



## Assessment of party's structure for women political participation and representation in Bauchi State, North-Eastern, Nigeria

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### Abstract

This paper determines the influence of party structures, the constitutions of political parties, leadership composition, policies, and ideologies on women's political participation in Bauchi state Nigeria. Survey research design was used to determine the intersections between party structure and gender inequality, and other detrimental consequences of women's inactivity on the political arena. The target population is the two dominant political parties in the state which are All Progressive Congress (APC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Due to difficulty in getting the exact number of registered members in these parties, Bauchi State was stratified based on senatorial district with two (2) Local Governments from each zone with equal allocation of 100 respondents across all of the selected frame making a total of 600 respondents. Data was collected using a structured and closed ended questionnaire designed and validated (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.81). 564 fully filled questionnaires were retrieved which the analysis was based using correlation and regression analysis and t – test. Negative relationship was found showing that the internal organization and operations of political parties have a significant impact on women's political participation. Often, party structures reinforce traditional gender norms and exclude women from leadership positions. The impact of party structures, the constitution of political parties, leadership composition, policies, and ideologies on women's political participation in Nigeria is undeniable. These factors create barriers that limit women's access to political power, representation, and decision-making. Achieving gender equality and increasing women's political participation requires a comprehensive effort to reform party structures and policies for all-inclusiveness.

**Keywords:** Women's participation, party structures, constitution, leadership composition, ideology

### Introduction

Political parties remain the major entities through which people can choose their representatives and have become indispensable institutions for democratic politics and representation and sustainability. Their central functions in modern global representative democracies have been to develop consistent policies and government programmes (the interest articulation function); to transmit demands from society and aggregate them (the interest aggregation function); to recruit, select and position people for positions in government and the legislature and to oversee and control government (Catón 2007 as cited in IDEA, 2021). Political parties have long been seen as playing an essential role in the functioning of modern representative democracy as the key institutions for inclusive participation and accountable representation (International IDEA 2013). Generally, people get involved in public life through political parties and support candidates and parties that reflect their views and interests at both local and national political space.

The participatory platform provided by political parties is all inclusive. IDEA, (2021) stated that ensuring the inclusive representation of the views, interests and needs of all citizens both women and men is crucial to the effective functioning of political parties and to their legitimacy and representativeness. As is widely acknowledged, the failure to include women and their perspectives in political decision-making weakens the legitimacy of democratically elected institutions and deprives women which arguably constitute half of the population in any given country of their right to participate effectively in the governance of their societies.

Political Party structure such as their constitutions and laws, leadership composition, policies and ideologies are essential to protect and advance gender equality and women's political participation and representation in positions of power and decision-making at all levels. Gender equality within a party existing structure not only implies formal guarantees of equal rights for women but also entails substantive equality in exercising and enjoying such fundamental rights. Guarantees on gender equality and non-discrimination in party structure ultimately influence how men and women participate and are represented in politics and public decision-making and leadership.

The 1995 Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, which set the international target for reaching gender balance in political decision-making at 35 percent. The National Gender Policy in Nigeria has since 2006 formulated policy to promote a 35% affirmative action for women. This policy demands 35 percent involvement of Nigerian women in all governance processes. But women are under-represented across all levels of power (UN Women 2020). In Nigerian democracy today, empirical evidences show that general women political participation and representation is low as compared within existing global standard. For instance, INEC reported that Only 13 percent (3,163) of candidates that vied for different positions in the 2019 general election were women, leaving the balance of 87 percent (21,190) for men, in a total of 24,353 contestants (Oluyemi, 2020). It is against this background that this work attempts to assess political party structure and women political participation and representation in Bauchi State.

## 1. Political Party Structures and Participation

This study will adopt the definition of political party as viewed by Uki & Christopher (2020) <sup>[5]</sup>. According to them, a political party is defined as an organized and presumably durable association which is legally registered and having the aim of placing its members in governmental offices for the purpose of bringing about the adoption of favored political policies or programmes. Of all the characteristics of parties, the one which distinguishes them from all other associations evincing a substantial interest in public affairs is their effort to secure the election or the appointment of their own personnel to the public positions through which the policies of government are prescribed for implementation. A party structure in the other hand, deals with all institutional components that shapes the foundations and operations of a political party. These structures include the party constitution, leadership composition, ideologies and policies, membership framework, managing and financing political activities, etc.

Political participation is one of the primary pillars of democracy. Akiro & Peter (2019) <sup>[1]</sup> as cited in UNDP (2020) perceives political participation as “freedom of expression, association, right to free flow of communication, right to influence decision process and the right to social justice, health services, better working condition and opportunity for franchise”.

Political participation further entails voluntary involvement in the political processes of one’s country. Political participation refers to those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly, in the formulation of public policy (Oluyemi, 2020). Political participation is an encompassing social activity, which cuts across political systems and societies. Whether the society is a liberal/democratic society or an autocratic, dictatorial system, someone must take political decisions and citizens must participate in the activities of the state either directly or impliedly (Christopher & Uki, 2020) <sup>[5]</sup>. To demonstrate the concept, Aciro & Peter (2019) <sup>[1]</sup> opined as thus; ‘In a political system, the citizens can be involved in the political process and decision making by joining a political party, voting during election, participating in general campaign, community affairs and other political activities.

## 2. Women Political Participation and Representation

Women political participation refers to those political activities that citizens of a country are legally permitted to exercised. The variables of political participation are basically voting in elections, contesting elective public offices, campaigning, registration as a party member, registering for and collection of voters card, etc. This is quite different from representation. Representation basically entails election/appointment into public offices held in relation to other representation (Akiyode, 2020) <sup>[2]</sup>. Women representation speaks of their abilities to win and occupy elective offices as executives and legislatures; and to also secure appointment into public offices. But in Nigeria, this has been hampered by a lot of barriers and discrimination. As a result of this, international consensus around political parties continues to advocate for healthy democracies where equality and fairness are engaged. For example, the UN Resolution on Women and Political Participation (United Nations General Assembly 2016) urges states:

To take all appropriate measures to eliminate prejudices that are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women and that constitute a barrier to women’s access to and participation in the political sphere, and to adopt inclusive approaches to their political participation; To strongly encourage political parties to remove all barriers that directly or indirectly discriminate against the participation of women, to develop their capacity to analyze issues from a gender perspective, and to adopt policies, as appropriate, to promote the ability of women to participate fully at all levels of decision-making within those political parties.

In view of the foregoing literature, this research submits that Political Parties are critical in enhancing the actualization of the 35 percent affirmative action for women if their structures are designed and pursued in line with global best practices.

The main argument of the study is the continuous dominant masculine model of the exercise of power in Nigerian political space and within political parties builds on traditional attitudes that marginalize women despite the existence of international, regional and national recognition of the need for equality is becoming alarming. General political engagements have been preventing women from entering into politics and from taking active part in public decision-making of their community and country. In addition, the public view and discourse about women constantly reinforced gender-based stereotypes, which make it particularly difficult to reconcile women’s active engagement in politics with their traditionally acclaimed domestic roles and responsibilities particularly in the northern part of Nigeria.

Even though women are counted as voters and are often active supporters of political party mobilization and campaigning, their participation does not generally translate into inclusion and is never matched with their participation and representation in politics and decision making at all levels (IDEA, 2021) as advocated for by the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, and the National Gender Policy. From the local to the global level, women’s leadership and political participation are restricted. Women are under- represented as voters, as well as in leading positions, whether in elected offices, or appointed offices. This occurs despite their proven abilities as leaders and agents of change, and their right to participate equally under a democratic system. Statistics show that there is no single woman in the national assembly (both Senate and House of Representatives) from Bauchi State. Out of the 20 commissioners, only 5 are women representing just 25 percent. Based on these, this work therefore seeks to find solutions to this intractable problem of women’s low participation in politics and representation by testing the following research hypotheses:

The aim of this study is to assess how party structure is affecting women political participation and representation in Bauchi State which was broken down into the following hypotheses:

1. **H<sub>01</sub>:** The constitutions of political parties cannot affect women political participation and representation.
2. **H<sub>02</sub>:** Leadership compositions of political parties have not enabled women political participation and representation.

- 3. **H<sub>03</sub>:** Political Parties policies and ideologies cannot affect women direct political involvement and representation at both local and national politics.
- 4. **H<sub>04</sub>:** Political Party structure has not mitigated barriers and discrimination against women political participation and representation.

**1. Methodology**

Survey research design was used to determines the intersections between party structure and gender inequality, and other detrimental consequences of women off on the political arena. The target population is Bauchi State which, according to the projected population of 2022 is 8,308,300 people out of which there were many political registered political parties in Bauchi State that participated in 2019 general election. However, in the history of the fourth democratic dispensation, the two dominant political parties that have been controlling the political landscape of the state are All Progressive Congress (APC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). The population of this study shall therefore comprise of all the registered members of All Progressive Congress (APC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). This includes all party leaders, advisers, present and former aspirants, candidates, elected officers at both state and national executive and legislative arms of government and also appointed officers in same categories. These two political parties constitute the scope of this study.

Due to difficulty in getting the exact number of registered members in these parties, Bauchi State was stratified based on senatorial district with two (2) Local Governments from each zone was non-probability sampled with equal allocation of 100 respondents across all of the selected frame making a total of 600 respondents chosen randomly from each stratum upon which 564 were fully recovered which the analysis was based. Data was collected using a structured and closed ended questionnaire designed and validated (Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.81). The data collected was analyzed at 5% level using correlation and regression analysis and t – test.

**2. Models Specification**

Impact of poverty on girl child dropout, specified model panel is formulated as:

$$WP = \alpha + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \beta_4x_4$$

**Table 3: Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	-.502	.079		-6.385	.000
	Constitutions of Political Party	.212	.012	.425	17.052	.000
	Leadership Composition	.217	.016	.298	13.402	.000
	Policies and Ideologies	.172	.012	.314	14.475	.000
	Party’s Structures	-.224	.013	-.433	-17.654	.573

The simultaneous regression analysis was carried out to ascertain the individual effect of these variables. All the predictors yielded significant beta weights with their varied t – values which are all statistically significant in each case. This implies that there is significant effect of these proxy-variables on women participation as a result of party’s

Where  $x_1$ = Constitution of political parties,  $x_2$ = leadership composition,  $x_3$ = Policies and ideologies and  $x_4$ = Party structures

**Result and Discussion**

**1. Relationship between Poverty and Girl Child Dropout in Bauchi State, Nigeria**

**Table 1: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.909	.827	.823	.1347496

The coefficient of multiple correlation, R, shows that there is a strong and positive relationship between party structures and women participation in politics (R = 0.909). R – square, the coefficient of multiple determination is 0.827. That is about 82.7% of the total variation is explained by the changes in the independent variables indicating that women participation in politics is influenced by the structure of the party by 82.7%. In other word, the proxies (constitutions of political parties, leadership composition, policies and ideologies and party’s structures) explain women participation in politics by 82.7%.

The adjusted R – Squared value is 82.3%, this also shows that there is high relationship between the dependent and independent variables indicating the actual percentage of variation explained by the set of independent variables that actually affect the dependent variable.

**Table 2: ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	32.584	4	8.146	448.627	.000
	Residual	6.827	560	.001		
	Total	39.411	564			

A multiple regression analysis was carried out to assess the impact of these variables on girl child dropout. Study shows that if these variables were adequately taken care of (party’s constitutions stated the leadership compositions in clear terms and captured in policies and ideologies within the structure of each of these political parties), women participation in politics will got enhanced significantly. Result in ANOVA reliably justified the true influence of these variables as the P – value is less than the level of significance (P - value = 0.000 < 0.05).

structures. Therefore, the hypotheses formulated on these bases were tested below corresponding to their beta weights:

- The predictor, Constitutions of political party yielded a significant beta weight of  $\beta_1 = 0.212$  with its corresponding t-value which is statistically

significant since the P – value is less than the level of significance ( $P = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) which form the basis of rejecting the null hypothesis and concluded that the Constitutions of political parties can affect women political participation and representation.

- Leadership composition variable has the value,  $\beta_2 = 0.217$  with P- value that is significant ( $P = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) indicating its positive relationship and impact, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis and concluding that leadership compositions of political parties have enabled women political participation and representation.
- The variable Policies and ideologies had a beta weight of  $\beta_3 = 0.172$ . The p-value corresponding to this value is 0.000 which is less than the level of significance. That is to say there is a positive relationship. The null hypothesis was rejected based on the analysis made and concluded that political party policies and ideologies can affect women direct political involvement and representation at both local and national policies.
- The predictor, party’s structures yielded a significant beta weight of  $\beta_4 = - 0.224$  with its corresponding t-value that is not statistically significant ( $P = 0.573 > 0.05$ ). With this, we cannot reject the null hypothesis

established and conclude that political party structures have not mitigate barriers and discrimination against women political participation and representation.

**2. Respondent’s Perceptions on Party’s Structures and Women Political Participation by Location**

$H_0$ : Respondent’s Perceptions on Party’s Structures and Women Political Participation by Location

*Descriptive*

**Table 4**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Place of Residence	Urban	328	2.84	.725	.049
	Rural	236	3.02	.687	.054

Perceived responses in average shows that the average response by location in urban areas is 2.84 while that of rural area is 3.02. The average respondents to have perceived that the effect of party’s structures on women participation in politics in rural areas is predominant than that of urban areas. This is justified by the standard error which is found to be far from the mean, signifying its reliability.

**Table 5: Place of Residence (Urban, rural)**

		t-test for Equality of Means				
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Place of Residence	Equal variances assumed	-2.448	562	.015	-1.80	.073
	Equal variances not assumed	-2.469	539.927	.014	-1.80	.073

**Level of Significance and Critical Value**

At 5% level,  $\alpha = 0.05$  (two tailed test),  $0.05$ .  $V$ , the degree of freedom is:  $V = n_1 + n_2 - 2 = 328 + 236 - 2 = 562$   
The critical value corresponding to the degree of freedom is:

$$t_{\alpha,v} = t_{0.05,562} = 1.645$$

The calculated value of -2.448 (in absolute) is greater than the critical value (1.645), we therefore concluded that there is significant difference on the respondent’s perceptions on party’s structures and women political participation and representation by location.

**3. Discussion of Findings**

Firstly, party structures can serve as a platform for women to engage in politics and participate in decision-making processes. Some political parties in Nigeria have implemented affirmative action policies, such as gender quotas, to increase the representation of women within their ranks. These policies have been successful in encouraging women to join and actively participate in politics at various levels.

However, despite these efforts, women still face significant barriers within party structures that hinder their full political participation. Structural factors, such as patriarchal norms and cultural biases, limit women’s access to resources, funding, and leadership positions within political parties. This perpetuates a gender imbalance and reinforces traditional power dynamics that disadvantage women seeking political representation.

Furthermore, the lack of internal democracy and transparency within party structures in Nigeria poses additional challenges. Women often struggle to navigate through party hierarchies and face obstacles when trying to contest for party nominations or hold leadership positions. This lack of inclusivity affects the overall representation and participation of women in Nigerian politics.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, while party structures in Nigeria can provide avenues for women’s political participation, barriers such as cultural biases, limited access to resources, and lack of internal democracy still impede their full involvement. By adopting inclusive policies, promoting capacity-building programs, advocating for electoral reforms, creating supportive networks, and promoting gender-sensitive politics, Nigerian political parties can facilitate and enhance women’s participation in politics. This will enable more equitable representation and contribute to the overall development and progress of the nation.

**Recommendations**

To promote women’s political participation in Nigeria, several recommendations can be put forth: Enhanced Gender Mainstreaming: Political parties must prioritize the inclusion and active involvement of women in decision-making processes. Establishing and implementing comprehensive gender mainstreaming policies can help address the existing gender gap within party structures.

**Capacity Building Programs:** Organizations and stakeholders should organize training and capacity-building programs aimed at developing the political skills and leadership potential of women. These programs can equip women with the necessary knowledge and tools to navigate party structures.

**Advocacy for Electoral Reforms:** There is a need for advocacy efforts to push for electoral reforms that promote gender equality and create a more level playing field for women in Nigerian politics. This can include legal provisions that mandate a certain percentage of women's representation within party structures and electoral positions.

**Creating Supportive Networks:** Encouraging the formation of support networks and mentorship programs within political parties can help women overcome challenges and build strategic alliances. These networks can provide guidance, empower women, and create a supportive environment for increased participation.

**Promoting Gender-Sensitive Politics:** Efforts should be made to foster a political culture that values gender equality and challenges discriminatory practices. Sensitizing party members and leaders about the importance of women's participation can help reshape party structures and practices.

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