



## **Federalism: Gender and Leadership in Nigeria (1999-2015): The Nigerian Experience**

by

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### ***Abstract***

*This paper examined the challenges and prospects of women participating significantly in politics and also contesting for political positions, and how it affects the welfare of women. The political arena is plagued with gender inequalities; the gap in female gender representation in political systems is therefore worrisome. Despite legislative breakthrough, the female gender remains vastly underrepresented in policy-making structures. This inequality is seen in female gender representation in the democratic government since 1999. The role women play during electioneering campaigns and voting demands that they take part significantly in policy making in Nigeria as their male counterparts. Equal representation in policy-making structures is far from being realized owing to few women participating in politics and seeking electoral positions. A key cornerstone is the integration of gender quality into the governance structures. The paper adopted the descriptive method of research, drawing data mainly from secondary sources. The data was analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. Major findings included amongst others: the characteristics of womanhood, women are not interested in politics owing to the violent nature of politics, women are financially handicapped as politics demands heavy expenditures- from purchase of nomination form to campaign in elections. Major recommendations were as follows: women participating in politics in large numbers; women should come together to form organizations and empower themselves financially; women should accept and vote women who contest in elections; and cultural and religious barriers should be dismantled and in our patriarchal society, men should accept women as equals and not looking down on them as their property.*

**Keywords:** Federalism, Gender, Politics, Leadership, Political Participation.

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### **1. Introduction**

Charles de-Granile had earlier said that politics is too serious a business to be left in the hands of politicians. Whatever prompted him to make such a statement cannot be

explained since he had not explained his mind until death. This serious business of government is carried out by three instruments of government; the Legislative, the Executive and the Judiciary. Although the legislature is the law-making institution, the executive and the judiciary also make laws.

The achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society in which they work in equality and complementarity, drawing mutual enrichment from their differences (The Universal Declaration on Democracy adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in September, 1997).

Nigeria is a Federal state that got independence since 1960. It is unfortunate that 59 years after independence, Nigeria's institutions of government are still lopsided in favour of the male gender. It is an understandable situation that federalism should increase equality and the rights of minorities with focus on female gender through increased representation in policy-making structures. Even though an increased number of female gender are providing services in the executive and judiciary arm of government, the legislative arm of government have experienced the least number of women. It is extremely important to include women in policy-making to represent a significant number of women who are in half of the population in Nigeria. In a bid to justify this assertion government in some countries adopt the quota systems, In Nigeria, during the Goodluck Jonathan administration 31 percent was implemented.

Quota systems have increased women participation and representation in appropriate political decision-making positions. Quotas have been viewed as one of the most effective affirmative actions in increasing women's representation especially in bureaucracy in Nigeria. Quotas for female gender in political endeavours increase women representation in government and this is evidenced in Rwanda, Seychelles, Senegal and South Africa. Four of the world's top 10 countries, in terms of women's share of single or lower house of parliament, are in Sub-Saharan Africa: Rwanda, Seychelles, Senegal, and South Africa (The Universal Declaration on Democracy adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in September 1997). While some African countries are making giant strides in women's political representation, others like Nigeria have achieved very little progress.

According to same source, in 52 years of world parliamentary history, only 42 of the 186 countries with a legislative institution have, at one time or another in recent history selected a woman to preside over parliament or a house of parliament: this has occurred 78 times in all. The countries concerned are 18 European countries, 19 countries of the Americas, 3 African countries, 1 Asian country and 1 country in the Pacific region. Also, the source continues, 24 of the 42 countries concerned had a bicameral parliament, and the presidency was entrusted to a woman a little more often in the upper house than in the lower house. Only 22 women preside over one of the houses of the existing parliaments, 70 of which are bicameral. This means 8.6% of the total of 255 posts of presiding officers of parliament or of one of its houses.

Gender quotas have emerged as a way of including women in policy making structure in Nigeria; the Africa Leadership Forum had recommended 35% represent

women in policy making structures. It is observed that in Goodluck Jonathan era 31% representation was implemented. Umoh (2010) in her “Argument of same composition” argued that the idea of quota to please the women is unacceptable by all standards. In her argument, she said that both men and women, in their creation have same composition. She brought out the fact that female gender is a finer creation. If a man was created with dust and the woman was created with a rib from a man’s body, then comes her argument that women should not cry for 35 percent representative as they (women) are supposed to be ‘finer’ creation and, therefore should be more intelligent and more effective in politics play.

The idea and implementation of quota systems has been one way governments have been working towards achieving gender parity in elected bodies of government (Quota Project, 2003). There are 3 types of quota for women reserved seats, political party quotas and legal candidate quotas (Quota project 2013). According to project (2013), critics claim that quotas are the opposite of equal opportunity because women are as favoured candidates over men. According to same source, critics also call gender quota undemocratic saying that quota undermine voters choice in who gets elected. The main objective of this paper was to find out why few women participate in politics. The subsidiary objective was to find out how this lopsided representation in policy-making structures is affecting the governance in Nigeria as a federal structure.

## **2. Conceptual Framework**

### ***Federalism***

Federalism is a political organization system which pursues the purpose to connect the existence and independence of the majority of political unities with a synthesis of these unities to a higher unity. As a result, federalism is the freedom of narrower territorial and personal communities within the scope of a whole. Federalism has never been a modern designed ideology of autonomy, decentralization, independence; federalism may not be equalized with decentralization or separatism. If a tendency towards particularism, ambivalence, egoism or even to the idea of secession exists, then one does not think in a federal way. Federalism presumes the will to a unity in diversities. With federalism, the recognition and affirmation of diversities in the unity are typical. The will to self-affirmation, and the will to create a unity are, one may say, basic characteristic features of this form of state organization, connection of which will be maintained by the will to unity (in tolerance) (Nettesheim, 2003).

Federalism is a political organization principle that pursues the purpose to connect the existence and independence of political unities, with a connection of these unities to a higher whole. Federal facilities are to be regarded as political multi-level systems in which the political existence of the whole is based upon the political entities which are members of the federation. As a result, federalism is the freedom of narrower and personal entities within the scope of a whole. Federalism serves the creation of unity in diversity; it operates towards an integration of what is different in the common (Nettesheim, 2003).

### ***Feminism Defined***

Feminism is theory that men and women should be equal politically, economically and socially. One who believes in that men and women should be equal politically, economically and socially as defined above. What follows are different branches of feminism theory that are recognized by feminists and feminist scholars. These different theories of feminism are widely acknowledged and taught in women's studies courses, gender studies courses and the like ([www.amazoncastle.com/feminism/ecocult.shtml](http://www.amazoncastle.com/feminism/ecocult.shtml)).

Feminity (also called) girlishness womanliness or womanhood is a set of partially socially constructed, being made up of both socially- defined and biologically- created factors. This makes it distinct from the definition of the biologically female sex as both males and female can exhibit feminine traits. Traits traditionally cited as female include gentleness, empathy and sensitivity. Traits associated with feminity vary depending on location and context and are influenced by a variety of social and cultural factors. In 1949, French intellectual Simone de Beauvoir wrote "no biological psychological or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society and one is not born". Passivity and tenderness assigned to women and aggressive and intelligence assigned to men.

The feminine mystique, American Feminist, Betty Friedan wrote that the key to women's subjugation lay in the social construction of feminity as childlike passive and dependent and called for a "drastic reshaping of the cultural image of feminity. The defining characteristics of feminity are not unnecessary identical and some patterns exist: gentleness, empathy, sensibility caring, sweetness, compassion, tolerance, nurturance, deference and docility are traits that have traditionally been cited as female (En.m.wikipedia.org).

According to Awofeso and Odeyemi (2014), throughout ages and virtually in all cultures, women were rarely considered equal to their male counterparts. According to the same source, from the home as daughter, wife, and mother, through the school, office and church as student, employee and worshiper respectively, to the public sphere of life as in business and politics, women are known to have been discriminated, marginalized and dominated through the combination of gender-biased cultural norms and practices which were in favour of men.

The authors remarked that a historical evidences in many societies, both during the ancient and modern periods support the idea of male domination over their female folks in many spheres of human endeavour. They concluded by saying that the literature on the subjugation of women to men's domination knows no bound with such literature covering wide range of issues, including the body, class and work, disability, the family, globalization, human rights, culture, race and racism, reproduction, science, the self, sex, work, human trafficking and sexuality.

According to Keifer, (1934) in Ancient Rome, an adulterous wife could be killed by her husband without trial, while the reverse attracted no punishment on the man. According to the same source, the Ancient Hebrew also considered women as legally minor and thus preferred a male child to a female child who was seen as inferior to the

former. Pre-historical culture considered women as part of men's possession such that their wives' virginity is exclusively "part of the personal estate of their husbands" (Izugbara, 2013:283), and the absence of which attracted severe punishment. Nowhere is the inferiority and subordination of female gender made clearer than in sacred texts – the Holy Bible and the Quran.

According to Tashi (2000 in Umoh 2010), women are known to possess certain important qualities that are suitable for leadership. This includes hard work, dedication, patience, endurance, tolerance, thoroughness, honesty and transparency all of which are great assets in public relations and public acceptance. According to same author, with the crisis of leadership that have bedeviled the Nigerian society since Independence and against the backdrop of the outstanding performance of women in public capacities in recent decades, seem to be a growing consensus among scholars and observers of these trends that women could fill the critical leadership gap in providing the much desired good governance in Nigeria.

Milbrath (1965) classified these activities into three, namely: gladiatorial activities, transitional activities and spectator activities. According to the author, political activities such as holding public or party offices, canvassing for party funds, contesting at election, etc. are classified under gladiatorial activities. Transitional activities, according to same source, also include activities such as attending political meetings or political rally, making monetary contribution to political parties, etc. Spectator activities on the other hand, the source said, include political activities such as wearing of party badges, caps, uniforms or emblems, running errands for political leaders, voting at elections, etc.

Using Milbrath's classification of political participation and political representation at the highest category of political participation – the gladiatorial activities, had always favoured the male gender in Nigeria since Independence till 2015. Available statistics see table 1 page 11 gender representation in public offices, especially, at the highest decision making levels such as the offices of the president and state governor. 2015 and 2019 elections brought no female presidents (Hundred Years of Nigerian Women, Nigerian Centenary Country Report on Women, Dec. 2013).

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

When writing on women issues, two schools of thoughts are normally considered. The Conservatives and the Radical views, the radical view here refers to the group that considers a woman as having equal potentials as man. It is necessary to fully understand the reason behind male dominance in the public sector administration, it is also necessary to discuss the basis of male-dominance extensively in this paper. This approach will enable people to understand why few women feature insignificantly in the public sphere. Many reasons have been given including the psychology of womanhood (Umoh, 2011). Others concern themselves with the exploitative nature of the 'Other Sex'. The two schools of thought are discussed in this paper.

Conservative viewers here refer to the group that considers a man as the head of the house and a woman as the subject. God has made a woman to be subject to the man.

Eve, as the Bible says, was created from a rib taken out from the ribs of a man. Since Adam was the first creation and out of him was produced Eve, therefore, by all norms and ethics, a woman needs to be subject to a man (Genesis 2:21-23). The Conservative school of thought believes that the biological differences between sexes are the necessary causes of sexual division of labour. This school of thought is derived from the works of (Murdock, 1949). In Esther Boserup's terminology, the negative view is sometimes termed the linear view (Oakley, 1974).

Liberal viewers here refers to the group that considers the man and the woman as having equal potentials since a woman was created from the bone of Adam (Umoh, 2001). The Holy Bible has not reported that Eve was created with another substance different from the one that was used in creating Adam. It is, therefore, safe to conclude that whatever came out of Adam should not differ from the original creation. Liberal feminism is an individualist form of feminist theory. It has also been said that liberal feminism is liberalism as applied to gender issue, TaraElla (2017). Liberal feminists argue that society holds the false belief that women are, by nature, less intellectually and physically capable than men; thus it tends to discriminate against women in the academy, the forum, and the marketplace. Liberal feminists believe that female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that blocks women's entrance to and success in the so-called public world. Liberals hold that freedom is a fundamental value, and that the just state ensures freedom for individual (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Thu. Oct 18, 2007).

In 1920, after nearly 50 years of intense activism, women were finally granted the right to vote and the right to hold public office in the United States. In the 1960s during the civil rights movement, liberal feminists drew parallels between systemic race discrimination and sex discrimination, Tong, Rosemarie (1989).

Connell (1975) used his conceptualization to explain why few women participate in masculine tasks such as politics. According to Connell, masculinity is defined as "...simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effect of these practices on bodily experience personality and culture". According to same author, masculinity is not reducible to individual expression and experience. Masculinities and femininities become "gender projects" in the lives of individuals, but they do not refer to features of or specific kinds of people. Instead of possessing or having masculinity, individual moves through and produce masculinity by engaging in masculine practices. In some and to reiterate then, masculinity is a social position, a performance or practice and the effect of masculine practice on individuals and social structure. For instance, if people begin to think about femininity in terms of Connell's definition of masculinity, it could be said that femininity is a social position, practices associated with that social position and the individual and social effect of those recurring practices. Because there is nothing about femininity in his conceptualization, masculinity is equated with and encompasses all aspects of gender relations.

According to Cornell (1995), masculinity maintains its position of superiority in relation to femininity and men maintain legitimate possession of those superior

characteristics regardless of who is enacting of being feminine or masculine. For him, are no masculine characteristics that are stigmatized as masculinities. For Connell, masculinity is not reducible to individual expression or experience. According to same source, masculinities and femininities become “gender projects” in the lives of individuals, but they do not refer to features of specific kinds of people. Instead of possessing or having masculinity, individuals move through and produce masculinity by engaging in masculine practices. The author concluded that one final point in defense of limiting the definition of femininity and masculinity to symbolic meaning: ‘Masculine’ and ‘feminine’ are labels used to categories much more than individuals. People are comfortable categorizing activities as feminine or masculine. Decisions about which label to apply, he said depend on how closely the activity resembles what women and men are assumed and supposed to be like. The author specifies the characteristics of both masculinity and femininity as knitting of feminine (domestic, quiet, sedentary); boxing is masculine (aggressive, physical, competitive). Occupations and jobs are masculine and feminine depending on how closely the work required fits the ideal for women and men. Nursing is feminine (caretaking, nurturing); law enforcement is masculine (rationale, use of force).

This paper anchors on Connell’s conceptualization of masculinity and femininity jobs or works that are masculine have been listed in this paper. Such work as law enforcement as specified in this work can also be added to other masculine work as politics. Politics can only be pursued rigorously by women who are brave and can face all kinds of situations that can be termed violent. This work puts the percentage of women who are able to participate in violent situations at 1%, the remaining 99% of women cannot play masculinity (Umoh, 2010).

#### **4. Gender And Governance In The Nigerian System (1999 – 2015)**

The right to participate in the governance processes is a universal democratic right for both males and females. According to Ng. C. (2012), the right to participate is the right for both the quest to achieve social justice in the structures of government, the implementation of gender quotas alone cannot resolves the issue of structural disparities in society. It is the authors’ view that an integral aspect of social justice must also involve a redistribution of socio-economic resource within societies, which includes the notion of genders justice and women’s participation in public and political life.

Governance entails the process of decision making and the process by which such decisions are executed (or not executed) (Ng, C. 2012). According to the author, the state, as a privileged site of power, is a key factor in determining whether (good) governance principles and practices are adhered to. Another cornerstone of governance, the author says, is the integration of gender equality, as a constitutive principle into the participation processes and structures. According to same source, for the past two decades, women advocates at both the global and the national levels have lobbied for the inclusion of women in the decision-making processes, particularly though the use of “quotas” to fast forward their demands.

The year 1999 marked the beginning of a new dawn as Nigeria returned to civilian government after demise of military rule. Women political participation witnessed sharp improvement over previous experience. President Obasanjo who assumed power on May 29<sup>th</sup> 1999 made a clear departure from the past and appointed 4 out of the 29 senior ministers representing 13.7% and 3 out of the 18 junior ministers representing 16.6%. Furthermore, he appointed 2 women advisors and 2 senior special assistants and 6 special assistants and 1 special assistant to the vice president as well as 8 permanent secretaries (Luka, 2012). According to same source, women were also appointed as commissioners and therefore members of the executive councils in all the state. It should be noted that while the number of women in political position drastically increased between 1999 and 2011, the positions were mostly appointive rather than elective. From 1999 to 2011, no woman was elected into the office of the president or governor in any of the 36 states, (Ngara, 2013). According to the same source, in 1999, out of the total seat of 469 (Senate and House of Representatives), there were only 15 women representing 3.19%; this increased to 25 in 2003 representing 5.33%; there was a further increase in 2007 to 34 representing 7.24% and a slight decline in 2011 to 33 representing 7.03%. The statistics shows that between 2003 to 2007, 4 to 6 women were elected as deputy governors. In spite of these improvements, the representation of women in politics and decision making in Nigeria is still a far cry from the global benchmark of 35% affirmative action.

Table 1 confirms that female gender in Nigeria, in most instances, and for several reasons, participate in politics at the least level of Milbrath's classification of political activities – the spectator activities (Umoh, 2010). Here, women are mostly engaged in rallies and campaign activities where the uniforms, caps and badges of respective political parties are freely displayed on them. More often than not, the female genders are easily mobilized for the election victory of male candidates who are more financially buoyant than their female counterparts. In a study on the 2011 general elections in Nigeria, refers to women "as active participants in the success of their male counterparts during elections Chukwu (2013:40)". According to Umoh (2010), it is not uncommon to find very highly educated women in government accepting to be campaign organs (mouthpiece) for men who are political leaders. According to same source the opportunity these highly placed women have is wasted because they have neglected political education for the women and have merely accepted to be tools for the campaign of their male counterpart. According to same source, although the Nigerian women are calling for emancipation to enable enjoy equal rights and privileges as their male counterparts, the women themselves displayed their unwillingness to compete favourably with the men when referred to Sarah Jubril's case.

The source concluded that after the 2001 elections, it is very clear at the Nigerian society still require a woman to be subjected to man whose domain is in the public sphere. Women are also known to have registered as voters more than men in successive voters' registration exercises, while statistics equally support that women turnout in successive elections in Nigeria are usually greater than that of men. Yet, all these could not translate



women representation in elective positions into an appreciable level in Nigeria (Umoh, 2010).

Milbrath's middle level classification of political participation into transitional activities which include attending political meetings, attending political rallies, making monetary contribution to candidates and political parties, etc. are equally male dominated activities, which had enhanced male gender over all political participation and consequent domination of political affairs. According to Enginade (2010) research has shown the connection between female political participation and economic empowerment. According to Oyelaran-Oyeyinka (2014), inequality is a drag on growth and development and there is a strong relationship between inequality and slow growth in poor countries. The author reiterated that there was a strong association between opportunity equality and human well-being reflected in better health and long life. Hence, the author concluded that the effect of inequality on growth can be seen as a rough indicator of inequality of opportunity and limited social mobility in a particular setting, a phenomenon sometimes also referred to as "destructive inequality".

Despite being a patriarchal society, Nigeria has a history of women breaking out of the mold to participate in politics. In the 2015 general elections, the Nigerian woman participated actively in the election campaigns and rallies and came all out to support the candidates of their choice. The result of the 2015 general elections in the country had however, not shown improved women representations in elective positions in the country. Out of the fourteen candidates that contested for the seat of the president, the women amongst the contenders came out in the twelfth position. Just as men have always dominated the National Assembly, the 2015 election result did not present a different picture in the number of women who are representing their constituencies for the next four years since the birth of current democratic dispensation in 1999.

A few women who were privilege to be appointed into the various positions in the three tiers of government are shown here in this work. They were:

- 1960-63 Elizabeth the Second, Queen of Nigeria and of her other realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth (01.10-01-10). Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland since 1952.
- Chief Adenike Egun Oyagbola – Minister of National Planning – 1979-83/84. Ambassador to Mexico and Central America around 2003. Minister of State of Internal affairs 1979-83.
- Chief Janet Akinrinade – Minister of State of Internal Affairs Nwanyiirimkezia K. A. Ashinobi – 1979-85.
- Elizabeth Afadzwan Ivasse Minister of State of Education 1983-85. Minister of State of Education 1983-85. Minister of Education – 1993. Deputy Minister of Education – 1993.
- Yohanna...1993 Minister of Culture Bola Juforiji-Oluba – 1993 Minister of Trade – 1993
- Emily Aig-Imoklurede – Secretary of State for States and Local Government 1993-95.
- Mobolaji Osmo – Minister of Establishment Management Service – 1993 – 95

- Ada Adoyu – Minister of State in Charge of Agriculture 1995-97.
- Judith Sefi Attah – Minister of Women’s Affairs and Social Welfare.
- Ambassador to UNESCO 1982-86, Permanent Secretary of Science and Technology 1986-87, Director General of the Foreign Ministry 1987-90 and Ambassador to Italy, Greece and Cyprus 1990-95.
- Mariam T. Clark – Minister of State for the Federal Capital Territory – 1995-97
- Iyabode Anisulowo – Minister of State of Education – 1997.
- Chief Adenike Ekum Oyagbola – Minister of National Planning – 1997-999.
- Chief M. Onikepo Akande – Minister of Industries 1997-98
- Hajju Sani – Minister of Women’s Affairs – 1998
- Rose Adunike – Minister of State of Education – 1998-99
- Dr. Laraba Gambo Abdullahi- Minister of Women’s Affairs, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Abuja 1999.
- Princess A. O. Oguneye – Minister of State of Federal Capital Territory – 1999.
- Grace Enang Achibong (May-July), 1999, Acting Chief Executive of the Ministry of Information Appointed Permanent Secretary and was Acting Minister till the appointment of the new cabinet.
- I Asugha – Acting Chief Executive of the Ministry of Employment, Labour and Productivity, (May-July) 1999. Acting Chief Executive of the Ministry of Transport A. Pepple (May-July) 1999.
- Acting Chief Executive of the Ministry of Petroleum Resources, 2003.
- Dr. Kema Chikwe Minister of Transport – 1999 – 2000  
Minister of Aviation – 2000-03  
Minister of State of Defence Dupe Adelaja – 1999-2001  
Minister of State of Defence for the Navy – 2001-2002  
Minister of Solid Minerals – 2002-2003
- Dr. Becky Ketebu-Igwe 1999-2000 - Minister of State of Solid Minerals 2000-01.
- Pauline Tallen – Minister of Women Affairs – 1999-03.
- Hajjiya Na’ajatu Mohamed – Minister of State of Science and Technology; Appointed Minister of State of Women’s Affairs and Youth Development – 1999; replaced by Aisha Ismael within days after her appointment.
- Hajjiya Aishat Ismeal – Minister of State of Women’s Affairs and Youth Development – 1999-2000; Minister of Women’s Affairs and Youth Development 1999;2001-2003; Minister of Women’s Affairs, Commissioner of Social Development in the Kano State – 1990-92.
- Joy Emordi Candidate – Minister 1999; The Senate rejected her and the other candidate – Ministers nominated by the newly elected.
- Salome Adudu – Candidate Minister – 1999
- Dr. Kemafo Nony – Candidate Minister – 1999
- Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala – Minister of Finance – 2003-06. Head of the Economic Reform Team – 2003-06, 2006-2011. Minister of Finance – 2012. Former Vice-President of the World Bank and Corporate Secretary.

- Rita Akpan – Minister for Women Affairs – 2003-05.

**Source:** *Umoh, 2010*

If these women have performed creditably in their various positions, it means that they would also perform well as law makers. The violent nature of elections in Nigeria from 1999 to 2015 shows that Nigeria is not prepared to have a significant number of women in politics. Table 1 is self-explanatory.

**Table 1: The Standing of Nigerian Women in Political Participation and Performance from 1999 till 2015**

S/N	Position	No. of Seats	No. of Women in 1999	2003	2007	2011	2015
1	Presidency	2	0	0	0	0	0
2	Senate	109	3	4	8	7	8
3	House of Reps	360	12	23	26	26	14
4	Governorship	36	0	0	0	0	0
5	Deputy Governorship	36	1	2	6	3	4
6	36 State Houses of Assembly	990	12	38	54	62	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1533</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>26</b>

**Source:** *Lance-Onyiewu, Maureen (2011), Excerpt from UN Women's Preliminary Analysis of the 2011 General Elections in Nigeria.*

Table 1 shows a very poor women standing in politics. No woman contested for the office of the president in the years, 1999, 2003 and 2007. Even though a woman (Sarah Jubril) contested the 2011 presidential primaries, she had only 1 vote. Table 1 is self-explanatory, the number of women who contested clearly displayed. The numbers of seats available are also clearly displayed. The table clearly shows the disparity in women representation in our legislative bodies. A federal structure as Nigeria is supposed to balance the number of women and that of men in the three arms of government. The reverse is the current practice as men tend not to allow more women the legislatures. If the cost of elections is reduced, and elections are conducted peacefully, women will be more interested in joining politics. Women need political education and not the gift of money during campaigns and bags of rice/salt. Many women issues will be addressed

## **5. Discussion of Findings**

The low level of women representation in parliaments should be considered a violation of women's fundamental democratic rights and as such, a violation of their basic human right. This unequal rate of representation in legislative bodies signifies that women representation, rather than being a consequence of democratization, is more a reflection of a statuesque (Shevedova, 2008:32).

Findings showed that there were many setbacks to women participating in politics. These setbacks include:

### **i. Characteristics of Womanhood:**

The characteristics of femininity or womanhood as enumerated by Simone de Beauvoir and Friedman (year?) are gentleness, empathy, sensitivity caring,

sweetness, compassion, tolerance, nurturance, deference, soccorance, passivity, tenderness. These characteristics of womanhood prevent women from participating in politics in large numbers

ii. **Patriarchal Society:**

Feminism theory of patriarchy has identified men's presence and dominance of political institutions as a major obstacle to women achieving equality with men. Women could possess the characteristics that make for good candidates, they often are not encouraged to go out and contest owing to the unfavourable condition that plaque the political arena in Nigeria.

iv. **The Violent Nature of Election in Nigeria:**

The primary elections conducted in some political parties witnessed killings-actions which few women can stand. According to the National Democratic Institute's "Final Report on the 2011 Nigerian Elections", as far as running for election goes, many women are dissuaded due to "high levels of competition, the often violent nature of Nigerian politics and deeply held prejudices against female politicians", with some women reporting pressure to withdraw their candidacies, harassment and physical attacks (NDI, 2011:45).

v. **Funding:**

Few women will be prepared to invest their money in politics. Men themselves are not prepared to invest their money in ventures that they are not sure will bring reward. The violent nature of elections in Nigeria scares women from participating in politics; women will prefer investing money in other businesses than politics.

vi. **Low Zeal for Power:**

Men are prepared to go to any length to ensure they win elections because of the high zeal for power. Only few women can do that.

vii. **Cultural Barriers:**

One of the cultural barriers is that women who marry from another state and move to her husband's place of residence will end-up be designated non-indigenous, and may be deprived of certain political benefits which she would have enjoyed in her home state (**Which Author, 2016**).

Feminists politics has found it difficult to change the situation when religious communities and social institutions including the family are concerned. Religious organizations are not helping on the issue of genders discrimination. Some religious organizations discourage women who dare to join politics and contest for political positions.

## 6. **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The feminine mystique, American Feminist, Betty Friedman, wrote that the key to women's subjugation lay in the social construction of femininity as childlike, passive and dependent and called for a "drastic reshaping of the cultural image of femininity. The defining characteristics of femininity are not unnecessary identical and some patterns exist:

gentleness, empathy, sensibility caring, sweetness, compassion, tolerance, nurturance, deference and soccorance are traits that have traditionally been cited as feminine (En.m.wikipedia.org).

This drastic reshaping of the cultural image of femininity may be difficult to attain as long as humanity exists. It was concluded from the work that the position of women in politics and in governance may remain the same for the next century as they are very few women who take up masculine activities such as politics. Women participating in politics may also not improve drastically but there is hope that with political education, the situation may change. From the study, the following recommendations are made

1. Funding: women should mobilize themselves and raise funds to help them find their political endeavours.
2. Women should be challenged by the political activities of men and join politics in large numbers.
3. Women should stop providing themselves as tools for political campaigns for the men. Instead they should encourage women who contest for political positions.
4. Men should conduct elections in calm and non-violent manner to enable women join politics in large numbers.

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