

Women and Political Party System in Nigeria: An Appraisal of All Progressive Congress and People's Democratic Party

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Abstract

Democracy provides a level playing field for competitiveness for all people, regardless of gender. Any system that claims to be democratic must, in essence, accept a higher standard of open competition, accountability, political rights, and public participation that embraces all societal groups. Democracy encompasses political party's participation, capable of organizing, educating, and bringing together a variety of social interests. After a protracted period of military dictatorship, Nigeria returned to a democratically elected system of government in 1999, with the first registration of three political parties. Since democracy was restored in the country, the number of citizens who are members of political parties of their choice have increased dramatically. As a result, every member of society has an equal opportunity to participate in the political process through elections. This study investigates women and political party system in Nigeria with focus on two political parties: All Progressive Congress (APC) and People's Democratic Party (PDP) in order to assess the role, impact, and factors that are working against women in party partitioning. Feminist theory is one of the components of the study's foundation. The study uses secondary source of data collection and archival method research was employed whereby several scholarly articles, reports, policy statements, publications, records documents were consulted to gather relevant information needed in order to accomplish the stated objectives. This is

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Received: November 7, 2023. Revised: December 29, 2023. Accepted: December 29, 2023

based on the fact that secondary methods help us to understand women interaction with Nigeria's political party, structures and with the electorates. Therefore, it is important to promote the adoption of internal structures and procedures that are gender-responsive by political parties.

Keywords: Women, political party, party system, democracy and Election

Introduction

The political party system plays a crucial role in shaping democratic governance and policy decisions in Nigeria. However, women's participation and representation within this system have been persistently limited, posing challenges to achieving gender equality and inclusive decision-making. Understanding the dynamics of women's engagement in political parties is essential for promoting their active involvement in Nigerian politics. Nigeria, as the most populous country in Africa, is characterized by deep-rooted gender inequalities and patriarchal norms that influence women's political participation. Cultural expectations and societal perceptions often discourage women from pursuing political careers, relegating them to traditional gender roles. These attitudes perpetuate the notion that politics is a male-dominated domain, further marginalizing women's voices and contributions (Akindele & Dunmade, 2020).

While the Nigerian legal and policy framework recognizes the importance of gender equality and women's political participation, implementation and enforcement remain inadequate. The 1999 Nigerian Constitution guarantees the right to equal participation in political processes for all citizens, regardless of gender. Additionally, various national policies, such as the National Gender Policy, the National Gender Development Plan, and the National Gender Policy on Women's Political Empowerment, provide guidelines and strategies to promote women's inclusion in politics. However, significant gaps persist in translating these policies into concrete actions (The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Development, 2008; Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999).

Within the Nigerian political landscape, the All Progressive Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) are the two major political parties that shape the country's governance. Therefore, evaluating their approaches to women's political empowerment provides insights into the challenges and opportunities women encounter within the political party system. The All Progressive Congress (APC), formed in 2013 through the merger of several opposition parties, identifies as a center-right political party. While the APC emphasizes progressive policies, the party's efforts to increase women's participation have yielded mixed results. Despite the rhetoric of inclusivity, women's representation within the APC's ranks remains relatively low. The People's Democratic Party (PDP), with a longer history and multiple terms in governance, has also emphasized inclusivity and women's empowerment. However, the party has struggled to translate these intentions into meaningful

representation, with limited progress in promoting women's participation within its structures (Aigbokhan, 2017).

Agishi (2014) asserted that the challenges impeding women's participation in Nigerian politics are multi-faceted. Sociocultural factors, such as gender norms, stereotypes, and discriminatory practices, perpetuate gender inequality and hinder women's political aspirations. Structural factors, including the absence of gender-sensitive party structures, limited access to resources and finances, and the concentration of power within male-dominated networks, further exacerbate the underrepresentation of women. Additionally, economic factors and the limited availability of support mechanisms contribute to the marginalization of women within the political party system (Ogbogu, 2012).

It takes comprehensive approaches that change party structures, challenge social norms, and empower women politically to address these issues. Promoting women's participation and representation within political parties requires enacting gender-sensitive policies, strengthening the legal system, implementing leadership development and capacity building programs, and focusing on specific women's political empowerment projects.

Against this backdrop, the purpose of this study is to provide a thorough evaluation of the All Progressive Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) with regard to women's engagement in the Nigerian political party system. The study attempts to highlight areas for development and make recommendations for steps to increase women's presence and influence in Nigerian politics by scrutinizing the strategies, accomplishments, and weaknesses of these parties. Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment among political party system would ultimately result in more inclusive and democratic administration in Nigeria.

Review of Political Parties and Women's Participation: Theoretical Underpinning

Growing scholarly interest in the proportion of women elected to parliaments and studies on how they promote women's interests have been observed over the previous two decades. Studies have looked at how women's connections to the parties that serve as the key entry points for representational politics are shaped by the opportunity structure (Williarty, 2010; Baldez, 2008; Childs, 2008; Kittilson, 2006; Macaulay, 2006).

According to Kittilson (2006), the process is influenced by sets of circumstances that are both exogenous and endogenous to the parties. The exogenous factors are more pervasive and have more indirect effects on things like women's access to higher education or paid employment, impetus for change from feminist movements, and shifts in general perceptions of women's roles in political and social life. Endogenous structures, which can result in large benefits, can be top-down or bottom-up. Top-down influences encompass candidate gender quotas, competition among parties for women's votes, the presence of women in party administration, shifts in party executives' opinions, and the struggle for women's support.

Women's groups within parties and rising female support can exert bottom-up pressure. These elements play varying roles and interact in diverse ways depending on the situation. According to the majority of studies, party ideology plays a significant role in influencing party positions on women's representation. Parties with a more left-leaning stance are more likely to favor gender quotas and women in elected office (Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Paxton, Kunovich & Hughes, 2007). According to the argument made by Holmsten, Moser, and Slosar (2009), religious ethnic parties have one of the lowest percentages of elected women of any ethnic groups.

Comparative research on ethno-nationalist or ethno-regionalist parties point towards how these parties additionally established left-right philosophical identities, putting them distinctly across the line that runs between revolutionary left to revolutionary right (Massetti, 2009). Their views on the representation of women may differ depending on where they fall on this continuum. If there is fierce electoral competition, a significant presence of women in party structures, strong leadership support, a desire on the part of the party to project a modern image, and a gender limit in position, ethnic parties are more likely to advocate for women's representation that is more equitable. Once more, these elements work together (Purdam et al., 2002).

Several ethno-nationalist parties have strong linkages to social and political movements. There are two reasons why this is crucial. First of all, there is a significant increase in the involvement and mobilization of women within ethno-nationalist groups (Vickers, 2006). Second, these movements affect how parties decide on their policies. However, despite taking into account the ideologies of ethno-

nationalist parties, prior literature has mainly ignored the relationship between women's involvement in ethno-nationalist groups and the changes in women's official electoral participation.

Women are frequently treated as tokens rather than active participants, despite the fact that they put forth significant effort during national struggles, according to the extensive body of research on gender and nationalism, which includes the study of women's mobilization and participation in nationalist movements/national projects (Enloe, 1990). When movements achieve some level of national independence or change in colonial/race/ethnic relations, they fail to address the needs of women, devalue their status out of respect for custom, and limit their ability to participate in social and political life (Feijo, 1998; Kuumba, 2001). Consequently, feminist scholars emphasize a supposed conflict between nationalism and actual gender equality, which is understandable. Nevertheless, multiple instances show that in some non-Western polities, the goals of feminism and nationalism can be harmonized given specific circumstances. For instance, Hasso's (1998) study on a leftist-nationalist party and the feminist-nationalist women's group that was linked with it in the occupied Palestinian territories shows how Palestinian nationalism empowers women. The movement's modernist ideology, particularly was characterized by peaceful community involvement rather than military mobilization, and its focus on demonstrating the value of Palestinian society to the West led to this empowerment.

Nationalist parties may in fact give women the chance to become more politically visible and recognized, to raise feminist consciousness collectively, to exercise their organizing skills, to gain political experience, and to gain some degree of influence over negotiations at home and in their communities.

Methodology

The All Progressive Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) are the two political parties that this study focuses on in order to give readers a comprehensive grasp of women's participation and representation within the Nigerian political party system. This study utilizes an integrative qualitative literature review, representing the study's research methodology (Synder, 2019). As a result, a thorough evaluation of the body of research, including scholarly articles, reports, policy statements, and pertinent publications, was carried out. This offers a theoretical underpinning as well as insights into the bigger picture of women's involvement in Nigerian politics and the function of political parties. To determine that both APC and PDP's official positions on women's involvement and

representation, several scholarly articles, party materials including constitutions, manifestos, policy documents, and reports were examined. The tactics and processes used by the parties to further women's empowerment are discussed in this analysis. Thematic analysis is used to examine the data that was gathered. Transcripts and categories of the primary themes and sub-themes from the document analysis and literature review, are used. The themes that were found compared and contrasted, making it easier to examine how the APC and the PDP treat women's participation and representation within their respective party organizations.

Historical Context of Women in Nigeria's Politics

The historical context of women in Nigeria's politics is characterized by a gradual but significant progress towards gender equality and increased participation of women in political affairs. Nigeria, like many other countries, initially experienced limited representation of women in politics due to various societal, cultural, and historical factors. However, over time, women in Nigeria have made notable strides in their political engagement and have fought for their rights to participate in decision-making processes (Popoola et al., 2021). The historical context of women in Nigeria's politics is traced to pre-colonial era, colonial era and Nigeria post-independence.

Prior to colonization, Nigerian society was largely patriarchal, with women occupying traditional roles in their communities. They played essential roles in local governance and decision-making, especially in matters related to women and children. However, their participation in formal political structures was limited. With the advent of British colonial rule in Nigeria during the late 19th century, the socio-political landscape underwent significant changes. The British administration introduced Western-style governance systems, which marginalized women further. Nigerian women were largely excluded from political participation, and traditional gender roles were reinforced (Modupe et al., 2019; Aigbokhan, 2017).

In the mid-20th century, Nigeria witnessed a fervent movement for independence from British colonial rule. Women played active roles in these movements, advocating for self-determination and social change. According to Popoola (2018), notable figures such as Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti and Margaret Ekpo emerged as prominent women activists, fighting for the rights of women and the broader society.

After Nigeria gained independence in 1960, women continued to face challenges in accessing political power. However, over time, their engagement in politics increased. In 1985, President Ibrahim Babangida appointed the first female minister, Amina J. Mohammed, marking a significant milestone for women's representation (Agishi, 2014). Throughout the 20th century, women's movements and organizations in Nigeria became more active in advocating for gender equality and increased political representation. They raised awareness about women's issues, pushed for legal reforms, and encouraged women to participate in politics. Organizations like the Federation of Nigerian Women Societies (FNWS) and the National Council of Women's Societies (NCWS) played crucial roles in empowering women politically (Oni, 2014; Ngara & Ayabam, 2013).

Nigeria developed an affirmative action program and a quota system to address the gender gap in political representation. The National Gender Policy's aim of 35 percent female representation in governmental appointments and elective positions was introduced in 2006. Even if progress has been achieved, it is still difficult to meet this goal (Abubakar & Ahmad, 2014; Okoronkwo-Chukwu, 2013). Despite the obstacles, a number of Nigerian women have become well-known political leaders. Examples include Amina Mohammed, who held the position of Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations from 2017 to 2021, and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, who assumed the position of Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2021. The political scene in Nigeria has historically been dominated by men, although there has been a gradual shift towards greater political participation among women. Affirmative action laws, women's movements, and legal reforms have all aided in this development. To establish complete gender equality and representation in Nigeria's political sphere, however, more needs to be done (Kolawale et al., 2013).

Nigeria's Political System and Legal Framework for Women

The legal and policy framework on women in politics in Nigeria entails a number of laws, rules, and initiatives that are meant to advance gender equality, boost the representation of women in politics, and alleviate the difficulties faced by women in this field. For instance, the Constitution of Nigeria guarantees the basic liberties and rights of every citizen, irrespective of gender. It acknowledges the values of equality for all citizens in political involvement and the absence of prejudice (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999).

A framework for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in all fields, including politics, is provided by the National Gender Policy, which was introduced in 2006. It lays out goals and plans to boost the number of women in political appointments and elective positions (Daniel & Faith, 2013). Fundamentally, Nigeria has passed a number of electoral laws and rules that affect the participation of women in politics. These laws contain provisions pertaining to voting procedures, political party activities, candidate selection, funding for campaigns, and voter education. There have been efforts made to ensure that these laws are gender-sensitive and support the inclusion of women, as shown through the amendments in the Electoral Act of 2022 (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2022).

Nigeria has also implemented affirmative action policies to enhance women's representation in politics. The Affirmative Action Policy seeks to ensure that women are given a minimum of 35 percent representation in political appointments and elective positions at all levels. Political parties are encouraged to adopt gender-sensitive practices in their internal structures and candidate selection processes. The INEC is responsible for organizing and conducting elections in Nigeria. It plays a vital role in implementing policies and regulations that promote women's participation in electoral processes. INEC has taken steps to encourage political parties to adopt gender-sensitive practices and has conducted voter education programs targeting women (Abubakar & Ahmad, 2014; Okoronkwo-Chukwu, 2013).

Despite the existence of legal and policy frameworks guiding political parties in Nigeria with regard to women participation in politics, challenges persist in fully realizing women's political participation in Nigeria. Barriers such as cultural norms, gender stereotypes, limited access to resources and finance, violence and intimidation, and the underrepresentation of women in decision-making bodies continue to hinder progress (Akindele & Dunmade, 2020). Efforts to address these challenges involve continuous advocacy, awareness campaigns, and the collaboration of government, civil society, and international partners to create an enabling environment for women's political engagement.

Women Participation in Nigeria's Political Parties: the Case of APC and PDP

Women's participation in Nigeria's political parties, including the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP), has been a subject of both progress and challenges. The APC

is one of the leading political parties in Nigeria. While the party has made efforts to promote women's inclusion, gender disparities persist within its ranks. The APC has implemented affirmative action measures to increase women's representation. The party's constitution stipulates that at least 35 percent of party positions should be reserved for women (All Progressives Congress [APC], 2022, art. 14.20). However, there have been mixed results in the implementation of these provisions, and women's actual representation in key decision-making bodies' remains low. The party (APC) has a Women's Wing known as the APC Women and Youth Presidential Campaign Team (APC-WYPCT). The Women's Wing mobilizes and supports women's participation in the party's activities, including election campaigns. The APC has seen women occupy leadership positions within the party. Notable examples include former Minister of Finance, Kemi Adeosun, who served as the Treasurer of the APC, and former Minister of Women Affairs, Aisha Jummai Al-Hassan, who was a prominent member of the party.

The People's Democratic Party (PDP), as one of Nigeria's major political parties, has also grappled with issues of gender imbalance and the need for increased women's participation. The PDP has made efforts to promote women's representation within the party. It has established quotas for women's participation in the party's structures and decision-making processes. However, the effective implementation of these measures and achieving gender parity remain ongoing challenges. The PDP has a Women's Wing called the PDP Women's Forum. The Women's Forum aims to mobilize and empower women politically, advocate for gender equality, and encourage women's participation in the party (Peoples Democratic Party [PDP], 2017, chap. 43). The PDP has seen women occupy leadership positions within the party. For instance, several women have served as National Women Leaders of the PDP, advocating for women's issues and representing women within the party.

Overall, while both the All Progressive Congress and the People's Democratic Party have taken steps to promote women's participation in their respective parties, achieving gender parity and meaningful representation remains a challenge. Such difficulties can be reflected in the significant gap within the gender representation of women to men in the 2023 subnational elections, with APC only hosting 6 percent of women candidates and PDP merely hosting 5 percent across its political candidates (Nkereuwem, 2023). Efforts to increase women's involvement in decision-making processes, address cultural barriers, and implement gender-sensitive practices within political parties are crucial for enhancing women's political participation in Nigeria.

Comparative Analysis of APC and PDP on Women Participation in Decision Making in Nigeria's Political Party

When comparing the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in terms of women representation and participation in decision-making within Nigeria's political parties, several factors need to be considered. It's important to note that the analysis is based on trends and information gathered. The APC has implemented a quota system requiring at least 35 percent of party positions to be reserved for women. However, the effective implementation and enforcement of this provision have been inconsistent, resulting in limited progress in achieving gender parity. The PDP has also introduced a quota system, aiming to increase women's representation within the party. However, similar to the APC, the actual implementation and success of achieving the target have been mixed (APC, 2022; PDP, 2017).

The APC has a Women's Wing as revealed by the party official documents such as constitution, manifestoes and ideology. The APC Women and Youth Presidential Campaign Team (APC-WYPCT), which focuses on mobilizing and supporting women's participation in party activities, including election campaigns. The Women's Wing serves as a platform for women to voice their concerns and engage in political activities. The PDP has a Women's Wing known as the PDP Women's Forum as revealed from relevant documents of the party, which seeks to mobilize women politically and advocate for gender equality. It plays a similar role to the APC's Women's Wing, aiming to empower women and increase their participation within the party (APC, 2022; PDP, 2017).

The APC has seen women occupy leadership positions within the party, including ministerial positions and key party roles. However, the number of women in top leadership positions remains relatively low compared to their male counterparts. The PDP has also witnessed women in leadership positions within the party. Notable examples include women serving as National Women Leaders of the PDP. However, similar to the APC, achieving gender balance in top leadership positions remains a challenge. The gender imbalance can be represented by the APC National Working Committee only accommodating women to the positions of National Women Leader and Deputy National Leader, across the board of 26 members (APC, 2023). This major disproportionate gender representation of women in the decision-making bodies is also replicated in the PDP, only electing women officials to the position of National Women's Leader and Deputy National Women's Leader, out of 21 positions (Olafusi, 2021).

Both parties face challenges in effectively implementing affirmative action measures and ensuring meaningful women's participation in decision-making processes. These challenges include cultural barriers, inadequate enforcement mechanisms, and limited access to resources and finance for women candidates. Progress has been made in raising awareness about gender equality and the importance of women's political participation within both parties. However, achieving significant improvements in women's representation in key decision-making bodies requires sustained efforts and systemic changes. While both the APC and the PDP have taken steps to promote women's representation and participation within their parties, challenges persist. Both parties have implemented quota systems and have women's wings focused on mobilization and advocacy. However, effective implementation, enforcement, and achieving gender parity in leadership positions remain ongoing challenges for both parties (Akindele & Dunmade, 2020). Continued efforts are therefore needed to overcome cultural barriers, provide equal opportunities, and empower women to participate meaningfully in decision-making processes within Nigeria's political parties.

Factors Influencing Women's Participation in Nigeria's Politics

It is apparent that several factors influence women's participation in Nigeria's politics. These factors can be categorized into structural, cultural, socio-economic, and institutional aspects.

Patriarchal Norms and Gender Stereotypes:

Deep-rooted patriarchal norms and gender stereotypes play a significant role in limiting women's political participation in Nigeria. Cultural beliefs that assign women to traditional roles and prioritize men in leadership positions create barriers for women seeking political office.

Limited Access to Education and Resources:

Unequal access to education and limited resources affect women's ability to engage in politics. Inadequate education can hinder women's confidence, skills, and political knowledge, making it challenging to navigate the political landscape effectively. Limited financial resources and campaign funding also pose obstacles for women candidates.

Cultural and Religious Barriers:

Cultural and religious practices and beliefs sometimes discourage or restrict women's involvement in politics. Customary practices and traditions that prioritize male leadership, social expectations regarding women's behavior, and cultural norms that discourage women from assuming public roles can all discourage women's political participation. The dominant religions of Christianity and Islam also emphasize on the submissive roles of women, socialized into "passive political roles" and limiting their progression into major political positions that can introduce further opportunities for women in politics (Ette & Akpan-Obong, 2022).

Violence and Intimidation:

Women in Nigerian politics often face violence, intimidation, and harassment, which acts as a deterrent to their participation. Threats to personal safety and security, both during campaigns and while holding office, discourage many women from pursuing political roles.

Party Structures and Internal Dynamics:

Political party structures and dynamics can contribute to gender disparities. Male-dominated party structures, limited opportunities for women's involvement in decision-making processes, and biases in candidate selection processes within parties can undermine women's chances of securing party nominations and ascending to leadership positions in the country.

Lack of Women-Friendly Policies and Legislation:

Inadequate implementation of women-friendly policies and legislation that promote gender equality and women's participation in politics can hinder progress. Limited enforcement of affirmative action measures, lack of gender-responsive electoral laws, and insufficient support for women candidates have impede women's political involvement.

Socio-Economic Factors:

Socio-economic factors, such as poverty, limited access to economic opportunities, and the burden of caregiving responsibilities, had over the years hinder women's political participation in Nigeria. These factors often affect women's ability to invest time and resources in political campaigns or pursue leadership roles.

Lack of Mentorship and Support Networks:

Limited access to mentorship opportunities and support networks has impeded women's political progress. Mentorship and networking play crucial roles in building women's political skills, confidence, and connections, which are essential for navigating the political landscape.

To address these issues, extensive actions are needed, such as targeted initiatives to improve women's leadership capacity and skills, legal and legislative reforms, cultural and attitudinal changes, educational empowerment, and financial support. To increase women's representation and participation in political decision-making processes, it is essential to create an atmosphere that supports gender equality and overcomes the unique obstacles experienced by women in Nigerian politics.

Summary of the Major Findings on Women and Political Party System in Nigeria

Women's participation in the political party system in Nigeria faces numerous challenges and barriers, but there have been notable developments and efforts to address gender disparities. Women continue to face significant gender disparities within political parties in Nigeria. Male dominance in leadership positions, limited representation in decision-making bodies, and unequal access to resources and opportunities hinder women's political participation (Pogoson, 2012).

It is a known fact that, affirmative action programs have been put in place by both of the major political parties, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC), to enhance the representation of women (Omodia, Erunke, & Abdul, 2013). There has been little progress toward gender parity as a result of inconsistent implementation and enforcement of these rules. Within their respective parties, the APC and PDP both have developed women's wings. These wings facilitate women's participation in party operations and election campaigns while also providing opportunities for engagement and political mobilization of women.

Women's engagement in political parties is greatly impacted by cultural norms, gender stereotypes, access restrictions to education and resources, violence and intimidation, and socioeconomic issues. The underrepresentation of women in party leadership roles and decision-making bodies is influenced by these variables (Tama & Maiwuga, 2022). Within political parties, mentorship programs and support systems for women are sometimes lacking. It is essential for women to have access to mentoring programs and social networks in order to advance politically and develop their

skills and confidence. Even though there have been female leaders in the APC and PDP, achieving gender parity at the highest levels is still difficult. Compared to men, women are still underrepresented in political party senior leadership roles.

To remedy gender imbalances, party structures, internal procedures, and electoral laws must be changed. Women's inclusion and participation in the political party system can be encouraged via gender-sensitive election reforms, party rule modifications, and the implementation of gender equality requirements. When it comes to dispelling gender stereotypes, encouraging women to participate in politics, and winning support for gender equality inside political parties, advocacy initiatives, public awareness campaigns, and sensitization programs are crucial tools.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Women's participation in Nigeria's political party system faces various challenges related to cultural norms, gender stereotypes, limited resources, violence, and socio-economic factors. However, there have been some positive developments, including affirmative action measures, women's wings, and efforts to promote women's inclusion. Addressing gender disparities within political parties requires sustained efforts, including legal and policy reforms, capacity-building programs, mentorship initiatives, and advocacy for gender equality. To enhance women's participation in Nigeria's politics, several recommendations can be considered. These recommendations are pertinent to address the barriers and challenges faced by women and create an enabling environment for their increased representation and involvement. The recommendations are as follows:

There should be effort to insure the efficient implementation and oversight of affirmative action policies that advance women's participation in political parties, electoral processes, and decision-making bodies. Claret goals for women's engagement in politics at all levels must be established and put into practice. Introduce and put into practice electoral changes that take into account the unique requirements and difficulties that women encounter during the voting process. This includes guidelines for creating candidate lists that are evenly distributed between men and women, assistance with campaign financing, and safeguards against violence and harassment of women in politics.

It is also important to promote the adoption of internal structures and procedures that are gender-responsive by political parties. This entails encouraging the participation of women in party leadership roles, ensuring the fairness of the selection of candidates, and providing women with opportunities for meaningful decision-making inside party structures. Programs for women's leadership development and targeted political education are needed. The emphasis of these initiatives should be on enhancing women's political knowledge, expertise, self-assurance, and networking potential. Promote successful women leaders as role models and emphasize the value of women's political participation.

Similarly, government, political parties and civil society organization should endeavor to develop strategies to increase women's access to funding and resources for political campaigns. Financial assistance, the creation of funds specifically for female candidates, and easing access to tools like media platforms and campaign infrastructure are all part of this. Create and implement rigorous policies to stop and handle harassment, intimidation, and violence against women in politics. This entails giving security and protection to female candidates and elected officials as well as developing secure channels for reporting cases of violence and harassment.

Government should encourage men to take a proactive role in supporting women's political participation as allies. Men may make a significant contribution to dispelling gender stereotypes, fighting for women's rights, and encouraging women to pursue leadership positions. Encourage the development of networks and mentoring programs for women in politics, putting up-and-coming female leaders in touch with seasoned mentors who can offer advice, encouragement, and chances for advancement. Launch awareness-raising initiatives to dispel gender stereotypes, highlight the value of women's political engagement, and inform the public on the advantages of gender equality in politics. Reach a large audience by utilizing a variety of media outlets and community involvement.

Review and reinforce the legal and policy framework frequently to promote gender equality and women's political empowerment. As part of this, laws, regulations, and policies that support women's involvement and combat gender-based discrimination must be updated and put into effect. The government, political parties, civil society organizations, women's groups, and the global community must all work together to implement these ideas. The political environment in Nigeria must be made favorable of women's involvement, leadership, and decision-making.

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