

CRITICAL EVALUATION OF WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN THE 2023 NIGERIAN GENERAL ELECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

As of 1st October 2024, 30 women served as Heads of State and/or Government in 29 countries. Additionally, only 15 countries have women holding 50% or more of cabinet ministerial positions, while just six countries have 50% or more women in their single or lower houses of parliament. These countries include Rwanda (61%), Cuba (56%), Nicaragua (54%), Andorra (50%), Mexico (50%), New Zealand (50%), and the United Arab Emirates (50%). Therefore, achieving gender balance in governance seems farfetched. The underrepresentation of women in Nigerian politics remains a pressing issue, as women continue to face systemic barriers to political participation. This paper critically evaluates the 2023 general elections, where, despite comprising 47.5% of registered voters, women made up only 9.2% of candidates, and less than 5% were elected into major offices (INEC, 2023). Employing the feminist theory, representative theory and critical mass theory, this study explores the systemic barriers limiting women's political participation, including patriarchal norms, high campaign costs, weak policy implementation, and electoral violence. The findings highlight persistent

disparities but also progress through notable success stories, such as Aishatu Dahiru Ahmed (Binani), whose political outing challenged long-standing stereotypes. The role of advocacy groups like Women in Politics Forum (WIPF) in increasing awareness and promoting women's political involvement is also discussed.

Keywords: Gender representation; gender balance; governance; Nigerian politics; women

INTRODUCTION

Gender representation in politics has been a critical factor in achieving sustainable development and inclusive governance. Globally, societies with greater gender balance in political leadership are expected to benefit from diverse perspectives, which enhance decision-making processes and policy outcomes. In Nigeria, the historical role of women in governance cannot be over-emphasised.

Despite these early strides, the advent of colonial governance introduced patriarchal structures that systematically marginalized women from formal political spaces. This exclusion continued post-independence, resulting in entrenched gender inequalities in political representation. Globally, women's political participation has improved significantly, with countries like Rwanda achieving over 60% female parliamentary representation through deliberate policy interventions. This is also reflected in the Senate where women occupied 53.8% of seats (Inter-Parliamentary Union, IPU, 2023). Unfortunately, Nigeria lags behind, with women occupying less than 10% of elective positions as of the 2023 elections. They occupied 3% of seats in the Senate and 4% seats in the House of Representatives (Premium Times, 2023).

The 2023 general elections presented another opportunity for Nigeria to bridge

gender disparities in political representation. While there were notable successes, such as increased voter education and advocacy, systemic barriers including cultural stereotypes, limited access to resources, and institutional inefficiencies continued to undermine women's full participation in politics. Addressing these issues is essential for gender equity as well as for enhancing democratic governance and national development. Despite Nigeria's ratification of international frameworks like CEDAW (Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against Women) and the implementation of the National Gender Policy targeting 35% female representation in governance, the country has consistently fallen short of these benchmarks. The 2023 general elections, rather than marking significant progress, further exposed the structural and cultural barriers that hinder women's political participation. There were 47.5% of registered voters but women made up only 9.2% of candidates, and less than 5% were elected into major offices (INEC, 2023).

Systemic issues such as patriarchal norms, economic disparities, and inadequate enforcement of gender-focused policies persist as major obstacles. The limited representation of women in governance not only undermines democratic ideals but also stifles the inclusion of critical perspectives that are essential for addressing issues such as education, healthcare, and social equity. For example, while women constitute nearly half of Nigeria's population and 47.1% of registered voters, their representation in key political offices remains negligible. These challenges raise important questions about the effectiveness of existing policies, the readiness of political parties to embrace inclusivity, and the broader societal willingness to support women's leadership.

The specific objectives of this study are to examine: the level of women's participation in the 2023 general elections, identify the factors that hindered or facilitated women representation during the elections, assess the effectiveness of policies and strategies designed to enhance women's political representation in Nigeria and recommend for improving women's representation in future elections.

The study is guided by the following research questions: To what extent did women participate in the 2023 general elections, both as candidates and voters? What sociocultural, economic, and institutional factors influenced gender representation in the elections? How effective were existing policies and initiatives in addressing gender disparities in Nigerian politics during election? What strategies can be implemented to improve women representation in future elections?

This study is confined to examining women representation in the context of the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. The scope is defined both thematically and geographically to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. The scope of this study is thematic because the analysis focuses on the participation of women in elective positions across federal and state levels, including the presidency, Senate, House of Representatives, governorship, and state houses of assembly. It also explores the sociocultural, economic, and institutional factors influencing their participation, as well as the effectiveness of policies such as the National Gender Policy and gender quotas.. The study also had a geographical scope, it spans across the Nigeria's six geopolitical zones to ensure that regional and cultural variations in women representation are adequately addressed. This broad coverage provides insights into the similarities and differences in challenges faced by women across diverse socio-political contexts. By narrowing the scope to

the 2023 elections, the study offers a focused and current evaluation of women representation while providing a foundation for future research on electoral trends and gender representation in subsequent elections.

This study is unique and significant by highlighting the systemic barriers and success stories from the 2023 general elections, it offers a roadmap for advocacy groups to strengthen their campaigns and support mechanisms for women in politics. Addressing gender disparities in politics has far-reaching implications for societal progress, as it promotes equality, reduces marginalization and fosters a more inclusive political culture.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Gender Representation

This refers to the presence and participation of individuals of different genders in political decision-making processes and governance structures. In this context, it emphasizes the inclusion of women in political leadership roles to ensure equitable access to power and influence. Women representation in politics is not just about achieving numerical parity but also about creating conditions where women's voices, perspectives, and needs influence policymaking. It entails equal opportunities for both men and women to contest and occupy positions of authority, fostering inclusive governance. It also means fairness of treatment for all genders, recognizing the unique needs and contributions of each, access to education, employment, healthcare, and political participation, equal rights and protection of all genders. However, in this study gender representation is used with focus on women participation.

Political Participation

This encompasses the range of activities through which individuals engage in the political process, including voting, campaigning, contesting elections, and holding public office. This study focuses on women's participation as both candidates and voters during the 2023 general elections. It examines how systemic barriers, such as cultural norms and economic challenges, shape women's ability to fully participate in politics.

Systemic Barriers

This refers to entrenched societal, economic, and institutional obstacles that limit equitable access to political opportunities.

Economic Disparities

This is described as issues pertaining to high campaign costs disproportionately affect women considering the fact that most women in Nigeria are not economically or financially independent as their male counterparts.

Electoral Violence

This constitutes intimidation and general voter apathy during elections discourage female participation for instance physical fighting, violent altercations, party clashes, snatching and burning election materials by political thugs and so on that poses harm to participants.

Gender Quotas

These are policy tools that set minimum thresholds for female representation in governance, often through legislative or voluntary mechanisms. The National Gender Policy targets 35% female representation in governance, with emphasis on the potential adoption of gender quotas to address disparities.

Inclusive Governance

This implies efforts to ensure that decision-making processes represent diverse societal groups, fostering equity and fairness. The study positions women representation as integral to achieving sustainable development and inclusive governance, aligning with international frameworks like the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Advocacy and Awareness

This refers to organized efforts to influence public policy and societal attitudes, often through campaigns, education, and lobbying. The study highlights the role of advocacy groups like the Women in Politics Forum (WIPF) in raising awareness, building capacity, and fostering an environment conducive to women's political participation

LITERATURE REVIEW

The history of women's involvement in Nigerian politics is deeply rooted in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial governance systems. During these periods, women played significant roles in leadership, particularly in matriarchal societies and as influential leaders in councils. For instance, the Aba Women Riot of 1929 which was organized and led by the rural women of Owerri and Calabar provinces with their modus operandi involving 'sit-in' by the women during the which many Warrant Chiefs were forced to resign, and 16 Native Courts were attacked, with most of them destroyed, this was the first major revolt by women in West Africa. The protests led to the abolishing of the system of warrant chiefs, and appointment of women into the Native Court system. These reforms were built upon by the African women and have been seen as a prelude to the emergence of mass African nationalism. Notable figures such as Queen Amina of Zazzau, Moremi of Ife, Oyinkansola Ayobami of Lagos, Funmilayo

Ransom Kuti of Abeokuta, Margaret Ekpo of Creek Town amongst others fought for the rights of women to vote and demonstrated the capacity of women in leadership roles (Ekundayo, 2017).

However, colonialism introduced a system of governance that marginalized women, relegating them to domestic roles while men dominated formal political structures. This marginalization persisted into the post-independence era, where women's roles in governance became tokenistic and gender inequalities widened. In the modern era, despite increased advocacy for gender inclusion; women remain underrepresented in politics and decision-making platforms. For instance, as of 2019, women occupied only 7% of elective positions in Nigeria, a figure significantly below the global average of 25% (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2020).

In the Fourth Republic (1999–present), several efforts have been made to enhance women's participation in governance. Women such as Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (former Finance Minister and coordinating minister of the economy, president of world trade Organisation), Obiageli Ezekwesili (former minister of solid minerals and minister of education) Amina Mohammed (Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations) Bolanle Ajayi (Deputy Speaker Ogun State House of Assembly), Maryam Yusuf (Deputy Chief Whip of Kwara State House of Assembly) and others have risen to prominence, symbolizing potential for female leadership but still their numbers remain exceptions rather than the norm. The 2019 and 2023 elections further revealed the structural barriers women face in Nigeria's political system. Data from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) shows a decline in female candidacies from 2015 to 2023, despite increased global awareness of gender parity (INEC, 2023). Nigeria lags behind many African countries in terms of gender

representation. For example, Rwanda has the highest percentage of women in parliament globally, with over 60% representation, attributed to deliberate policy measures such as gender quotas (Tripp, 2016). Similarly, countries like South Africa and Senegal have implemented affirmative actionable policies that ensure a minimum representation of women in their political arena.

The Key challenges contributing to the low representation of women in Nigerian politics include: Patriarchal and socio-cultural norms deeply ingrained in our system which views politics as a male-dominated field. Economic inequalities and limited access to funding for political campaigns disproportionately affect women in their quest for political participation. Female candidates are demoralized due to political violence, intimidation and harassment often faced discourages their participation. Political parties rarely prioritize or enforce gender equity in candidate selection processes and lack the internal democratic mechanisms to do so. The 2023 general elections serve as a critical case study to evaluate the progress and setbacks in Nigeria's journey toward gender equity in politics. Despite some success stories, such as the election of women into key positions in certain states like Ogun, Kwara, Kogi, Rivers, FCT, Lagos, Anambra state and so on, overall representation remains minimal compared to Nigeria's potential and international benchmarks (INEC, 2023).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework underpinning this study integrates feminist theory and representation theory to critically analyze gender representation in Nigerian politics. The Feminist Theory provides a lens for understanding the systemic barriers that perpetuate gender inequality. It critiques

patriarchal norms and cultural stereotypes that limit women's access to political spaces and resources. Feminist theory also advocates for affirmative actions like gender quotas to redress historical imbalances and promote equitable opportunities for women in leadership roles. The Representation Theory articulated by Hanna Pitkin, this theory emphasizes both descriptive and substantive representation. Descriptive representation focuses on the presence of women in political offices as a reflection of societal demographics, while substantive representation evaluates their impact in advancing policies that address gender-specific issues. In the context of Nigeria, representation theory highlights the dual challenges of increasing the number of women in politics and ensuring their presence translates into meaningful policy changes.

Furthermore, Critical Mass Theory suggests that when a marginalized group—such as women—achieves a certain minimum threshold of representation in a political or Organisational setting, they can exert significant influence and drive meaningful change. The concept was popularized by Drude Dahlerup in her 1988 study on Scandinavian parliaments, where she identified that women needed to constitute about 30–35% of a legislature to make substantial contributions to decision-making processes and policy outcomes. In the context of Nigeria, Critical Mass Theory is adopted as the underpinning theory because highly relevant to critically analyze the gender representation issues in Nigerian politics, as women remain far below the threshold of representation necessary to influence governance effectively. In the 2023 general elections, women constituted less than 10% of elected officials across federal and state assemblies. For instance: out of 469 National Assembly seats (Senate and House of

Representatives), only 21 women were elected, representing approximately 4.2%.

At the state level, women were largely absent from gubernatorial positions, with only a few notable successes in state assemblies. This theory argues that small numbers of women in leadership are often tokenistic and ineffective, but reaching a critical mass can shift dynamics, challenge stereotypes, and lead to policies that address the group's interests. Amplify advocacy for gender sensitive policies, challenge patriarchal norms within political institutions, inspire greater societal acceptance of women in leadership roles. Together, these theories provide a robust framework for analyzing the 2023 elections, offering insights into both the causes of underrepresentation and the potential pathways for achieving gender equity in governance.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design, which is well-suited for exploring the complex sociocultural and institutional factors influencing gender representation in politics. The qualitative approach allows for an in-depth examination of the lived experiences of women candidates, voters, and stakeholders in the 2023 elections. By focusing on narratives, perceptions, and contextual nuances, the research design provides a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and successes related to gender representation. A combination of secondary and primary methods of data collections was deployed in this study: Secondary Data includes; Reports from INEC, UN Women, and the National Bureau of Statistics offer quantitative insights into voter registration, candidacy rates, and election outcomes. Academic literature and media coverage provide

qualitative data on public perceptions and advocacy efforts.

Primary data sources include semi-structured interviews with female candidates, legislative aids, political party representatives, campaign council members and advocacy groups captured firsthand accounts of challenges and strategies. Focus group discussions with women voters explore their experiences and attitudes toward female political participation. The triangulation of these data sources enhances the reliability and validity of the study's findings. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure the inclusion of diverse perspectives. Participants are selected based on their relevance to the study's objectives: Female candidates at federal and state levels, women voters from urban and rural areas, representatives of political parties and advocacy Organisations. This approach ensures a balanced representation of voices while focusing on stakeholders directly involved in or affected by the electoral process.

The study used a thematic analysis approach in data analysis, which is particularly effective for examining qualitative data and uncovering patterns related to gender representation in Nigerian politics. This method involves a systematic process of identifying, analyzing, and interpreting recurring themes and patterns from both primary and secondary data sources. All collected data, including interview transcripts, focus group discussions, and secondary data from INEC reports and academic literature, are thoroughly reviewed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the content. Key phrases, concepts, and ideas are coded systematically. For instance, barriers such as "financial constraints" or "patriarchal norms" are tagged and grouped for further exploration. Recurring patterns are categorized into

broader themes such as: Barriers to women's political participation (e.g., cultural, economic, and structural factors), Success stories and strategies employed by women who achieved electoral success, Effectiveness of policies and advocacy efforts aimed at promoting gender equity.

The identified themes are analyzed within the broader socio-political context of Nigeria, considering regional and cultural variations across the six geopolitical zones. The data is compared with findings from previous elections (e.g., 2015 and 2019) to evaluate trends and progress in gender representation. Secondary data from INEC and other statistical sources are analyzed using content analysis to extract relevant trends and figures, such as: Percentage of female candidates versus total candidates, voter turnout rates by gender and success rates of women in different levels of elective positions. The analysis culminates in an interpretive process, linking the findings to the theoretical framework. Feminist theory and representation theory provide lenses to understand the systemic barriers identified and assess the implications of gender representation on policy outcomes and governance. Triangulation is employed to ensure the reliability of findings by cross-referencing data from different sources (e.g., comparing insights from interviews with INEC reports and academic literature). This multi-faceted approach to data analysis ensures a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of gender representation in the 2023 elections and provides a robust foundation for actionable recommendations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It should be noted that women voters in the 2023 elections faced numerous challenges, many of which undermined their ability to participate fully in the electoral process. Reports of violence, particularly in conflict-

prone regions, deterred many women from voting. Fear of attacks or harassment at polling units contributed to low voter turnout among women in certain areas. Incidents of verbal abuse, profiling, and physical harassment were reported, creating an unwelcoming environment for female voters. In some cases, women were coerced into voting for particular candidates or parties. Long distances to polling units and inadequate infrastructure, such as insufficient security and poorly managed queues, disproportionately affected women, especially those in rural areas. In conservative communities, societal norms discouraged women from engaging in political activities, including voting. Despite these challenges, advocacy by NGOs and women's groups helped to improve awareness and resilience among some female voters.

Despite the challenges faced, some women managed to secure seats in the National Assembly, demonstrating resilience and capacity amidst the stiff, competitive and systemic challenges: In the Senate Elections, three women won senatorial seats, Ipalibo Harry Banigo of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), who won the West senatorial district of Rivers Ireti Heebah Kingibe of the Labour Party (LP) who won the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) seat and Idiat Oluranti Adebule of the All Progressives Congress (APC) who won the Lagos West senatorial seat, their victories reflected strong grassroots mobilization and public confidence in their leadership abilities.

In the House of Representatives, Nnabuife Chinwe Clara (Young Progressive Party (YPP) who won the Orumba North/Orumba South federal constituency of Anambra State) Orogbu Obiageli (Labour Party (LP) who won the Awka North/Awka South federal constituency) Gwacham Maureen Chime (All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) who won the Oyi/Ayamelum federal constituency of Anambra) Regina Akume (All Progressives

Congress (APC) who won the Gboko/Tarka federal constituency of Benue) Ibori-Suenu Erhiatake (People's Democratic Party (PDP) who won Ethiope East/Ethiope West constituency of Delta State) Fatima Talba (APC won Nangre/Potiskum constituency of Yobe State), Onuh Onyeche Blessing (APC won the Otukpo/Ohimini constituency of Benue State) Ebikate Marie Enenimiete (PDP won the Brass/Nembe constituency of Bayelsa State) Zainab Gimba (APC won the Bama/Ngala/Kala-Balge constituency of Borno State) Beni Butmak (PDP won Lantang North/Lantang South constituency of Plateau State) Chimera Blessing Amadi (PDP won Portharcourt II constituency of Rivers State) Goodhead Boma (PDP won Akuku Toru/Asari Toru constituency of Rivers State) Khadija Bukar Abba Ibrahim (APC won Damaturu/Gujba/Gulani/Tarmuwa constituency of Yobe State). Onuoha Miriam Odinaka (APC won Isiala Mbano/Okigwe/Onuimo constituency of Imo State) Adewunmi Ariyomi Onanuga (APC won Ikenne/Shagamu/Remo North constituency).

Women who won seats in the House of Representatives often did so in constituencies where advocacy for gender equity had gained traction. For instance, female candidates supported by grassroots Organisations and mentorship programs, such as the Women in Politics Forum (WIPF), demonstrated how strategic collaborations can yield positive outcomes. While no woman won a governorship seat in the 2023 elections, several high-profile female candidates, such as Aishatu Dahiru Ahmed (Binani) in Adamawa, garnered significant public support. Her close contest marked a historic moment in the country's political history and demonstrated that with better institutional support, women can compete at the highest levels of governance.

A total of 48 women made it into the various state house of assembly. Meanwhile some regions showed encouraging trends, certain states, like Lagos and Anambra, recorded an increase in the number of female lawmakers elected to their state legislatures. These victories were largely attributed to robust advocacy efforts by local women's Organisations and the active involvement of civil society groups.

Beyond elective offices, women made significant contributions to the electoral process itself such as in the INEC Leadership, female officials within the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) played vital roles in election monitoring, logistics, and advocacy for gender-sensitive policies and generally ensuring a credible and inclusive electoral process. Civil Society Organisations: women-led advocacy groups, such as Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre (WARDC) and Women in Politics Forum (WIPF), provided crucial support to female candidates through training, funding, and public awareness campaigns. Their efforts helped amplify women's voices and increased voter awareness about gender equity.

The 2023 elections saw progress in challenging long-standing cultural barriers that have traditionally limited women's participation in politics: Prominent female candidates such as Aishatu Dahiru Ahmed (Binani) inspired other women by challenging stereotypes about women in leadership. Their campaigns highlighted the potential for women to excel in governance despite systemic obstacles. Urban youth voters demonstrated growing acceptance of female candidates, reflecting a shift in societal attitudes toward gender representation. Social media played a crucial role in amplifying the campaigns of women candidates and challenging cultural stereotypes. Grassroots mobilization by women's Organisations and civil society

groups increased public awareness about the importance of gender equity in politics. These efforts were particularly effective in regions like Lagos and Anambra, where more women were elected to state legislatures. The successes of women in the 2023 elections provide important lessons for future advocacy and policy interventions: Female candidates who engaged directly with local communities built trust and garnered significant voter support, demonstrating the power of grassroots strategies.

Programs that provided training, mentorship, and resources to female candidates, such as those organized by the Women in Politics Forum (WIPF), proved effective in equipping women with the skills needed to navigate Nigeria's political landscape. Partnerships between NGOs, political mentors, and civil society groups amplified the visibility and credibility of female candidates. These collaborations showed that collective efforts can help overcome systemic barriers. Women who succeeded despite challenges, such as financial constraints and cultural stereotypes, highlighted the importance of determination and strategic campaigning.

The 2023 elections underscored several policy and structural barriers that continue to hinder gender representation in Nigerian politics: The National Gender Policy's target of 35% female representation remains largely unenforced. Political parties failed to prioritize or implement internal mechanisms for gender equity. The prohibitive cost of nomination forms and campaign financing disproportionately affects women, who generally have less access to financial resources compared to their male counterparts. The threat of violence during campaigns discourages women from participating, either as candidates or voters. In some cases, female candidates were targeted for intimidation,

further exacerbating their marginalization. Weak enforcement of electoral reforms aimed at supporting gender equity, such as reduced campaign costs or reserved seats for women, continues to perpetuate systemic inequalities.

A comparison of the 2023 elections with previous polls reveals both progress and persistent challenges: While the number of female candidates declined slightly compared to 2019, the visibility of their campaigns increased due to stronger advocacy efforts and technological tools like social media. Women's voter turnout saw improvements in urban areas, where advocacy campaigns were more robust, but declined in regions affected by insecurity. The 2023 elections recorded some successes, such as increased representation in state legislatures in states like Lagos and Anambra. However, the overall percentage of women elected remained below global and regional benchmarks. The lack of progress in enforcing gender-focused policies remains a recurring issue, highlighting the need for more robust institutional frameworks.

The findings of this study have significant implications for governance, policy, and societal development: for governance, the underrepresentation of women in politics limits the diversity of perspectives in decision-making processes, often resulting in policies that fail to address the needs of marginalized groups. For policy, the persistent barriers to gender equity underscore the need for more enforceable policies, such as mandatory gender quotas and financial support for female candidates. And for societal development, the success of individual women in breaking cultural barriers demonstrates the potential for societal change through sustained advocacy and public education and the lessons learned from the 2023 elections provide a roadmap for improving gender representation in

subsequent polls, emphasizing the importance of institutional reforms and grassroots engagement. For the attainment of gender parity in the Nigerian political space this study recommends the following actions: Bold statutory reforms and strict implementation of gender quotas as stipulated in the 2006 National gender policy, Political Education, mentorship and collaborative partnership with advocacy groups must be encouraged, Political parties must develop internal democratic mechanism to promote gender inclusivity, Reduced financial barriers (subsidies for female candidates), strengthening of electoral reforms to address malpractices and support inclusive policies and more access to education, employment, healthcare, and political participation.

CONCLUSION

The 2023 general elections in Nigeria highlighted the persistent challenges of gender inequality in political representation, but also revealed opportunities for progress. Women remain underrepresented in elective offices due to cultural, financial, and systemic barriers, despite constituting a significant portion of the electorate. The low number of female candidates and the marginal increase in elected women reflect the need for a concerted effort to address these systemic issues. However, notable successes—such as the emergence of women leaders in legislative positions, increased voter awareness, and the effective use of technology by female candidates—demonstrate that progress is achievable. These stories of resilience and accomplishment provide a foundation for advocacy, policy reforms, and cultural transformation to promote gender equity in Nigerian politics.

To build on these achievements, it is imperative to implement enforceable gender quotas, reduce financial barriers, and create supportive ecosystems for female political

participation through training, mentorship, and partnerships. Civil society Organisations, government agencies, and the private sector must collaborate to address societal stereotypes and ensure that women are not just participants but key stakeholders in the political process. Ultimately, improving gender representation in politics is not just about fairness; it is about fostering inclusive governance that reflects the diversity of Nigerian society. The journey toward equitable political representation requires sustained commitment, bold reforms, and the collective efforts of all stakeholders. The dynamics of women's participation in Nigerian elections should be studied further to understand regional disparities and best practices. Long-term strategies for dismantling cultural and patriarchal barriers must be developed in partnership with community leaders and influencers.

Nigeria's electoral framework must be reviewed to prioritize gender equity as a cornerstone of democratic governance. By addressing these issues, future elections can serve as milestones in achieving gender parity, transforming Nigeria into a more inclusive democracy.

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