

# **The Affirmative Action and Women Participation in Politics in Nigeria: An Assessment Study on the Legal Constraint**

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**Abstract:** The participation of women in politics and decision making is one of the major issues that have dominated the world; this is because women constitute about fifty percentage of the world population. The importance of women participation in politics cannot be over-emphasised, considering the fact that women are mothers, social, cultural and political activists. In Nigeria, the affirmative action contained in the National Gender Policy is a strategic tool for enhancing women participation in politics. The policy has brought about tremendous increase in women participation in politics in Nigeria, as more women are willing to participate in both appointive and elective politics. However, the affirmative action is a mere action plan of the executive and falls under Chapter II (Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) which makes it non-justiciable. So, where the government fails to abide by the affirmative action, the government cannot be compelled and such cannot be challenged in the law court (as currently being experienced in Nigeria). This paper seeks to discuss the relevance of the affirmative action to the participation of women in politics in Nigeria. The legal constraint to the enforcement of the policy is particularly identified and discussed, while imperative legal measures towards giving legal prominence to the policy are recommended.

**Keywords:** Affirmative action; Legal constraint; Participation; Politics; Women

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## Introduction

One of the key issues which have dominated the world is women participation in politics and decision making. The adequate representation of women in public policy making positions is sine qua non to achieving societal development (Ejuronemu and Olusola 131). Women constitute almost half of the world population, but their participation in decision making and general political processes is relatively low when compared to their male counterpart (Abubakar and Ahmad 214). In Nigeria, women's influence on politics and decision making can be traced to the pre-colonial era. This is because there was no specific law imputing any disabilities on them; they were very active in both economic and social-political sectors (Ozo-Eson 111).

However, women historically have been under-represented in politics, compared to men. It is observed that Nigerian women over the years had operated in a less liberal democratic environment despite the constitutional provisions that gave them equal rights in political participation in the country (Ekundayo and Ama 72). The weak representation of women in politics impoverishes the development of democratic principles in public life and inhibits the economic development of the society (Adebimpe). Few of the factors responsible for low participation of women in politics in Nigeria are socio-economic, cultural, religious and educational factors. Some cultures and norms regard women as weak in terms of social struggle which necessitates them to assume a subordinate position to men in politics and other aspects of life (Agbalajobi 75).

The alarming and disturbing rate of low participation of women in politics led to agitations from women interest groups, governmental and non-governmental organisations at both national and international levels. For example in Nigeria, the National Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ) and International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) (*The Nation Newspaper* of 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 2015) have played prominent roles in clamoring for more women participation in governance. For instance, some of the prominent roles of FIDA include advancement of opportunities available to the women in civic life, politics, education, industry, business and the professions particularly the legal profession; organisation of women lawyers nationally, regionally and internationally; championing the rights of women and children; promotion of the socio-economic well-being of women and children, among others. It is

pertinent to note that these agitations have actually helped in enhancing more women participation in politics by facilitating national policies and regional/international instruments that focus on women. Examples of regional/international instruments on women include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and African Union Solemn Declaration for Gender Equality. A more recent positive development for women's right in full participation in governance was the 2011 launch of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the empowerment of women to be known as UN Women. This new body emerged from the four UN agencies previously engaged in gender issues, elevating the seniority of input on women's issue within the UN decision-making process (Ayeni and Ajibogun 119). In Nigeria, the National Gender Policy is the major policy that concerns women.

One of the major tools for enhancing women participation in politics and decision making is the affirmative action. This policy provides for the empowerment of women at various levels, it calls for the elimination of practices that marginalise women, especially in the area of decision making. It encourages and strives to maintain equality in the distribution of economic resources in all ramifications. It is an attempt to promote equal opportunities to women and to increase the representation of women in every sector of the economy (Ekwugha et al. 2945). The truth is that Affirmative Action is ancient and it is traceable to the Civil Rights Movement in the United States of America. Meanwhile, women political affirmative action in Nigeria gained prominence in 2000 with the introduction of the National Policy on Women though the policy became effective in the year 2001. It stipulates that all forms of discrimination against women should be eliminated. The National Policy on Women was replaced by the National Gender Policy by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2006. The National Gender Policy at inception provided for thirty percent affirmative action for women, that is, women should occupy thirty percent of both elective and appointive positions. However, the immediate past administration of President Goodluck Jonathan upgraded the women affirmative action from thirty percent to thirty five percent in 2011.

The women political affirmative action has really helped in facilitating more women participation in politics and decision making in Nigeria, when compared with the periods preceding the implementation

of the policy. The immediate past administration of President Goodluck Jonathan improved on appointive positions by appointing more women to man major Federal Ministries. For example, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was the minister of finance, Mrs. Diezani Allison Madueke was the minister of petroleum, Prof. (Mrs) Ruqayyatu Ahmed Rufai was the minister of education, and Hajia Hadiza Mailafia was the minister of environment. Despite this however, the government is yet to meet the thirty five percent women political affirmative action, as the reality on ground does not show any seriousness from the government at all tiers including the political parties on the fulfilment of the thirty five per cent affirmation of women participation in active government (Ekwugha et al. 2949). The situation is even more worrisome in the present administration as evident in the various appointments made so far.

The legal constraint to the affirmative action on women participation in politics in Nigeria is that, because the National Gender Policy falls under chapter II of the constitution, it is non justiciable by the provisions of section 6 (6) (c) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria (as amended). That is, where the government refuses to abide by the affirmative action, it can neither be challenged in the law court nor compelled by the law court to abide by the affirmative action. There are however other challenges to the realisation of the affirmative action on political participation of women in Nigeria such as low level of literacy, cultural barriers, to mention but a few. It is therefore important to address the legal constraint that has constituted a clog on the wheel of the realisation of the policy in Nigeria's politics.

### **The Leadership Roles of Women in Pre-Colonial and Colonial Nigeria**

It is an obvious fact that the impacts of women on politics were felt in the pre-colonial era. This is because there were no specific laws imputing any disabilities on them; they were very active in economic and social - political sectors (Ozo-Eson 111). In many empires and kingdoms in the pre-colonial Nigerian system, women emerged as queens and decision-makers (Ejuronemu and Olusola 134). The socio-cultural institutions in different parts of Nigeria which exercised political powers had female parallel organisations, which constituted a system of women's government complementary to that of the men (Onwuzirike 60). For example, Queen Karibasa became dominant in the politics and life of Bonny as the only woman ruler of Bonny (Ekundayo and Ama 72);

Queen Amina of Zazzau led armies to drive out invaders from Zaria; and Moremi of Ile-Ife contributed immensely to the development of her society (Ngara and Ayabam 49). Also, Iyalode Efunsetan Aniwura of Ibadan, Ida of Edo, Emotan of Benin, and Inikpi of Idah were not of small contributions to the growth of their empires (Ejikonemu and Olusola 134).

In the pre-colonial Benin empire, it was the practice for the ruling monarch, three years after the ascension to the throne, to confer on his mother the title of “Iyabo” (Queen’s mother) after which she would be sent to Uselu, a part of the Kingdom, to reign as “Iyabo Uselu” and become one of the King’s important advisers until her death (Abdulraheem 155). In some parts of Igbo land, there was the institution of Omu, which was a council of women similar to that of the Obi and Chiefs. The Omu were usually entitled to sit with the Obi in Council. The Omu had responsibilities towards women and the whole community, especially the control of market women. They regulated and decided who sold what, when, where and how much to sell products brought to the market (Imam).

Also in the pre-colonial Oyo Empire, the role of Iya-Afin was available for a woman and she had ritual duties in connection with the Oba by acting as a political and religious adviser and intermediary (Abdulraheem 156). However, as active as the participation of Nigerian women in the pre-colonial politics was, the powers exercised by them in their various political activities were far less than their male counterparts. For example, the powers of Omu and her Council were not as extensive as those of their male counterparts.

The colonial period of 1862–1960 witnessed the relegation of the political participation of women in Nigeria. This was as a result of discrimination against them rooted in the “Victorian concept of women” which encouraged the public invisibility of women and advocated that women should be seen and not heard (Lewu 331). Colonialism brought about gender inequality in Nigeria as women were blocked from assuming decision making positions. It also gave the opportunity of Western education and training to men as they worked within the colonial administrative set-up, while the women were relegated to providing services leading to building their homes (Tanko and Best 17). The marginalisation of women in politics during this period led to the formation of women pressure groups that fought against oppression and injustices of the colonial administration against women. For instance,

the Abeokuta Women Union led by the late Mrs. Olufunmilayo Ransom Kuti championed the temporary exile of the Alake of Egba land in 1948 as a result of the abuse of power by the Alake. The group also criticised the imposition of poll tax on women and agitated for the right of women to vote. The Igbo women led by Mrs. Margaret Ekpo in the eastern part as well resisted the imposition of taxes in 1926 and 1929 by the colonial government without due consultation and this led to the popular Aba riot of 1929 (Lewu 328).

### **Women Political Position in Nigeria Civilian Regime**

The attainment of independence by Nigeria in 1960 did not accord much political recognition to women despite the fact that a lot of political activities were witnessed during that period. In the first republic, there were only four female legislators in the whole of the country, a number that was so negligible to give women the necessary influence in politics (Ngara and Ayabam 48). Margaret Ekpo, being a woman activist, found her way into the House of Representatives in the first Republic and Hajia Gambo Sawaba also fought for Universal Suffrage for women in the North under the Northern Element Progressive Union (NEPU) when women were not allowed to vote (Abdulaheem 163).

In the second republic, not many women were appointed to Executive Councils as Ministers and Commissioners; the few that were appointed were either junior Ministers or Commissioners in charge of youths. Even though in this Republic all the parties formed their women's wing, women members were more of mobilising agents, singing and dancing at rallies to be rewarded with ridiculous amount of money or a few yards of cloth (Abdulaheem 164). As a result, women could not play any active role in the decision making process, as the boldest attempt to raise the status of women politically was the nomination of Mrs. Bola Ogunbo as the presidential running mate of the late Mallam Aminu Kano in the election of 1979, which was never realised (Shettima 27). The second republic just like the first republic produced only one female senator in the person of the Late Franca Afegbuwa. A few Nigerian women also won elections into the House of Representatives at the national level. Some of these women were Mrs J.E. Eze of the Nigerian People's Party (NPP), Mrs. V.U. Nnaji also of NPP from Imo State and Mrs. Abimbola Babatope of the Unity Party of Nigeria (Irabor 4). The third republic, which was short-lived, was also not an exception; women did not get commensurate number of seats in

positions of responsibility. A few women emerged as councilors; Chief (Mrs.) Titilayo Ajanaku, as Chairperson of Abeokuta Local Government Council in Ogun State, two female Deputy Governors, Alhaja Sinatu Ojikutu and Mrs. Cecilia Ekpenyong in Lagos and Cross River States respectively (Ngara and Ayabam 48). In addition, only a few women were elected to the National Assembly. Mrs. Kofo Bucknor- Akerele was the only woman who won a seat in the Senate. This followed the pattern of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Republics. A very few number of women won election into the House of Representative, one of them was Chief (Mrs.) Florence Ita- Giwa (Iboror 4).

However, the re-emergence of civilian rule in 1999, after the long military rule, brought about improvements in women participation in politics in Nigeria. From the fourth republic till date, more women have gotten political responsibilities in Nigeria, although most of the positions were appointive rather than elective. The Obasanjo's administration implemented the National Policy on Women in 2000 to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women by putting in place measures that encouraged gender equity. In 2006, the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs pushed for the adoption of the National Gender Policy to replace the National Policy on Women (Nnadi 34). The National Gender Policy initially stipulated thirty percent affirmative action for women participation in politics in Nigeria. The administration of Goodluck Jonathan however reviewed the thirty percent affirmative action to thirty five percent to accommodate more women participation in politics.

### **Nigerian Women Political Participation in the Military Era**

The military rule from 1966 to 1999, with a brief spell of civil rule in 1979–1983, did not accord much recognition to women participation in governance and decision making processes. Nigerian women were not in the military hierarchy and, therefore, could not be members of the highest legislative and executive body combined in the various military ruling councils (Abdulraheem 8). Although the military were autocratic, it was not until 1976 that Northern women had the right to vote through the military decree promulgated by the Murtala/Obasanjo Administration (Ejukonemu and Olusola 134). The General Babangida military regime also made attempts to encourage women participation in politics through the different programs created by the then First Lady, the Late Mrs. Maryam Babangida. The top of all the programs and policies was the Better Life for Rural Women and the initiation of



the establishment of the National Commission for Women (Ekwugha 2948).

Also, in order to encourage women participation in governance, the succeeding administration of the late General Sanni Abacha later consolidated the foundation of the National Commission for Women (National Commission for Women Act 1990) through the Family Support Programme (FSP) of the then First Lady, Mrs. Mariam Abacha (Ekwugha 2948). One salient feature common to the military regimes is that they were male dominated and only a few women were put in positions of authority.

### **The Affirmative Action and Women Participation in Democratic Politics in Nigeria**

As earlier discussed, various programs and initiatives were put in place by successive governments in Nigeria to enhance women participation in politics. Most of these initiatives failed to achieve the desired results as women were relegated in political participation in Nigeria. It was in 2000 that the Federal Government implemented the National Policy on Women and the same was replaced with the National Gender Policy in 2006. As earlier noted, the National Gender Policy contained thirty percent affirmative action for women; it encouraged gender equity and fostered more women participation in politics.

It is important to state that the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) recognises principles of non-discrimination. This is by virtue of the fundamental freedom from any form of discrimination against any person as provided in section 42 of the Constitution, which provides thus:

A citizen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall not, by reason only that he is such a person-

(a) be subjected either expressly by, or in the practical application of, any law in force in Nigeria or any executive or administrative action of the government, to disabilities or restrictions to which citizen of Nigeria of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religions or political opinions are not made subject (Section 42(1) ).

The affirmative action on women in Nigeria is an agenda to increase women participation in politics, education and employment in Nigeria.



It also seeks to eradicate all forms of discrimination against women, as a form of compensation for the long years of relegation of women (Section 42 of the CFRN 1999). The effects of the affirmative action on women participation in politics will be discussed later.

Ever since the introduction of the National Policy on Women in 2000, a lot of changes have been witnessed in the political arena as earlier discussed. President Obasanjo appointed 4 women out of the 29 senior ministers representing 13.7 percent and 3 women out of the 18 junior ministers, representing 16.6 percent. Furthermore, he appointed 2 women advisers and 2 senior special assistants and 6 special assistants and 1 special assistant to the Vice President as well as 8 permanent secretaries (Luka 29). A few of the women appointed at the Federal level were Dr. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala (Finance), Dr. Oby Ezekwesili (Budgeting), Chief (Mrs) Titilayo Ajanaku (Special Adviser to the President on Women Affairs), late Prof. Dora Akunyili (NAFDAC Director-General), Dr. (Mrs) Kema Chikwe (Minister of Transport), Mrs. Dupe Adelaja (Minister of State, Defence), Dr. (Mrs) Bekky Ketebugwe (Minister of State, Ministry of Solid Minerals), Dr. (Mrs) Amina Ndalolo (Minister of State, Federal Ministry of Health), Mrs. Pauline Tallen (Minister of State, Federal Ministry of Science and Technology) and Hajia Aishatu Ismaila (Minister of Women Affairs) (Ekwugha 2948).

The late Umaru Musa Yaradua's administration appointed a few women into its Executive Council and could not meet up with the thirty percent affirmative action applicable then. In addition, a few women were elected into positions following the April 2007 elections. There were a total of 1200 women aspirants to 1532 offices, 660 of whom won their primaries. Out of these 660 candidates, only 93 finally emerged as winners and these included 6 Deputy Governors (Asaju and Adagba 60). Out of the 42 ministers appointed before the 13th September 2013 cabinet reshuffle, 13 were women, representing 31.0 percent. Similarly, there were 11 female Permanent Secretaries out of 43, constituting 25 percent, and 5 female Advisers out of 13, representing 38 percent (Ngara and Ayabam 52). In addition, female ministers were assigned to manage key ministries like finance, petroleum and aviation. The then First Lady, Dame Patience Jonathan, also initiated the Women for Change Initiative, to encourage women participation in governance at all levels. For the National Assembly, there were 15 women representing 3.19 percent in 1999; this increased to 25 in 2003, representing 5.33 percent; there was

a further increase in 2007 to 34, representing 7.24 percent, and a slight decline in 2011 to 33, representing 7.03 percent (Ngara and Ayabam 48).

The introduction of the affirmative action on women in Nigeria has improved women participation in politics when compared with the periods preceding the implementation of the policy. Women are more alert to issues that surround politics and decision making. It has given women the chances to venture into terrains they would never have thought of in politics, they are more passionate and ambitious about politics. For example, a woman, Aisha Al-hassan, contested in the gubernatorial election in Taraba State in 2015 and almost won; at the same time, more women contested for virtually all the elective positions at various levels but a few were elected deputy governors in Lagos and Calabar States. Although, women occupy more appointive positions than elective positions, the fact remains that the affirmative action on women has brought tremendous improvements to women's participation in politics and decision making in Nigeria.

*Table 1: Elective Position (1999–2015)*

Office	1999		2003		2007		2011		2015	
	Seat Available	Women	Seat Available	Women	Seat Available	Women	Seat Available	Women	Seat Available	Women
President	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
Vice President	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
Senate	109	3(2.8)	109	4(3.7)	109	8(7.3)	109	7(6.4)	109	8(6.4)
House of Representatives	360	12(3.3)	360	21(5.8)	360	23(6.4)	360	26(7.2)	360	19(5.3)
Governor	36	0	36	0	36	0	36	0	36	0
Deputy Governor	36	1(2.8)	36	2(5.5)	36	6(16.7)	36	3(8.3)	36	4
State House of Assembly	990	12(1.2)	990	38(3.8)	990	52(5.3)	990	62(6.3)		
SHA Committees Chairperson	829	18(2.2)	881	32(3.6)	887	52(5.9)	887	—		
L.G.A Chairpersons	710	9(1.2)	774	15(1.9)	740	27(3.6)	740	—		
Councillors	8,810	143(0.02)	6,368	267(42)	6,368	235(3.7)	6,368	—		

Source: Oloyede.

However, since the implementation of the National Gender Policy in Nigeria, the representation of women in politics and decision making in Nigeria is still a far cry from the benchmark of thirty or thirty-five

percent affirmative action, as the case may be. Government at all levels struggle to meet up with the affirmative action. The best that was achieved was thirty one percent for women in the ministerial appointments by the Goodluck administration. The states and local governments are even lackadaisical about the thirty-five percent benchmark. The major reason for the non-commitment to it is that, the affirmative action itself is an agenda contained in the National Gender Policy. The National Gender Policy by its nature is an action plan of the Executive and does not have any legal backing. Government will keep to it when it feels like and the best that can be done to gear the government up is lobbying.

### **The Legal Constraint to Affirmative Action on Women Participation in Politics in Nigeria**

The fact that the affirmative action is an agenda contained in the National Gender Policy does not have any legal backing, and that has militated greatly against achieving the thirty-five percent affirmative action on women. It is therefore non-justiciable, that is, where the government refuses to abide by the Policy; it can neither be challenged in the law court nor compelled by the law court to abide with same. Section 6(6) (c) of the Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) provides that the judicial powers vested in the courts shall not, except as otherwise provided by the Constitution, extend to any issue or question as to whether any act or omission by any authority or person or any law or judicial decision is in conformity with the fundamental objectives and Directive Principles of State policy set out in Chapter II of the Constitution.

For example, in *Olubunmi Okogie's V. Attorney General of Lagos State* (2 NCLR 337), it was held that the provisions of Chapter II of the Constitution are not obligatory on the government. The argument in support of the concept of the non-justiciability is that making those rights justiciable will lead to constant confrontation between the Executive and the Legislature on the one hand and the judiciary on the other. It was also argued that allowing judges to make pronouncements on whether government policy and programmes conforms to fundamental objectives and directive principles of State policy will amount to asking judges to make political value judgments.

Government and political parties in Nigeria always hide under this legal constraint and shy away from meeting the benchmark. The most that could be done to get the attention of the government and other

authorities by women interest groups in Nigeria are protests and lobbies. This legal constraint has hindered the participation of many ambitious women in politics; most of them are precluded at the party levels from vying for elective positions. The appointive positions are not spared, as fewer women are given authorities, and this is the situation across all levels of government in Nigeria. This serves as a clog in the wheel of women participation in politics and decision making in Nigeria. It has deprived the women folk the opportunity of reaping the benefits of the affirmative action as intended.

### **Other Constraints to Affirmative Action on Women Participation in Politics in Nigeria**

It is pertinent to state that apart from the legal constraint, there may be other constraints which likely inhibit the realisation of the affirmative action on women participation in politics in Nigeria. Some of these constraints are discussed as follows:

#### *Low Level of Literacy*

This constitutes a major challenge to the political participation of women in Nigeria. Generally, women are at a disadvantage in terms of education; this is because most parents give preference to their sons over their daughters when it comes to access to formal education. A survey by the National Planning Commission indicates that 50% of women had no formal education (Okpilike and Abamba 159). Since education is an important factor, the limited number of educated women also account for why only few women present themselves as candidates for elective positions (Ngara and Ayabam 54) and appointive positions respectively.

#### *Cultural Barriers*

Nigeria being a multicultural state is characterised with many cultures that discourage women participation in politics. It is perceived as a taboo in some quarters for women to be engaged in politics, a decent and virtuous woman is believed to be seen and not be heard. For example, women in Igbo communities are not expected to present kola nut (Sarah). It should be noted that most cultures in Nigeria encourage male domination which reinforces the supremacy of men over women. These cultural discriminations against women have prevented their active participation in politics.

### *Religious Restrictions*

The two major religions in Nigeria, Islam and Christianity, preach female subordination and submission to the male, and this has been the situation from the creation of man. For example, the Holy Qur'an provides that:

Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard (Qur'an 4:34).

The Holy Bible also makes similar provisions, it stated that:

Submitting your selves' one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands, as unto the lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church: and he is the Savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything (Ephesians 5 verses 21-24).

These religious injunctions may hinder the participation of women in politics in Nigeria and even the politically ambitious and enlightened women have always been caught up in the web of religious limitations.

### *Financial Incapacity*

The nature of Nigerian politics is one that requires huge funds, and very few women have the financial base and political clout to generate funds for effective participation in politics (Lewu 332). The lack of financial muscles has placed womenfolk either as subordinate or weak players in the political game (Ngara and Ayabam 52). Even the attempts by some major political parties in Nigeria to make women participation in politics attractive have not yielded much result as political godfathers are reluctant in sponsoring women. This factor has really hindered the participation of many promising women in politics in Nigeria.

### *Political Violence*

The Nigerian politics is usually greeted with violence; a typical electoral period (i.e. pre-election, election and post-election) in Nigeria features destruction of property, political thuggery, political assassination, intimidation, abduction etc. This has made most women to dread venturing into politics notwithstanding the prospects of their participation in it. In addition, women have always been the worst affected by political violence in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

Having said all that, the following are hereby recommended for the realisation of women political participation as per affirmative action:

It is important to remove the legal constraint to the affirmative action on women in Nigeria to enhance active women participation in politics by making chapter II of the Nigerian's constitution justiciable. Since all men (including women) are deemed equal before the law, there should not be any gender discrimination in the case of participation in politics. This would require taking the issue of affirmative action a step further from being a policy to becoming a law. This will put to rest the question whether or not the affirmative action is non-justiciable.

There is need for cultural re-orientation, where parents are meant to see their female children as gifts from God who should be entitled to what their male counterparts are also entitled to, including rights to actively participate in politics, contest for and occupy elective posts. After all, majority of the women who have been mentioned in history in this work succeeded in their political endeavours.

Participation in governance ought not to be gender based, especially at a moment like this when nations are yearning for a responsive and proactive leadership. There has been a global crusade for equal participation in the governance devoid of gender disparity and racism. Already, there is a paradigm shift from this orthodox belief which portrays women as a weaker vessel, this is because beyond their appointment as ministers, among others, women are currently being elected as presidents across the globe and their performance is highly commendable; hence the need for a rethink on the non-justiciability of the affirmative action in Nigeria.

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