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Sociology

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Introduction

Democracy as a system of government has gained more popularity now in the contemporary societies than in the years past. The reasons for this development may not be unconnected with the fact that democratic system abhors segregation in the area of gender when it comes to election participation. One of the features of democracy that makes it unique is equality of participation in decision making on issues affecting all segments of the society. The exclusion of any body from the political process based on gender is seen by scholars as a negation of the true values of a democratic society (Ball and Dagger, 1995, p. 270; Rubin and Bartle, 2005, pp. 259-272; Fox, 2007, pp. 251-270; Onyeghalaji, 2008, pp. 23-45).

Nigeria like other countries in Africa experienced colonial legacy under the British rule from 1900 to 1st October, 1960. At independence, the country embraced the democratic system based on non-gender discrimination in political participation modeled after the British parliamentary democratic system (Ikelegbe, 2004). However, the colonial legacy of marginalization of women in politics was intensified at independence based on the patriarchal traditional norms of colonial Nigerian society of male dominance (Aiyede, 2007, pp. 182-199; Ojiakor, 2009, pp. 142-151).

Women marginalization in political affairs could be seen one of the negative attributes of colonial legacy in Nigeria, which was re-enforced by the different governments of post-

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WOMEN IN GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA, 1999-2012

ABSTRACT. Democracy is a system of government that abhors gender segregation in politics. Also, it has been observed that contribution to development in any society is not gender discriminatory. Utilizing secondary data, the paper shows that although female of ages 20 and above constitute 50.10 percent of the nation's population; their appointment into positions of authority is infinitesimal compared to their male counterpart of the same age. It reveals further that the dominance of male in the nation's politics, and the low involvement of women in the election participation and their appointment into positions of authority have created the politics of "near-exclusion" of women in favour of their male counterpart in the past. It therefore recommends among others the integration of women into the political process in terms of their actual involvement in public policy formulation and implementation as basis for sustainable democracy and development in Nigeria.

colonial Nigerian society after independence. Studies have shown that some notable women played prominent roles in governance of their respective kingdoms, empires and emirates before the advent of colonialism in 1900. For instance, the governance of pre-colonial Nigerian societies highlighted the exploits of women like: Queen Daura of Daura emirate in the present day Katsina State, Queen Amina of Zazzau, now Zaria, of the Zaria emirate in the present day Kaduna State, all from the northern part of Nigeria; Ogiso Orhorho and Emotan of the famous Benin Kingdom (south), in the present day Edo State (Faseke, 2001; Sani, 2001, pp. 113-136; Agaba, 2007, pp. 73-89; Ojiakor, 2009, pp. 142-151).

In the western part of Nigeria, the Yoruba tradition speaks of the female Oba (King) in Ile-Ife, Oyo Kingdom, Ilesa and Ondo. In addition, studies have shown that women also played various important roles in the palace administration of various Kingdoms in Yoruba-land as: Iya-Afin (King's wife) and Iya-Oba (King's Mother); the roles of other brave women like Iyalode Aniwura of Ibadan in the present day Oyo State; and that of Morenike of Ile-Ife, who saved her people from war through political diplomacy are also worthy of note (Ikpe, 2004, pp. 19-28; Agaba, 2007, pp. 73-89; Aiyede, 2007, pp. 182-199, Ojiakor, 2009, pp. 142-151).

The eastern part of Nigeria, including the Igbo speaking people of Delta State had a structure of political participation equivalent to those of the men put in place to enable women to be part of the political process for good governance. For instance, there is the office of the Queen called Omu (female King), who was not the wife of the male king (Obi), neither was she related to him in any way. There was a clear division between the Omu and the Obi. While the Obi ruled the men, the Omu ruled the women for orderly society (Faseke, 2001; Agaba, 2007). In this regard, Uchendu (1993) argues that in pre-colonial Nigeria, Igbo women did not participate in politics as a privilege but rather as a right or duty to the society.

However, with colonialism came the marginalization of women active participation in the Nigerian political process. According to Nelson (2012, pp. 85-99), colonialism had a decisively negative impact on indigenous political system in Nigeria, and the gender dimension of politics was certainly not an exception. In the same vein, Ikpe (2004) argues that colonialism itself as experienced in Nigeria was male dominated as all colonial officers were male. The era of colonial rule witnessed the abolition of Kingdoms and the removal of the dual system of government that allowed male and female kings to rule side by side. Also, women chiefs in the various Kingdoms before colonialism lost their power to rule and were no longer called upon in the decision making process (Nwankwo, 2006, pp. 7-20).

Colonial rule enforced the dominance of men in politics to the extent that even when new chiefs were to be appointed, colonial agents did not see women as capable of performing the roles of such office. Women were regarded as home-makers and nothing more (Ikpe, 2004). Even when the western-type education was introduced initially in Nigeria by the colonial officials, it was considered useful only because it prepared boys to be able to qualify for employment as clerks, interpreters, teachers, catechists, evangelists, stewards and cooks for government offices, commercial houses and missionaries. Girls were never considered fit enough for such job opportunities (Ikpe, 2004; Agaba, 2007; Yusuf, 2009).

Arising from the above therefore, it could be concluded that colonialism was the root cause of women's marginalization in the present day Nigerian political landscape. For instance at independence in 1960, Margaret Ekpo was the only female member of the then eastern region house of assembly in the country, while Mrs. Wuraola was the only female nominated out of the 12 Senators from the western region of Nigeria. Furthermore, out of the 312 members in the then Federal House of Representatives, there was no female member (Nwankwo, 2006, pp. 7-20; Luka, 2011, pp. 24-37). The picture painted above created a "near-exclusion" of women from the political process in Nigeria. It was not until the 1979/83 second republic politics that a woman – Mrs. Franca Afegbua, was elected for the first time as the only female Senator into the Nigerian House of Senate made-up of 100 members (Yusuf, 2009; Nelson, 2012). Today

however, the story is different because more women are now being elected into both the states and the national legislature. What this implies is that the concept of “near-exclusion” of women in the Nigerian political process is fast disappearing (Iloh & Ikenna, 2009, pp. 113-128; Oni & Segun, 2011, pp. 1-20; Okoronkwo-Chukwu, 2013, pp. 39-46).

A study by Cornwell (2000) on gender and development in Sub-Saharan Africa; Swers (2002) on gender differences in policy priorities at the congressional level in the United States of America; and Aiyede (2007) on women’s political leadership potential in Nigeria reveals that involvement of women in governance prove to be keys to unlock the inherent development potential of the south; the representation of women’s interest requires a greater inclusion of women leaders in public office; and removal of all forms of discrimination against women is seen as basis for their meaningful contribution towards development in Nigeria respectively. The challenge now is: how can the involvement of women in the political process enhance democracy in Nigeria? What are the possible ways women can be encouraged to enhance their participation in the political process in the country?

The main argument in this paper is that the continuous domination and discrimination against women in the political process is more likely to affect negatively the democratic sustainability in the country. Also, appointment of more women into positions of authority in the country is more likely to enhance their ability to be part of the formulation and implementation of public policies for sustainable democracy and development in Nigeria.

Secondary data obtained from relevant books, journals, online resources, seminar papers and magazines were adopted for the work. Structure of the paper covers the introduction; the examination of the concept of governance; women in governance, democracy and nation building as well as the concept of democracy; marginalization of women in governance and sustainable democracy in Nigeria; discussion on the way forward; and the conclusion.

1. Concept of Governance

Some scholars see the concept of governance as synonymous with government (Okunade, 2000; Gberevbíe and Lafenwa, 2007). In this regard, Bello (2007, p. 4) sees government as the one that “entails those political processes that have to do with the authoritative formulation of rules and policies that are binding and pervasive throughout a society”. Other scholars argue that government occurs when those with legally and formally derived authority and policing power execute and implement policies and programmes for the enhancement of the living standard of the people. These categories of scholars on the other hand see governance as the creation, execution and implementation of activities backed by the shared goals of citizens of a nation and organization, who may or may not have formal authority and policing power (Rosenau, 1992; Bingham, Nabatchi & O’Leary, 2005).

According to Obadan (1998), governance entails the efficiency and effectiveness of a government in promoting the economic well being of its people. To the African Development Bank (1999), governance may be seen as denoting how people are ruled, and how the affair of a state is administered and regulated. On his part, Boyte (2005, p. 536) posits that “governance has become a global discourse with a breadth that suggests its usefulness for exploring the fundamental questions of democracy, civil agency and politics”. World Bank (2004) see governance as “the process and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised... how governments are selected, held accountable, monitored and replaced”. In the same vein, the UNDP see governance in terms of its emphasis on the interactions among governments, civil society and business groups that are essential for development (cited in Boyte, 2005).

However, Brinkerhoff (2005) argues that governance extends beyond government action to address the role of citizens and the way groups and communities within society are

organized to make and implement decisions on matters of general concern. This position supports the view of Ogunjobi (2004) who posits that governance does not only refer to the quality of leadership and capacity, but also the effectiveness and consistency of policy and development of institutions that deliver public goods and social services in a stable environment. This implies that governance connotes the exercise of authority, formulation and implementation of policies, management of institutions and resources in accordance to laid-down principles under a stable political atmosphere.

2. Women in Governance, Democracy and Nation Building

Since the past three and a half decades, agitation and movements toward gender relevance and equity in governance of nations have gained momentum in the world over (Elson, 2002; Rubin and Bartle, 2005). Scholars and practitioners alike have come to realize and publicly committed themselves to promoting gender relevance and equity of men and women as strategy for sustainable democracy, economic growth and full social development of nations. This is particularly so because it has been realized that contributions to a nation's development is not gender discriminatory (Klasen, 1999; Hewitt and Mukhopadhyay, 2002; Rubin and Bartle, 2005).

In recognition of the importance of the role of women in governance for sustainable democracy and development of nations, Article 1 of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325:

Urges states to ensure increased women representation at all decision making levels in national, regional, and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict, while Article 8 calls on all actors to adopt a gender perspective when negotiating and implementing peace agreement (UNSC, 2000).

Also, in pursuance of women's relevance in the governance of nations, UN General Assembly in 1979, adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), referred to as the "International Bill of Rights for Women." By October 2004, 179 of the 191 UN member nations were party to CEDAW, and an additional nation had bound itself to do "nothing in contravention of its terms" (UNDAW, 2004). The year 1995, witnessed the representatives of 171 governments at the UN 4th world conference on women, held in Beijing, China, to reaffirmed CEDAW's commitment to end discrimination against women (Rubin and Bartle, 2005).

Gender discrimination in governance is seen as detrimental to nation building and development. Oni and Agbude (2011) argue that sustainable democracy relies upon the equality and complementary participation of both male and female in the conduct of governmental affairs as basis for development of nations. Liebenow (1986) posits that the process of nation building is to a considerable degree a product of social engineering rather than the result of natural or inevitable evolutionary forces. This implies that for any nation to achieve sustainable democracy and development, social engineering is a vital choice to make. Therefore, an end to discrimination against women in politics and their involvement in the policy process in a traditional patriarchal society of male dominance like Nigeria is a right step in the right direction for development.

Researches have shown that development in any society requires greater gender balance in power sharing between male and female in the political process for it to be achieved (Hamadeh-Banerjee, 2000; Kumar and Baldwin, 2001; Bouta, Frerks & Bannon, 2005). In this regard, Fox (2007, pp. 251-270) argues that a government dominated by male elected officials is likely to be biased against the election of women and hence may not fairly represent the public, particularly the interests of women in that particular society. This implies

that any governmental system that does not give priority to gender equality in political participation could not qualify to be considered democratic.

According to Onyeghalaji (2008), the responsible and responsive governance that make for sustainable development places political decisions and activities in the hands of the populace without gender discrimination. He argues that what is required includes: the sincere participation of every one in society irrespective of gender, and the social cooperation of everyone in making decisions with regard to the values that concern the life of the people for the common good. And democracy is the system of government that is more likely to place political decisions and activities in the hands of the populace either directly or through their elected representatives. According to Ball and Dagger (1995, p. 270), “one of the most striking features of contemporary politics is the astonishing popularity of democracy. There are few people nowadays, whether major political leaders or ordinary citizens and subjects, who do not praise democracy or claim to be democrats”. The question that comes to mind is: what is democracy?

3. Concept of Democracy

The concept of democracy lacks a single and universally acceptable definition like most other concepts in the social sciences. Schumpeter (1950, p. 269) sees democracy as “a certain type of institutional arrangement for arriving at political, legislative and administrative decision... a method by which the individual acquires the power to participate in decisions by means of a competitive struggle for all the people’s vote”. To Cohen (1971, p. 7), “democracy is a system of community government in which by and large the members of the community participate or may participate directly in the making of decisions which affect them all”.

Scholars have argued that democracy as a system of government is good because it gives citizens the opportunity to contribute towards public decision making in terms of what agencies of government produce or deliver thereby bringing about stability and development in the society (Alford, 2002; Kathi and Cooper, 2005). Kakabadse, Kakabadse & Kouzmin (2003, p. 45) argue that:

The major contemporary justification for participatory democracy is that it serves interests by bringing them into debate and decision procedures: that democratic participation enhances autonomy and, in so doing, democracy is the most efficacious form of government for political equity – it is the natural form for consent through deliberation.

In the same vein, Muhammad (2007) argues that one of the features inherent in democracy as a system of government that has made it popular amongst people in the world over is based on the fact that various groups are able to articulate and press home their demands thereby contributing towards public policy making for positive outcomes in society without gender discrimination.

The foregoing clearly shows that democracy as a political system abhors gender discrimination in any society. It implies a system of government that imbibes the culture of popular participation of citizens in decisions either directly or through their elected representatives. Therefore, for the interests of everyone in society to be fully represented, it is imperative that women are encouraged to be part of the political process for nation building and development.

4. Marginalization of Nigerian Women in Governance

Going by the last general census conducted in 2006, the population of Nigeria is 140,431,790 people, out of which male are 71,345,488 and female 69,086,302. However, the

numbers of male and female between ages 20 years and above are: male make-up 33,346,808 or 49.90 percent of the total population of those between ages 20 years and above; and female make-up 33,485,266 or 50.10 percent of the total population of those between ages 20 years and above (NPC, 2009). In spite of the large number of female in the age over 20 years; women are still being marginalized in the political process even under the democratic dispensation, particularly in the area of standing for elections to be voted for and appointment into positions of authority.

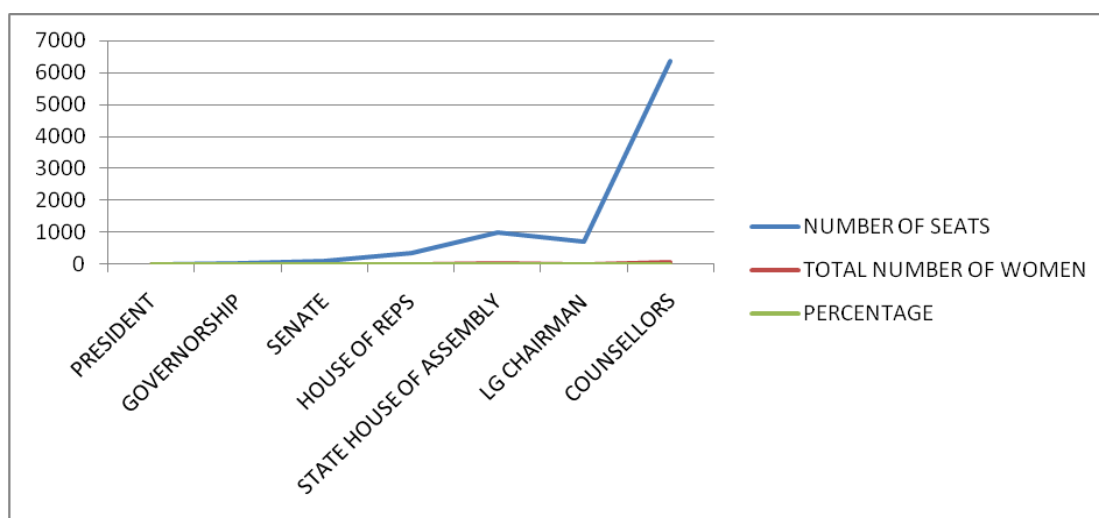
The country was under a democratic system between 1960 and 1966 when the military took over power in a military coup on 15th January, 1966. Further democratic system took place in the country between 1st October, 1979 and 31st December, 1983 when another military coup took place. On 29th May, 1999, the military government under the leadership of General Abdusalami Abubakar handed over the political power to a democratically elected government under the leadership of Olusegun Obasanjo (Ikelegbe, 2004; McCormick, 2004).

Since 1999 when the country assumed democratic governance; participation in politics continues to be a major challenge in terms of domination and discrimination against women. The tables and graphs below show the outcomes of women's involvement in elections between 1999 and 2011 in their quest to contribute to nation building. In this section, the governing bodies are adopted for the analysis: The office of President, Governorship, Senate, House of Representatives, State House of Assembly, Local Government Chairpersons and Councilors.

Table 1. Women and the General Elections of 1999

Position	Number of Seats	Total Number of Women	Percentage (%)
President	1	0	0
Governorship	36	0	0
Senate	109	3	2.8
House of Reps.	360	7	1.9
State House of Assembly	990	24	2.4
Local Govt. Chairpersons	710	13	1.8
Councilors	6368	69	1.1

Source: culled from Okoronkwo-Chukwu (2013, p. 41)



Graph 1. Women's Performance in the 1999 General Elections

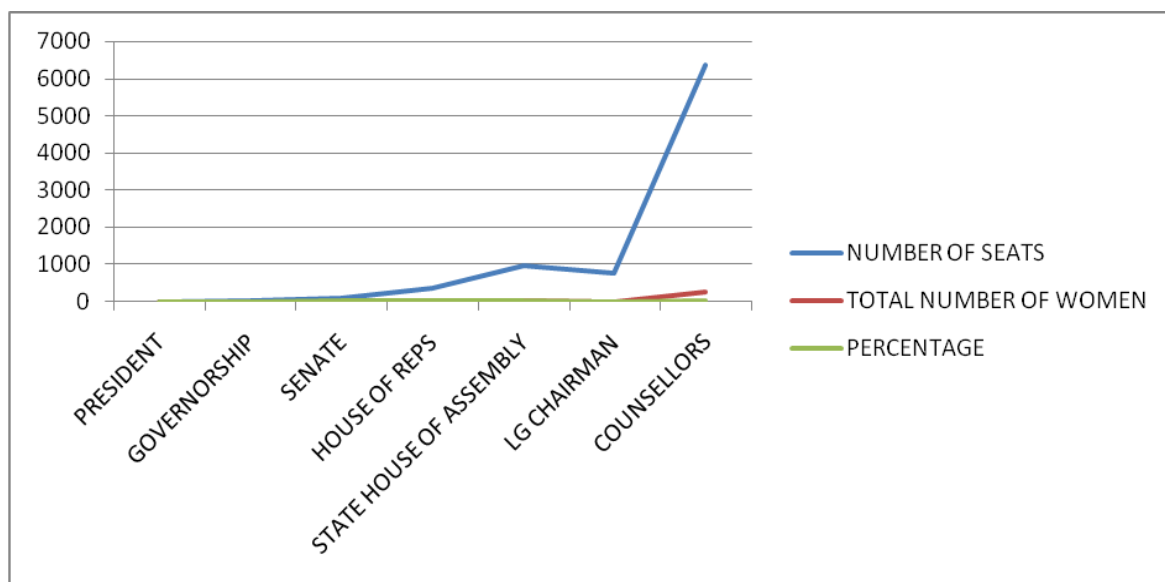
Graph 1 above shows the performance of women in the 1999 general elections in Nigeria. The election results show that no women won in the presidential and governorship elections. However, women won 3 out of 109 seats available for contest at the senate level, 7 out of 360 seats at the House of Representatives, 24 out of 990 seats at the state house of assembly, 13 out of 710 local government chairperson seats and 69 out of 6,368 councillorship seats. In addition, 1 woman emerged as deputy governor in Lagos State (Olojede, 2004).

Table 2. Women and the General Elections of 2003

Position	Number of Seats	Total Number of Women	Percentage
President	1	0	0
Governorship	36	0	0
Senate	109	4	3.7
House of Reps.	360	21	5.8
State House of Assembly	990	40	3.9
Local Govt. Chairpersons	774	15	1.9
Councillors	6368	267	4.2

Source: culled from Okoronkwo-Chukwu (2013, p. 41)

Graph 2 below represents the performance of women in the 2003 general elections. The outcome of the results show that no woman won in the presidential and governorship elections.



Graph 2. Women's Performance in the 2003 General Elections

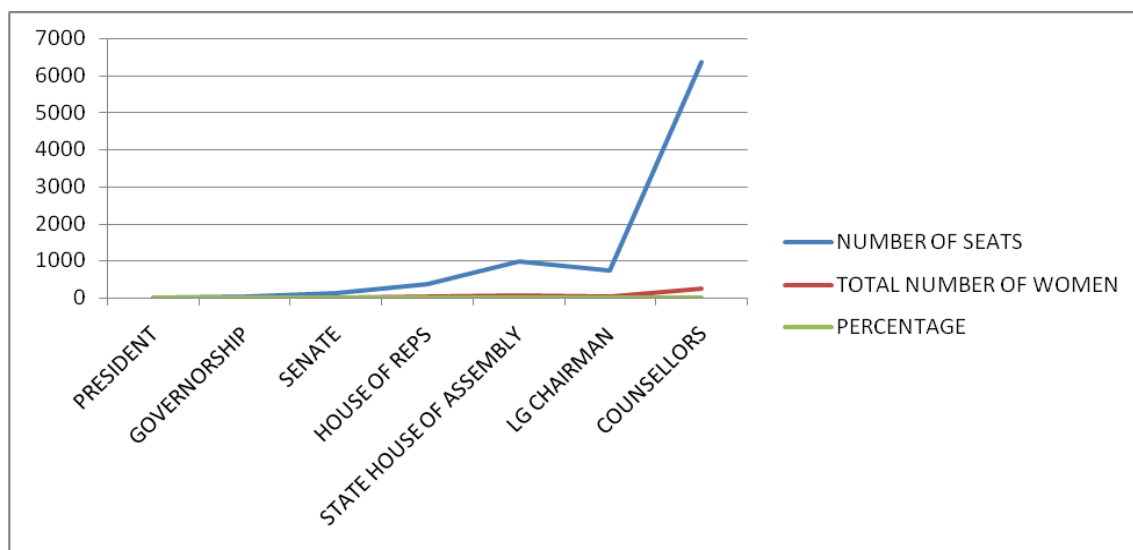
Although, women recorded victory at other levels: senate, 4 out of 109 seats; House of Representatives, 21 out of 360 seats; state house of assembly, 40 out of 990 seats; local government chairpersons, 15 out of 774 seats; and councillorship, 267 out of 6,368 seats. The outcome of the 2003 elections even recorded higher rate of marginalization against women. The reasons behind this development include: the inability of women to be nominated as flag

bearers to major/popular political parties in the country due to the overwhelming influence of men in the nomination process; the inability of most women to pay the high cost of nomination fees of these major/popular political parties; and lack of confidence in women to represent the interest of these parties at elections. However, 2 women emerged as deputies in Lagos and Ogun States. In addition, a female member of the house emerged as Speaker in the Ogun State House of Assembly UNDP 2005; (Iloh and Ikenna, 2009, pp. 113-128; Oni and Segun, 2011, pp. 1-21).

Table 3. Women and the General Elections of 2007

Position	Number of Seats	Total Number of Women	Percentage (%)
President	1	0	0
Governorship	36	0	0
Senate	109	9	8.3
House of Reps.	360	27	7.5
State House of Assembly	990	57	5.8
Local Govt. Chairman	740	27	3.6
Councilors	6368	235	3.7

Source: culled from Okoronkwo-Chukwu (2013, p. 41)



Graph 3. Women's Performance in the 2007 General Elections

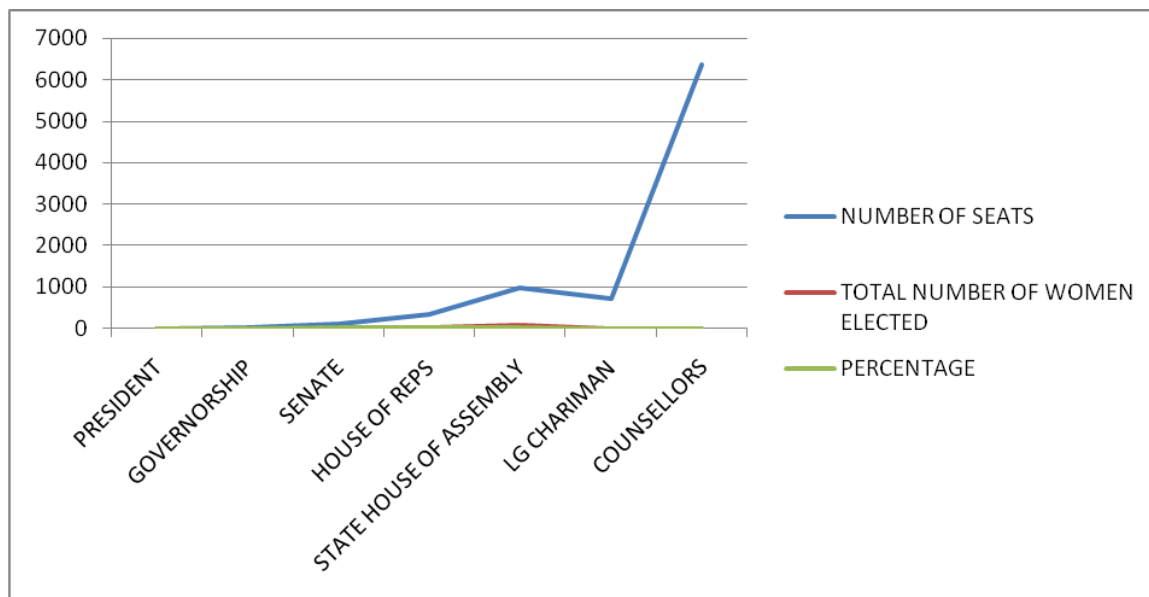
Graph 3 above shows a pictorial outcome of the 2007 elections. Like other elections before it since 1999 when the nation assumed democratic governance after long years of military rule, no woman won in the presidential and governorship elections. However, women won 9 out of 109 seats in the senate; 27 out of 360 seats in the House of Representatives; 57 out of 990 seats in the state house of assembly; 27 out of 740 local government chairperson seats; and 235 out of the 6,368 councillorship seats. In addition, 6 women emerged as deputy governors (Arowolo and Aluko, 2010, pp. 581-593).

Table 4. Women and the General Elections of 2011

Position	Number of Seats	Total Number of Women Elected	Percentage (%)
President	1	0	0
Governorship	36	0	0
Senate	109	7	6.4
House of Reps.	360	25	6.9
State House of Assembly	990	68	6.9
Local Govt. Chairpersons	740	-	-
Councillors	6368	-	-

Source: culled from Okoronkwo-Chukwu (2013, p. 41)

Graph 4 below shows the performance of women in the 2011 Nigerian general elections. Although, the 2011 elections were considered to be better organized as conducted by the Independent Electoral Commission over that of 1999, 2003 and 2007 elections; yet the issue of domination and discrimination against women in politics was very much of great concern. For instance, like other previous elections in the country, no woman won in the presidential and governorship elections of 2011. In other elections however, women won 7 out of 109 seats in the senate; 25 out of 360 seats in the House of Representatives; and 68 out of 990 seats in the state house of assembly. There is no available data of the performance of women at the local government chairperson and councillorship levels (NCAA, 2011; Okoronkwo-Chukwu, 2013, pp. 39-46).



Graph 4. Women's Performance in the 2011 General Elections

In the presidential election, there were 4 vice-presidential aspirants for the first time under African Renaissance Party (ARP), Better Nigeria Progressive Party (BNPP), Fresh Democratic Party (FDP) and National Transformation Party (NTP). None of these contestants won. Also, it is important to note that none of 5 top political parties in Nigeria – People's

Democratic Party (PDP), Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP), Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) and All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) had women as vice-presidential running mates in the election of 2011 (Oni and Segun, 2011, pp. 1-21; Okoronkwo-Chukwu, 2013, pp. 39-46).

The above development could be considered a major setback for women's political participation considering the fact that before the elections, women's advocacy groups played major positive roles that ought to have improved the performance of women at the polls. For instance, after the 2007 general elections, women advocacy groups in the country came together to press for the enforcement of the National Gender Policy (NGP), which came into existence on 15 August, 2008. The policy was designed to grant women at least 35 percent of the total seats to be contested for at the polls. Also, on the 24 March 2011, just before the elections, The Nigerian Women Trust Fund was inaugurated with the sum of NGN100 million or USD645, 161.29 by the Ministry of Women and Social Development to help offset the campaign costs of 230 female aspirants no matter their political parties. In addition, the wife of the president of Nigeria, Mrs. Patience Jonathan embarked on rigorous tour of the 36 states of the Nigerian Federation to motivate women to participate in the elections and to be voted for into public offices (Akiyode-Afolabi, 2011; Okoronkwo-Chukwu, 2013, pp. 39-46).

4.1. Women and appointment into positions of authority

In terms of appointment into positions of authority, the situation did not fair in any way better for women. It is on record that between 1999 and 2003 for instance, out of 130 federal boards of public corporations, only 7 had women named as chairpersons, representing 5.6 percent. Out of 47 cabinet ministers appointed, only 7 were women, representing 14.89 percent. Other appointments were: Director – General of government regulatory agency – 1 woman, special advisers – 2 women, senior special assistants – 2 women, special assistants – 6 women, permanent secretaries – 8 women and one special assistant to the Vice-President of Nigeria (Olojede, 2004; Ezeilo, 2008).

However, during the election campaign leading to the 2011 elections, President Goodluck Jonathan promised women in Nigeria to pursue the National Gender Policy of the appointment of more women into his government if elected into office. It was in realization of the promise by the president that led to the appointment 12 women out the 42 ministers appointed by the Federal Government, which represented 30 percent of the total number of ministers appointed. In addition, out of 20 special advisers appointed by the Federal Government, 4 were women, which represented 20 percent of the number of people appointed. This was an improvement over the past administrations in the country. This improvement in the appointment of women into positions of authority could be attributed to the continuous effort of women's advocacy groups who call for 35 affirmative action plan for women's representation in government by the National Gender Policy (Idonor, 2011; Nigerian News online, 2011; Okoronkwo-Chukwu; 2013, pp. 39-46). This development implies that what women could not secure at the polls; they were able to get through appointments.

Other appointments made in government between 1999 and 2012 include: Director-General, National Agency for Food, Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC) and later Minister for information – Dr. Dora Akunyili (Nnabuife, 2010). Senior Special Assistance to the President on Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (BMPIU), Minister of Solid Mineral, and later Minister for Education, Dr. Obiageli Ezekwesili (Agbalajobi, 2009). Also appointed is Aruma Oteh as Director-General of Security and Exchange Commission (Oriloye, 2011). Further appointments include: Director-General of Bureau for Public Enterprise (BPE), Irene Chigbue and later Bolanle Onagoruwa (Ajaero, 2007), Head of Service of the Nigerian Federation, Ebele Ofunne Okeke (Ogunbayo, 2007). Constance Momoh was appointed the

Chief Judge of Edo State (Ogunbayo, 2007). Ayotunde Philips was appointed the Chief Judge of Lagos (Chief Judge of Lagos State online, 2012), and Alloma Mariam Muktar got the appointment as the Chief Justice of the Nigerian Federation, (Onuorah and Ughegbe, 2012; Uche-Okobi, 2012).

4.2. Women and nation building for development (1999-2012)

Experience has shown that nation building for development is not an exclusive preserve of a particular gender. Presented below are contributions toward nation building for development by some of the women appointed into positions of authority. The justification for this list is based on the fact that: first, these were the women who got appointed into top government positions due to their personal quality in terms of education and performance in their previous assignments at different areas of the nation's economy. Second, due to their brilliant performance in the appointment given to them by the government:

- a. **Dr. Dora Akunyili:** In April 2001, Prof Dora Akunyili was appointed the Director-General of NAFDAC by the Olusegun Obasanjo's government, with the sole purpose to eliminate fake drugs in Nigeria. Through determination, she was able to carry out the following positive actions: incidence of fake drugs was reduced by 90 percent from what it was in 2001 as per the time she left office in 2007; production capacities of local pharmaceutical industries were increased and 22 new drug-manufacturing outfits were established within five years; between April 2001 and January 2006, NAFDAC carried out 100 destruction exercise of counterfeit and substandard drugs valued at NGN 14 billion or USD 90.32 million; between 2001 and 2005 alone, 1,000 raids were carried out by NAFDAC officials on distribution outlets of fake drugs nation-wide. NAFDAC was able to secure 45 convictions in respect of counterfeit-drug related cases within five years; sanctions on erring manufacturing and importers of fake/substandard drugs achieved stood at 2,226 in 2002, 3,178 in 2003, 3,460 in 2004 and 4,132 in 2005 individuals and corporate organizations respectively (Agbalajobi, 2009; Nnabuife, 2010).

Also, NAFDAC under the leadership of Professor Akunyili was able to monitor salt iodization in Nigeria to the extent that UNICEF was able to rate Nigeria as the first country in Africa to achieve universal salt iodization. For the good job done as head of NAFDAC, Akunyili received two hundred and fifty awards both from local and international institutions for her commitment to the values of honesty and transparency in the eradication of fake and counterfeit drugs in Nigeria (Agbalajobi, 2009; Nnabuife, 2010).

- b. **Dr. Obiageli Ezekwesili:** In October 2003, Dr Ezekwesili was appointed the Senior Special Assistance to the President on Due Process or BMPIU by the Obasanjo's government to oversee the prudent and integrity-anchored procurement system that would power the economic growth of Nigeria and reward productive efforts. The task of BMPIU involves ensuring strict compliance with laid-down rules and procedures guiding the process of: contract invitation; contract award; and project implementation in the public sector of the nation's economy to prevent corruption in the award and execution of contracts (Agbalajobi, 2009; Nnabuife, 2010). Under the leadership of Dr Ezekwesili, BMPIU was able to make huge gains to the extent that she is now known and called in Nigeria as "Madam Due Process".

Some of the achievements of BMPIU under Ezekwesili were: the promotion of fair play and competition resulting in huge savings through reduction in contracts sum to the tune of NGN 77.50 billion or USD 500 million (Oladoyin, 2006). Furthermore, unlike in the past when contracts were awarded at more than 200 percent of the true

cost and to influential people in society, BMPIU recognized only competent contractors who went through the due process. As a result of the transparency involved in the due process, BMPIU was able to save additional NGN 125 billion or USD 806.45 million for the nation in two and a half years. Dr Ezekwesili's brilliant performance in Nigeria's public sector management eventually made it possible for her to be appointed the Vice-President for the World Bank's African Region in 2007 (Oladoyin, 2006; Adebayo and Arawomo, 2008).

- c. **Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala:** Dr Okonjo-Iweala was first appointed by the Obasanjo's government in 2003 as the first female Finance Minister in Nigeria. While in office, she facilitated the formation of the Economic Reform Team (ERT), which formed the platform for the negotiation of debt reduction from the Paris Club of creditors to achieve a debt relief for the country in 2005. The negotiation led to the cancellation of USD 18 billion out of USD 30 billion owed to the Paris Club of creditors by Nigeria (Agbalajobi, 2009).

The performance of the finance ministry under the leadership of Dr Okonjo-Iweala facilitated her appointment as the Managing Director of the World Bank – African Region in 2007. At the inception of President Goodluck Jonathan's administration in 2011, she was called upon to become the Minister of Finance for the second time. Her drive for transformation of the nation's economy made it possible for her to be appointed the head of the economic implementation of the decision of the Economic Management Team (EMT), and the coordinating minister of the economy. Her focus is on job creation in agriculture and infrastructure (Eni, 2012).

- d. **Aruma Oteh:** Oteh was appointed the Director-General of SEC by President Goodluck Jonathan's government. This was at a time when SEC was considered a non-performing organization due to poor corporate governance and accountability. She embarked upon a reform hinged on accountability, good corporate governance, fairness and efficiency as a way of building a world class capital market that investors would have confidence in. Based on her performance, she has been described as an efficient and focused regulator in the Nigerian capital market (Oriloye, 2011; Odutola, 2012).
- e. **Justice Ayotunde Philips:** Justice Ayotunde Philips was appointed the Chief Justice of Lagos State of Nigeria by the Lagos State Governor – Barrister Babatunde Raji Fashola in June 2012. She addressed the decadence in the prison system resulting from the backlog of untried prison inmates languishing away at the Kirikiri maximum and Kirikiri medium security prisons in Lagos. In September 2012, she ordered for the release of 233 inmates made-up of 130 inmates from the Kirikiri Maximum Security Prison and 103 inmates from the Kirikiri Medium Security Prison in Lagos. Most of the inmates released had spent up to 12 years in prison custody without trial. Her argument was that even if these inmates were to be found guilty, they had actually spent more than the years they would have spent in prison for committing the crime for which they were held. Commenting her effort, the Deputy Comptroller of Prison in-charge of Kirikiri Prisons Mr. Olu Tinuoye disclosed that it was unusual for the Chief Judge of Lagos State to visit the prison to see things firsthand. This singular act based on motherly instinct brought praise to the judiciary and the Lagos State Government in pursuance of human rights (Chief Judge of Lagos State online, 2012).
- f. **Justice Alloma Mariam Mukhtar:** History was made in Nigeria when for the first time a female judge was appointed the Chief Justice of Nigeria on the 16th July 2012 by President Goodluck Jonathan. A renowned Lagos based lawyer, Fred Agbaje while commenting on the appointment of Justice Mukhtar as the first female Chief Justice of Nigeria posits that Mukhtar is one of the greatest women to have appeared in Nigerian

judicial landscape. Justice Mukhtar's focus is on judicial reforms for effective dispensation of justice in the country (Onuorah and Ughegbe, 2012; Uche-Okobi, 2012). Emphasizing the importance of leadership potential of women, Professor Pat Utomi had argued that the government could even make it a duty to have about 50 percent of its cabinet members as women because they have proven to be more compassionate and committed about issues of national importance than a lot of men (Ola 2007). Also, former President Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007) argues that "no position in government is sacrosanct that a woman cannot occupy" (Ola, 2007, p. 6).

4.3. Odds against Nigerian Women in Governance

Aboribo and Oguoe (2007, p. 31) have identified some constraints on women active participation in politics and governmental affairs that include the patriarchal structure of the Nigerian society brought about by colonialism, traditional norms, gender bias against women, sexual harassment and discrimination. They argue that "politics by nature and definition in Nigeria is a militant activity and women are not interested and involved in militant activity, rather they are more located within the caring professions". Supporting the view presented above, Olomola (2008, p. 93), points out that:

Although, the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides for non-discrimination and of equality between the sexes, in reality the gap between law and practice is quite wide and seemingly parallel... Discrimination against women in Nigeria is rooted in traditional beliefs and practices that regard the man as superior to his female counterpart.

Other factors that facilitate the marginalization of women in the political process and governance include:

- a.** Cultural and religious practices: cultural and religious beliefs in most Nigerian societies support the argument that women are to be home-makers, and therefore should not participate in politics to the extent of standing for election at any level. For instance, until 1976, most women from the northern part of Nigeria, due to their Islamic religious faith were not even allowed to vote for candidates of their choice, let alone standing for elections in the country (Iloh and Ikenna, 2009, pp. 113-128; Yahaya, 2012).
- b.** Violence, thuggery and intimidation: political contest in Nigeria is violent prone, "do-or-die-affair" and hence not suitable for women. In the Nigerian political landscape, there are rampant unresolved cases of political assassination. People see politics as an end in itself because of the economic gains through corrupt self enrichment, hence would do everything possible to win by all means. This development makes political participation a difficult and risky venture for women (Joseph, 1991; Eyinade, 2010).
- c.** Non-indigene syndrome: this is a system inherited from the pre-colonial Nigerian societies where each ethnic group struggled for political identity and self preservation. The problem of non-indigene is a serious obstacle to women participation in politics. A woman married from another ethnic group is regarded as not qualified to contest for public office. Except this situation is urgently addressed, women that fall into this category would continue be prevented from participating in Nigerian political process (Iloh and Ikenna, 2009, pp. 113-128).
- d.** High cost of party nomination fees: one of the major obstacles to women participation in the electoral process is that of high cost of party nomination fees put in place by the bigger and more popular political parties in Nigeria. Most women who may want to run for elective positions are not economically empowered enough to pay such high nomination fees (Eyinade, 2010; Yahaya, 2012). The implication is that most women

who may be desirous to contribute their quota towards the development of the nation are not likely to be elected into public offices due to their inability to pay the nomination fees. This development is a set back to sustainable democracy in Nigeria.

The above factors no doubt have contributed negatively in the past towards the low level of women's participation in politics, and made it almost impossible for them to be part of governance in terms of formulation and implementation of public policies for development. The low level of women's participation in politics therefore could be seen as a threat to sustainable democracy. This is based on the fact that a very large number of the populace – 50.10 percent of women, aged 20 years old and above are under-represented in the political process thereby negating the true meaning and value of democracy in a “democratic society” like Nigeria. This is particularly true, since democracy as a system of government abhors gender discrimination in politics.

5. Way Forward

Studies have shown that democracy as a system of government is good for nations because it gives people irrespective of their gender status the opportunity to be part of the policy process for societal development (Ball and Dagger, 1995; Fox, 2007; Onyeghalaji, 2008). Any attempt therefore to discriminate against or prevent anyone from participating in politics in terms of gender negates the democratic ideals and hence is a threat to sustainable democracy. To enhance the participation of women in politics for sustainable democracy and development in Nigeria, the following are put forward as suggestions:

First, all women advocacy groups in the country should be encouraged to press hard on the government and the general public on the need to support women in their bid to participate in politics. Also, there is the need for women already in government to use their motherly and compassionate instinct to their advantage by standing for what is right at all times as way of convincing the general public of their ability to perform well for the good of society if given greater opportunity in governmental affairs.

Second, the Federal Government through the Independent Electoral Commission should embark on campaign to educate the general public on the need to do away with negative cultural and religious practices that see women as object to be used and put aside rather than as partners in nation building for development. This is possible particularly if civic education is introduced at the primary and secondary level to inculcate into the youths the need to contribute to the nation's development through hard-work instead of having the negative mindset that discriminate against women's participation in politics and governance in the society.

Third, political parties should encourage women participation in politics by removing every barrier such as the abolishment of all forms of nomination fees paid at the political party level as it is currently practiced in some of the more bigger and popular political parties in the country, removal of the clause on non-indigene syndrome (a system inherited from the pre-colonial Nigerian societies where each ethnic group struggled for political identity and self preservation), as basis for nomination by political parties, holding of political party meetings at day time rather than odd hours that could discourage women from attending (the current practice with most political parties in Nigeria is that party meetings where important issues bothering on representations and nominations are held at odds hours of the night), political parties should put in place certain percentage of seats to be contested for as reserve for women, political parties should put in place stringent laws to fight against political violence, thuggery and intimidation at party congresses during and after nominations, and political parties should put in place machinery to work for the progress of candidates nominated as party flag-bearers at elections devoid of gender discrimination.

Finally, democracy is more likely to be sustained in Nigeria when competent people are elected or appointed into public offices on the basis of merit rather than on gender status. This is more likely to be achieved when regular training on democratic culture is given to those intending to contest for public office and the current occupiers of such public office to enable them imbibe the values of democracy that abhors gender discrimination against women in political participation as catalyst for sustainable democracy and societal development. According to Omoruyi (2007, p. 339) “no one is born a democrat; only learning makes one a democrat”.

Conclusion

The paper examines women in governance and sustainable democracy in Nigeria. It identified factors that militate against women’s desire to be part of the political process to include: cultural and religious practices; violence, thuggery and intimidation; non-indigence syndrome; and high cost of party nomination fees. The paper further observed that for as long as these factors remain unresolved, women are not likely to actively participate in the political process and the concept of “near-exclusion” of women in the Nigerian political landscape in favour of their male counterparts is more likely to persist. The implication is that the non-active participation of women in the political process is a negation of true democratic system and a setback for societal development. This is particularly true since development in any democratic society is not gender discriminatory.

However, findings from the study reveals that women participation in politics in terms of election into public offices and appointment into positions of authority have improved under President Goodluck Jonathan’s administration compared to previous governments in the country. This improvement is as a result of fulfilled promise of the president to implement the National Gender Policy of 2008 that supports the 35 percent affirmative action plan of women representation in government. This calls for more action on the part of government to continuously put in place, and genuinely implement measures that will enhance the participation of women in politics and also, make the appointment of women into positions of authority a top priority as strategy for the sustainability of democratic governance for development in Nigeria.

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