



Chapter 5

Historicising Women's Representation in Democratic Governance in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, 1999–2023

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Abstract

The main thrust of this chapter is to critically historicise the nature and dynamics of women's representation in democratic governance since the birth of Nigeria's Fourth Republic in 1999. It argues that though the representation of Nigerian women in political governance pre-dated the birth of the Fourth Republic, the participation of women in party politics had witnessed major transformation as attested to by their representation in different political leadership either as appointees or elected officers at the federal, state and local levels. The chapter equally argues that in spite of this development, Nigerian women were under-represented at all levels of democratic governance since the birth of the republic, especially with reference to the United Nations Economic and Social Council Resolution of 1990 which recommended 30% minimum proportion of women in leadership positions. It explains that the under-representation of women in governance since the birth of the republic was caused by a combination of factors, amongst which were the nature of party politics, widespread prejudices and biases about women as political leaders, women's lack of interest in politics, women's lack of economic base and so on. Although there are existing studies on the participation of women in political governance in Nigeria, there is no specific work that interrogates the nature and dynamics



of women's representation in democratic governance during the twenty-four years of the existence of the Fourth Republic (1999–2023) from the historical perspective. This is a major gap that this current research intends to fill in the historiography of women's representation in governance in Nigeria. However, this chapter is a complement to the existing literature on the history of women's representation in governance in Nigeria. This study is very timely because the terminal year of the study, which is 2023, was when the seventh general elections in the republic were conducted. This would enable the researchers to critically make comparative and historical analysis of women's representation in governance between 1999 (when the first general elections were conducted) and 2023. It concludes that the need to increase the level of women's representation in democratic governance is critical to the attainment of the Goal 5 (Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls) of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The methodology adopted in this study is historical, analytical and multidisciplinary, utilising materials from both primary and secondary sources of data collection.

Keywords: Democracy, Governance, Nigeria, Representation, Women

Introduction

There is no doubt about the fact that there is a wide gender gap in political representation in democratic governance between men and women in Nigeria since the return to civil rule in 1999. Although the challenge of gender equality in democratic governance is a general phenomenon, a number of countries had made and are still making appreciable progress towards the attainment of Goal 5 (Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls) of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015). Extant studies revealed that since the birth of the new millennium, there was an impressive rise in women's political representation around the world, with the global average in the share of women in national parliaments in particular, and all regions of the world, are making substantial progress towards the implementation of the 30% affirmative action for elective and appointive positions for women, as recommended by the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (UN Women, 2015; Eke, 2022). While other countries of the world are making appreciable progress towards the implementation of this recommendation, since the birth of the Fourth Republic in 1999, Nigeria has continued to record a major decline and instability. For instance, according to Okafor and Ileyemi, in 2022, Nigeria was ranked the lowest amongst the 54 independent African countries regarding percentage of female representation in democratic governance, securing 54th position with

a 5.45% female representation, while Rwanda was ranked first with 47.95% (Okafor & Ileyemi, 2023).

It is imperative to point out here that the history of political marginalisation of women in Nigerian politics is not a recent phenomenon. Its evolution could be traced to the colonial period, which was facilitated by the British colonial policy of administration. While the men were given limited access to political representation in governance by the colonial government, the women were not. The native administration was mainly male-dominated. This was quite different from the pre-colonial experience in which women participated actively in mainstream political activities with relatively few restrictions (Adjepong, 2015:28). As argued by Fields and others, women formed an important component of the host of officials in most of the pre-colonial West African states, kingdoms and empires, serving as founders, rulers, political advisers, lawmakers, regents, chiefs and so on. Thus, the liberation of women from political domination by their male counterparts in the politics of Nigeria during the colonial period was as a result of the brevity of women themselves, occasioned by continued colonial emasculation through the heavy economic burden of taxation (Anyia, 2003:60). In other words, the women took the bull by the horns through fighting for their political right and emancipation. This political trend which was laid during the colonial period was further consolidated in the postcolonial period.

It is against this background that this study intends to historicise women's representation in democratic governance in Nigeria's Fourth Republic between 1999 and 2023. This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section is the introduction and the methodology used. The second section focuses on conceptual clarifications. The third part deals with historicising women's representation in governance up to 1999. The fourth section centres on the Fourth Republic and women's representation in democratic governance from 1999 to 2023. The last section is the concluding remarks. The methodology adopted in this study is historical, analytical and multidisciplinary, utilising materials from both primary and secondary sources of data collection.

Conceptual clarifications

Governance

Governance is an important concept which scholars have viewed from different perspectives. As argued by Arisi and Ukadike (2013), governance is a relationship between rulers and the ruled, the state and society, the governors and the governed. Coleman sees governance as the process of decision making

and the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented (Arisi & Ukadike, 2013:121). According to the UN Human Development Report, governance has two faces. First, the leadership which has responsibilities derived from the principles of effective governmental organisations. Secondly, the governed, that is the citizens, who are responsible for making relevant inputs to the socio-economic and political affairs of their society (UNDP, 2004). In all, governance involves a relationship between the leaders and the followers as well as how rules are made in society by the leaders, which are to be accepted by the followers as legitimate in order to enhance values with society. This form of governance is mainly possible in a democratic society.

Democratic Governance

Democratic governance is a system of governance that allows and promotes active and popular participation of citizens of a state in decision-making processes through democratically elected structures such as the formation of political parties. According to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), democratic governance is a system of government where institutions function according to democratic processes and norms, both internally and in their interaction with other institutions (OSCE, n.d.). In democratic governance, leadership recruitment into various political offices is not only based on strict adherence to the ideal's principles of democracy, but also on the principle of equality for all.

Women's Representation

The word representation simply refers to the act of speaking or acting on behalf of someone in place, either informally or formally. With specific reference to governance, representation entails the process by which someone voluntarily submits themselves or is nominated for political position or is either appointed or elected to represent a section or a group of people's interests in the administration of a state or country. Therefore, our concept of representation in this chapter is limited to political representation of women in the administration of Nigeria since 1999. Women's representation in democratic governance in Nigeria in this chapter entails the following: voluntary submission to contest for an elective position, nomination by a political party for an elective position and appointment into various public offices both at the federal and state levels.

Historicising women's representation in governance in Nigeria up to 1999

Historically, the history of women's representation in governance in Nigeria generally spanned through three distinct historical phases, namely pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. Each phase was marked by its own distinctive characteristics. The first phase of representation of women in governance in Nigeria began in the pre-colonial period. In other words, existing literature revealed different roles that women played in the pre-colonial political administrations in different parts of Nigeria. During this phase, the women served in varying capacities amongst which were founders or rulers, regents, political advisers, lawmakers, queens, queen mothers and chiefs of some empires, kingdoms and states. For instance, while Queen Amina became a ruler of Zaria by right of succession and took over the throne of the state through popular consent in 1576 (Ikpe, 1997:250), Pupupu was the founder of the Ondo dynasty and became the first Osemawe of Ondo Kingdom (Omojeje, 2015:115). Also, Queen Kambasa was one of the founders of the state of Bonny and ruled the state around the 1500s (Alagoa, 1992:25). In South Western Nigeria, there were evidences of the emergence of females as rulers of some kingdoms in places like Ondo, Sabe, Oyo and so (Ikpe, 1997:250). In Ibadan and Egba societies, there was the institution of the Iyalode who represented women's interests in the courts. A good example was Madam Tinubu who was behind the installation of Oyekan as the Alake of Egba in 1878. There were women amongst the Ilaris (travelling agents / emissaries) of the kings, who reported happenings in the outlying territories to the courts in some Yoruba kingdoms (Ikpe, 1997:251). Highest political offices aside, women were involved in administrative positions most especially in the palaces, where they served as advisers and lawmakers. For example, in the Kanem-Bornu Empire, the Queen Mother (known as *Magira*) did influence certain decisions of the Mai (Adjepong, 2015:29). In Benin Kingdom, Ogbomo argues that women were amongst the thirty-one Ogiso (paramount chiefs) who ruled the kingdom during the Ogiso dynasty (Ogbomo, 2005:357).

During the colonial period, the representation of women in modern political governance was restricted by the British colonial policy of administration. In other words, the indirect rule system did not give women the opportunity to serve their people, unlike during the pre-colonial period. Prior to the introduction of the elective principle which granted franchise to the citizens, the British made use of traditional rulers, who were all males, as sole native authorities. In a society where a centralised system administration did not exist, like amongst the Igbo, the British made use of some chiefs who were designated as 'warrant chiefs' (Falola et al., 1991:189-190). Following the introduction of the elective principle through the Clifford Constitution

of 1922, only a few educated men were granted the opportunity to be represented in political governance of their country. The elective principle was restricted to Lagos and Calabar (Akinyele, 1997:290). Even the franchise that was introduced was a restricted one. It not only excluded the women, but also did not grant an opportunity of the right to vote to all men. According to the 1922 Constitution, four Nigerians were to be elected on an income qualification of £100 per annum—three from Lagos and one from Calabar (Akinyele, 1997:290). As argued by Ikpe (1997) and Mba (1982), colonialism was unfavourable to the women. Colonial rule was mainly carried out by male chauvinists. For instance, while Mba explains that women under colonialism felt victimised and deprived (Mba, 1982:67), Ikpe posits that the basis of women's political actions that culminated in various women's protest movements which were prevalent in both Southern and Northern Nigeria, was as a result of their political marginalisation and economic exploitation (Ikpe, 1997:258).

In order to free themselves from colonial exploitation and political marginalisation, the women staged several protests. For example, there was the Aba Riot of 1929 (Women's War) in Eastern Nigeria, which led to the breakdown or demise of the warrant chief system. Also, Mrs Obasa formed the Lagos Women's League (a pressure group) for better sanitary conditions and women's education. Lady Abayomi formed the Women's Party in 1944. The party agitated for welfare issues and the equality of sexes. Mrs Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti formed the Abeokuta Ladies Club, which metamorphosed into the Abeokuta Women's Union in 1946 and later the Nigerian Women's Union in 1949 (in order to extend its scope). Through this political platform, she fought for women's political freedom. For example, through the AWU, Mrs Funmilayo led a protest against a tax on women in Abeokuta, which led to the temporary abdication of the then Alake of Egba in 1949 (Awe, 1992:3-6).

During the decolonisation process, women were actively involved in the establishment and growth of some major political parties that dominated Nigerian politics from 1951 until political independence in 1960. These parties were the Northern People's Congress (NPC), the Action Group (AG), the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) and the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU). Through the women's wing of the parties, women could mobilise grassroots women for their parties. However, very few women were privileged to be admitted into the upper echelons of the parties. Many such women included the wives of the leaders of the parties. However, a few women were able to distinguish themselves. One of these was Margaret Ekpo of the NCNC. She was a veteran politician who won election on her own merit into the Eastern House of Assembly in 1953/1954 and attended constitutional

conferences. Other prominent women Nigerian politicians during this period were Lady Abayomi, Mrs Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, Miss Young, Hajiya Gambo and Mrs Femi-Pearse (Ikpe, 1997:260). For instance, Hajiya Gambo Sawaba, a Northern female Nigerian politician, nationalist, women's rights activist, and philanthropist was a strong member of the NEPU in Zaria. Through the influence of Mrs Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti on her, she embarked on door-to-door meetings with women who were not allowed to attend political activities because of their gender and purdah practice. She openly campaigned against the marriage of underage girls, unfair taxes, the use of forced labour, canvassed for jobs for women and advocated for Western education for girls and full voting rights for women in the North. In 1956, Gambo and her supporters marched to the office of the regional premier, Sir Ahmadu Bello, in Kaduna, to demand the franchise for women in the North in future parliamentary elections. This protest was informed by the granting of a limited franchise to women in Southern Nigeria in 1951 (Agunbiade, 2021).

In the post-colonial period, which spanned from 1960 to 1999, the representation of women in governance could be examined under two different systems of administration, namely civilian and military. The representation of women during this period could be both in appointive and elective positions. In the build-up to the independence of Nigeria in 1960, elections were conducted in 1958 and 1959. Some women, most especially from Southern Nigeria, participated in these elections. For example, through active involvement in the modern politics of Nigeria, Wurola Adepeju Esan of the AG in the 1958 elections was appointed as the first female member in the Senate of 36 members. She was nominated as a senator from Ibadan West of the Western Region. No woman was elected into the 312-member House of Representatives and none was in the federal cabinet. During the First Republic, 1960 to 1966, there were only four female legislators in the whole of the country, both at the federal and regional levels (Samuel & Segun, 2012:4). They were Senator Wurola Adepeju Esan and Senator Bernice Kerry in the National Parliament; and Mrs Margaret Ekpo and Mrs Janet Muokelu in the Eastern House of Assembly (Anya, 2003:62). There were no female Ministers in the Federal Cabinet. The development continued until the demise of the First Republic in 1966, occasioned by the 15 January 1966 coup led by Major Kaduna Nzeogwu.

The collapse of the First Republic resulted in the emergence of military rule. Generally, there were two major phases of military rule: namely, the first phase, 1966 to 1979, and the second phase from 1983 to 1999. During the first phase, which lasted for thirteen years, Nigeria was governed by four successive military rulers, namely Major General JFU Aguiyi Ironsi, General Yakubu Gowon, General Murtala Mohammed and General Olusegun Obasanjo.

During this first phase, there was neither a female military head of state nor a female military governor. This development could be attributed to the nature, character and disposition of the military to women. Prior to this time, women were not expected to belong to the combative force of the military, which translated into not playing any role in military administrations. The marginalisation of women by successive military regimes in governance was manifested with the use of male civilian counterparts in political administration, like Chief Obafemi Awolowo as the Federal Minister of Finance during Gowon regime. The situation continued until the return to democratic rule in 1979, leading to the birth of the Second Republic, where the hope of the Nigerian women in terms of their participation in the governance of their country was rekindled. During the republic, which lasted between 1979 and 1983, women participated actively in the politics of Nigeria. Few women were represented in the ruling bodies of any of the parties. This affected their representation in both executive and legislative positions at the Federal and State levels. As argued by Ikpe, women during this republic were pushed to the women's wings of the political parties to continue as voter-catchers (Ikpe, 1997:264), rather than major players. However, some women were presented in governance during this republic. For example, Mrs Oyibo Odinamadu was elected as the first National Vice-President of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN). In the Second Republic - 1979 to 1983 - there was 1 female Senator out of 95, 11 female House of Representative Members out of 450 and 3 Women Ministers in the Federal Cabinet. There were only a few women in the States Houses of Assembly while there was no Woman Chairman (chairperson) of Local Government (Anya, 2003:64).

The Second Republic collapsed in December 1983 as a result of the overthrow of Alhaji Shehu Shagari's government by Major General Muhammadu Buhari. This led to the emergence of the second phase of military rule, which lasted until 1999. Although women suffered political neglect during this phase of military rule, they, however, enjoyed limited political rights during General Ibrahim Babangida's rule, who made an attempt to give Nigerian women a chance in the politics of Nigeria through the creation of the Office of the First Lady that initiated some programmes. Some women ambassadors were appointed by his regime. He also directed all military governors to appoint at least one woman into their cabinets (Ikpe, 1997:265). In his transition programme, which later became an aborted Third Republic, the women participated actively in the political process of that era. During this period, women were able to obtain both elective and appointive positions, namely two females out of 19 Political Bureau members, two Female Military Deputy Governors (Mrs Pamela Sadauki and Alhaja Lateefat Okunnu), two Female Civilian Deputy Governors (Chief Mrs Sinatu Aderoju Ojikutu and Mrs Cecilia Ekpeyong), three females out of 591 Chairmen

(Chairpersons) in the 1991 LGA elections, 27 females out of 1,172 State Houses of Assembly Members, 14 females out of 589 House of Representative Members, one female out of 91 Senators, eight female Presidential aspirants in 1991 and one female Presidential aspirant in 1993 (Anya, 2003:65). The annulment of the 12 June 1993 Presidential election made the transition programme unsuccessful.

Following the annulment of the Presidential election, General Babangida stepped aside and inaugurated an Interim National Government (ING), with Chief Ernest Shonekan as the Chairman in August 1993. The ING, which was short-lived, had three women as Secretaries. The ING was overthrown by General Sani Abacha in November 1993. Although the new military regime initiated a transition programme, it was not brought into logical conclusion as a result of the sudden death of General Sani Abacha in June 1998. He was later succeeded by a new head of State, General Abdulsalam Abubakar, who eventually returned Nigeria to civil rule in 1999, marking the birth of the Fourth Republic.

The fourth republic and women's representation in democratic governance, 1999-2023

Here, attempts will be made to identify and critically analyse the participation of women in the successive general elections held between 1999 and 2023 as well as their eventual election and appointment into various political offices both at the federal and state levels during this period. In analysing the representation of women in democratic governance during this republic, both chronological and thematic approaches have been adopted in this section. It is important to point out here that the level of participation of women in the politics of Nigeria during this republic was critical to their eventual representation in democratic governance. However, before interrogating this, it is imperative to have a glimpse of the circumstances that culminated in the birth of the Fourth Republic in 1999.

The birth of the Fourth Republic on 29 May 1999 was traced to the military regime of General Abdulsalam Abubakar, the eighth military Head of State of Nigeria. Although the process of transition to democratic administration was started by General Sani Abacha, it was truncated as a result of his sudden death on 8 June 1998. General Abdulsalam, who took over the reins of power, had a transition programme as part of his agenda for the country. Thus, in his broadcast to the nation, he publicly announced that he would hand over power to a democratically elected president on 29 May 1999. In the pursuit of this political programme, he dissolved the five political parties registered by the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria

under the Abacha regime and set up a new electoral commission known as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) (with Justice Ephraim Akpata as the pioneer Chairman), which later began the process of the registration of new political parties. Initially, the INEC wanted to grant provisional registration to nine political parties, with the condition that after the local government elections, political parties that had 10% votes and above in at least 24 states of the federation would qualify to contest the state and federal elections (Dode, 2010:190). However, the INEC succeeded in registering only three political parties which participated in the first general elections that were conducted in the republic. These political parties were the Alliance for Democracy (AD), the All People's Party (APP) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Following the success of the presidential election of February 1999, which was contested by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo of the PDP and Chief Olu Falae of the AD/APP on 29 May 1999, General Abdulsalam handed over power to Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, who was declared the winner by the INEC. This development marked the genesis of the Fourth Republic.

Having provided a brief background of the birth of the Fourth Republic in 1999, our main focus now is to critically interrogate women's representation in democratic governance within the twenty-four years of the birth of the republic (1999-2023). In analysing this, we shall restrict ourselves to the representation of women at both federal and state levels, with a major emphasis on elective and appointive positions both in the executive and legislative arms of government. Between 1999 and 2023, seven successive general elections were conducted by the INEC, in which democratic governance was consolidated both at the federal and state levels. Within this period, the participation of women in the politics of Nigeria at these two governmental levels witnessed major transformations. Significantly, evidences from the extant literature revealed that the level of involvement of women in the politics of Nigeria during this period varied across the thirty-six states of the federation, including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, as well as in the six geo-political zones of the federation. It was shown that no state or geo-political zone was left out regarding women's representation in democratic governance either at the state or federal level, whether as elected candidates or appointees of the government. Also, the percentage of women's representation in democratic governance during this period both at the state and federal levels varied and depended on the political dispensation that emerged. The major transformations that occurred with respect to the representation of women in democratic governance between 1999 and 2023 will be critically analysed here.

a. Women's representation at the federal level: Executive and legislative positions

The representation of women in democratic governance at the federal level will be examined in terms of participation as candidates in the general elections as well as appointees both in the executive and legislative arms of government. In the executive arm of government, there were records of women who contested as Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates in the general elections between 1999 and 2023. Although the number of women who vied for the Presidential and Vice-Presidential positions in the general elections during this period was very low, there was little increase in the number of women who showed interest in these positions. In the first four general elections conducted between 1999 and 2011, there was no record of any woman who vied for either the Presidential or Vice-Presidential position.

The active participation of women in these two positions began during the 2015 general elections. In the 2015 general elections, of the fourteen Presidential candidates who participated in the election, only one was female, known as Professor Oluremi Sonaya. She contested under a minority political party, the KOWA Party (KP). Also, in the election of the fourteen Vice-Presidential candidates, four were female. In the 2019 general elections, of the seventy-three Presidential candidates who participated in the elections, six were women, with twenty-two female Vice-Presidential candidates, and they all contested under minority political parties (Opejobi, 2019). There was a small increase in the number of women who vied for these positions, from one in 2015 to six and four to twenty-two in 2019. However, in the 2023 general election, the number of women who participated in the election as Presidential candidates dropped to one, with no female Presidential candidate. The representation of women in terms of contest for elective Presidential and Vice-Presidential positions between 1999 and 2023, though changed, it was generally low. All the women who contested for these elective positions during this period were candidates of minority political parties. None of the major political parties, namely Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) between 1999 and 2023 and All Progressives Congress (APC) between 2015 and 2023, presented women as their candidates for the two executive elective positions.

In terms of appointive positions, women served in the cabinet of successive democratic governments as ministers, ambassadors, advisers between 1999 and 2023. Evidences from the literature revealed that women served in the government of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007); Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (2007-2010); Dr Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015) and Muhammadu Buhari (2015-2023), though in varying numbers. Tables 4 to 8 show names and ministries of some of the women who served in different

Women Representation in Governance in Nigeria

successive democratic administrations in Nigeria's Fourth Republic between 1999 and 2023.

Table 4: List of Some Female Ministers during Chief Olusegun Obasanjo Administration, 1999–2007

#	Name	Ministry	Period
1	Kema Chikwe	Transport Aviation	1999–2001 2001–2003
2	Aisha Ismail	Women Affairs and Youth Development	1999–2003
3	Rita Akpan	Women Affairs	2003–2005
4	Mobolaji Osomo	Housing, Land and Urban Development	2003–2005
5	Funke Adedoyin	State for Health	2003–2005
6		State for Education	2003–2005
7	Maryam Ciroma	Women Affairs	2005–2007
8	Obiageli Ezekwesili	Solid Minerals Education	2005–2007 2006–2007
9	Halima Tayo-Alao	State for Education State for Health	2005–2006 2006–2007
10	Helen Esuene	State for Health Environment	2005–2006 2006–2007
11	Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala	Finance Foreign Affairs	2003–2006 2006
12	Nenadi Esther Usman	State for Finance Finance	2003–2006 2006–2007
13	Joy Ogwu	Foreign Affairs	2006–2007
14	Leslye Obiora	Solid Minerals	2007

Source: Personal compilation from various media sources and newspapers online

Table 5: List of Some Female Ministers during Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's Administration, 2007-2010

#	Name	Ministry	Period
1	Adenike Grange	Health	2007-2008
2	Halima Tayo-Alao	Environment & Housing	2007-2008
3	Diezani Alison-Madueke	Transport Mines & Steel Development	2007-2008 2008-2010
4	Grace Ekpiwhre	Science & Technology	2007-2008
5	Saudatu Bungudu	Women Affairs & Social Development	2007-2008
6	Dora Akuyili	Information & Communication	2008-2010
7	Salamatu Hussaini Suleiman	Women Affairs & Social Development	2008-2010
8	Fatima Balarabe Ibrahim	State for Energy (Power)	2007
9	Fidelia Njeze	State for Defence State for Agriculture & Water Resources	2007-2008 2008-2010

Source: Personal compilation from various media sources and newspapers online

Table 6: List of Some Female Ministers during Dr Goodluck Jonathan's Administration, 2010-2015

#	Name	Ministry	Period
1	Fidelia Njeze	Aviation	2010-2011
2	Dora Akuyili	Information and Communication	2010-2015
3	Ruquayyah Ahmed Rufai	Education	2010-2015
4	Diezani Alison-Madueke	Petroleum	2010-2015
5	Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala	Finance	2010-2015
6	Josephine Anenih	Women Affairs & Social Development	2010
7	Stella Oduah	Aviation	2011-2015
8	Erelu Olusola Obada	State for Defence	2011-2015
9	Olajumoke Akinjide	State for FCT	2011-2015
10	Viola Onwuliri	State for Foreign Affairs	2011-2015
11	Moboloji Johnson	Communication Technology	2011-2015
12	Zainab Ibrahim Kudi	State for Niger Delta Affairs	2011-2015
13	Zainab Maina	Women Affairs & Social Development	2011-2015

Source: Personal compilation from various media sources and newspapers online

Women Representation in Governance in Nigeria

Table 7: List of Some Female Ministers during Muhammadu Buhari's Administration, 2015–2023

#	Name	Ministry	Period
1	Zainab Ahmed	State for Budget & Planning	2015-2018
		Finance	2018-2019
		Finance, Budget & National Planning	2019-2023
2	Amina Mohammed	Environment	2015-2018
3	Kemi Adeosun	Finance	2015-2018
4	Khadija Bukar Abba Ibrahim	State for Foreign Affairs	2015-2018
5	Aisha Abubakar	State for Industry, Trade & Investment	2015-2019
6	Aisha Alhasan	Women Affairs & Social Development	2015-2018
7	Aisha Abubakar	Women Affairs & Social Development	2018-2019
8	Sharon Ikeazor	State for Environment	2019-2022
		State for Niger Delta Affairs	2022-2023
9	Ramatu Tijani Aliyu	State for FCT	2019-2023
10	Sadiya Umar Farouq	Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster & Social Development	2019-2023
11	Mariam Yalwaji Katagum	Industry, Trade and Investment	2019-2023
12	Gbemisola Saraki	State for Transport	2019-2022
		State for Mines & Steel Development	2022-2023
13	Pauline Tallen	Women Affairs & Social Development	2019-2023

Source: Personal compilation from various media sources and newspapers online

Table 8: List of Female Ministers under Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Administration 2023

#	Name	Ministry	Period
1	Barr. Hannatu Musawa	Art, Culture and Creative Economy	2023
2	Dr Betta Edu	Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation	2023
3	Hon. Nkeiruka Onyejocha	State for Labour and Employment	2023
4	Mrs Lola Ade-John	Tourism	2023
5	Hon. Uju Kennedy Ohaneyeye	Women Affairs	2023
6	Mrs Iman Suleiman Ibrahim	State for Police Affairs	2023
7	Dr Doris Aniche	Industry, Trade and Investment	2023

Source: Personal compilation from various media sources and newspapers online

Tables 4 to 8 reveal a list of some female ministers who served five different democratic administrations in the country between 1999 and 2023. From the tables, women were represented in the federal executive council of each government, though in varying numbers. In fact, some women served in two to three ministries under an administration, while some served under two different administrations. With the exception of the second term of President Olusegun Obasanjo, in which 30% of women were ministers, in the others the percentage of women in the cabinet ranged between 14% and 25%. While during Yar'Adua's administration, it was 18%, during Goodluck Jonathan's administration, it was 25%. Also, during Buhari's administration, women's representation was 14% during his first term and 16% during his second term. Of the 45 ministers appointed by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, 7 (representing 16%) were female.

At the level of National Assembly, which comprises two houses of legislature (Senate-Upper House and House of Representatives-Lower House), women were represented between 1999 and 2023. Although the number of women's representation in the National Assembly varied across the 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, there was no election year in which at least one woman would not be elected into either the Senate (which made up 109 members) or House of Representatives (which made up 360 members). Table 9 shows the computed number of seats won by women vis-à-vis men between 1999 and 2023 in the two houses of legislature.

Table 9: Number of Women Elected into the Senate, 1999–2023

Year	Total No of Seats and Percentages				
	No of Seats	Men	%	Women	%
1999	109	106	97.2	3	1.8
2003	109	105	95.8	4	4.2
2007	109	101	91.92	8	8.08
2011	109	102	92.86	7	6.4
2015	109	102	92.86	7	7.14
2019	109	102	92.86	7	7.14
2023	109	106	97.25	3	2.75

Source: Eke (2022:51) and information from various newspapers

Table 9 shows the number and percentage of women versus men elected into the Senate between 1999 and 2023. From the table, there was an increase in the number of women who were elected into this upper house of legislature between 1999 and 2007. It started declining and remained static between 2011 and 2019, and dropped drastically in 2023. Within this period, women recorded their highest numbers in the Senate in 2007, with the total number of 8.

With respect to the elected principal officers in the Senate during this period, there was equally women’s representation, though not encouraging. Between the 4th and the 10th Assemblies (1999–2023), no woman was elected as either Senate President or Deputy Senate President. However, in the 4th Assembly, which was inaugurated in 1999, Senator Stella Unuezi Omu of the PDP from the Delta South Senatorial District of Delta State was elected as the Chief Whip. Also, in the 8th Assembly a female senator was elected as Deputy Minority Whip. Aside from being elected as principal officers, the majority of the female senators who were elected into the Senate during this period, were appointed as Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of various Senate Committees.

Table 10 shows the number and percentage of women versus men elected into the House of Representatives between 1999 and 2023. From the table, there was an increase in the number of women who were elected into this upper house of legislature between 1999 and 2007. It declined in 2011 and increased in 2015. It equally dropped drastically in 2019 and increased in 2023. Within this period, women recorded their highest numbers in the Senate in 2007, with a total number of 25. Generally, the representation of women in the House of Representatives was not stable.

Table 10: Number of Women Elected into the House of Representatives, 1999–2023

Year	Total No of Seats and Percentages				
	No of Seats	Men	%	Women	%
1999	360	347	96.4	13	3.6
2003	360	339	94.17	21	5.83
2007	360	335	93.06	25	6.94
2011	360	345	92.78	15	3.7
2015	360	338	93.89	22	6.11
2019	360	349	95.65	11	3.05
2023	360	345	92.78	15	3.7

Source: Eke (2022:51) and information from various newspapers

With respect to the elected principal officers in the House of Representatives during this period, there was equally women's representation in some of the principal officers of the House during this period. The representation of women in the principal officers of the House of Representatives between 1999 and 2023 was very encouraging, unlike in the Senate. For instance, in the 6th Assembly, which was inaugurated in 2007, a woman, known as Rt. Hon. Olunmi Patricia Etteh (who represented Ayedaade / Isokan / Irewole constituency in Osun State), was elected as the Speaker of the House. She was the first female Speaker in the history of Nigeria's House of Representatives. However, she barely spent five months before was impeached on allegation of corruption, which has yet to be proved. In the 7th Assembly, which was inaugurated in 2011, Hon. Mulikat Akande Adeola of the PDP (who represented Ogbomoso North, South and Orire Federal Constituency in Oyo State) contested for the position of Speaker, but later stepped down for Hon. Aminu Tambuwal. She was later elected as the Majority Leader of the House, becoming the first woman to hold that position. In the 8th Assembly, which was inaugurated in 2015, Hon. Fatima Binta Bello of the PDP (who represented Kaltungo/Shongom Federal Constituency in Gombe State), was elected as the Deputy Minority Whip of the House. In the 9th Assembly, which was inaugurated in 2019, Hon. Nkeiruka Chiduben Onyejeocha of the APC (who represented Isuikwuato / Umunneochi Federal Constituency of Abia State), contested for the position of Speaker of the House against Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila. She later stepped down and was elected as the Deputy Chief Whip. In the 10th Assembly, which was inaugurated in 2023, Hon. Adewunmi Oriyomi Onanuga of the APC (who represented Ikenne/Sagamu Remo North Federal Constituency), was elected as Deputy Chief Whip of the House. Apart

from being elected as principal officers of the House, the majority of the female lawmakers who were elected into the House during this period were appointed as Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of various House Committees such as Trade and Investment, Health, Women Affairs and so on.

b. Women's representation at the state level: Executive and legislative positions

Generally, at the state level, women's representation can be seen both at the executive (serving as governor, deputy-governors, commissioners and special advisers) and legislative positions (serving as speakers and deputy speakers). At the executive position level, our discussion would be restricted only to the governorship and deputy governorship positions. First, at the executive position level, no woman had been elected as the Governor of any state in Nigeria between 1999 and 2023. However, following the impeachment of the then incumbent Governor of Anambra State by the Anambra State House of Assembly under the Hon. Mike Balonwu as the Speaker in November 2007, Mrs Dame Virginia Etiaba, who was then the Deputy Governor, was sworn in as the first female governor of Anambra state in particular, and Nigeria in general. She barely ruled for three months (November to February), when Mr Peter Obi was returned as the governor by the judiciary. Between the 1999 and 2011 general elections, there was no active participation of women in terms of standing in as governorship candidates of either major or minor political parties. However, during the 2015, 2019 and 2023 governorship elections, there were evidences of women's active representation as governorship candidates of both majority and minority political parties. In the 2015 governorship election, twenty-four out of three hundred and eighty candidates were women (representing just 6%); in the 2019 governorship election, eighty out of one thousand and sixty-six were women (representing 8%).

There was just a 2% increase in the number of women who vied for governorship seats between 2015 and 2019. In the 2023 governorship election, the number of female contestants dropped to 24 out of 420 contestants. One major development with respect to the representation of women in elective positions especially during the 2015 and 2023 general elections was that for the first time in political history of the Fourth Republic, women emerged as governorship candidates of one of the major political parties in Nigeria; that is, All Progressives Congress (APC). In the 2015 governorship election, of the 24 women who were candidates, one, known as Senator Aisha Jummai Al-Hassan (popularly known as Mama Taraba), was from the major political party (APC), others were from the minority political parties. Senator Aisha participated in the gubernatorial primary election, defeated other candidates

and emerged as APC candidate in Taraba State. In the main governorship election, she contested against the then incumbent Governor of the State, Alhaji **Darius Ishaku of the PDP. The election was initially declared inconclusive. In the rerun election, Senator Aisha was defeated.**

In the 2023 governorship election, Senator Aishatu Dahiru Ahmed (popularly known as Binani) emerged as the APC gubernatorial candidate in Adamawa State. She did not just emerge as the governorship candidate of the APC through consensus arrangement, but through a competitive and keenly contested primary election that involved prominent figures such as former Governor of Adamawa State, Muhammadu Jibrilla Bindow, pioneer Executive Chairman Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Nuhu Ribadu, and influential Federal legislator and chairman of the House Committee on Army, Abdurazaq Namdas. She defeated the three major male candidates by securing 430 votes with the runner-up, Nuhu Ribadu, receiving 288 votes (Zagi et al., 2023). In the main governorship election, Senator Dahiru contested against the incumbent governor, Alhaji Ahmadu Fintiri of the PDP. The election was equally declared inconclusive. In the re-run election, Fintiri was later declared winner of the election by the INEC. Besides Senator Aishatu Dahiru, there were other twenty-two women who contested as governorship candidates during the 2023 general elections but under minority political parties such as the Social Democratic Party, the Peoples Redemption Party, the Action Alliance Party, the Action Democratic Party, the Zenith Labour Party, the Labour Party, the Allied People's Movement, the All People's Party, the Action Alliance, the Boot Party, the National Rescue Movement, the All Progressives Grand Alliance and the Young Progressives Party.

Another major development with respect to the representation of women in elective executive positions at the state level was in the deputy governorship position. Without doubt, between 1999 and 2023, women have done fairly well. Although the representation of women in this leadership position during this period varied across the 36 states and six geo-political zones of the federation, no single geo-political zone was left. While the South West (with Lagos and Ogun States with highest number of female deputy governors: three times each) recorded the highest number of female deputy governors since the birth of the Fourth Republic (eight), the North East had the least with only one (Adamawa State). Table 11 shows the current and previous names and states of female deputy governors in Nigeria.

Women Representation in Governance in Nigeria

Table 11: List of Female Deputy Governors in Nigeria, 1999–2023

#	Name	State	Party	Period
1	Mrs Kofoworola Akerele-Bucknor	Lagos	AD	1999–2003
2	Mrs Cecilia Eyo Ekpenyong	Cross River	PDP	1999–2003
3	Mrs Salimot Badru	Ogun	PDP	2003–2007 2007–2011
4	Dame Virginia Etiaba	Anambra	APGA	2007–2010
5	Mrs Sarah Adebisi Sosan	Lagos	CAN	2007–2011
6	Mrs Pauline Tallen	Plateau	PDP	2007–2011
7	Chief Titiloyo Laoye-Tomori	Osun	CAN/APC	2010–2014 2014–2018
8	Mrs Adejoke Orelope-Adefulire	Lagos	CAN	2011–2015
9	Lady Valerie Ebe	Akwa Ibom	PDP	2012–2015 2015–2019
10	Mrs Yetunde Onanuga	Ogun	APC	2015–2019
11	Mrs Cecilia Ezeilo	Enugu	PDP	2015–2019 2019–2023
12	Dr Ipalibo Gogo Banigo	Rivers	PDP	2015–2019 2019–2023
13	Dr Hadiza Balarabe	Kaduna	APC	2019–2023 2023–
14	Mrs Naimot Salako Ayodele	Ogun	APC	2019–2023 2023–
15	Mrs Monisade Afuye	Ekiti	APC	2022–
16	Prof Ngozi Nma Odi	Rivers	PDP	2023–
17	Dr Akon Enyakenyi	Akwa Ibom	PDP	2023–
18	Mrs Josephine Piyo	Plateau	PDP	2023–
19	Mrs Patricia Obila	Ebonyi	APC	2023–
20	Prof Kaletapwa Farauta	Adamawa	PDP	2023–

Source: Personal compilation from different media sources and newspapers online

Table 11 shows the list of female deputy governors in Nigeria between 1999 and 2023. It reveals that women were represented in the deputy position at the executive council at the state level. It could be seen from the table that out of the 36 states of the federation, only 13 states have been able to give females the opportunity to be represented in the governorship position level. Also

from the table, Lagos State tops the list of the 36 states that had produced the highest number female deputy governors in Nigeria (securing three). Lagos State was followed by Ogun, Plateau, Rivers and Akwa Ibom, which each produced two. The other eight states (namely Ekiti, Osun, Kaduna, Cross River, Enugu, Ebonyi, Anambra and Adamawa) produced one each. The table also reveals that while some female deputy governors served two consecutive terms in some states (such as Ogun, Akwa Ibom, Enugu, Rivers, Osun and Kaduna), others served just one term.

At legislative level, women's representation could be seen in various State Houses of Assembly that emerged in Nigeria between 1999 and 2023. Although the number of female parliamentarians varied across the 36 State Houses of Assembly, women were represented in both the highest and lowest positions in the state parliament. Table 12 shows the computed number of seats won by women between 1999 and 2023.

Table 12: State Houses of Assembly

Year	Total No of Seats and Percentages				
	No of Seats	Men	%	Women	%
1999	978	966	98.8	12	1.2
2003	951	912	96.0	39	4.0
2007	900	843	94.2	57	5.8
2011	900	832	93.1	68	6.9
2015	979	900	91.9	79	8.1
2019	991	946	95.59	45	4.41
2023	988	940	95.15	48	4.85

Source: Eke (2022:51) and information from various newspapers.

Table 12 shows the total number of female lawmakers in the 36 States of the federation between 1999 and 2023. From the table, there was a steady increase in the number of female lawmakers between 1999 and 2015. The number declined during the 2019 general elections, and later increased by three seats in the 2023 general elections. With specific reference to the 2023 general elections, of the 36 states, women were represented in only 21 states (namely Anambra, Kaduna, Bayelsa, Benue, Cross River, Delta, Ekiti, Oyo, Taraba, Nasarawa, Plateau, Kogi, Kwara, Akwa Ibom, Ogun, Lagos, Adamawa, Ondo, Enugu and Ebonyi States), though with a varying number of seats in the State House of Assembly. In terms of geo-political statistical analysis, while the South West had the highest number of female lawmakers (with 16 seats), the North West had the least with just two female lawmakers (and

only from Kaduna State). Other geo-political zones included North Central - 12, South-South - 10, South East - 5 and North East - 3.

Apart from the emergence of the female lawmakers in the various states Houses of Assembly, their representation in various leadership positions in the state legislature equally deserve interrogation. Between 1999 and 2023, a number of female lawmakers had been represented in some top leadership positions in the States Houses of Assembly amongst which were Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Leader of the House, Deputy Leader of the House, Chief Whip, Deputy Chief, Clerk of the House and so on. We will restrict ourselves to just Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the House. Tables 13 and 14 show the names of Female Speakers and Deputy Speakers of some States Houses of Assembly in Nigeria between 1999 and 2023.

Table 13: List of Female Speakers of States Houses of Assembly in Nigeria, 1999-2023

#	Name	State	Period
1	Hon. Margaret Icheen	Benue	1999-2003
2	Hon. Titi Oseni-Gomez	Ogun	2003-2008
3	Hon. Eucharua Azodo	Anambra	2003-2011
4	Hon. Chinwe Nwaebili	Anambra	2011-2015
5	Hon. Monsuratu Jumoke Sunmonu	Oyo	2011
6	Hon. Rita Mmaduagwu	Anambra	2015-2019
7	Hon. Jumoke Akinjide	Ondo	2014-2017
8	Hon. Olubunmi Adelugba	Ekiti	2023-

Source: Personal compilation from various media sources/newspapers online

Table 13 shows the total number of female speakers who have emerged since the birth of the Fourth Republic in 1999 across the 36 States of the federation. From the table, one can vividly see that out of the 36 states, female speakers have emerged in only six states. Of these six states, four from the South West, and only one from each of South East and North Central. The other three geo-political zones, namely South-South, North East and North West have not produced any female speakers. Also, of the six states that have produced female speakers since 1999, Anambra has the highest (with three); the other five states produced one each. In all, eight female speakers have emerged in the States Houses of Assembly in Nigeria between 1999 and 2023.

Table 14: List of Female Deputy Speakers of States Houses of Assembly in Nigeria, 1999–2023

#	Name	State	Period
1	Hon. Mrs Adefunmilayo Tejuosho	Lagos	2007–2009
2	Hon. Felicia Bassey	Akwa Ibom	2019–2023
3	Hon. Latifat Ajayi	Ogun	2023
4	Hon. Lami Danladi	Benue	2023
5	Hon. Afiniki Dauda	Niger	2023

Source: Personal compilation from various media sources/newspapers online

Table 14 shows the total number of female Deputy Speakers who have emerged since the birth of the Fourth Republic in 1999 across the 36 States of the federation. From the table, one can vividly see that out of the 36 states, female Deputy Speakers have emerged in only five states. Of these five states, two from the South West (Lagos and Ogun), two from North Central (Benue and Niger) and one from the South-South (Akwa Ibom). The other three geo-political zones, namely South East, North East and North West have not produced any female Deputy Speaker.

Conclusion and recommendations

The foregoing has critically historicised the representation of Nigerian women in governance under three major historical phases, namely pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. These historical phases revealed the change and continuity in the representation of women in governance. With special reference to the Fourth Republic, the chapter examined the representation of women in both elective and appointive positions at the federal and state levels between 1999 and 2023. It argued that though women were represented in both levels of governments especially in the executive and legislative arms during this period, the percentage of their representation vis-à-vis men was very infinitesimal. In other words, the representation of women in democratic governance between 1999 and 2023 was way below the recommendation of the United Nations Economic and Social Council Resolution of 1990 which recommended a 30% minimum proportion of women in leadership positions (UN, 1990). Evidences from the statistics of women's representation in both elective and appointive positions at federal and state levels revealed that the percentage of women in both positions in democratic governance since 1999 had not reached 10%, let alone the 30% affirmation. In comparison with the 54 African countries, Nigeria was ranked the lowest, securing 54th position with a 5.45% female representation, while

Rwanda was ranked first with 47.95% (which was even more than the UN recommendation. Other worse-performing countries in Africa with poor female representation in democratic governance were Algeria (second with 6.2%), Benin Republic (with 7.4%), the Gambia with 8.6% and Liberia (with 11.0%). Aside from these five countries, including Nigeria, no other country in Africa had below 30% affirmation regarding women's representation in democratic governance.

The low representation of women in democratic governance both as elected political officers and appointees of the government during this Fourth Republic was hindered by a combination of factors amongst which were the nature of party politics, widespread prejudices and biases about women as political leaders, women's lack of interest in politics, women's lack of economic base, cultural factors, inept political leadership of some women politicians and so on. For instance, the nature of party politics of the majority of political parties did not favour women. This starts with the composition of the National Working Committee of the political parties. Besides the position of National Women Leader, which naturally is to be headed by a woman, other positions such as National Chairman, Deputy Chairman, National Secretary, National Treasurer, National Legal Adviser, amongst others, are mainly dominated by men. This is the major body that determines who will emerge as the standard-bearer of the party in the general elections, both at the federal and state levels. Ikpe describes this challenge as the personality dominated and paternalistic nature of political parties (Ikpe, 1997:263).

Another major challenge of low representation of women in democratic governance is finance. This challenge could be seen in the cost of purchasing mandatory expression of interest and nomination forms as well as the cost of prosecuting both primary and general elections. For instance, while the APC pecked the cost of expression of interest and nomination forms for President, Governorship, Senate, House of Representatives and State House of Assembly as follows: N100 million, N50 million, N20 million, N10 million and N2 million respectively, the PDP pecked their own as follows: N40 million, N21 million, N3.5 million, N2.5 million and N600,000. The implication of this high cost of mandatory expression of interest and nomination forms is to discourage those who are not financially buoyant from contesting.

Religious/Traditional Beliefs and Practices equally hinder active participation of Nigerian women in politics. In many of the societies in Nigeria, religious and traditional practices often determine the role that women play. Evidence from the literature has shown that because of adopted religious and some traditional practices, women are not supposed to be at the helm of affairs where men are concerned. Anya argues that the greatest danger to this practice is the internalisation of these belief systems, which

make women see politics as something out of their sphere (Anya, 2003:67). This particular challenge majorly affects women in the Northern part of Nigeria. The resultant effect of this can be seen in the low rate of women's representation in elective positions from Northern Nigeria between 1999 and 2023. There are several states in the North West and North East in particular, where no woman has been elected into either the State House of Assembly or the National Assembly.

More so, widespread prejudices and biases about women as political leaders combined with inept political leadership of some women who had been given political positions in the past were contributory factors to the low representation of women in democratic governance. Although there were some women politicians who had distinguished themselves well in administration, there were some who did not do well. There is general saying that the first impression lasts longer. The inept political leadership of some women politicians has led to why some major political parties failed to support female candidacy for some positions such as President, Vice-President, Governorship, Senate President and Speaker of the House of Representatives. These elective positions are seen to be very critical to committing into the hands of female politicians.

The chapter concludes that within the twenty-four years of the birth of the Fourth Republic, women have not done badly in democratic administration as elective officers or appointees of the government. Despite the fact that some women politicians did not do well, leading either to their impeachment or forceful resignation from elective positions, this inept political leadership was not limited to female politicians alone. The male politicians were equally culprits of this challenge. It submits that the need to increase the level of women's representation in democratic governance is critical to the attainment of Goal 5 (Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls) of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 (UN, 2015). Thus, political parties should develop policies that would make it mandatory for a certain number of seats (a minimum of 35%) at both the executive and legislative arms of government, to be reserved for women, as being practiced in some countries such as Kenya and Uganda. This should equally be given a legislative backing. It advocated for political doggedness of Nigerian women in the face of intimidation by and electoral competition against their male counterparts.

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