

Chapter 11

Political Financing and the Inclusion of Women in Governance in Nigeria

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Abstract

The interplay between political financing and women's representation maintains an important relationship in the democratic development of Nigeria, a relationship which impacts on inclusive governance. It is premised on the fact that women's representation in politics and governance has remained abysmally low because of the lack of access to political financing. This chapter employs both primary and secondary data, relying on published materials and a modest literature review, as well as the use of questionnaires administered amongst six political parties. The chapter employs a multifaceted analysis, considering legal frameworks, cultural dynamics, and the role of financial support networks. The chapter employs content analysis as well as the use of graphs and tables to analyse the primary data. The findings indicate that amongst factors standing against women's political competitiveness and the ability of women's inclusiveness in governance are the prevalence of patriarchy. These factors also impinge on the overall representation of women in governance. The chapter recommends political parties' gender-specific funding initiatives, as well as regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms to enhancing women's representation in Nigerian governance.

Keywords: Governance, Patriarchy, Political Financing, Political Parties, Women's Representation

Introduction

Political financing and women's representation in governance are two of the most trending themes in development debates surrounding Nigerian democracy in recent times. The intricate relationship between the two themes

come together in the growing body of literature and thought around gender, democracy and good governance. In interrogating these themes, the role of political parties as necessary gatekeepers of modern democracy and points of entry into politics comes to the fore (International IDEA, 2021). Similarly, political participation as an important tenet of democracy, is powered through the activities of political parties. Political parties provide for the internal party structure system, which allows potential candidates to obtain financial and professional support to be elected into public office. Within this framework, support for women within the party structure as candidates is crucial to enhancing and sustaining women's representation in the electoral process and in decision-making as a whole (Kandawasvika-Nhundu, 2013). Such support may take the form of adopting quotas for women at all levels of government, financial assistance; and promoting women's empowerment through mentorship and capacity-building, amongst others. However, Kandawasvika-Nhundu (2013) observe that more women lose the race at an early stage of primary elections at party level because of a lack of resources in comparison with their male counterparts. Non-accessibility of resources for women to support their political ambitions dissuades them from taking an active role in the electoral process in Nigeria. In recent times, much attention is focused on why women start from a position of inequality to be competitive with their male counterparts. The gender gap in Nigeria represents a major issue to be resolved if the country is to achieve the targets it set in its National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) (CBN, 2012) and for closing the gender gap in governance.

In Nigeria, the labour force participation rate for females is 52.1% and males is 65.5% for 2022, while the life expectancy for men in 2022 was 55.1 years and for women it was 57.2 years (NBS, 2023). In addition, the benchmark for gender global index is one, which signifies parity, however, the Nigeria 2023 global gender gap index was 0.64, showing wide gender disparities in health, empowerment and the labour market. This tends to restrict women's opportunities and freedom, giving them less interaction with others and fewer opportunities for independent behaviour, damaging their self-esteem, self-expression and limiting their autonomy and control over household resources, resulting in low political participation and leadership positions (WHO, 2024). This preposition stimulates the study's interest to examine and analyse the intricacies surrounding political financing and women's representation in governance with a view to identifying the inherent shortcomings and make recommendations that assist in formulating a policy and pragmatic programme of action for adoption in order to achieve the desired reforms in Nigeria. It comes with the assumption that political financing is critical to electoral success and the ability to access political

opportunities, and the backwardness of women in the Nigerian political space is closely related to the poverty of political financing opportunities.

Literature review

Conceptual exploration of political participation in Nigeria

Political participation is “behaviour influencing or attempting to influence the distribution of public goods” (Booth, 1979). According to Deth (2021), “political participation can be loosely defined as citizens’ activities affecting politics”. Supporting this assertion, Okolie (2004) perceives political participation as “freedom of expression, association, right to free flow of communication, right to influence decision process and the right to social justice, health services, better working condition and opportunity for franchise”.

From the above, it is clear that political participation is one of the key ingredients of democracy in its real sense. Especially taking into consideration the conceptualisation of democracy by Diamond et al. (1989), that democracy provides the equal opportunity platform for political participation and fairness (encourages inclusivity of all social strata, men, women, youth, people with disabilities (PwDs) and so on, in meaningful and equal proportion), such that no major (adult) social group is excluded, and a level of civil and political liberties, freedom to form and join organisations sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation are entrenched.

Since democracy does not ordinarily discriminate on the grounds of race, religion or sex, then restrictions experienced by women, youth and PwDs in Nigeria suggests a level of artificiality and human-made imposition. Participation is a development approach, which recognises the need to involve disadvantaged segments of the population in the design and implementation of policies concerning their well-being. The strengthening of women, youths and PwDs in all spheres of life has become a major issue in the development discourses as socio-economic and political development cannot be fully achieved without the active involvement of these groups in the decision-making process in all societies (Parrot, 2017).

Contributing to the discussion, Agbalajobi (2010) suggests that political participation entails several variables of participation but basically voting in elections, contesting elective (public) offices and so on. This, according to him, is different from representation. Representation is essentially the number of elective and appointive positions held as a ratio of the population of respective groups (women, men, youth and PwDs) in society. For instance,

the increase of votes cast by women in elections from 10% to 40% of total votes cast in eight years signifies a form of increase in participation. But when the number of women holding public offices is compared to men, it is relatively low, there is under-representation. That is, there may be an increase in participation of women and yet under-representation of women in politics, or there could be a high representation of women in politics and yet a low level of participation, depending on the standards used to measure participation; however, the former is rather common. The under-representation syndrome has been the discourse in academic circles and the need to address the factors inhibiting the fair and equal representation of women in the scheme of political activities. Interestingly, the 1999 Constitution (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999) recognises states, rather than gender and other social categories, as the basis for representation in governance.

In a similar manner, Shojaei et al. (2010) conducted a study titled *The Financial obstacles of women political participation Iran*. The findings of their study reveal that inadequate financial resources act as the structural obstacles of Iranian women in top political positions. Barber et al. (2016), in their study titled *Gender Inequalities in Campaign Finance*, reveal that male candidates raise substantially more money than female candidates, as male donors also give more money to male candidates while female donors to political parties give approximately equally to men and women. The combined effects are that there are gender inequalities in campaign finance, but they may not have immediate consequence for women's representation.

This study therefore aligns with the submission of Abdullahi et al. (2019), that for the purpose of inclusivity and appreciating the essence of involvement of all groups in society in the decision-making process, then political participation should be seen as the active involvement and engagement by individuals, including women, men, youths and the PwDs in political processes that affect their lives. The act of active engagement should include voting, standing for office, joining of political parties or to take part in political campaigns of the political parties and to exert influence in the decision-making process through public debate and dialogue with the representatives who they elected or through their capacity to organise themselves; or exercise public power by holding public office at different levels of administrations - local, regional, national and international.

The procedural process of nomination and recruitment in elections

In the majority of cases of democratic jurisprudence, participation and representation in governance involves periodic elections. In Nigeria in particular, there are three-stage processes of election into offices. According

to Nkereuwem (2023), the first stage is for candidates to indicate intention in their respective political parties and nominate themselves. Second, candidates contest in the party primary elections and whoever wins becomes the party's official candidate. Finally, candidates contest for the office election alongside other political parties during the general elections. During these phases, money is spent for both legitimate and illegitimate (clandestine, criminal and immoral) purposes. According to Miruka (2003):

the legitimate items that often feature in the elections budget of any candidate include; nomination fee, transportation (vehicles, fuel, spares, licences, insurance), allowances for agents and campaigners; publicity; hire of security personnel and hire of meeting/campaign venues etc. While the illegitimate expenses which nevertheless occur include; bribery of voters with cash and materials (i.e. vote buying), hiring of thugs to intimidate, sabotage and sometimes physically brutalize opponents, hire of hecklers to disrupt the campaign speeches of opponents, purchase and destruction of voter cards in opponents' strongholds to reduce the latter's chances of winning etc.

The legitimate and illegitimate costs of the above activities are testimonies to the fact that an election is resource-demanding and resource-draining. It is not surprising that the data available confirms that the level of women's participation and representation in Nigerian politics is low, as women have never reached more than 10% at both Senate and House of Representatives since the return to democracy in 1999 (INEC, 2023). This is because women frequently have less access than men to the resources needed to successfully contest for an election (Ballington & Kahane, 2014).

In all the stages of electioneering processes, raising money to gain the party's nomination is one of the greatest challenges that women prospective candidates face, as raising money very early is the initial financing required to launch a campaign for their candidature. The preliminary stage of gaining exposure and building name recognition, travelling and organising a campaign team and ultimately winning the party nomination engulf a lot of resources, which is mostly difficulty to realise by women. This is more so that raising money at this preliminary stage is self-financing as such efforts often come from the candidates. Financial challenges encountered after winning the nomination is another major obstacle for women as party support may increase and greater visibility may attract additional sources of funding (Ballington, 2012).

Instructively, recruitment and nomination of candidates constitute a very important part of the processes for political parties to address in order to promote women's representation in governance in Nigeria. Political parties as

a vital link for achieving equality and inclusive representation in governance need to organise the party structures and integrate women in the politburo (Maimouna, 2020) because they have firm control over the nomination of candidates for elected offices (Ballington, 2012). Section 84(1) of the Electoral Act (2022) empowers political party to nominate its candidate which is done by holding party primaries. A cursory glance at the All Progressives Congress (APC) Constitution in Nigeria distilled in its Article 19(iii) on the “Screening and Selection Committee(s)” where the committee is saddled with the responsibility of “screening of party aspirants for nomination or election” into offices while Article 20 of the APC Constitution enjoins the “Electoral College of delegates to conduct indirect primaries for the purpose of nominating a candidate...”.

Despite a clear and unambiguous provisions in Article 20(IV)(e) of the APC Constitution (APC, 2019) for having rules and regulations that have a gender balance within the constituency covered by the Party, it has been observed in practice that the selection and nomination of candidates are in the hands of a few party leaders, which makes it very difficult for women to compete on equal footing with men as they seem to be typically excluded from the ‘all boys’ networks (Ballington, 2012). Thus, selecting or nominating women at this primary stage is critical and this shows a clear link between them being elected in primary elections and their access to finance. In evidencing this position is the view expressed by Joy Phumaphi (Phumaphi et al., 2020), the Co-Chair of the UN Secretary General’s Independent Accountability Panel for Women, Children and Adolescent health thus:

the current political setup is designed to favour men, recruitment is done by existing leader, who in this case recruit new people into the parties that they are leading- another man. Mentorship will be men to men. Lack of resources for women hinders them to break through the hostile set up under the existing electoral system.

Therefore, there should be clear, transparent and implementable political parties’ guidelines that should be finance-friendly that can incorporate rules guaranteeing women’s participation and representation in governance.

Review of the sources of political financing in Nigeria

Section 225 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, as amended) deals with finances of political parties in Nigeria (Does the section mention women or gender? If not, why not, and if it does, what does it say?). Also note that this provision is not equivalent to giving financial help to aspirants and candidates of the

party, especially women. By the combined effects of Sections 225 and 226 of the 1999 Constitution and Sections 86 and 89 of the Electoral Act, 2022, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is empowered to monitor, inquire into and assess campaign finances, and parties' source of and management of funds. However, it is instructive to note that an election in Nigeria has become an expensive affair. Political aspirants or candidates from the under-represented groups, especially women, find it challenging to secure the substantial sums of money usually required to run a campaign and win an election. This argument has been evident for instance, in the cost of APC forms for the presidential election of 2023 which was N100,000,00,0 while that of governorship was N50,000,000. The Senatorial election form was N20,000,000, the House of Representatives' form was N10,000,000, and the House of Assembly's form was N2,000,000 (ChannelsTV.com, 2023). Beside the above expenses for showing of interest and nomination forms, Section 88(2)-(7) of the Electoral Act, (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2022) stipulated the limits of election expenses, which from all indications show that pursuing any of these elective positions may be difficult to secure by some aspiring women (In both PDP and APC women do not pay for nomination forms at all levels, only for expression of interest).

The limits are aimed at ensuring that the cost of campaigning remains affordable especially for women for the purpose of guaranteeing an effective and efficient electoral participation and representation, thus, discouraging corrupt practices and decreasing the role of money in influencing policymaking. Despite the penalties for contravention of the limits of campaign expenses under Section 88(9) – (11) of the Electoral Act (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2022), it has been evident that the election expenses of the political parties and candidates overshot the limits in the 2023 general election. The penalties for the contravention of the above provision worsen the situation as the penalties seem to be meagre and not strong enough to serve as a deterrent for any candidate who overshoots the limit of election expenses prescribed in the extant laws.

It is pertinent to address the financial barriers that hinder the representation of women and equalise the situation by reviewing the available sources of finances from which women can tap into to finance their political ambitions and increase their representation in governance across all levels. Unfortunately, leaning on or relying on donations for election has also been limited as the INEC (Independent National Electoral Commission) has been empowered to place a limitation on any amount or assets which can be donated to any party under Section 87 of the Electoral Act (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2022). This provision is gender-blind as it does not exclude

women aspirants, which should have been a leeway for women aspirants to raise more funds to finance their elections.

Instructively, reviewing the resources available for election for women can be categorised into public, political party and private funding initiatives.

Public Funding

Governments in many countries are using public funding to encourage political parties to nominate candidates from under-represented groups and enable them to become elected by tying the provision of public funding to the enforcement of electoral quotas where they exist. Public funding gives political parties financial incentives to meet the quota target, or penalises them if they fail to meet the agreed proportion of candidates from under-represented groups (Agrawal & Hamada, 2021). Agrawal et al. (2021) add that gender-targeted public funding has two distinct avenues. First, the eligibility of a political party to receive a certain amount of public funding (or all of it) is connected to the level of gender equality between the candidates it puts up for election (or manages to get elected). In the second, a certain proportion of public funding that a political party receives is formally earmarked for gender-related activities, including training and development of female members, developing a gender action plan, or gender-sensitisation within the ranks of the political party.

Because of the importance of public funding for ensuring inclusive democracy, several countries often make provisions for the funding of political parties for three purposes; one to provide incentives to political parties to include more women as electoral candidates; two to improve the capacity of individual women to run successful campaigns for party nomination and winning the election; and thirdly, to undertake strategic work within parties to improve attitudes and support towards gender equality. Experiences from some countries suggest that about 70% of countries provide direct public funding to political parties. However, only 17% of countries have gender-targeted public funding to promote women's political participation (International IDEA, 2020). This is perhaps the gap in public funding and women's political representation.

The first use of gender-targeted public funding is found in Finland, where in 1974, a certain proportion of public funding was earmarked for activities to enhance gender equality (Ohman, 2018). Article 18 of the Colombia Bill 1475 (Congress of Colombia, 2011) affirms that public funding must be earmarked for "effective inclusion of women, youth, and ethnic minorities in a political process." It emphasises that "in any case, parties and movements will allocate in their annual budgets a sum not less than 15% of the State contributions that they were granted to conduct political and

electoral training courses for the effective inclusion of young people, women and ethnic minorities in the political process.” In addition, 5% of state funding for political parties must be distributed as an incentive for those who gain seats for women candidates. Furthermore, as there is a voting threshold that parties must reach in order to obtain seats and maintain their legal status (Casas-Zamora & Falguera, 2016). This means that political parties that failed to meet the minimum women’s representation over time will be deregistered.

Similarly, in Kenya, according to Article 26 of the Political Parties Act 2011 (ORPP, 2011), at least 30% of the direct public funding provided to political parties should be used for “promoting the representation in Parliament and in the county assemblies of women, persons with disabilities, youth, ethnic and other minorities and marginalised communities” (Casas-Zamora & Falguera, 2016). In France, gender-targeted public funding was introduced in 2000. It provides that if the gender gap between all candidates presented by a political party was greater than 2% (in practice, greater than 51% men and 49% women), the public funding received by that party would be reduced. The reduction was originally set at half of that gap, later increased to two-thirds. Since 2014, it has been 1.5 times the gap. This means that if a party nominates 60% men and 40% women (in other words, a gap of 20%), its public funding is reduced by 30%; if it were to nominate no women at all, it would forfeit all public funding that it would otherwise have received (Pacific Women in Politics, 2000). As a result of these provisions, the proportion of female candidates and elected parliamentarians has increased.

Political Party Funding

Political parties are expected to play a vital role in addressing the gender funding gap. Especially in moving beyond legislated measures to adopting their own initiatives to promote equitable participation, also raising funds on behalf of under-represented groups with limited access to political funding. In their study, Khushbu et al. (2021) reveal that political parties are a vital link to achieving equal and inclusive participation of women, as they play a crucial role in not only the candidate selection and nomination process, but also in the administration of political funds, including public funding for political activities.

In some countries, political parties have adopted voluntary initiatives to level the playing field for women candidates, including reducing and waiving nomination fees and establishing fundraising mechanisms (Ballington & Kahane, 2014). In many countries, however, women candidates often receive little or no financial assistance from their political parties. In order to support women in their quest for political office, political parties can help women raise funds for political campaigns by, for example, establishing

fundraising networks, reducing or waiving membership and candidate registration fees, creating funds within the party aimed at supporting women candidates, providing them with subsidies or in-kind contributions such as cost of childcare, support towards transportation, and campaign materials, or setting ceilings on nomination and campaign expenditures.

Wanigasinghe (2022) submits that allocating a certain minimum amount of funds within a political party solely for women to represent the party is one option to overcome the problem of women's political under-representation to a large extent. However, this is not a complete solution to the problem. Introducing regulations on campaign financing such as controls on how much can be spent per campaign is an added measure to ensure that financial limitations do not discourage women's participation.

In the Republic of El Salvador, the Frente Farabundo Martí Para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) party supported women candidates for their campaigns by setting up an electoral committee which raised funds for women candidates by seeking donations and organising fundraising events. The funds went towards promoting women candidates through media exposure, as well as printing of T-shirts and posters with the names of women candidates and training of women for effective engagement at elections (International IDEA, 2021). The experiences from these countries explains how funding from political parties help to bridge the gap in political representation and governance.

Private Funding

Khushbu et al. (2021) state that public funding and party-level initiatives can relieve the financial burden that women candidates face; however, they are often insufficient. As a result, women are increasingly relying on private sources of funding. Unfortunately, even private sources are not easily accessible by women, who can have limited access to the public sphere, including moneyed networks. The absence of women from these networks hampers their ability to raise funds to campaign effectively. In some countries, partisan networks have been raising funds through member contributions to support women candidates.

On a similar note, Cantrell et al. (2020) reveal how politicians rely heavily on private funding in Nepal. Given the costs of campaigning in Nepal, which put a financial strain on all potential candidates, men and women alike are beyond the funds provided by the government and political parties; resort is therefore tailored to raise money for their campaigns either by selling their ancestral properties, taking loans or seeking donations from businesspersons, although these fundraising methods are more accessible to male candidates. More so in Bulgaria, the largest amounts of campaign

funding come from private and business donations (UNDP, 2007). Campaign funding in Colombia can be private or public, and in the 2014 elections for Congress, private funds represented 70% of the total cost of the campaigns (Casas-Zamora & Falguera, 2016).

One of the most celebrated private interventions for funding of women's election expenditure and encouraging women inclusiveness is the EMILYs List (EMILYs List, 2024). The EMILYs list is a US political action committee (PAC) founded in 1985 that helps pro-choice Democratic female candidates become elected to office. It does so by recruiting and training women candidates to run for office at every level across the country, supporting their campaigns through research, communication, fundraising, and mobilising women voters. Comprised of five million members, EMILYs List has raised over \$500 million in the last thirty-five years, becoming one of the largest financial resources for minority women seeking federal office. It has helped elect 116 pro-choice Democratic women to the House, twenty-six to the Senate, sixteen to governors' seats, and over 1,100 women to state and local office (Hamada & Agrawal, 2020). This success indicates the relationship between political financing and the ability of women to be victorious in elections and access governance processes.

Challenges of gender-targeted political financing

"In spite of advances in incorporating women into politics, the gender perspective has not yet penetrated the area of political funding..." (Laura, cited in Griner and Zovatto, 2005). This explains the challenging situation of women in politics in accessing the needed funds for effective participation in electioneering processes leading to their representation. Studies (Shannon, 2007) show that female candidates have more difficulty securing funds for their campaigns. Below are some of the reasons why women find it difficult to access adequate funds for effective political participation:

Incumbency factor

One of the most relevant factors regarding the impediments that women face in accessing funds is incumbency. Because of the fact that most women tend to be newcomers to politics, they must first establish themselves in the political arena, which puts them at a disadvantage against male politicians who are already well-known and have amassed wealth by virtue of the positions they have held over time (Global 50/50 Campaign, 2007). Even when they attain a position of political power, women are usually put in charge of less financially juicy areas like gender and children's policies, healthcare, education, or migration. Their disadvantage is even more prominent when

placed against a person who has already held a position in office and does not need to fight for recognition.

Since the corporate elite is male-dominated, the political gender gap continues to grow. A committee reported headed by Karen (2019) found out that in Canada, incumbent candidates are rarely challenged when seeking re-nomination, and that incumbent candidates tend to receive greater financial resources, support and visibility during an election campaign compared to non-incumbent candidates. According to a representative from the Privy Council Office, “there is an incumbency advantage, and that generally seems to support men.” The research findings further revealed that female incumbents are more ‘precariously placed’ than their male counterparts and are therefore responsible for the availability of more funds to the male counterparts.

According to International IDEA and the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, electoral candidates in Colombia enjoy fundraising opportunities if they have the support of a political group or the advantages of incumbency. Emerging female leaders can thus face more complex financial limitations than men already on the inside lane of Colombian politics (Rodríguez & Dávil, 2014).

Political affiliation

The nature and size of political parties that women belong to also plays a vital role in their access to political funding. Bigger parties are more likely to attract donations, especially from large corporations, while smaller parties’ candidates must rely more on their political party for support. The political gender gap is thus also affected by party affiliation, with candidates from the small parties to which the majority of women belonged places them at a disadvantaged position in terms of access to funding (Feo et al., 2021).

The role that political financing plays in the under-representation of women or minorities cannot be underscored. Although, some countries are already taking measures to reduce this gap and ensure that political campaigns are fairer; however, no appreciable results have been recorded so far. For instance, Aili and Khabure (2014), in a study titled *Women’s Leadership as a Route to Greater Empowerment: Kenya Case Study*, stated that although political parties in Kenya are expected to use at least 30% of their funds to promote women candidates, this has not been fulfilled. Ohman and Lintari (2016) add that lack of political party support to women candidates disadvantages them more than their male counterparts. Therefore, women who are financially empowered are in a better position to run successful political campaigns and fully participate in politics, as economic constraints

and the ever-increasing costs linked to political campaigns will unfortunately continue to hinder their ability to vie for political offices.

In a study conducted by Miruka (2003), titled *Financing for politics – which way for women in Kenya?*, it was found out that one of the sources of political financing is the political party that one belongs to. Political parties advance some funding to their candidates, perhaps not all candidates, but at least those who are perceived to have a realistic chance of succeeding. One must therefore seek to understand women's standing regarding these and concluded that inchoate women politicians may have a slight disadvantage in this area because of the traditional marginalisation of women from the public domain, especially when political parties provide funding to all their nominated candidates using a graduated scale, which considers incumbency, the acknowledged financial capacity of the candidate and specificity of the requests by candidates.

In a related study titled *The Political Participation of Women in Kenya* conducted by Kenyatta (2023), it was revealed that political parties do offer limited support to their candidates for their political campaigns. Although these parties are eligible for public funding as per the Political Parties Act of 2011 (ORPP, 2011), this framework is structurally discriminatory as it tends to fund large and short-lived parties, while blocking mini and more long-lasting political parties. These mini parties are vital because of the role that they undertake in championing women's participation and as the preferred political vehicles for women who choose to run independently outside the party frames.

Access to Economic Opportunity

Globally, men earn more than women and women occupy a disproportionate number of poorly paid and unprotected jobs, including in the informal sector and migrant labour pools (UNDP, 2007). Amongst others, socio-cultural drivers and gender expectations lead to women having lower levels of income and education than men in Nigeria (CBN, 2019). First, women typically earn less than men, and their incomes are often designated for day-to-day household spending (such as food, clothes, and cooking fuel). This leaves them with little or no disposable income with which they can purchase larger goods, make investments, or save and participate in active electoral governance. Women may therefore encounter barriers over the course of the nomination and election processes that their male counterparts do not (Karen, 2019).

The British Council report on Girls Education in Nigeria, (2015) provides an instructive picture of the situation that poverty, gender norms, and traditional practices, including early marriage, increase the risk of

premature school dropout and unemployment, particularly for women. Such perceptions mean that girls are more often burdened with household chores. This limits their capacity to regularly attend classes or pursue gainful employment outside of the home. Restricted access to education also impedes women's access to high quality, well-paying jobs. As a result, women are more likely than men to be vulnerably employed or unemployed. In fact, their male counterparts are nearly twice as likely to hold wage-earning jobs (World Bank, 2017).

Experiences from some countries portray the effect of lack of access to economic opportunity as instrumental to poor political funding for women's representation. For instance, the Rawal and Agrawal (2016) conducted a study on *Barriers to Women's Land and Property Access and Ownership in Nepal* and found that women's property ownership is below 50% and numbers are even lower amongst women from marginalised groups, with less than 8% of Dalit women owning property. The study also found that despite the increase in women's property ownership, this is not indicative of women's decision-making power over the use of the property, its revenues or major expenses. Therefore, as women continue to face unequal access to property rights, they consequently have less control over the funds generated from property ownership, adversely affecting their access to funds for political activities. Furthermore, Aili et al. (2014) note that women in Kenya generally have less funds and are unlikely to be office holders. Most women in Kenya lack avenues to property entitlement despite the Constitution guaranteeing them this; they legally own 1% of land, while those who own land collectively are 5% to 6% (World Bank, 2004).

Patriarchy

For women aspiring to run for elected office, patriarchal mindsets can be barriers for women aspirants, in addition to lack of access and control of funds. A study conducted by Cantrell et al. (2020) found that several female candidates did not have input on decisions on the use of their families' properties – that is, taking loans against the property or selling property to fund election campaigns – or that they were financially dependent on male family members.

Research by Atem & Lopa (2023) titled *Young Women in Political Institutions in South Sudan: Lessons from Lived Experiences* reveals that politics is capital-intensive. South Sudan is patriarchal; many women depend on their husbands or other male relatives because men own families and communal wealth. "Appointed or elected, political positions are lobbied for," says a young woman politician. To lobby, campaign, and effectively engage or serve your constituency requires material resources that women, young or old,

usually lack. Even within political parties, individual members with resources are deemed worthier. In other words, operating in a male-dominated space where men hold social, political, and economic power, women, especially young women in politics, are vulnerable and prone to sexual exploitation and abuse.

Theoretical framework on women's representation in governance

This study draws upon the Theory of Empowerment. Of all the various perspectives, the social-psychological perspective by Zimmerman (2000) is most relevant. The central argument is the belief that the Social-Psychological Theory emphasised the transformative capacity of empowerment. The goal of such empowerment is to foster change by equipping people with the needed resources to enhance their well-being and enable them to solve their own problems. Consequently, it will mean an intentional ongoing process involving mutual resources, critical reflection, caring and group participation through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989).

Since the acquisition and retention of political power requires material resources and is of great importance in all political systems with competitive popular elections, which evidently the men have more access to, there must therefore be a deliberate intervention to empower the women to have greater access to and control over money as a means of improving their political participation.

Methodology

The study adopts a survey design to generate the primary data through the use of survey questionnaires. The combined effect of these approaches is that it will help to integrate the opinions of researchers as published in documents and the practitioners (political class) on the issue of political financing and women's representation in Nigeria. The structured questionnaire was administered to sixty-seven respondents comprising the serving and past female legislators with the representatives of six political parties as well as individual women aspirants, candidates, and elected officials. Because of limitations of time, space and resources, the questionnaire was administered to six political parties from their head offices in Abuja. The data collected were analysed using simple percentages.

Some demographic characteristics of the respondents will help. Were they men, women, youths by gender, women leaders, or what category of

respondents? Are the respondents related to the financial decisions of the political parties?

Table 23: Background Information of Sampled Population of Data Collection

Participants	Number of respondents	Location/Study area
APC	10	ABUJA
PDP	10	ABUJA
APGA	10	ABUJA
LP	10	ABUJA
ADC	10	ABUJA
ADP	10	ABUJA
Female Senators of 10 th Assembly	03	ABUJA
Representative Members of 10 th Assembly	04	ABUJA

Source: Author’s field survey, 2023

Presentation of results

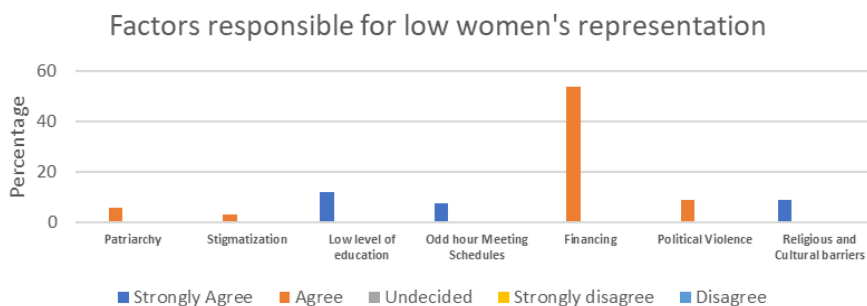


Figure 8: Factors responsible for low women’s representation

Source: Author’s field survey, 2023

Figure 8 shows that the factors responsible for low women’s participation are multi-faceted including low level of education, meeting schedules at odd hours, political violence, religious and cultural barriers, stigmatisation, patriarchy and finance. Of these factors, inadequate finance seems prominent because politics the world-over and particularly in Nigeria involves a lot of money, and since women are not economically empowered compared to their male counterparts, this limits their level of political attainment. Unequal

access to productive resources is a very strong constraint against women’s empowerment to political participation. This is sometimes caused by easier access of men to land through inheritance, hence the need to investigate the factors responsible for poor funding of women’s representation.

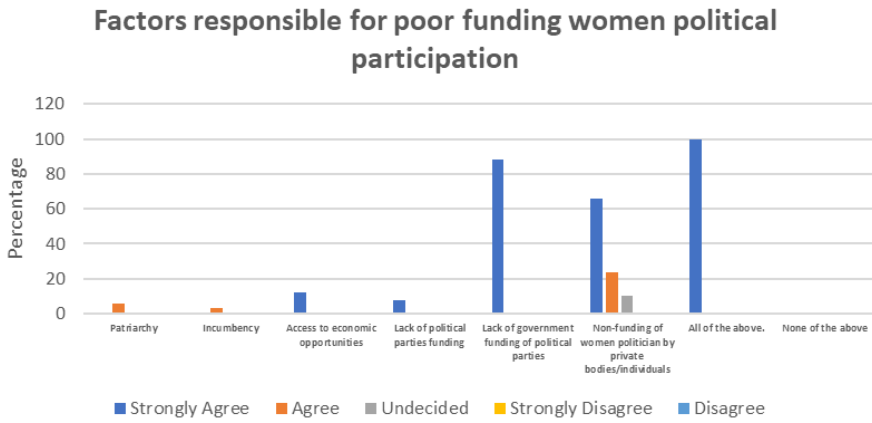


Figure 9: Factors responsible for poor funding of women’s political participation

Source: Author’s field survey, 2023

Figure 9 reveals that several factors are responsible for poor funding of women’s political participation; incumbency, access to economic activities, patriarchy, lack of funding by political parties and government, non-funding of women politicians by private bodies and individuals.

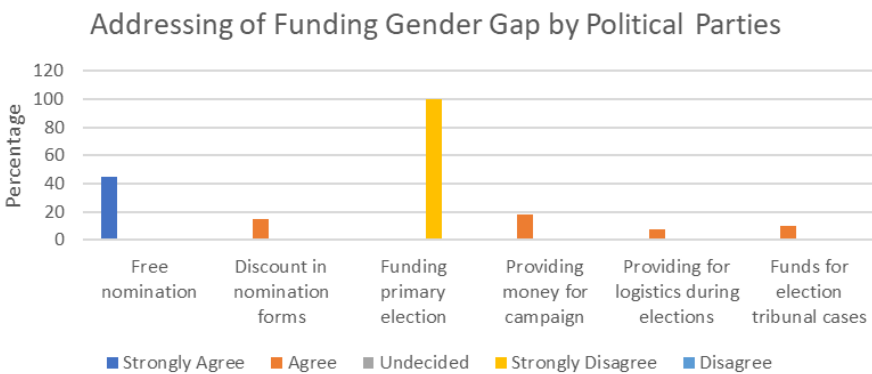


Figure 10: How have political parties addressed the gender funding gap?

Source: Author’s field survey, 2023

On the role of political parties in promoting women’s representation, it is clear from Figure 10 that free nomination forms is the most popular strategy adopted by political parties in Nigeria to engender more women’s participation, while some parties only discounted the cost of the nomination forms. Financing campaigns, providing funds for logistics during elections and pursuing cases at the tribunal after elections are scarcely promoted by political parties. Competing for political positions in Nigeria requires huge finance and most Nigerian women who seek elective positions could not afford meeting the financial obligations therein, despite the wavers giving to women aspirants by some of the political parties. And so, they could do little or nothing to outweigh their male counterparts.



Figure 11: How has government addressed gender gap funding in Nigeria?

Source: Author’s field survey, 2023

Figure 11 shows the abysmal role of government in Nigeria in addressing the gender funding gap. Government had over time not taken an appreciable role in bridging the funding gap of women to improve their political participation and representation. It is also obvious that efforts by the government to provide incentives have not been targeted at empowering women; rather a mere provision of incentives to political parties for women’s inclusiveness, funding of political parties for women’s participation; providing of funds for the training of women politicians and legislation to encourage private bodies to finance women’s political participation may be seen as misappropriation of funds without clear directions of such funds.

Discussion of findings

From the data analysed above, the findings show that:

1. The study reveals that the shortage or lack of finance constitutes the major challenge to women's representation in Nigerian political leadership. The inadequacy of funds for women narrows their representation. Other factors are incumbency, access to economic activities, patriarchy, lack of funding by political parties and government as well as non-funding of women politicians by private bodies or individuals. This finding is similar to the submissions of Wanigasinghe (2022), Cantrell et al. (2020) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) (2020), all of which reveal that unequal access to funds for female candidates, reinforced by patriarchal attitudes of political stakeholders, adversely affects their political representation.
2. Political parties in Nigeria, other than the free nomination forms for women vying for elective positions, which have proved not to be inadequate, have failed to develop other strategic policy frameworks for empowering women and promoting their representation, as practiced in other countries. For instance, Colombia requires every party and political movement to allocate at least 15% of the state funding they receive to training activities for increasing political participation amongst women, ethnic groups and young people, while in Kenya, 30% of the public funding to political parties is reserved for women's political representation (Casas-Zamora & Falguera, 2016).
3. Similarly, the study reveals that the Nigerian government has not enunciated policies to address the gender financing gap in Nigeria to improve their political participation and representation. This is at variance with practices in other countries. In France, Kenya, Colombia and others, governments specifically provide funding to political parties and the enjoyment of such funding depends on the gender representation guaranteed by the political parties. Wanigasinghe (2022) and Khushbu et al. (2021), submit that allocating a certain minimum amount of funds within a political party solely for women representing the party is one option to overcome the problem of women's political under-representation to a large extent, and that in almost all countries that have introduced gender-targeted public funding, the number of women in parliament is higher today. However, attributing this increase to financial measures must be made with caution, and only after analysing individual country contexts and other legislative and non-legislative measures introduced at the same time. These include reform of the electoral system, adoption of provisions related to quotas and reserved

seats, changing attitudes and perceptions, and advocacy by interest groups, amongst other factors.

Conclusion

There are several factors responsible for the low women's representation in Nigeria; however, inadequate finance is the most fundamental determinant of women's political success which is relegated to the background by political parties and the government. This is because there are no constitutional provisions or any legal framework that have a specific provision of boosting the financial capacity of women that can serve as salvation to women's political ambitions. The author cannot conclude for sure that access to political funds is the overriding consideration in the inability of women to win an election, however, it can be concluded that women face more obstacles than men in seeking political office and one of these obstacles is the lack of access to funds for political representation in Nigeria. Drawing on global examples, this chapter highlights successful strategies implemented in other contexts to enhance both political financing transparency and women's representation. The countries examined as case studies in this chapter provide practical insights and potential models for adoption in the Nigerian context. The chapter further concludes by reiterating the urgency of addressing both political financing and women's representation as interconnected elements of a more inclusive governance paradigm in Nigeria. It underscores the potential positive impact on democracy, social development, and the overall well-being of the nation.

Recommendations

To improve political participation and representation of under-represented groups, especially women, in Nigeria the following measures are recommended:

1. Government through the legislation by the National Assembly should create financial incentives for all registered parties to nominate more candidates who are women in general elections and by-elections. Such funds should be developed to fund only political parties that have achieved an appreciable number of women's representations of at least the minimum 35% as per the affirmative action targets. If public funding to political parties is introduced, consider introducing a funding scale, whereby political parties adhering to women's representation requirements receive larger amounts than parties that do not.
2. In addition to the 35% affirmation action, the National Assembly should provide legislation that bars the holding of government seats either

- elective or appointive beyond two-thirds of the same gender as practiced in most other countries (e.g. Article 27 (3) of the 2010 Kenya Constitution – Constitute Project (2010)).
3. For effective women's representation, political parties have to adopt a number of measures. First, parties should seek ways to reduce the resources needed for election campaigns by identifying low-cost campaigning approaches and start fundraising early. Second, eliminating all primary election expenditures including nomination fees for talented female candidates who may not have access to independent finances or resources. Third, provide targeted support to potential female candidates to begin fundraising, building support networks for campaigning and working on possible campaign strategies.
 4. The Federal Government should through legislative houses in Nigeria enact laws that will encourage private bodies to specifically fund women's political representation as tax rebate mechanisms for their businesses. This will help to reduce pressure to raise large amounts from personal wealth or having connections to wealthy networks for aspiring candidates, for which women are at a disadvantage. In this regard, civil society can support potential female candidates to start fundraising early to carefully consider low-cost, high-impact approaches such as social media-based outreach and campaign strategies.

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