

Political Parties and Women's Political Leadership in Nigeria: The Case of the PDP, the ANPP, and the AD

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Abstract

Women constitute at least half of Nigeria's population. They make important and largely unacknowledged contributions to economic life and play crucial roles in all spheres of society. In spite of Nigeria's long history of political parties, very few Nigerian women have held political offices, either elected or appointed. The passive participation of women in the nation's political parties and policymaking bodies suggests that affirmative action in favor of women has not been given adequate attention. This affects women's power in influencing the nation's public policies. As already noted, by their demographic advantage, women have the capacity to decide on the political leadership, but very few women emerge to the leadership positions of political parties and even fewer become party candidates for electoral contests. Why is this so? Is it because women do not put themselves forward? Or, is it because women voters believe that men can represent their interests adequately? Is it because male political leaders perceive women political leaders as a threat to "male" power? This article seeks to explicate the underlying factors that have been affecting the emergence of women political leadership in Nigeria by focusing on the three dominant political parties of Nigeria's Fourth Republic. The article concludes that the current developmental tasks require that women rise beyond the tokenism that they are used to receiving and rise to play significant and effective roles in the process of democratizing the Nigerian polity.

Introduction

Women constitute at least half of Nigeria's population. They make important and largely unacknowledged contributions to economic life and play crucial roles in all spheres of society. In spite of Nigeria's long history of political parties, very few Nigerian women have held political offices either elected or appointed. This is partly due to the cultural and economic constraints that prevent women from actively participating in politics, and the fact that political parties and indeed the electorate still feel reluctant to elect women in leadership positions. The passive participation of women in the nation's political parties and policy making bodies suggests that affirmative action in favour of women has not been given adequate attention. This affects women's power in influencing the nation's public policies. As already adumbrated, by their demographic advantage, women have the capacity to decide on the political leadership. But very few women emerge to the leadership positions of political parties and even fewer become party candidates for electoral contests. Why is this so? Is it because women do not put themselves forward? Or, is it because women voters believe that men can represent their interests adequately? Is it because male political leaders perceive women political leaders as a threat to "male" power? Presumably, all these factors are interrelated and constitute the problematic of this study which must be explored.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study is concerned with political parties and female political leadership in Nigeria's Fourth Republic (May 29, 1999 to date), focusing on the People's

Democratic Party (PDP), the All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP), and the Alliance for Democracy (AD). Problems encountered in the course of this exercise include the attitudes of the people to questions posed as there were often delays and hesitation before they answered.

Method and Techniques

Methodologically, both primary and secondary sources of data were employed in this study. The primary sources include fieldwork that involved interview schedules purposively conducted with some selected Key Informants (KIS) in Abuja, Lagos, and Oyo states. These KIS are women politicians from the three dominant political parties of Nigeria's Fourth Republic. In conducting these interviews, tape recorders were used and note-taking was done alongside to record other physical observations of people interviewed. Our primary source of data collection also includes the administration of a structured questionnaire to the target population. The respondents cut across sex, religion, ethnic group, and profession. The central objectives of the data collected via questionnaire (as well as interviews) were to find out the voting pattern of the electorate during the 2003 general elections, reasons for not voting for female candidates, whether men (as against women) represent the electorate better, etc.

The secondary source of data involved data collection through literature assessment on our subject of inquiry, manifestoes of the three political parties, and, finally, the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This study employed a simple random sampling technique. Consequently, 300 questionnaires were distributed in the three sampled areas, i.e. 100

questionnaires for each of the two states (Oyo and Lagos), and 100 questionnaires also for Abuja. We accept the fact that the number of the survey instruments is small compared to the size of the population of these areas, but it is representative of the total populations of the selected areas. The analytical technique adopted for the obtained data were descriptive and quantitative.

Following from the above, this paper engages in the analysis of how women have been empowered (or otherwise) to realize their political leadership potentials in Nigeria within the three political parties: the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP), and the Alliance for Democracy (AD) which are the dominant parties of Nigeria's Fourth Republic. It is, therefore, hoped that with the results of this study, some suggestions will be made for empowering women and more fundamentally, contribute to the emergence of female political leaders in Nigeria.

The rest of the paper is divided into five broad sections. The first discusses the key concepts that are central to this study, while the second takes a quick look at the feminine political passivity and its main features. The third part considers the historical review of women in Nigeria's politics. This is followed with the case studies and general discussions and findings, while the final part proffers effective solutions to the marginalization of women in politics.

Political Party, Political Participation, and Leadership: Towards a Conceptual Clarification

This paper begins with some clarification of the three key concepts that are central to the study: political party, leadership, and political participation. At the risk

of repeating what is well known, we shall attempt to sketch the essentials of these concepts in our explanation. Political party as a concept is multifaceted in its meaning for it does not lend itself to a precise definition and its meaning, nature, and content have been understood differently by various scholars. Preferred meaning depends on cherished values and interests. In this paper, a political party is conceptualized as any group of people with symmetrical political opinions, principles, and ideologies, and who, on the basis of this ideological symmetry, unite to gain, through competitive efforts for votes, the control of government, in order to translate their formulated policies and programs (manifestoes) into public policy (Derbyshire and Derbyshire, 1991: 139). In other words, the aim of a political party is the gaining of political power to aid the realization of its ideas and political foresight. As conceptualized, political party is distinguishable from pressure group for its sole objective is fundamentally to win elections, control state power and be in charge of government, and thereafter allocate values and resources to other members of the society (Onuoha, 2003: 137). Interestingly, political parties provide the platforms for mass mobilization and participation of members (men and women) in politics.

Political participation, on the other hand, refers to the variety of ways in which people try to exercise influence over political processes. The ultimate aim of political participation is to wield political power and influence. The electorate is stimulated to take part in political decisions affecting lives (e.g. voting) through the parties' clarification of issues and provision of indispensable information on both socio-political current events and candidates for political office. There seems to be a close interrelationship between participating in a

political process and actually holding some political power, although there cannot be any power without participation. For better understanding, it is important to revisit a hierarchical model of political participation developed by Milbraith (1965: 18), which shows the levels of political participation in descending order: holding party and public office, being a candidate for office, soliciting political funds, attending a caucus or strategy meeting, becoming an active member of a party, contributing time to political campaigns, attending a political meeting or rally, etc. In the context of Nigeria's experience with political parties, female political participation is very minimal. This is largely due to the fact that political participation is characterized by a high degree of exclusion of women supporters who do not determine the real direction of the party politics (International IDEA, 2000: 121). Leadership is a relational concept underlined by power, trust and defined goals. In this paper leadership is taken to mean the "ability to obtain non-coerced, voluntary compliance which enables followers to attain goals which they share with the leaders" (Cartwright, 1983: 21).

Explaining Feminine Political Passivity

Literature on women in politics is replete with multifarious reasons for the masculine super-ordination/feminine subordination dichotomy. This dichotomy creates hurdles for female advancement in decision-making and politics that surround them in all spheres of the society (Stitcher and Parpart, 1990; Imam et al, 1985; Imam, 1987; Boserup, 1970; Dorsey et al, 1989). The foremost critical factor adduced by pundits is that of the socio-cultural beliefs and myths, which, to a greater extent,

determine the perception of men and women right from childhood. Nzomo buttressed this fact by saying that:

The sex-stereotypes and gender segregation in employment and allocation of roles in private and public life are primarily a product of the early socialization process, the indoctrination of the societal environment. In this regard, many women's 'hang up' and lack of confidence in their ability to competently execute public leadership roles, arise from this socialization which is insubordination in nature (1991:5).

Sadly enough, the pervasive socio-cultural practices of patriarchy in many cultures represent one of the most formidable constraints to women's participation in Nigeria's political processes. Patriarchy as a system of male domination in socio-cultural, economic and political affairs perpetually relegates women to the background. In *addendum*, patriarchy as a system disempowers women via various discriminatory customary practices such as disinheritance of females, humiliating widowhood rites, taboos against acquisition of property, beliefs in supernatural forces and food taboos, and exclusion from decision-making in the family or community (Aina, 1998: 3-32; Agina-Ude, 2003: 4). Subjected to patriarchal norms, women's political expressions are limited to entertainment, and voting for candidates preferred by their husbands. Basically, men thought it abominable to be under a woman's leadership. This is quite revealing in a study carried out in a rural community in Anambra state of Nigeria which shows that men feel that it is something

close to a taboo for women to rule over them (Freidrich Ebert Foundation, 1998: 108).

Aside from the socio-cultural constraints, the role of the established male dominated political systems and the lack of political will on the part of government are inhibiting women's political leadership in Nigeria. With respect to the latter, Agina-Ude (2003) contends that apart from using gender issues to score political points, the Nigerian leadership has never really taken practical steps to increase female presence in public offices. This scholar argues further that:

Nothing stops the federal and state chief executives from appointing a sizeable number of women into public offices to make up for the shortfall in all elective posts (ibid).

Furthermore, the structures of political parties also impede the effective participation of Nigerian women in politics and public positions. Numerous empirical studies have shown that information about politics is disseminated through channels that men have more access to, not to mention that the language of politics can appear alien to women. Apart from the foregoing, the very nature of partisan politics in Nigeria is nothing to write home about as far as gender is concerned. Male politicians believe in political thuggery, elimination of political opponents, incitement of ethnic and sectarian violence, vote rigging, intimidation, vote buying and unnecessary clandestine meetings targeted at excluding women from participating (Okunkunbor, 2002; Onoge, 2001). These factors interact to promote the environmental context suitable for the recycling of the same class of male politicians in Nigeria

which is evident in most African countries. Furthermore, experience during the last general elections shows that some parties had unwritten policies against female aspirants. Of note, is the fact that the parties determine who gets to contest for what post and the party apparatus is used to enhance the ambition of selected candidates.

In addition, the fact that education is a basic human right that provides opportunities for socio-economic advancement is eminently unarguable. Indeed, women continue to endure inadequate representation in political and decision making because of formidable socio-cultural determinants against women's participation in education (Nzomo, 1987). For instance, because of socio-cultural attitudes and sexist stereotypes, financial limitations, patriarchal practices, early female marriages, submissiveness, motherhood, passivity, family subsistence through child labour, and parental perception of education's influence on women's world view, the girl is deliberately denied education and opportunities for meaningful future political participation. On the other hand, male children are socialized/educated to become kings, chiefs, family heads, aggressive, competitive, professionals, and independent minded (Alao, 1998: 92-93). As Nzomo (1987) rightly emphasized, there is an institutionalized and structural educational prejudice, which ensures that inappropriate/inadequate education is employed to obstruct women's participation in political processes—a situation that generates very high female school dropout rates, described as wastage of inestimable human intellectual resources.

Furthermore, Nigerian politicians/politics require enormous financial resources to ensure effective political participation. At various levels, varying degree of financial commitments is required to establish and sustain political

party membership. Traditionally, women are restricted by socio-cultural prescriptions to poorly remunerated subsistence agricultural activities devoid of land ownership, low-level office employment, and primarily domestic labour centered on procreation/motherhood (Imam, 1987). Without land, a highly preferred collateral security in financial institutions, the prospects of mobilizing funds for political participation by women is further hampered (Oluwemimo, 1998: 66-67).

In Nigeria, the three dominant religions contain restrictive tenets to female participation in their rituals. For instance, Islam regulates residential and public appearances (*Kulle* or *Purdah*) of women. As of yet, there are still no female Islamic and Catholic religious heads. Looking specifically at Christianity, it stipulates the subordination of women. According to the Holy Bible, "for the woman is not of man: but the woman for the man" (1 Corinthians 11: 8-9). Also, "Let your women keep silent in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church" (1 Corinthians 14: 34-35). Religious injunctions like these have robbed and restricted women and made the churches male dominated. The traditional religion is even more decisive with its application of stringent taboos on women (Aina, 1998). In these religions, women are restricted to certain areas within their worship facilities. Invariably, these are issues central to the manipulation of women for voting and engagement in Nigeria's political processes (Abdullah, 1993).

The aforementioned factors are interrelated and aptly summed up by Duverger:

If the majority of women are little attracted to political carriers, it is because everything tends to turn away from them; If they allow politics to remain essentially a man's business, it is because everything is conducive to this belief; tradition, family life, education, religion and literature. The small part played by women in politics merely reflects and results from the secondary place to which they are assigned by the custom and attitudes of our society and which their education and training tend to make them accept as the natural order of things (Duverger, 1975: 129-130, cited in Nzomo, 1991).

It is on this note that Willis (1991: 24) calls for women's empowerment and support to overcome the systemic man-made barriers to their political participation.

Women in Nigerian Politics: Historical Review

Studies on Nigerian women clearly reveal that in spite of the apparent male dominance, it is highly significant to note that some women have succeeded in forcing themselves into the exalted platform of active participants in history. There is no doubt that as a gender, women are under-represented in the governance of Nigerian society, but the point we are making is that the historical appraisal of Nigeria's past provides evidence of women political leaders of respectable genre. This position is supported by Bolanle Awe:

...an analysis of the leading figures of the pre-twentieth century Africa will show that there were more women than men in the forefront of social, political and economic life, than in contemporary Africa, and that during that period, the dominant position which the women held was both qualitative and quantitative (cited in Aibangbee, 2003).

Another scholar who studied the roles of Nigerian women from the pre-colonial era up to the beginning of the Second Republic (1979-1983) is Mba (1982); her account provides a romanticization of Nigeria's pre-colonial past. The study reveals that the tradition of many Nigerian groups clearly confirmed that our women occupied important positions, not only in the economic domain, but also in socio-political spheres. Examples abound to illustrate these influences. To start with, among the Yoruba of the Southwestern part of the country, Johnson's study of the political system and constitution of the old Oyo Empire clearly shows women occupying important political offices (Johnson, 1966:63-66). Prominent among these were "the ladies of the palace" or "the King's wives." This group includes, (i) the *Iya Oba*, the *Alafin's* 'official mother' who played mother to the king; (ii) *Iya kere* who was in charge of the King's treasures and royal symbol. This woman had far reaching political power and she could refuse to surrender these to the king if she was not satisfied with his conduct. Next was the *Iya Mode* who was the priestess in charge of the veneration of the spirits of departed kings. It is said that the king looked upon her as a 'father' and addressed her as such (Afigbo, 1991: 26).

Moremi is another woman of fearlessness among the Yoruba. She rescued her Ile-Ife people from Igbo invasion by allowing herself to be captured as a strategy in order to know the internal workings of the invaders. Other women of wealth and repute were Madam Tinubu, and Madam Efunsetan who later became the *Iyalode* of Ibadan.

In the Central Sudan, the myth of Queen Amina in the Hausa political traditions is not in doubt. As a female leader, history recorded that Queen Amina's "political and military exploits dazzled all Hausa land in the 16th Century when she came to the throne of Zaria only a few decades after the foundation of Zaria city of Zarkin Barkwa Turunku" (Afigbo, 1991: 24). During her time she was regarded as an astute administrator who achieved much for her area of governance. With respect to Borno, the political imports of the Gumsu in the Amir's Court as well as the Maigira have been well documented. Among the Igala of Nigeria, during their age of domination by the Jukuns, Inkpi, a princess of the Igala royal family, bravely surrendered herself as a sacrificial lamb for the freedom of the Igala from the Jukuns. History recorded that she died a heroic death in order to put an end to the Jukuns overlordship of the Igala. Inkpi thus surrendered her life to bring peace to the Igala. As a result of her death, the Igala breathed the air of freedom. Inkpi's self-sacrifice enabled the Igala to gain freedom and to subsequently unite and consolidate.

Noteworthy is the resistance to colonialism by notable women like Madam Tinubu and Madam Pelewura who provided a link with the Lagos market women for Herbert Macaulay, a foremost nationalist. This was similar to the Eastern "Women's War" against the obnoxious colonial policies and the Warrant Chief System. In the

same context, Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti independently organized women's revolts against taxation and other policies unfavourable to women in Abeokuta. Beyond this, Mrs. Ransome-Kuti also extended support to Mrs. Margaret Ekpo who had commenced an independent resistance to colonial policies in Eastern Nigeria. Mrs. Ransome-Kuti later transformed her Abeokuta Women's Union (AWU) into the Nigeria Women's Union (NWU). This union was also to later transform into the Federation of Nigerian Women's Society (FNWS) with the mandate of articulating women's position in Nigerian society (Williams, 1992). It is on record that Mrs. Ransome-Kuti's political activism led to her membership in the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) and as part of the Nigerian delegation to London to lodge a formal protest with the Secretary of State for the Colonies before independence in 1960. Also, one should not forget the roles played by Chief (Mrs.) Bolarinwa and Alhaja Humani Alaga. These two women were able to mobilize women to support the Action Group Party (AG) of Chief Obafemi Awolowo in the Western Region. Besides, Hajia Sawaba Gambo was a prominent female leader and rose to become the leader of the women's wing of the radical political party, the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU). She was a strong ally of Mallam Aminu Kano in the radical politics of the North. NEPU provided her the platform for organized activism. It is on this note that Olaitan argues that:

...while women were not really well represented at the governmental level through the electoral political process because of their dis-enfranchisement, they were nonetheless a force to be reckoned

with at the non-governmental level in terms of mobilizing support for political causes, and sometimes even in championing their own and general societal interests (1998:77).

Women however experienced the following obstacles during the period under review: enticement from political parties which they could not resist and marital pressures that facilitated acceptance of the "women's wing" idea. Thus, their query of the women's wing idea when there was no men's wing yielded no fruits. With this trend, it should not surprise anyone that by the time Nigeria acquired political independence, women had been thoroughly marginalized from any political role. The uppish attitude of some women who thought the answer was to form their own parties was a resounding failure. The market women were right by being suspicious of their language not to talk of the failure of uppish women to empathize on their plight in the market place. And for sure, a women's party automatically cuts out about half the population.

The analysis of women's political participation in post-independence Nigeria leads one to conclude that women are bound to remain marginalized. That means that the high political awareness has not been translated into a high level of female involvement in public decision-making. For instance, during Nigeria's First Republic (1960-1966), only four women were elected in the entire country: Mrs Wuraola Esan and Mrs. Bernice Kerry in Parliament, and Mrs. Margaret Ekpo and Mrs. Janet Muokelu in the Eastern House of Assembly. No woman was appointed as Minister. In the Second Republic (1979-1983), the situation did not show much improvement. Of

the 57 Senators, only one, Franca Afegbula, was female. In the Lower House (Representatives) of 445 members, 11 were females. There were no women in the State Assemblies, and no female Councilor or Chairperson of Local Government. In the aborted Third Republic (1985-1993) under General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, only two women featured in the Political Bureau, while only 3 women were in Local Governments as the Chairpersons out of 591 seats. The State Houses of Assembly had only 27 women out of 1172 members, while Federal Houses of Parliament had only 15 women. There were no elected women in the 14 states. In 1991, 8 out of 31 presidential aspirants were women.

Women, Political Parties, and Nigeria's Fourth Republic: General Discussions and Findings

From the aforementioned statistical representation of women's political participation in Nigeria, it seems that a favourable ground is still elusive for female political leadership in the country. One admits that there are cultural barriers, but certainly political parties are supposed to serve as bridges linking women with their political leadership through their party structures, party machineries, and functions. The experience in the Fourth Republic shows that political parties are not yet directed to actualize this goal. The three dominant political parties claim in their manifestoes that they would uplift the lot of women. To really have a better understanding of these parties' activities concerning women, it is important to visit their manifestoes which are documents containing political intentions on the basis of which parties and candidates woo voters during elections. Table I (see Appendix) shows the three parties' manifestoes concerning women.

From this presentation, it can be seen, according to Simbine (2003: 145) that, "provisions certainly exist in the manifestoes of the three political parties on women issues and in the case of the APP (now ANPP) and the AD, are actually unusually the same. In terms of contents for all three parties, greater involvement is to be promoted, effective participation in decision-making is to be secured and encouraged especially in electoral contests and political appointments."

Under this new political dispensation, hopes were initially raised to improve participation of women, the so-called "disadvantaged group," be it at the level of party or elective posts in the country. It is disheartening that in spite of remarkable efforts made by some political parties, it is obvious that women, even though politically active, are mainly voters. For example, in the 1999 elections, women constituted about 27 million out of the 47 million eligible registered voters but only 1.61% of them actually won elections (Hussaini, 2001: 24). At the level of party politics, female membership of political parties was 5% according to the 1999 party registrations. Furthermore, female party executives were 7%; and women qualified as party delegates stood at 8% (National Affirmative Action, 1999). The principal reason for this trend is what is usually referred to as the "Politics of Women's Wing" of political parties. Almost all the political parties have "women brigade" or "women's wing." How these peripheral groups are used to manipulate women and keep them out of mainstream politics has been well documented (Badejo, 1990; Sani, 2001; Agina-Ude, 2003). What is dismaying in the politics of "women's wing" is that by confining women political participation to the so-called "women's wing", the party had erected a mechanism not only for retarding the participation of women but, in fact,

for resisting the “empowerment” of women towards independent and self-enlightened participation. Indeed, by remaining officially linked to older incorporated structures, such women’s organizations were tied to the party’s dictates and its overriding interest in securing as much of the female vote as possible. No wonder some radical feminist believed that “women’s wings” were the worst enemies of female participation in politics.

Party politics are characterized by a structure reliant on funding, male domination, and tendency to violence. All these are vices in the political party structures that impede female political leadership in Nigeria. Thus, the political parties which are supposed to integrate women in politics so as to harness their political leadership potential for national development fail to do so. The effect of this is the purging out of women illicitly from their political context through the institutional and structural barriers found in political parties. Political parties also fail to make political information available for women in politics. Similarly, women are not made to contest under equal conditions with males. Yet, such unequal chances are often used against women. For instance, women were not made to pay for political nomination in the PDP. The implication of this is making women to feel inferior to their male counterparts. Women feel that since they do not pay, they do not lose anything for losing the elections. This situation is well captured by Mrs. Nkoyo Toyo, a strong PDP member who contested for the party primary for a House of Representatives seat in Calabar/Uduakpani Federal Constituency. While narrating her experience, she offered a strong appreciation of the obstacles that stopped her. Her party, the PDP, she said, is:

...structured for exclusion and for every woman, there are both the party and the personal challenges to contend with, especially concerning expectations not only by the male designed and dominated structures but also by fellow women... On paper, the PDP has good policies for encouraging women's participation, which does not play out in practice. For example, women were exempted from paying the nomination fees, but even this turned out to be much liability... The PDP 30% policy for women has not been implemented (personal interview).

Mrs. Toyo, a human rights activist and Executive Director of Gender and Development Action (GADA) argues that some people – men in this case – conducted themselves in a way that gives the impression that the party was in their pocket. According to her:

Some people behaved as though they owned the party and spent much effort and time making sense that those they considered outsiders should not penetrate either in terms of getting information or even getting a fair chance to contest (Okeke, 2003: 70).

Mrs. Nkoyo Toyo's position is well supported by a female Senator of the PDP as reported by Gimbiya (December, 2000: 7). According to this report, the Senator confirmed that women are still marginalized when she examined the number of women appointed as Board

members by the Federal Government that is controlled by the PDP. According to her, it is frustrating that the party is unable to live up to its campaign promises on female participation in politics by giving them 30% of all political appointments. She was irritated, specifically, by the fact that of 833 Federal Board appointments, only 86 were given to women. She succinctly states:

Of the 130 federal boards, only 7 boards are to be chaired by women, representing 5.6% of the appointments. If the 30% earlier promised to the women were to be upheld, women would chair 39 of the boards out of the 130 so far announced. It is disheartening to note that out of the 833 appointed members... women represent 10.3%. This is contrary to the campaign promises of the PDP government that is in power (December, 2000: 7).

The experience of Onyeka Onwenu, a popular artist, who also sought the chairmanship ticket for Ideato Local Government of Imo State on the platform of the PDP, is similar. According to her:

The intrigues were many as you have candidates who brought money to the field and were distributing; you have candidates who sent buses to get underage school children to vote for them; you had candidates who, when they were through with this ward, they would get their

supporters transported to another ward to stand on the line and vote for them; you had paid officials... (Okeke, 2003: 71).

The experience of Mrs. Yetunde Sanni who was a pioneer member of the PDP in Lagos state captured the problems confronting women within the party in particular and politics in general. Essentially, it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for her to secure the party's ticket in Ifako/Ijaye into the House of Representatives. Mrs. Sanni stated:

When the PDP was introduced to us in Ifako/Ijaye Local Government area of Lagos state in 1989, no politician was ready to associate with this party. Even those men who now parade themselves as leaders of the party in the state were not ready to host PDP meetings in their houses. I volunteered to use my house as the venue for the party's meetings. That was why I was elected unopposed in 1998 to compete for the Chairmanship position for Ifako/Ijaye on the platform of the PDP. I lost that time not because people were not ready to vote for me but for the propaganda by the opposition party that PDP people killed Abiola and voting for the party was as good as a vote for the enslavement of the Yoruba race (interview conducted by GADA and cited in Gender Audit, 2003: 70).

She contends that it is difficult for any female candidate to make a meaningful impact on politics. On the issues of politics and money, or what is derisively called *Ghana must go* in the politics of the country, she has this to say:

The implication of this is that even if a woman belongs to a group, the position given to that group would be contested for mostly by men... a woman who does not have money to throw around should think twice before embarking on the race for any elective post either at state or federal level. Even if you have so much money you feel you could afford throwing around, you need to be watchful because most of these leaders are eager to live on you (ibid).

Conclusively, Mrs. Sanni warns that:

The leaders of the [PDP] at local government level and [Lagos] state are self-centered. They are not interested in people who are called capable of making some difference in the system or people with experience. What they are after is money! money!! money!!!. When an aspirant comes forwards, they charged him or her between NGN100,000 and NGN300,000. Some people paid this money, yet they were barred from taking part in the primary elections or they simply organized a kangaroo meeting where a new

candidate not known in the area would be put forward as the party's choice. For example, I was victimized by the so-called leaders for not giving them the required money demanded by them to enable me to become the party's candidate for the House of Representative (ibid).

The situation remains the same in the Alliance for Democracy (AD). The case of Mrs. Bissy Koya, former Lagos State House of Assembly aspirant in the AD, and some other aspirants who won the party primaries but were supplanted with men that lost are illustrative of this bias. While narrating her story, Mrs. Koya said that she lost her bid because 'party elders' more or less forced her to step-down for a male candidate, whom she believed was less popular than her in the constituency. Her story divulges two things. First, that an individual candidate's agenda is secondary to party loyalty and interest. Two, that one must have sufficient money to settle political IOUs and buy the trust and support of both the party and its followers. These bitter experiences negate the goals of the party constitution, especially those that relate to women's political empowerment as set out in the aims and objectives of the party. In fact, the 18th stated objective of the AD's constitution is concerned with "the creation of opportunities for, and encouragement of the full development of the political, social, cultural and economic potentials of Nigerian women." As good as this objective is, it is sad that the AD constitution failed to support female leaders or some other form of affirmative action in the composition of the party's leadership at various levels. With all of the above, the political parties try to hide the actual reason for the injustice; party leaders later attributed

the fact that the women would lose in the final elections as the real motive in replacing them with male candidates.

The All Nigerian People's Party (APP) is not an exception. A good example is the celebrated case of Fati Maidugu. Mrs. Maidugu resigned as a Commissioner for Tourism and Culture in Borno State under controversial circumstances in the wake of a political disagreement between the Governor, Mala Kachalla, the party Senate Leader, Ali Sherrif, and the State House of Assembly. Mrs. Maidugu claimed that some politicians rallied against her to subdue her growing influence simply because she is a woman.

From the above discussion, it is apparent that Nigerian women have been marginalized and still not well represented in the country's democratic governance. The experience in the first half of the Fourth Republic (May 29, 1999 to April, 2003) is also discouraging, as the presentation below illustrates:

- (i) Out of 2 seats for Presidency and Vice-Presidency, no woman was elected.
- (ii) Out of 109 seats in the Senate, 5 women contested and 3 women won.
- (iii) Out of 360 seats in the House of Representatives, 29 women contested and 12 women won.
- (iv) Out of 72 seats in the Governorship elections, 2 women contested and 1 won (Deputy Governor for Lagos State).
- (v) Out of 990 seats in the State Houses of Assembly, 39 women contested and 12 won.
- (vi) Out of 774 Local Government Chairmanships, 46 women contested and 9 won.

- (vii) Out of 8,800 Councillorships, 510 women contested and 143 won.

The above represents 1.61% women in the political dispensation. The trend was the same in appointive posts. Out of the 49 Ministers and Presidential Advisers appointed in 1999, only 6 were women.

Against the foregoing, one would have expected an improved performance on the part of women by reason of registration, especially within the PDP. At any rate, the election results did not portray the expected outcomes of improving women participation both at the federal and state levels. The second half of the Fourth Republic (May 29, 2003- present) features 62 women both at the National and State Houses of Assembly. Though this representation is a little bit higher than what we had in 1999, this is still marginal, as shown in Tables II, III, and IV (see Appendix).

From Table II, it is clear that Benue state took the lead by having the highest percentage (17.24%) of women elected into the House of Assembly, while Kaduna state has the lowest percentage (2.94%). It is very unfortunate that no woman was elected to the House of Assembly in 12 states: Adamawa, Cross River, Ebonyi, Jigawa, Kano, Kastina, Kebbi, Nasarawa, Oyo, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara. The story is the same for the National Assembly elections as revealed in Table III. Only 3 and 21 women were elected into the Upper (Senate) and Lower (House of Representatives) legislative chambers, respectively. These figures constitute 2.75% and 5.83% of the total, respectively. Comparatively, Table IV shows that more women were elected into the House of Representatives and State Houses of Assembly in the 2003 general elections than in the previous elections in 1999. At the state level, only 12 women were elected into the State

Houses of Assembly throughout the country in 1999, while in 2003 the number increased to 38. Tables V, VI, and VII detail female members of the Federal House of Representatives, women Senators, and, women in the State Houses of Assembly in 2003 (see Appendix).

As stated earlier, part of the research techniques utilized for this study is administration of questionnaires with the sole objective of understanding the voting pattern of the electorate and why women failed to be voted for in most cases. My question is whether this is based on voters' gender attitudes, prejudices and biases, or objectivity. My findings are summarized in Table VIII (see Appendix).

From Table VIII, the responses of the electorate to the question of whether they voted for men or women vary. In Abuja, 20.7% and 79.3% voted for women and men respectively. While in Oyo and Lagos states, 31.8% and 68.2% and, 35.1% and 64.9% voted for women and men respectively. In summary, the majority of the electorate voted for men.

As shown in Table IX (see Appendix), in Abuja, out of those who did not vote for women in the last general elections (2003), 80.2% did so because of gender attitudes, biases, and, prejudices, while only 19.8% did not vote women based on objectivity, i.e. the reason for not voting women was because they believed the candidates they voted for could perform better in office. Similarly, in Oyo and Lagos states, 75.5% and 24.5%; and, 70.3% and 29.7% of the electorate based their voting pattern on prejudices, biases, and gender attitudes and objectivity, respectively.

It is apparent from the above statistical presentation that the electorates still prefer men to women in elective positions, hence, this further underscores my argument on the marginalization of women in politics.

This is based on the voters' prejudices and biases and the patriarchal nature of the Nigerian society or what some prefer to call the masculine model of politics. The above position is supported by Okeke Anya:

Rulership from this perspective is also seen as a male affair. This thus gives room for what has been termed masculine model of politics. In this system, men dominate the political arena: men formulate the rule of the game: and men define the standards for evaluation. The existence of this male-dominated model results in either women rejecting politics altogether or rejecting male style politics (2003).

Still on the legislature, only Anambra and Ogun states recorded women Speakers. However, Anambra state Speaker, Mrs. Anazodo Eucharria, was finally impeached as a result of the crisis that rocked the state over Governor Chris Ngige's *purported* resignation. A female politician was elected deputy Speaker of Kwara State House of Assembly. Hon. Funmi Smith-Tejuosho, the only woman legislator in the Lagos House of Assembly, was elected the Majority Leader/Chief Whip in the AD control House. Though for now, there is still no woman Governor, the PDP was able to sponsor two successful Deputy Governorship candidates –Alhaja Salimatu Badru and Mrs. Erelu Abiola Obada in Ogun and Osun states respectively. The AD which set the pace in the first half of this dispensation with a deputy Governor ended up having none. Following from the above, it can be argued that nothing has changed significantly between 1999 and 2003. This corroborates the official position of the Centre

for Development, Constitutionalism and Peace Advocacy, a Non Governmental Organisation based in Owerri, Imo state. In its report titled, *Women and Politics in Nigeria Today*, the organization contends that:

...many well qualified women who indicated interest to contest for certain elective posts under their parties this year were brutally intimidated out, and some were asked to withdraw. Many of those who contested were officially rigged out in preference to male contestants. (CDCP, 2003).

Concluding Remarks: Towards Effective Women's Political Participation

In this paper, we have analyzed the dynamics of women's political participation and the various factors that have affected the emergence of women political leadership in Nigeria focusing on the PDP, the ANPP and the AD. This paper has argued that in spite of women's numerical strength by being the majority of voters at elections, and putting up substantial presence at campaigns and rallies as supporters and entertainers, they are rarely registered members of political parties and hold few party posts. The current developmental tasks require that women rise beyond the tokenism that they are used to receiving and begin to play significant and effective roles in the process of democratizing the polity (Aibangbee, 2003: 23). Therefore, for effective women's political leadership in Nigeria, the following useful suggestions commend themselves.

First, women have the responsibility to make themselves relevant in this current democratic process. This is a responsibility that calls for the collective efforts of women as a gender category. It has been argued by Nzomo (1991) that since no power willingly vacates a position of dominance, then women need to struggle hard to realize this goal. In the words of Nzomo drawing from Kenyan experience:

It is common knowledge that in a largely patriarchal world, there are no cases where men have given up without a fight the privileged positions they have historically enjoyed as the authoritative decision-makers in the private and public sphere of their countries. While in the private domestic sphere, men may concede sharing some decision making roles with women in the public, specially the political arena, the male gender employs every possible strategy to keep women. This is the situation that prevails in Kenya, whereby, even when a woman surmounts all the typical socio-cultural and economic constraints to participation, she still has to prove to be better than the men candidates to gain entry into parliament. And if she does enter parliament, she is likely to be allocated a position of relative powerlessness. And being overwhelmingly outnumbered by men, her loudest voice is treated like a whisper and hence ignored (1991:13).

Furthermore, since it is only the party that can offer aspirants the platform for contesting an election, women need to join political parties where they can participate in party decision-making processes. They must struggle and be allowed to take strategic positions within the parties of their choice to enable them to discharge their responsibilities. As stated earlier, women representation at the party executive is very low and it is at this level that vital decisions are usually taken. One point needs to be raised here. Certainly, no political party will openly declare that it is not willing to let women in, and mouthing women empowerment has even become a fad or a faulty indicator of progress. However, whether a well articulated ideological position exists within the parties for encouraging female inclusion or moving towards parity is another thing. Women have to confront their political participation frontally. Having said this, there is a strong case in favour of women joining parties and harnessing the advantage of demography to negotiate for gender-based power sharing. This will encourage the nomination of women by political parties for a number of positions.

Second, this paper revealed that women have tended to accept their subordinate status and distance themselves from centres of decision making, thus contributing to, encouraging, and tolerating this culture of marginalization. As politicians and ordinary citizens, they have often willingly encouraged men to dictate and determine the values of participation in politics, governance and decision-making in general. The consequence is that women involved in politics have tended to accommodate themselves within the male agenda, which does not address issues and policies of concern to women, and by extension, to the majority in civil society. This should not be so; even women who are

not directly involved in party politics can still influence decisions because those who are in positions of authority are relations, colleagues, children, husbands, and friends who can be easily penetrated by women.

Furthermore, by using resources at their disposal, First Ladies can increase women's political participation significantly by supporting female aspirants. Presently, the wife of the President or wives of Governors and Local Government Chairmen have created some measures of importance by launching non-governmental projects. Such initiatives can be extended to the political arena. Since there is no law restricting their involvement in politics, there is no reason why First Ladies cannot utilize the opportunities open to them to promote women's causes. Unless women are prepared to raise funds by themselves and sponsor credible candidates, women's political participation will still be hindered by economic considerations, hence, sustainable empowerment becomes elusive.

Last but not the least is the implementation of affirmative action in order to bring more women into the mainstream of politics and political action. There will be no dramatic change in the trend of performance unless the political parties adopt gender-based affirmative action at elections. Affirmative action is the establishment of quotas for the representation of women in all sectors and at all levels of the political decision-making process and operation of laws that protect the interests of women. Specifically, this calls for 30% representation of women in all sections and levels of both elected and appointed positions, and a reflection of women's 30% representation in all relevant legislation. Experience elsewhere in the world, particularly in Uganda, Sweden, and South Africa bears eloquent testimony to the effectiveness of

affirmative action as a short-term strategy for accelerating female political participation. Consequently this calls for the enactment of laws for the implementation of international conventions/declarations signed by Nigeria on women issues and rights. For example:

1. The Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979, 1993)
2. The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies (1985)
3. The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD, 1994)
4. The Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995)

The following are additional recommendations for effective women political leadership in Nigeria.

- a. Women need to develop informative and educational materials to support advocacy and lobby.
- b. Women should seek and support the establishment of economic/financial empowerment programs.
- c. Women in position of authority should promote and support the growth of the women's movement in addition to joining and working with NGOs.

It is the hope of this paper that the above suggestions will enhance female political leadership in the country.

Appendix

Table I: Women-related Planks in Three Political Parties Manifestoes.

<i>Political Party</i>	<i>PDP</i>	<i>APP</i>	<i>AD</i>
	Ensure genders equality in employment and socio-economic advancement and promote greater women involvement and effective participation in politics.	Provide orientation programme aimed at securing greater political awareness of women in their effective participation in decision-making process at various levels.	Provide orientation programme aimed at securing greater political awareness of women in their effective participation in decision-making process at various levels.
	Ensure adequate women representation in all the organs and institutions of the party and of its government through encouraged participation of women in electoral contest and through political appointments.	Ensure that political parties and government authorities, at different levels, involve duly qualified and capable women in higher administrative and policy-making responsibilities.	Ensure that political parties and government authorities, at different levels, involve duly qualified and capable women in higher administrative and policy-making responsibilities.

Source: Extracted from Manifestoes of the Three Political Parties and cited in Simbine, 2003.

Table II: Women Elected into 2003 State Houses of Assembly

<i>State</i>	<i>Number of Constituencies</i>	<i>Number of Women Elected</i>	<i>Percentage (%) of Elected</i>
Abia	24	2	8.33
Akwa-Ibom.	26	2	7.69
Anambra	30	4	13.33
Bauchi	31	1	3.23
Bayelsa	24	1	4.17
Benue	29	5	17.24
Borno	28	1	3.57
Delta	29	2	6.90
Edo	24	2	8.33
Ekiti	26	1	3.85
Enugu	24	1	4.17
Gombe	24	1	4.17
Imo	27	1	3.70
Kaduna	34	1	2.94
Kogi	25	2	8.00
Kwara	24	1	4.17

Table II (cont.)

Lagos	40	2	5.00
Niger	27	1	3.70
Ogun	26	1	3.85
Ondo	26	1	3.85
Osun	26	1	3.85
Plateau	24	2	8.33
Rivers	32	1	3.13
Taraba	24	1	4.17
Adamawa	25	0	0
Cross River	25	0	0
Ebonyi	24	0	0
Jigawa	30	0	0
Kano	40	0	0
Kastina	34	0	0
Kebbi	24	0	0
Nasarawa	24	0	0
Oyo	32	0	0
Sokoto	30	0	0
Yobe	24	0	0
Zamfara	24	0	0

Source: Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi and Arogundade (2003:94)

Table III: Summary of Women Elected into the National Assembly

<i>Houses</i>	<i>Total Number Elected</i>	<i>Number of Women Elected</i>	<i>Percentage (%) of Total Elected</i>
Senate	109	3	2.75
House of Reps.	360	21	5.83

Source: Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi and Arogundade (2003:95)

Table IV: Comparison of Women Representation in 1999 and 2003 General Elections

<i>Position</i>	<i>Number of Available Seats</i>	<i>Number of Women Elected and % of Total in 1999</i>		<i>Number of Women Elected and % of Total in 2003</i>	
Presidency	1	-	0%	-	0%
Senate	109	3	2.75%	3	2.75%
House of Reps.	360	12	3.33%	21	5.83%
Governorship	36	-	0%	-	0%
State Houses of Assembly	990	12	1.21%	38	3.84%

Source: Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi and Arogundade (2003:96)

Table V: Female Members, Federal House of Representatives, 2003

<i>Elected Member</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Committee</i>	<i>Party</i>
Hon. Fakeye Eniola	Osun	Atakumosa/East and West Ilesa		PDP
Hon. Mercy Almona-Isei	Delta	Ndokwa/Ukwuani	Chairman	PDP
Hon. Ninimoh Iquo	Akwa Ibom	Ikono/Ini	Deputy Chairman	PDP
Maimunatu Adaji	Kwara	Baruten Kaiama		ANPP
Hon. Dabiri, Abike Kafayat	Lagos	Ikorodu	Chairman	AD
Hon. Fatimat Talba, S.	Yobe	Nangere/Potiskum		ANPP
Hon. Saidat Sani	Kaduna	Lere	Chairman	PDP
Hon. Ogodo Patience	Ebonyi	Ohaukwu/Ebonyi	Deputy Chairman	PDP
Hon. Patricia Etteh	Osun	Ayedaade/Irewole/Isokan	Leader	PDP
Hon. Azumi Namadi Bebeji	Kano	Kiru/Bebeji		ANPP
Hon. Abiola-Edewor Omolara	Lagos	Apapa	Deputy Chairman	AD
Hon. Aondona Dabo	Benue	Vandeikya/Konshina		
Hon. Jumoke Thomas	Lagos	Lagos Island		AD
Hon. Temi Harriman	Delta	Warri		PDP
Hon. Patricia Akwashiki	Nasarawa	Nasarawa North		PDP
Hon. Binta Koji	Kaduna	Kaduna South		ANPP
Hon. Fanta Baba Shehu	Borno	Kagi/Gubio/Magumori	Chairman	PDP
Hon. Nkechi Nwaogwu	Abia	Obinwa/Ugumnagbo/Osisioma		ANPP
Hon. Jesse Belonwu	Anambra	Onitsha North/South	Deputy Chairman	PDP
Hon. Ruth Jumai Ango	Kaduna	Zangon Kataf/Jaba		ANPP
Hon. Titilayo Akin Fadahunsi	Ekiti	Ekiti South		PDP

Source: Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi and Arogundade (2003:100-101)

Table VI: Women Senators, 2003

<i>Name of Elected Member</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Party</i>
Senator Daisy Ehanire-Danjuma	Edo South	PDP
Senator Saraki-Fowora Gbemisola	Kwara Central	PDP
Senator Veronica Anisulowo	Ogun West	PDP

Source: Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi and Arogundade (2003:101)

Table VII: Women in the State Houses of Assembly, 2003.

Abia	Aba North, Ukwa West	Hon. Blessing Azuru Hon. Gold Nwaogugu	PDP
Akwa Ibom	Etinam Orkanam	Mabel Etim U. Eshiet I. Eneobong.	PDP
Anambra	Aguata I Onitsha South II Njikoka Ogbaru	Eucharia Anazodo Tabaisi Anthonia Bridget Chkwuka Barr. Njideka-Ezeigwe	PDP
Bauchi	Barazo	Hon. Habiba Sabo	PDP
Bayelsa			
Benue	Gwer East Gwer West Ohimini Okpokwu	Maria Aikola Amedu Hon. V.N. Gajir Hon. Christy Adokwo Dewa Cecilia Misho Elizabeth	PDP
Borno	Gwoza	Hon. Asabe Bashir	PDP
Delta	Oshimili South Oshimili North	Hon. Olanrewaju, C Hon. Felia Nwaeze	PDP
Edo	Oredo West Egor-Edo	Hon. Esohe Jacob Hon. Elizabeth Ighodaro	PDP
Ekiti	Efon Ekiti	Hon. Oluwafemi Christiana	PDP
Enugu	Udi South	Hon. Ene Chika	PDP
Gombe	Kaltungo East	Hon. Zainab Abubakar Alman	PDP
Imo	Owerri Municipal	Mrs. Anthonia Ngoka	PDP
Kaduna	Chkuna	Hon. Maria Dogo	PDP
Kogi	Omala Koogi Adavi Kogi	Hon. Rosemary M. Hon. Nana Ojebu	PDP
Kwara	Sao/Essa	Hon. Banke Gbadamosi	PDP
Lagos	Mushin I Amuwo Odofin	Funmi Teju-Smith Bola Badmus	AD
Niger	Munya	Fati Tasala Ibrahim	PDP
Ogun	Abeokuta South	Titi Sodunke Oseni	PDP
Ondo	Ondo West II	Hon. Princess Titi Akinmade	PDP
Osun	Ifedayo	Hon. Dr. Mrs. Funmi Olaseinde Mustapha	PDP

Table VII (cont.)

Rivers	Akuku-Toru I	Mrs. Anthonia Membere	PDP
Taraba	Karim Lamido II	Hon. Virginia Baba	PDP
Adamawa		No Female Legislator	
Cross River		No Female Legislator	
Ebonyi		No Female Legislator	
Jigawa		No Female Legislator	
Kano		No Female Legislator	
Kastina		No Female Legislator	
Kebbi		No Female Legislator	
Nasarawa		No Female Legislator	
Oyo		No Female Legislator	
Sokoto		No Female Legislator	
Yobe		No Female Legislator	
Zamfara		No Female Legislator	

Source: Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi and Arogundade (2003:102-103)

Table VIII: Responses of Voting Pattern of the Electorate in Abuja, Oyo and Lagos States of Nigeria (2003 Elections)

Locations	Voted for Women	Voted for Men
Abuja	20.7%	79.3%
Oyo State	31.8%	68.2%
Lagos State	35.1%	64.9%

Source: Author's fieldwork, February 2004

Table IX: Reasons for Not Voting for Women in 2003 Election.

Locations	Objectivity (%)	Gender Attitudes, Prejudices and Biases (%)
Abuja	19.8%	80.2%
Oyo State	24.5%	75.5%
Lagos State	29.7%	70.3%

Source: Author's fieldwork, February 2004