:

Check the entire state political involvement politically since 1999 you will realized that women are nowhere to be found. This is because women have lesser school enrolment, harmful cultural practices and policies that ensure male domination.

Sexual Harassment and Women Political Participation in Nasarawa State

Since factors that block women involvement are numerous, sexual harassment is among the core factors that truncate women political involvement. Sometimes this harassment involves rape. Sexualisation of women body has manifested even in the political arena. No doubt, a lady responded that:

I have never vied for any political position; I have been involved in political rallies since 2011. I have never been sexually abused. But there have several advances, but I refused to succumb to some of such advances, though I was reminded severally that is the main criteria that will keep me in politics.

Another young female politician responded thus:

I once changed political party as a result series of sexual advances from male politicians even as they knew I was married. But since I joined this party, I have never been treated such but I hope it continues like this because that s what I fear the most as that is enough to get me out of politics.

A 42 years respondents expressed that:

There are women (even married) in my zone that reported some illicit sexual advances from their political friends and cant report to authorities, their parents and husbands for fear of been dislodge form politics. In fact I know a woman that was raped but couldn't report the perpetrator for fear his death threat, stigma, divorce or political disengagement.

Means of Cubing Women Low Political Participation in Nasarawa State

“Women need to be empowered and encourage to participate in politics. Nigerian politics is money driven and need certain level of freedom. This is a society where women must seek for the permission of their husbands before going out or get involved in politics. Who to vote is even decided by husbands, Brothers, or fathers.”

Currently, there should be equity in terms of access to opportunities in this state. As it is now men have gone far. Hence the need to prioritize women by given them certain automatic seat in the state and federal legislative Assembly.

Those who think women should be allowed to Participate I politics suggested that women should be empowered thus:

1. More enrolment of women in schools especially at the higher level of education
2. Women should have access to business ventures
3. Access to Loans
4. There should be decisive awareness and encouragement of women into politics
5. Percentage of legislative and executive seats should be reserved for women
6. Women should be encouraged to support women

Discussion of findings

Women as Governors in Nasarawa state

The results of this research showed that all the six Governors of Nasarawa state since 1996, two of which are military administrators are men. As Majeed (2022) reported that Aisha Dahiru Ahmad Binani is the only woman in the history of Adamawa state and Nigeria to have ever won a gubernatorial primary election. A victory which a Federal High court in Yola nullified. Whether she muscles herself and wins, 2023 general election will decide. Patriarchal domination of gubernatorial seats is a national occurrence, and can be traced as far back as pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial era. Even in the just conclude governorship primaries women also picked gubernatorial ticket as Channels TV (2022) reported that the wife of Abdullahi Adamu, the current National APC Chairman and

former Governor of Nasarawa State, Fatima Abdullahi got only 3 delegates out of 701, while A. A. Sule who got 698 votes and declared the winner (Channels TV). Had she won she would have been the first Nasarawa state governorship candidate in the upcoming 2023 general election, just like Binani in Adamawa State.

Women in the National House of Assembly

Findings of the study revealed that since 1999, Only Nasarawa North Senatorial Zone ever produced female senator and that is only between 2003–2007 and 2007–2011. And it is the same woman who won for the two tenures. In the Federal House of Representatives, only one woman has ever represented Nasarawa state in the lower chamber. The same zone (NasarawaEggon/Akwanga/Wamba constituency) still produced a female house of representative member. This Zone seems more tolerant when it comes to women political participation. Therefore there is poor women involvement in the representation in house of reps and the senate. This is worrisome, as even the current 2023 primary election winners for both the Federal Legislative Houses are all men across the political parties. This study also reaffirmed the work of Awodipe (2022) who lamented on the low women participation in the Federal house of assembly and wonder if women matter at all in the activities of Federal House of Assembly.

Women in the Nasarawa State House of Assembly

Out of the six (6) State House of Assembly speakers, none is a woman since 1999. Out of twenty four (24) members of Nasarawa state House of Assembly members, only one was a female from Akwanga North state political zone. It should be noted that Akwanga north is also located in Nasarawa North senatorial zone that produced the only women Senator. Also Akwanga North is located in Akwanga, NasarawaEggon/Wamba Federal Representative zone that produced the only female Federal law maker of the lower house since 1999. This also buttressed this zone as more politically friendly for women. Absence in the governance and especially the law making arm of the state is worrisome as Abel (2022) reported that in Commemoration of the International Women's Day 2022, National Council for Women Societies (NCWS), Nasarawa State Chapter led by its president in Nasarawa state Mrs. Mary Samuel Meshi, staged a peaceful protest at the state house of assembly complex (the law making venue of the state) de-

manding for more inclusion of women in governance in the state. Women carried several inscription seeking for change of political discrimination and stereotype against women.

Factors that militate against women political Participation

Since evidences are now clear that women are nearly absent in the politics of Nasarawa Sate, the study also revealed factors that account for women meager political status in the state as follows.

The study implicated cultural and religious beliefs; political party structure; economic status of women; low women school enrolment, educational advancement to higher level; women low self-esteem and confidence; inefficient women oriented Civil Society Organisation (CSOs) in the state. Findings of this study showed that as a result of culture and religious beliefs, women political participation like who to vote, where to vote, how to vote, when to vote, which poster of any political aspirant should be place in any part of household is determined by a father, brother or husband. In fact the Brother can be a younger brother. The conclusion of Fox and Lawless (2004) has association with this finding as the authors concluded that men are programmed by society to dominate women in all aspect. Also, due women poor economic status in Nasarawa State they lack funds to register themselves as members of political parties or to pick political ticket as aspirants. The study also revealed that some women face sexual harassment from their male counterparts. Declination of this sexual gesture has cost them politically. The respondents further revealed that the sexually harassed women do not mostly report such sexual advances to their husbands, parents and authorities as this may in their thought make their husbands and parents disengage them from politics, so they live with such trauma hoping to advance politically. Low women in higher education attainment also affect women political participation in Nasarawa State. The research of Ngwu et al. (2022) revealed poor education status of women as among the low women political participation.

Conclusion

No doubt, there has been poor women representation Nasarawa state politics since 1999. Ranging from elected and appointed positions, stake is still very high for women as the politics has been mainly male affairs.

Despite several local, national and international programs and policies specifically by government, non-governmental organizations and civil societies in the state, women are still politically weak. Core among the causes of ordeals of women in politics is religious doctrines and their misinterpretation. Another cardinal factor of women relegated role in politics is traditional patriarchal harmful beliefs and practices. Many other possible contributing factors are rooted in either religious or traditional beliefs of the people of Nasarawa state.

Recommendation

1. There should be awareness on the relevance of women in politics by Government and NGOs.
2. Women should be enrolled in schools especially tertiary education
3. There should be equal access to economic activities for both men and women
4. Gendered cultural and stereotypic traditional beliefs against women should be addressed.
5. There should be reserved documented percentage of elected and appointed political seats for women in Nasarawa State.
6. Women should hold certain vital positions in political parties.

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