

Political Parties and Women Candidacy: Gender Analysis of the 2019 General Elections in Nigeria

Ugwu, Chioma Scholastica, Ph.D

Department of Political and Administrative Studies University of Port Harcourt Rivers State, Nigeria

Okoye, Chukwuebuka Anthony, Ph.D

Department of Political Science Federal University Otuoke Bayelsa State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT: This paper assessed the role of political parties in recruiting, selecting and championing candidates for elections and the implications on women's political attainment. The male-dominated political party structure and power has an overwhelming influence on women's candidacy selection and winning of political seats. The attitude of political parties towards selection of candidates for elections in Nigeria is undemocratic and a major reason for women's poor representation in governance. The paper argues that equality of all irrespective of sex is crucial for achieving political equity, better legislation, good governance and national development. Data for the study were obtained through secondary sources and analysis of data revealed that political parties' candidacy selection and support have been lopsided in favour of men at all levels of political contests. The paper recommends policy strategies that would enhance more women entering into politics and party candidacy list geared towards attaining good governance and national development.

KEYWORD: Political party, women candidacy, political representation, policy legislation, good governance, national development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Globally, women are grossly underrepresented in parliament and governance. The global average for women's representation in parliaments is put at 24 per cent with countries such as Rwanda, Bolivia, and Cuba being the top three countries with 50 per cent or above in their national parliament (UN Women 2019). Women constitute about forty per cent of political party members worldwide, yet they are largely underrepresented in political party structure. This is in spite of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted in 1995 in the Fourth World Conference on Women and a 30 per cent affirmative action recommended for women in decision-making positions, the aim of which was to enhance equal representation of men and women at all levels of governance including within political parties (European Union, 2019). The demand for Women's equal participation in decision-making do not only bother on justice or democracy but also essential for undertaking women's interests. Excluding women from active participation in governance and undermining their views in decision making, would jeopardize attainment of the goals of equality, peace and development (United Nations, 1996).

Literature reveals that in spite of the 35 per cent affirmative action for women enshrined in the Nigeria's National Gender Policy, women are grossly underrepresented in party nomination list for

118	ISSN 2690-9626 (online), Published by "Global Research Network LLC" under Volume: 3 Issue: 2 in February-2022 https://grnjournals.us/index.php/AJSHR
	Copyright (c) 2022 Author (s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY). To view a copy of this license, visit https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

elections. Report shows that a Women Participation Bill that demands a one-third quota of female candidates in political party nominations for elections have had no positive outcome since its submission at the National Assembly (EU, 2019). Nigerian women political representation is below global and African average and one of the lowest in the world. Their representation in national parliament has continued to dwindle in recent times and falls below global standard. Women's representation in national parliament fell from 6.5 per cent in 2015 to 4.17 per cent in 2019 (Onyeji, 2019). This is in spite that women make up 47 per cent of registered voters (Ayomo, 2019). While many countries across the globe are making conscious efforts to bridge inequalities between men and women in the political space, Nigeria has kept falling short even when women constitute almost half of the voting population.

The 2015 voters' registration exercise reveals more women turn out than men. The total number of registered voters was put at 68,833,476, out of which men were 22,944,984 and women were 45,888,984 (Pham, 2015). Thus, women accounted for 67 per cent of the total registration while men made up the remaining 33 per cent. Despite women's numeric strength, result from previous elections show a decimal number of women in political positions compared to men. For instance, in 1999, there were only three women out of the 109 members representing 2.8 per cent of the members of the Senate and 12 out of 360 members which was about 3.3 per cent. In 2003, four (4) (3.7%) and twenty-one (21) (5.8%) women were elected in the Senate and House of Representatives. In 2007, the number increased to eight (7.3 per cent) and twenty-six (26) (7.2%) in House of Representatives. However, there was a decrease from eight women in senate in 2007 to seven in 2011 which is 6.4 per cent and from 26 to twenty-five (25) (6.9%) in House of Representatives. In 2015, eight (7.3 per cent) senators and 19 (5.3 per cent) secured seat in the House of Representatives (Oloyede n.d; Okorokwo-Chukwu, 2013).

The outcome of the election shows that Nigerian women are only active in voters' registration, election rallies and campaigns, voting and contesting hence their activities have not translated into actual governance. This collaborates Megan, Terry and Lauren (2014) argument that notwithstanding that few women vie for elections, they take active part in other activities in political parties such as organizing party rallies, but their activities do not reflect in their vying for and attaining leadership positions. In spite of these efforts by women, they are still underrepresented in governance (Onyeji, 2019). It is on this note that Sadie (2005) blamed the poor representation of women in governance on the inability of the political parties to enlist them on party list and political party structure. Sadie (2005) went further to contend that despite that political parties incorporated gender equality in their constitutions, it has not manifested in their party structure. Currently, there are no legal requirements to support women for political advancement in Nigeria, neither are there legal provisions for independent candidacy. These inadequacies compel women to depend on political parties for nomination (European Union, 2019). Since political party is the only legal platform for electoral contest in Nigeria, its processes should engender equality so as to accommodate both sexes in its structure and candidature nomination.

Literature is rich on studies on women's participation and representation in politics. See Agbalajobi (2010); Ngara and Ayabam (2013); Awofeso and Odeyemi (2014); Eme, Onyishi and Nwaoha (2014); Okafor and Akokuwebe (2015); Eme (2015). However, most of these studies focused more on the barriers to women's participation in politics which they identified as low economic status, cultural barriers, low educational status and some merely mentioned political party influence but did not have a detailed analysis of how political party's' candidacy selection impacts negatively on women's active engagement in governance in Nigeria. Thus, a lacuna exists in the literature in this regard. It is on this note that this paper aims to exhaustively analyse the extent to which political

parties' engendered equality in candidates' selection in the 2019 general election in Nigeria to ascertain the level of women candidacy and seats won and the implications on democratic governance and national development. The paper would further proffer policy strategies to be employed by political parties to improve the status quo of women in politics and governance for better policy legislation and attainment of national development.

2. POLITICAL PARTY AND WOMEN INCLUSION IN POLITICS

Political party is an integral element of any electoral process in both developed and developing countries. It is an association of individuals that engage in electoral struggle for the control of administration of government (Kwaghga, 2012). Essentially, political parties are platforms for competitiveness among groups seeking political positions and give opportunities for masses to participate in political process (Johnston, 2005). Ballington, Davis, Reith, Mitchell, Njoki, and Powley (2012) suggest that giving women opportunity to participate in the political process provides an enabling atmosphere for their empowerment. Political parties, therefore, are essentially the platform that promotes women's development and contribute toward achieving their political empowerment.

However, women have continued to be underrepresented in all political positions irrespective of efforts made to overcome such challenges. Castillejo (2009) observed that political parties mainly use women whom they place as women leaders to mobilize their fellow women for political activities. The consequences are usually disadvantageous, ultimately render women powerless and tend to exclude them from mainstream party politics. In its limited sense, women play minimal roles in parties, party chairperson or secretary general are the exclusive position of men. Men and women are not proportionately represented by political parties for electoral contests especially in Nigeria. Data from four major political parties during the 2011 general election shows a low representation of women in party list. The All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) presented the highest number of women candidates for election. Women represented 12 per cent of the total candidates which stood at 640. This was followed by the Labour party which presented 91 women candidates representing 11.7 per cent out of 775 candidates. All Nigerians Peoples' Party (ANPP) had 77 of 1293 representing 6 per cent, while Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) had the lowest percentage of women candidates among the four major parties with 84 women out of 1510 candidates representing 5.6 per cent (Oladoye, 2011). A total of 3306 candidates participated in the 2011 general elections across the nations. Of this number, 3004 candidates representing 90.9 per cent were males and 302 candidates representing 9.1 per cent were females (Irabor, 2011).

Specifically, out of the 20 presidential candidates in contest for the seat, there was only one female and out of 353 vice-presidential candidates, there were only three candidates and none of these females won. At the national assembly, out of the 890 candidates that contested for senatorial seats, 90 were women and only seven emerged victorious out of the 109 available seats while 2, 408 contested the House of Representative seats with 220 female candidates and 26 females won out of available 360 seats (International Republican Institute (IRI) & National Democratic Institute (NDI), 2019). More so, there were only 10 states with female governorship candidates of which 13 females out of a total of 384 candidates participated in the election yet none of them emerged victorious (Eme, 2014). Political parties that presented women for the governorship contest include African Democratic Congress (ADC), All Progressives Grand Congress (APGA), People's Redemption Party (PRP), African Liberation Party (ALP), Action Party of Nigeria (APN), Better Nigeria Progressive Party (BNPP), Fresh Democratic Party (FRESH), Allied Congress Party of Nigeria (ACPN), Mega Peoples Progressive Party (MPPP) and Labour Party (Irabor, 2011).

Among these political parties, only two of them presented more than one candidate across the 10 states, the ADC with 3 candidates and APN with 2 candidates. All others had only one candidate. It is worthy to note that none of these 10 political parties were among the top three most popular political parties during this period. One may argue that these political parties due to their presumed low popularity may have envisaged the party's incapability to win seat and hence decided to present women as their party's flag bearers. This goes a long way to show case how political parties undermine women in their candidacy selection for electoral contest in Nigeria. Political parties with high popularity hardly field women candidates especially for high profile offices such as president, vice-president and governorship seats. This is because they have high tendency of emerging victorious since party popularity takes precedence over individual popularity in elections in Nigeria.

In 2015 general election, out of the 26 registered political parties, 14 political parties presented presidential candidates of which there was only one female candidate by name Remi Sonaiya of Kowa party (MacBain, 2015). While four political parties nominated females as vice presidential candidates (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs [NDI], 2015). However, these political parties only appeared on the ballot paper as only two political parties namely, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressive Congress (APC) actually contested the presidential poll (Sanni, 2019). At the national assembly, 746 candidates contested for senatorial seats, out of which 128 were females and only 8 out of the available 109 seats were secured by women. These women include Stella Oduah (Anambra North), Rose Oko (Cross River North), Abiodun Olujimi (Ekiti South) and Fatimat Raji-Rasaki (Ekiti Central), Oluremi Tinubu (Lagos Central), Binta Garba (Adamawa North) and Alhaja Monsurat Sunmonu, Oyo, and Uche Ekwunife, Anambra Central (Ndujihe, 2019).

While a total of 1,777 candidates vied for seat in the House of Representatives, 270 of this number were women and only 17 out of 360 seats were won by women (IRI & NDI, 2019). At the state level, the governorship race had a total of 380 candidates out of which 23 were women and none of them emerged victorious in the election. Hence, none of the major political parties had a woman as the governorship candidate in the election as they mainly presented few deputy governorship candidates. The deputy governorship contest had also 380 candidates for which 64 were women but only 4 out of the 29 available seats were won by women. There were 51 female members in the State Houses of Assembly and there were no female members in 14 states (IRI & NDI, 2019).

Nnamani (2014) contended that majority of political parties in Nigeria do not inculcate the principle of democracy which result in political tension and violence in the electoral system. The author further noted that political godfathers exhibit domineering attitudes by determining who take which position in the political scene. These attitudes of godfathers create discontent in the political system due largely on party's inability to abide by legal procedure for party nominations. Civil society reported that female aspirants often faced gender-based intimidation, violent attacks and substitution by men on the final list of party candidates despite their victory in the primaries (European Union, 2019). This behavior of political parties towards women denotes that they lack the ability to change women's political status by preserving seats for them in party affairs and party structure (Nnamani, 2014).

There is basically no serious improvement in the level of women participation in politics especially looking at their output in terms of occupying elective offices since the return of democracy in Nigeria, even when there has been an increase in the number of female candidates in past elections such as 2011 and 2015 as clearly shown above. An exploration of the 2019 party candidacy selection and election would further assist in explaining the undermining factor to women's political

underrepresentation despite increase in the number of women candidacy by political parties in recent times.

3. POLITICAL PARTY AND WOMEN CANDIDACY IN THE 2019 GENERAL ELECTIONS: AN EXPOSITION

In preparation for the March, 2019 general elections, the Independent National Electoral commission (INEC) registered 91 political parties (EU, 2019; IRI & NDI, 2019).

At the national level, for the office of the presidency, there were 73 candidates. For the Senate, there were 1,904 candidates while for the House of Representatives, there were 4,680 candidates in contest of the 109 and 360 seats for each of the houses respectively. At the State level, there were 1,066 candidates who vied for the office of the 29 governorship and deputy governorship seats in the designated states (INEC, 2019), and 14,609 candidates contested for the 991 state assembly seats. In spite of the high number of candidates for the various positions, the percentage of female candidates was less than 12.8 per cent in all races (European Union, 2019).

The 2019 elections encountered more women contesting for various offices across the nation but majority of these women were fielded by new or minor political parties with no good records of winning elections (IRI & NDI, 2019). A total of 2,970 women contested for different political positions in the 2019 election but only 62 of them were elected. This is a decline from the existing 5.6 per cent women representing in 2015 to 4.17 per cent in 2019 (Olorok, 2019). The two major political parties during this election, the APC and PDP presented few women candidates in all elections across the states of the federation. At the national assembly, out of 469 candidates that contested the election, APC had only 24 while PDP had 31 women candidates. These parties also had 13 and eight legislative candidates, respectively, below the age of 35. The result of the elections showed a decline in women representation in the National Assembly when compared with the previous election in 2015. Thus, the number of women in Senate reduced from eight in 2015 to seven in 2019 while the House of Representatives fell from 19 to 11 members. This is in spite of INEC's announcement that 47 percent of registered voters were women (IRI/NDI, 2019). Consequently, women hold only 3.8 percent seat in the National Assembly. This is below the global average of 24 per cent and the lowest in Sub-Saharan Africa (IRI/NDI, 2019).

Elections at the state level held in only 29 out of 36 states on March 9, 2019. There were no elections in seven states. This was as a result of court rulings. These states include Anambra, Bayelsa, Edo, Ekiti, Kogi, Ondo and Osun states (IRI/NDI, 2019). Of the 275 women representing 11.40 per cent of candidates for the Deputy Governorship election, four women were elected from four states including Enugu, Kaduna, Ogun and Rivers states (Onyeji, 2019). This is in spite of the 76 women candidates that contested the poll. States such as Bauchi, Edo, Jigawa, Katsina, Kebbi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Sokoto, Taraba, and Zamfara had no woman elected in their legislature both at the national and state levels while 14 states had no women elected to the State House of Assembly and these include Abia, Bauchi, Borno, Edo, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Sokoto, Taraba, Yobe and Zamfara states (IRI/NDI, 2019). Thus, Only 44 representing 4.4 per cent, of State House of Assembly members were women (IRI/NDI, 2019).

In a view to clearly underscore the level of political parties' commitment in promoting women candidacy for election especially with regards to 2019 elections, it is pertinent to present state by state breakdown of men and women candidates and the effort of the two major political parties in enhancing women's chances of winning elections in various political positions.

Table 1: Percentage representation of women governorship and deputy governorship candidates in the 2019 elections by states

State	Total no of candidates	Male	Female Gov./Deputy Gov.candidates	Women governorship candidates	% of female candidates
Abia	64	53	11	3	17.2
Adamawa	58	52	6	5	10.4
Akwa Ibom	90	71	19	2	21.1
Bauchi	62	60	2	1	3.23
Benue	66	54	12	1	18.2
Boronu	64	60	4	Nil	6.25
Cross River	52	40	12	2	23.1
Delta	100	77	23	8	23
Ebonyi	74	66	8	3	10.8
Enugu	84	56	28	5	33.3
Gombe	64	57	7	1	10.9
Imo	140	115	25	4	17.9
Jigawa	38	36	2	1	5.3
Kaduna	76	69	7	2	9.2
Kano	110	98	12	9	10.9
Katsina	36	34	2	Nil	5.6
Kebbi	62	59	3	1	4.8
Kwara	70	54	16	2	22.9
Lagos	90	60	30	7	33.3
Nasarawa	58	53	5	1	8.6
Niger	62	52	10	2	16.1
Ogun	82	54	28	1	34.1
Oyo	84	61	23	6	27.4
Plateau	48	44	4	Nil	8.33
Rivers	128	103	25	4	19.53
Sokoto	102	93	9	2	8.8
Taraba	60	53	7	2	11.7
Yobe	26	23	3	1	11.5
Zamfara	82	74	8	2	9.8
Total	2132	1780	352	78	

Source: Compiled by authors from INEC, 2019

Table 1, above shows that a total of 2,132 governorship and deputy governorship candidates were fielded by various political parties and contested gubernatorial election in various states across the federation. The number of male candidates stood at 1,780 representing 83.3 per cent of the total candidates while the female candidates were 352 representing 16.5 per cent of the total number. Of this 16.5 per cent of female candidates, only about 3 per cent of them contested the governorship seat. Female deputy governorship candidates were 274 representing 77.8 per cent while governorship candidates were 78 representing 22.2 per cent. Neither APC nor PDP had a female governorship candidate. The 22.2 per cent representing the female governorship candidates came from small/new/unpopular political parties.

Candidacy selection across the states show that no political party in three states - Bornu, Katsina and Plateau had a female governorship candidate while eight states had only one female candidate each.

Only three states could be said to have been more gender sensitive in their candidacy selection as can be observed from the table. These were Ogun state with 34.1 per cent representation, Enugu and Lagos states each with 33.3 per cent representation respectively. The international benchmark for women political representation is 30 per cent. Although standing in political contest is not a guarantee for winning election but an opportunity to convince electorates to vote in one's favour.

It is obvious from the above table that few women were given opportunity by political parties to contest on their party platforms. When this is the case, it would be impossible for women to at least attain the 30 per cent representation by international standard since the Nigerian constitution does not provide for individual candidate to run for election except through a political party platform. This reason further buttresses the important role of political parties in promoting women's participation in politics and governance.

Table 2: Political parties with women candidacy for senatorial contest and percentage representation of women by states

State	Total no of candidates	Male	Female	Political parties	% of female candidates
Abia	44	38	6	ADC, APC, FJP, ADC, ANP, ZLP	13.6
Adamawa	43	34	10	ADC, AGA, APC, JM, PP, ACD, ACD, PT, APC, NPM,	23.3
Akwa Ibom	34	26	8	KP, DPP, ZLP, CAC, DPP, PPN, DPP, PDP	23.5
Anambara	75	61	14	ACD, ADC, APC, DPP, KP, NCP, PDP, PPC, RP, ADC, KP, PDP, RP, ZLP	18.7
Bauchi	44	43	1	DA	2.27
Bayelsa	44	40	4	DA, MPN, NRM, NUP	10
Benue	47	39	8	APC, GDPN, LP, JMPP, LP, ADC, PPN, PT	17.02
Boronu	39	38	1	NEPP	2.6
Cross River	38	35	3	ID, PDP, A	7.9
Delta	68	57	11	LP, MPN, PDP, ASD, DA, HDP, KP, NFD, ID, MPN, SDP	16.2
Ebonyi	37	34	3	ACPN, JMPP, PPN	8.1
Edo	33	30	3	JMPP, ADC, JMPP	9.1

Ekiti	27	24	3	DPP, PDP, PPN	11.1
Enugu	51	38	13	ID, MPN, NIP, PPN, APC, ID, KP, MPN, PPN, SDP, DPP, LP, MPN	25.5
Gombe	45	38	7	A, ASD, PDM, PDP, SDP, A, PDC	15.6
Imo	105	91	14	ADC, AGAP, ASD, JMPP, NAC, NIP, LP, PPN, A, ADP, ASD, NIP, NRM, UPP	13.3
Jigawa	32	31	1	MPN	3.1
Kaduna	56	51	5	A, ABP, APGA, DPC, NEPP	8.9
Kano	86	83	3	APDA, DPC, NPM	3.5
Katsina	33	32	1	NRM	3.0
Kebbi	51	46	5	A, AD, APA, NAC, GPN	9.8
Kogi	73	66	7	A, SDP, UPP, UPC, A, LP, UPP	9.6
Kwara	57	50	7	ADP, APC, GPN, LP, MPN, GNP, UPP	12.3
Lagos	54	34	20	A, APC, CAP, DA, FJP, ID, MPN, PT, ADC, CAP, DA, DPP, PDP, PT, A, ADP, APM, CAP, UPP, YPP	37.0
Nasarawa	45	41	4	ADC, GPN, MMN, ADP	8.9
Niger	40	35	5	NCP, PT, AGA, GNP, GNP	12.5
Ogun	61	54	7	ADC, GNP, MPN, LP, NCP, UPP, ZLP	11.5
Ondo	41	37	4	ADP, ZLP, ASD, MRDD	9.8
Osun	68	54	14	APA, BNPP, CAP, DA, GNP, LP, MAJA, ADC, CAP, RP, ACPN, APA, GPN, NCP	20.6
Oyo	60	53	7	A, ADC, A, JMPP, NCP, PDP, PPC	11.7
Plateau	40	36	4	ADP, MPN, PPC, MPN	10
Rivers	59	46	13	ACPN, C4C, ID, NDLP, ADC, ID, MRDD, C4C, MRDD, NPC, PDP, PPA, UPN	22
Sokoto	102	97	5	A, APGA, NAC, PPA, PPN	4.9

Taraba	49	46	3	PDM, ACPN, ADC	6.1
Yobe	17	16	1	MPN	5.9
Zamfara	74	74	NILL	NILL	Nill
Federal Capital Territory (FCT)	32	22	10	AAC, ADC, ANP, APM, CAP, GNP, JMPP, LP, MDN, YPP	31.3
Total	1904	1670	235		

Source: Compiled by authors from INEC, 2019

Table 2 above revealed the number of male and female candidates that contested for senate seats in the 2019 National Assembly election by states. Out of a total of 1904 candidates, 1670 were males representing 87.7 per cent of the total number of candidates and 235 were females representing 12.3 per cent. The table further shows political parties that presented female candidates for the election and their percentage representation by states. The table demonstrates that majority of political parties with female candidates are small/new/ unpopular political parties. Only but in few states did APC and PDP select a female candidate to run on their party platforms. The APC fielded only six female candidates while PDP had nine female candidates. The six states with APC female candidates were Abia, Adamawa, Anambara, Benue and Lagos states. States with PDP female candidates include Akwa-Ibom, Anambara, Delta, Ekiti, Gombe, Lagos, Oyo and Rivers states. Thus, only 11 states out of 36 had female candidates that contested for senatorial seats and Zamfara state had no female candidate.

In terms of percentage representation, only seven states had more than 20 per cent female candidates for the senatorial contest. These states include Lagos with the highest percentage -37.0, followed by FCT- 31.3 per cent, Enugu- 25.5 per cent, Akwa Ibom- 23.5 per cent, Adamawa- 23.3 per cent, Rivers- 22 per cent and Osun- 20.6 per cent. Thus, only about 19.4 per cent of states had more than 20 per cent women candidates for the senatorial contest while only two states representing 5.6 per cent had more than 30 per cent female candidature. Although few states had less than 5 per cent candidates for the election, a whopping 80.6 per cent of states had less than 20 per cent female candidates for the senatorial contest. This demonstrates the level of political party insensitivity in promoting women in politics and entrenching democratic principles in their selection of candidates for election. Political parties have failed to imbibe the principle of equality in their nomination and selection of candidates for election but have continued to promote patriarchy in both party structure and candidate's selection. This attitude by political parties have continued to undermine women's participation as well as their representation in governance and politics in Nigeria, and pose challenges for promoting gender sensitive issues, good governance and national development.

To further underscore the level to which women are undermined in securing political positions in Nigeria which are the consequences of political party marginalization, women could not win tangible number of seats in the 2019 election at all levels. The table 3 below clearly shows the number of women candidates and number of seats secured in the 2019 general elections at the national and state levels.

Table 3: Women candidates and number elected in the 2019 general elections

Political office	Available seats	Total no of candidates	Women candidates	Women elected
President	1	73	6	0
Senate	109	1,904	235	7
House of Representatives	360	4,680	533	12
Governor	29	1066	78	0
Deputy Governor	29	1066	274	4
House of Assembly	990	14,583	1,825	44

Source: Compiled by authors from INEC, 2019; European Union, 2019; Onyeji, 2019 & IRI/NDI, 2019 & INEC, 2019.

The outcome of the 2019 general elections with respect to women candidacy and number of seats won by women clearly indicates the effort of political parties in Nigerian democracy in promoting women in politics and governance. In spite that women form a large part of registered voters, yet their representation remains below African and global average. The Table 3 above shows that women formed only 8.2 per cent of presidential candidates and none had the courage to finally contest with the two major political parties (APC & PDP). Women only constituted 12.3 per cent of candidates that stood for senatorial seats and only secured seven seats representing 6.4 per cent. For the House of Representatives, women formed 11.4 per cent of all candidates and only secured 11 seats representing 3.05 per cent. At the state level, for the governorship contest, women formed 7.3 per cent of all contested candidates and none won while in the deputy governorship race, they constituted 25.8 per cent of the candidate and won 13.8 per cent. The House of Assembly election had 12.5 per cent of women candidates and only 4.44 per cent representation. So far, the percentage candidacy representation by political parties and percentage seat representation at all levels are minimal and detrimental to the growth of the nation's democracy and fall short of the 30 per cent global benchmark for women representation.

Table 4: Percentage of women candidates in 2019 national election by major political parties

Political Office	APC	PDP	New/small party(others)
President	0	0	100
Senate	3.04	4.31	92.65
House of Reps	2.65	3.60	93.75

Source: Adapted from School of Advanced International Studies Program (SAIS-AFP), Premium Times Center for Investigative Journalism (PTCIJ), and the Center for Democracy and Development (CDD), 2019.

Table 4 above clearly shows the percentage of candidates fielded by political parties for the national election held in 2019. The table revealed that majority of candidates that took part in the election came from new or small parties. For the office of the presidency, none of the two major political parties, the APC and PDP fielded a candidate while for the Senate and House of Representative, their percentage representation was less than 4 per cent each. Due to the wide popularity and influence of these two major parties, it was difficult for new and smaller parties to win seats in various elections conducted especially at the national level. This explains the reason for the low number of women who won seats at the national legislature as shown in the table 5 and 6 below.

Table 5: Women candidacy and distribution of seats by political parties that won seats in the Senate

Major Political parties	Total no of women Candidates (235)	No of seats won by women
APC	10	2
PDP	7	5
Total	17	7

Sources: Compilation by authors from Onyeji, 2019; Ndujihe, 2019 & INEC, 2019.

In contest for the 109 senatorial seats, 235 women, representing 12.34 per cent of candidates were cleared by INEC. The result of the election shows that women secured only seven seats representing 6.42 per cent of elected members (Onyeji, 2019; SAIS-AFP, PTCIJ & CDD, 2019 & European Union, 2019). These seven seats were won by APC and PDP candidates as shown on the table 5. The names, constituencies and political parties of these women are as follows: Oluremi Tinubu, Lagos Central, APC; Uche Ekwunife, Anambra Central, PDP; Stella Oduah, Anambra North, PDP; Akon, Eyakanyi, Akwa Ibom South, PDP; Aishatu Ahmed, Adamawa Central, APC; Rose Oko, Cross River, North, PDP, and Betty Apiafi, Rivers West, PDP (Ndujihe, 2019). The table further shows that APC and PDP fielded only 17 candidates out of 235 women candidates. Therefore, none of the 218 senatorial candidates from other political parties won seat in the election. The data further validates argument by IRI and NDI (2019) that the 2019 election had more women contesting for various offices across the nation than previous elections but majority of these women were fielded by new or minor political parties with no good records of winning elections (IRI & NDI, 2019).

Table 6: Women candidacy and distribution of seats by political parties that won seat in the House of Representatives

Major Political parties	Total no of women Candidates (533)	No of seats by women
APC	15	8
PDP	16	3
APGA	-	1
Total	31	12

Source: Compiled by authors from European Union, 2019; INEC, 2019.

It is worrisome looking at the data on table 6 which revealed that the two major political parties (APC & PDP) who contested the 2019 general elections in Nigeria expected to lead by example presented a meager 31 women candidates out of a total of 533 women who vied for seats at the lower chamber of the national legislature. This number only represents a mere 5.8 per cent of women candidates and less than one percent of the total contestants. What this implies is that majority of the women candidates totaling 502 in number were fielded by new/small or unpopular political parties. Out of the total number of women candidates, only 12 emerged victorious representing 3.33 per cent of the total seats in the lower chamber in the national legislature. This number is insignificant looking

at the percentage of male which stands at 96.77 per cent. These data clearly demonstrates the insensitivity of political parties in Nigerian politics to uphold the dividend of democracy which demands inclusive governance devoid of discrimination as witnessed by women in politics.

Table 7: Distribution of seats by political parties in the State Houses of Assembly in 2019

Political parties	No of Seats	No of Women
AA	8	1
ADC	5	1
ADP	1	0
APC	536	15
APGA	33	1
APM	7	0
NNPP	1	0
PDP	390	26
SDP	3	0
Total	984	44

Source: Modified from IRI & NDI Report, 2019.

The table 7 explicitly revealed that the two major political parties (APC & PDP) won majority of seats in the various houses of assembly across the nation. Out of a total number of 984, they control 926 seats representing 94.1 per cent of seats. Out of this number, these two political parties won only 31 seats for women and men had 894 seats. The result of the election implies that the two major political parties nominated few women candidates for the election. Women in (APC and PDP) won a meager 3.35 per cent of seat secured by their political parties. In sum, women only control 4.47 per cent of seats in state houses of assembly across the federation.

The poor performance of women in politics stems from the point of political parties' and their leaderships' failure to promote women in their candidacy lists. Major/popular political parties have preferred to give more than 90 per cent of its male members' tickets to contest elections to the detriment of the womenfolk. This finding affirms (Ugwu, 2018) assertion that women play significant roles during party campaigns and mobilization but are sidelined grossly during selection process. On the same note, Sadie (2005) blamed the poor representation of women in governance on the inability of the political parties to enlist them on party list and party structure. Women are hardly accommodated to occupy sensitive positions in political party structure. These actions by political parties expose women to all manner of intimidation including delisting them from party lists after emerging victorious in primaries. For instance, IRI/NDI reported how some stakeholders expressed dissatisfaction over political parties' continued practice of substituting candidates' names on the lists after parties conducted their primaries in October, 2018 ahead of the 2019 polls. The body lamented that several candidates who emerged victorious in primaries, women inclusive were eliminated by party leaders from the list and substituted with their desired candidates (IRI/NDI, 2019).

This may have accounted for the low representation of women candidates in the election especially by the two major contending political parties. It is worthy to note that while the APC and PDP claim to love the womenfolk, none of these parties fielded a woman governorship candidate in any state. The best they offered was to nominate a few of them as deputy governorship candidates. Notably, in Nigeria, deputy governors lack political influence and have insignificant relevance in the polity (Ayomo, 2019). Some other political parties which may be regarded as smaller or unpopular parties fielded more women candidates but most of them have little or no records of winning elections. In order words, they are unpopular parties who may be seeking relevance in the political scene and

seeking recognition to be considered for appointments by popular political parties when they emerge victorious.

Women face numerous challenges in politics ranging from lack of access to party decision-making structures and financial obligations that are difficult to meet without support of political party, and prevailing patriarchal system/social structures. Also practices that discriminate against women often limit their ability to engage and advance in politics (IRI/NDI, 2019; Watuka, n.d). Similarly, lack of transparency in intra-party candidate selection undermine women's political aspirations, and severely reduces their probabilities of winning elections (SAIS-AFP, PTCIJ & CDD, 2019).

Political parties remain one of the weakest institutions among Nigeria's nascent democratic institutions in terms of promoting justice and transparency in their electoral processes. The paucity of women and youths nominated to run on the tickets of the two major parties, the APC and PDP, demonstrated Nigerian political elites' lack of commitment to groom and support new faces and voices (IRI/NDI, 2019). It is imperative to note that majority of those who won seats in the 2019 election at all levels were either incumbent members or those who have previously occupied one office or the other. Political elites and parties have inculcated the seat tight syndrome in political domain giving little chances for new individuals and ideas to change the status quo of political affairs in Nigeria. This is one of the reasons for the continued poor state of development in all sectors of the economy including but not limited to education, health, power, etc, and the persistent rise on unemployment and poverty levels.

Policy strategies by political parties to enhance women's participation and representation in politics and governance

The only platform through which individuals can legally contest for election in Nigeria is through political party. Therefore, political party is the gateway to occupying political office at all levels in Nigeria. Given this situation, it is necessary for political parties to promote women in governance through strategies as below;

1. Political parties should introduce a legal requirement to have a minimum representation of women candidates for political offices. This can be a mandated percentage of women or a recommended percentage of women as considered by a political party. This should include using a regulatory body to monitor compliance and non-compliance and sanction accordingly as prescribed by the law of such regulatory body.
2. Internal party democracy is imperative to promote a more inclusive atmosphere to enhance women's active participation devoid of fear, intimidation, sexual harassment, hate speech or forced patron-client relationships that exist between political leaders and aspirants. Thus, the adoption of more transparent, credible and fair nomination processes devoid of persistent substitution of candidates' names during and after party primaries are crucial for the consolidation of democratic principles and to promote political equity.
3. To achieve political equity for women, political parties should engage in training and mentorship of female members of the party especially those who wish to contest for political office. This act will help to boost their self confidence and leadership skills. New women politicians and candidates would be more encouraged when being mentored by more experienced female politicians and more likely help to stimulate their leadership qualities.
4. Political education and value re-orientation are vital to promoting women candidacy and winning election. This can be done through political parties engaging in sensitization programmes on social media such as radio, television and internet platforms as well as social gatherings and

meetings to educate the womenfolk and the public on their rights and imperative of women's participation in politics respectively, and how this would enhance gender equality, good governance and national development.

5. Institutionalization of women's sections by political parties is crucial in enhancing the participation of women in party politics. This internal mechanism would help to recruit more women into the party. The women's section here deals with women issues in party and governance including their challenges and how to tackle such. It would engage women in training for leadership, organize workshops and symposiums that would expose women to leadership skills, build their confidence and teach them how to support each other. This internal organization would facilitate the growth of women party members and make them suitable to contest and win elections with the support of their political parties.

4. CONCLUSION

Since the return of democracy in Nigeria in 1999, evidences show that political parties have undermined women in political party especially as it concerns candidates' selection processes which have be marred with undemocratic characteristics such as lack of transparency and undue substitution of candidates' names on the parties' lists. The 2019 general elections showed a poor representation of women candidates on party lists most especially by the two major political parties, the APC and the PDP. Majority of women candidates were enlisted by new and unpopular political parties with little or no records of winning elections. These actions revealed a decline on the number of women who won election into various positions across the federation. Women's percentage representation in parliament remains insignificant when compared to men after 20 years of Nigeria's democracy. In order to enhance women's participation in politics and governance in Nigeria, political parties as the only gate way to attaining political offices should introduce legal means of maintaining a given per cent of women in their candidates' lists, adopt more transparent process of selecting candidates for election, create women's section in political parties with high number of women integrated in parties' administration, educating and sensitizing the electorates on the imperative of women's engagement in politics and governance for enhanced development.

References

1. Agbalajobi, D.T. (2010). Women's participation and the political process in Nigeria: Problems and prospects. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 4(2), 075-082.
2. Awofeso, O. and Odeyemi, T. I. (2014). Gender and political participation in Nigeria: A Cultural Perspective, in *Journal Research in Peace, Gender and Development (JRPGD)*, 4(6), 104-11
3. Ayomo, I. (April 14, 2019). *Government should work towards achieving gender parity in democratic governance*, Accessed May 27, 2020
<https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2019/04/14/women-and-representative-government/>
4. Ballington, J., Davis, R., Reith, M., Mitchell, L., Njoki, C., Kozma, A., Powley, E. (2012). *Empowering women for stronger political parties: A guidebook to promote women's political participation*. New York: United Nations Development Programme and National Democratic Institute.
5. Eme, O. I. (2015). An analysis of Nigerian women's score card in 2015 polls, *Singaporean Journal of Business Economics, and Management Studies* 4(4), 17-29.

6. Eme,O. I, Onyishi, A. I., & Nwaoha, C. (2014). Women Marginalization in electoral politics in Nigeria: A Historical perspective.*Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (Nigerian Chapter)* 2(7): 1-17.
7. European Union (2019). EU Election observation mission Nigeria 2019 final report general elections. Accessed June 15, 2019 from https://eeas.europa.eu/election-observation-missions/eom-nigeria-2019_en
8. INEC (2019). 2019 GENERAL ELECTIONS FINAL LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES Accessed June 15, 2020 from <https://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2019-GENERAL-ELECTIONS-FINAL-LIST-OF-CANDIDATES-FOR-HOUSE-OF-REPRESENTATIVES-1.pdf>
9. INEC (2019). 2019-GENERAL ELECTIONS FINAL LIST OF SENATORIAL CANDIDATE Accessed June 15, 2020 from <https://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2019-GENERAL-ELECTIONS-FINAL-LIST-OF-SENATORIAL-CANDIDATE-1.pdf>
10. INEC (2019). 2019 final list of GOVs. Accessed June 15, 2020 from <https://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Final-List-GOVs-30012019-with-Remarks-5.pdf>
11. Irabor, F.O. (2011). *Review of Women's Participation and Performance at the 2011 Elections of Women in Nigeria*, Lagos: baobawomen.
12. Nnamani, D. O. (2014). Electoral process and challenges of good governance in the Nigerian State (1999-2011). *Journal of Good Governance and Sustainable Development in Africa (JGGSDA)*, 2, 3, 78-99.
13. Okafor, E. M. and Akokuwebe, M. E. (2015). Women and leadership in Nigeria: Challenges and prospects, *Developing County Studies* 5(4), 1-10.
14. Okoronkwo-Chukwu, U. (2013). Female representation in Nigeria: The case of 2011 general elections and the fallacy of 35% affirmative action. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(2), 39-46.
15. Oladoye, D. (2011). In Retrospect: 2011 April polls and gender ranking in Nigeria. Accessed June 5, 2017 from www.cp.africa.com/2011/05/17/in-retrospect-2011-aprilpolls
16. Onyeji, E. (October 4, 2019). 2019 elections worst for Nigerian women in nearly two decades, analyses show. Accessed February 12, 2020 from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/326243-2019-elections-worst-for-nigerian-women-in-nearly-two-decades-analyses-show.html>.
17. McBain, W. (March 26, 2015). Nigeria election: The country's first-ever female presidential candidate hoping to inspire other women to become politically active. *The Independent*. Accessed May 24, 2020 from <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/nigeria-election-the-countrys-first-ever-female-presidential-candidate-hoping-to-inspire-other-women-10137107.html>
18. Ndujihe, C. (March 9, 2019). Women who will shape Ninth Senate. Accessed May 27, 2020 from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2019/03/women-who-will-shape-ninth-senate/>
19. Ngara, C. O., & Ayabam, A.T. (2013). Women in politics and decision- making in Nigeria: Challenges and prospects. *European Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, 2(8), 47- 58

20. Olorok., F (March 16, 2019). Only 62 women won elections in 2019, says INEC Accessed May 27, 2020 from <https://punchng.com/only-62-women-won-elections-in-2019-says-inec/5F>
21. Pham, J. P. (March 9, 2015). Interview with Chairman of Nigeria's Electoral Commission. Accessed May 27, 2020 from <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/africasource/interview-with-professor-attahiru-m-jega-ofr-chairman-of-nigeria-s-independent-national-electoral-commission/>
22. SAIS-AFP, PTCIJ & CDD (2019). Gendered contests: Women in competitive elections: An analysis of women's participation in the 2019 Nigeria General Elections. Accessed June 5, 2020 from <https://cddeibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Gendered-Contests-Women-in-Competitive-Elections.pdf>
23. Sanni, K. (February 15, 2019). For the record: Nigeria's 73 presidential candidates (Full list)
24. Accessed May 24, 2020 from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/313139-for-the-record-nigerias-73-presidential-candidates-full-list.html>
25. Ugwu, C. S. (2018). Challenges of political representation of women in Nsukka local government area of Enugu state. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance Research*, 1(1): 100-110.
26. United Nations (1996). *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women Beijing, 4-15 September 1995*. New York: United Nations
27. Watuka, C. M. (n.d). *Resistance to women's political leadership: Problems and advocated solutions*. Nairobi, Kenya: Women United for Social, Economic & Total Empowerment.