

EDUCATION AND WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE. A POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY ANALYSIS OF ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION IN TARABA SOUTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

Gender disparities in political representation continue to undermine democratic governance worldwide, particularly in many African societies where women's participation in elective political offices remains significantly low. Despite various national and international initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality in politics, women remain underrepresented in decision-making positions. This study examined the influence of educational attainment on women's participation in elective political positions in Taraba South Senatorial District, Nigeria. The study was anchored on Liberal Feminist Theory, which emphasizes equal access to education, political opportunities, and institutional resources as essential conditions for gender equality and effective participation in public affairs.

A sequential mixed-methods research design was adopted, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative phase involved Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with electoral officials, political party leaders, women politicians, and community leaders. Findings from this phase informed the development of a structured questionnaire used in the quantitative phase. A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was employed, and data were collected from 384 respondents selected from a voting-age population of 660,220 through appropriate sampling procedures. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. A mean score of 3.0 served as the benchmark for decision-making.

The findings revealed that low educational attainment is a major factor limiting women's participation in elective political offices in the study area. Educational limitations were found to reduce political awareness, leadership competence, self-confidence, access to political networks, and active involvement in party politics. Furthermore, inadequate education contributes to economic dependency, which further constrains women's ability to compete effectively in electoral processes.

The study concludes that education is a critical determinant of women's political participation and representation. Improving women's access to quality education can enhance their political consciousness, leadership capacity, economic independence, and overall engagement in democratic governance. The study therefore recommends the institutionalization of compulsory girl-child education, the implementation of gender-sensitive educational policies, the establishment of leadership and political mentorship programmes for women, and the adoption of affirmative measures such as gender quotas and reserved seats to increase women's representation in elective political offices.

Keywords: *Gender Politics, Women's Political Participation, Educational Attainment, Electoral Representation, Liberal Feminism, Democratic Governance.*

Introduction

Gender bias in political representation remains a major challenge to democratic governance worldwide. Despite increasing global advocacy for gender equality and women's political inclusion, women continue to be underrepresented in political decision-making positions. This problem is particularly pronounced in developing countries where patriarchal traditions, cultural norms, and socio-economic inequalities limit women's access to leadership

opportunities. Consequently, the issue of women's participation in electoral politics has attracted significant scholarly attention (Anifowose, 2004; Agbalajobi, 2010).

Political participation is a fundamental element of democracy because it enables citizens to influence governance and public policy. However, women's involvement in elective politics has historically been constrained by institutional, cultural, and socio-economic barriers. In many African societies, including Nigeria, leadership is often perceived as a male responsibility, while women are expected to perform domestic and supportive roles. These societal perceptions have restricted women's access to political power and representation.

The marginalization of women in Nigerian politics dates back to the colonial era. Colonial administrative structures reinforced patriarchal systems and excluded women from formal political processes. For instance, the Clifford Constitution of 1922 introduced electoral politics in Nigeria but denied women the right to vote and contest elections (Akinboye & Anifowose, 1999; Bamidele & Ikubaje, 2004). Although women have gained political rights since independence, their representation in elective offices remains low. Women's representation in the National Assembly has consistently remained below the 35 percent affirmative action target recommended by Nigeria's National Gender Policy and international frameworks such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

At the state level, the situation is similar. In Taraba State, women's political participation gained prominence when a woman was elected to the Senate in 2011. She later served as Minister of Women Affairs under President Muhammadu Buhari's administration and subsequently contested for the governorship of Taraba State. However, her defeat highlighted the continuing influence of cultural, religious, and patriarchal attitudes that often undermine women's political aspirations (Tama & Maiwuya, 2022).

Within Taraba South Senatorial District, women's representation in elective positions remains particularly poor. No woman has been elected to the Senate, House of Representatives, State House of Assembly, or Local Government Chairperson positions in the district. The highest elective office attained by women in the area has largely been that of councilor, indicating the existence of significant barriers to women's political advancement.

Among the factors responsible for women's underrepresentation in politics, educational attainment has emerged as a critical determinant. Education is widely recognized as a tool for empowerment because it enhances political awareness, leadership skills, self-confidence, and access to economic opportunities. It also equips individuals with the knowledge and competencies required for effective political participation. Furthermore, educational qualifications constitute formal requirements for contesting many elective positions in Nigeria, making education an important factor in determining political opportunities.

The historical roots of educational inequality in Nigeria can be traced to colonial educational policies that favored male education. Missionary and government schools primarily targeted boys, while girls received limited educational opportunities (Omolewa, 2002). This imbalance contributed to long-term disparities in social advancement, economic independence, and political participation among women. In addition, socio-cultural practices such as early marriage, gender stereotypes, and parental preference for educating male children have continued to restrict girls' access to education (Ojo, 2002).

Although women constitute a significant proportion of Nigeria's population, they remain disproportionately represented among those with low educational attainment (Afolabi, 2003). Similarly, Mukhtar (2013) observes that women account for a large percentage of the country's

illiterate population due to persistent discriminatory practices and traditional gender norms. These educational disadvantages reduce women's ability to compete effectively in politics, where literacy, communication skills, policy knowledge, and formal educational qualifications are increasingly essential.

Against this background, this study examines the influence of educational attainment on women's participation in elective political positions in Taraba South Senatorial District. The study seeks to provide empirical evidence on how educational disparities affect women's political representation within a socio-cultural environment characterized by strong patriarchal traditions. The findings are expected to contribute to existing literature on gender and political participation and provide useful recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders committed to promoting women's political inclusion and strengthening democratic governance in Nigeria.

Research Question

The study was guided by the following research question:

1. To what extent does educational attainment influence women's participation in elective political positions in Taraba South Senatorial District, Nigeria?

Theoretical Framework: Liberal Feminist Theory

This study is anchored on Liberal Feminist Theory, which provides a suitable framework for examining the relationship between education and women's representation in democratic governance. The theory originates from the liberal philosophical tradition and advocates equal rights and opportunities for women and men through legal, educational, political, and institutional reforms. Early proponents such as Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), Harriet Taylor Mill (1806-1873), and John Stuart Mill (1807-1858), argued that women should enjoy equal access to education, political participation, and citizenship rights.

Liberal Feminist Theory is based on the belief that women and men possess equal intellectual abilities and should therefore have equal opportunities in all spheres of society. The theory maintains that women's disadvantaged position is not the result of biological differences but rather a consequence of discrimination, unequal access to resources, restrictive cultural norms, and exclusionary social and political institutions. Consequently, gender inequality is viewed as a social construct that can be reduced through reforms that eliminate barriers to women's advancement.

A major principle of the theory is the importance of education as a tool for empowerment and social inclusion. Education equips women with the knowledge, skills, confidence, and political awareness required to participate effectively in governance and leadership. Through education, women are better positioned to participate in decision-making, compete for leadership positions, and challenge traditional gender stereotypes that limit their participation in public life.

In the Nigerian context, Liberal Feminist Theory helps explain the persistent underrepresentation of women in elective political positions despite constitutional guarantees of equality. Women continue to face barriers such as limited educational opportunities, inadequate economic resources, patriarchal cultural practices, gender stereotypes, and restricted access to political networks. These challenges reduce their chances of competing successfully in elections and political leadership.

The relevance of the theory to this study lies in its emphasis on education as a key determinant of women's empowerment and political participation. It suggests that higher levels of educational attainment enhance women's political consciousness, leadership capacity, self-confidence, and competitiveness in electoral politics. Therefore, Liberal Feminist Theory provides an appropriate lens for understanding how educational attainment influences women's representation in democratic governance and why improving women's access to education can promote greater political inclusion.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a Sequential Mixed-Methods Research Design. The sequential mixed-methods approach involves the collection and analysis of qualitative data in the first phase, followed by the development and administration of quantitative instruments based on the qualitative findings in the second phase (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). The rationale for employing this design is to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation before subjecting the emergent themes to empirical validation through quantitative techniques (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The qualitative phase enabled the researcher to explore stakeholders' perceptions regarding the influence of educational attainment on women's participation in elective political positions. Findings generated from the interviews informed the construction of the questionnaire used during the quantitative phase. Consequently, the integration of both qualitative and quantitative approaches enhanced the comprehensiveness, validity, and credibility of the findings.

The quantitative component employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey design, which allowed the researcher to collect data from a representative sample of respondents at a single point in time. This design was considered appropriate because it facilitates the description of prevailing conditions, opinions, attitudes, and relationships among variables within a population without manipulating any variables (Bethlehem, 1999).

Area of the Study

The study was conducted in the Taraba South Senatorial District of Taraba State, Nigeria. The district comprises five Local Government Areas (LGAs), namely Wukari, Ibi, Takum, Donga, and Ussa. The district was selected because of its strategic political significance and the observed underrepresentation of women in elective political offices despite ongoing democratic reforms and gender inclusion initiatives.

Population of the Study

The target population consisted of all eligible voters, political party officials (both current and former), party members, women leaders, and electoral stakeholders within Taraba South Senatorial District. According to available electoral records, the total adult voting-age population of the district was estimated at **660,220 persons (INEC, 2023)**.

Sample Size Determination

The sample size for the quantitative phase was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Sample Size Determination Table. Based on a population exceeding 660,000 persons, a

minimum sample size of 384 respondents was considered statistically adequate for achieving representativeness at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error.

For the qualitative phase, five (5) key informants were purposively selected, comprising one participant from each of the five Local Government Areas. These participants included experienced politicians, women political leaders, and senior party officials with extensive knowledge of electoral processes and political participation within the study area.

Sampling Techniques

A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted.

Stage One: Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling was employed to select five key informants for the qualitative phase. Selection criteria included political experience, active involvement in party politics, participation in electoral activities, and familiarity with issues relating to women's political participation.

Stage Two: Stratified Sampling

The sample size of 384 respondents was proportionately distributed into three relevant strata: Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) officials – 100 respondents, Political party officials – 100 respondents and Political party members – 184 respondents.

The stratification ensured adequate representation of critical stakeholders involved in electoral politics.

Stage Three: Simple Random Sampling

Simple random sampling without replacement was employed to choose respondents from each stratum. This method guaranteed that all eligible participants had an equal opportunity of being selected, thereby reducing sampling bias and improving the representativeness of the sample. The final sample was allocated proportionately among the five Local Government Areas according to their population sizes and the concentration of relevant stakeholders.

Instruments for Data Collection

Two major instruments were used for data collection:

1. Key Informant Interview (KII) Guide

A structured interview guide consisting of open-ended questions was developed to obtain detailed information from key informants. The interview focused on understanding the relationship between educational attainment and women's participation in elective politics.

The major interview questions included:

1. In your opinion, is educational qualification a significant determinant of women's participation in elective politics?
2. How does low educational attainment hinder women's involvement in elective political positions?
3. What role can improved access to education play in enhancing women's political participation?

The interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent to ensure accuracy during transcription and analysis.

2. Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of two sections:

Section A: Socio-Demographic Characteristics

This section was designed to obtain information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Specifically, it collected data on respondents' sex, age, marital status, educational qualification, occupation, length of residency in the study area, and political affiliation. The information gathered provided a demographic profile of the respondents and served as a basis for analyzing variations in perceptions and responses across different social and political groups.

Section B: Education and Women's Representation in Democratic Governance

This section contained ten (10) items designed to measure respondents' perceptions regarding the influence of educational attainment on Women's participation in elective political offices. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Undecided (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). This scaling procedure enabled the quantification of respondents' attitudes and perceptions for statistical analysis.

Validity of the Instrument

To ensure content and face validity, the instruments were subjected to expert review by four specialists, comprising: Two experts from the Department of Statistics, Federal University Wukari. And the other two experts from the Department of Economics, Kwararafa University, Wukari.

Their observations and recommendations led to modifications in the wording, structure, clarity, and relevance of the research instruments. This process ensured that the instruments adequately measured the constructs under investigation.

Reliability of the Instrument

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient. The analysis yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.86, indicating a high level of internal consistency and confirming the suitability of the instrument for data collection. According to Nunnally (1978), reliability coefficients above 0.70 are considered acceptable for social science research.

Method of Data Collection

Data collection was conducted in two phases corresponding to the mixed-methods design.

Qualitative Phase

The researcher conducted face-to-face Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with the selected participants. Prior appointments were scheduled to ensure convenience and cooperation. Interviews were conducted in English and lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. Participants' responses were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and subsequently coded for thematic analysis.

Findings from this phase informed the development and refinement of the questionnaire used in the quantitative phase.

Quantitative Phase

Five trained research assistants, one from each Local Government Area, assisted in administering the questionnaires. The assistants were selected based on their familiarity with the study area and ability to communicate effectively with respondents.

A total of 384 questionnaires were distributed and retrieved. The researcher personally supervised the administration process to ensure adherence to research protocols, improve response rates, and minimize errors associated with data collection.

Method of Data Analysis

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data generated through Key Informant Interviews were analyzed using Thematic Analysis. The process involved: Familiarization with the data, Transcription of interview recordings, Coding of responses, Identification of recurring themes and patterns, and lastly, Interpretation of emerging themes.

Relevant excerpts from participants' responses were presented verbatim to preserve authenticity and enhance the credibility of the findings.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Data obtained from the questionnaires were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 27, for analysis.

Descriptive statistical techniques such as: Frequency, Percentages, Mean scores and Standard deviations were used to summarize respondents' responses and demographic characteristics.

A criterion mean of 3.00 was adopted as the decision benchmark for interpreting questionnaire items. Items with mean scores equal to or above 3.00 were accepted, while those below 3.00 were rejected.

Interview Results

Education and Women's Representation in Democratic Governance.

Theme: Low Educational Qualification

The major theme obtained from the key informant interview as the major factor affecting women's participation in elective politics was low educational qualification. The five participants highlighted this factor in their various responses. A 45-year-old female key informant in Wukari had this to say:

Educational background influences women's confidence and self-esteem. Those without formal education or higher educational qualifications lack confidence in themselves. This lack of confidence deters some of the women from considering themselves as viable candidates for elective positions, even if they possess other qualities and skills necessary for leadership. (KII, B1, Age 45, Wukari)

Another informant corroborated this view in his response:

Political participation often requires networking, connections, and access to opportunities for career advancement. Women with limited educational backgrounds face challenges in building networks within

political circles, accessing mentorship programmes, or securing positions that can lead to political candidacy. (KII, B2, Age 40, Ussa)

Sub-theme 1: Disparities in Educational Attainment Levels.

The thematic analysis highlighted that disparities in the level of educational attainment between men and women tend to discourage women with low or limited educational attainment in the study area. A 37-year-old male key respondent had this to say:

Disparities in educational attainment levels between men and women discourage women from participating in elective politics. Factors like early marriage, societal expectations, and traditional gender roles lead to fewer opportunities for women to complete higher levels of education, thereby limiting their qualifications for political positions that often require certain educational backgrounds. (KII, B3, Age 37, Takum)

Sub-theme 2: Male Dominated the Political Party Structure, Not Only Having a Comparable Educational Background.

One of the interview participants is of the view that it is not only having a comparable education that matters, but men have also dominated the party structure. According to him, the selection process can only favour men. In his words:

Even with comparable educational backgrounds, women in this area face unequal opportunities for political engagement and advancement. Males dominated the political structures and party system, favoring men in the candidate selection process, campaign funding, and leadership positions, regardless of women's qualifications or achievements. These disparities in political opportunities further marginalized women and deterred them from seeking elective positions. (KII, B4, Age 45, Ibi)

Sub-theme 3: Financial Cost of Educational Pursuits.

A 36-year-old key informant believes that the financial cost of education pushes some women to sacrifice their educational pursuits in consideration of the family's financial needs, which cannot afford their education. This situation limits women's ability to acquire education for political roles.

To be candid, educational pursuits often come with financial costs; therefore, women from economically disadvantaged backgrounds struggle to afford quality education. Some women consider their families' financial needs over their own educational aspirations. This financial barrier limits women's ability to acquire the necessary educational qualifications for political roles. (KII, B5, Age 36, Donga)

Quantitative Results

The qualitative data obtained were built up to form quantitative questions, and the data are presented in Table 1. The data revealed a strong consensus among respondents that low educational qualifications significantly impede women's participation in elective political

positions in Taraba South Senatorial District. All the items recorded mean scores above the benchmark of 3.00, confirming respondents' agreement with the statements. The standard deviation values, ranging from 0.66 to 0.86, indicate a reasonable level of consistency in responses. Respondents agreed that educational qualification is a key determinant of women's participation in elective politics (Mean = 4.26). They also affirmed that illiteracy prevents many women from engaging in electoral politics (Mean = 4.17). Access to education was perceived as capable of enhancing women's political participation (Mean = 3.36). Furthermore, educational and public enlightenment programmes were considered important in increasing women's political party registration (Mean = 4.25). Respondents equally agreed that low educational attainment contributes to a lack of self-confidence among women seeking elective positions (Mean = 3.98). Overall, the findings underscore the critical role of education in promoting women's political participation and representation.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation responses on Education and Women's Representation in Democratic Governance.

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
Educational qualification a key ingredient in elective politics.	4.26	0.80	Agree
Low qualifications inhibit the majority of women from elective politics.	4.17	0.66	Agree
Access to education will increase the chances of women in elective politics.	3.36	0.82	Agree
Educational and public enlightenment will increase the number of women who register with a political party.	4.25	0.86	Agree
The majority of women's lack of self-confidence to contest for elective positions is attributed to low educational attainment.	3.98	0.84	Agree

Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the Education and Women's Representation in Democratic Governance. A Political Sociology Analysis of Electoral Participation in Taraba South Senatorial District, Nigeria. Findings from both the qualitative and quantitative analyses revealed that low educational attainment remains a major barrier to women's effective participation in electoral politics.

The study found that education plays a crucial role in enhancing women's political engagement and competitiveness. Participants noted that women with limited educational backgrounds often lack the political knowledge, awareness, communication skills, and confidence required to actively participate in political processes or contest elective positions. This finding supports the Liberal Feminist perspective, which emphasizes that unequal access to education contributes significantly to gender inequality and exclusion from leadership and decision-making positions (MacKinnon, 1989).

The findings further revealed the existence of educational disparities between men and women, largely resulting from socio-cultural practices that prioritize the education of male children

over female children. In many communities within Taraba South Senatorial District, families facing economic constraints often invest more in the education of boys, while girls are expected to perform domestic duties or marry at an early age. This situation limits women's educational advancement and, consequently, their opportunities for political participation. This finding is consistent with previous studies by Anifowose (2004) and Mukhtar (2013), which identified discriminatory educational practices as significant obstacles to women's political development in Nigeria.

The study also established that factors such as early marriage, childbearing, domestic responsibilities, and traditional gender expectations contribute significantly to women's educational disadvantages. These socio-cultural constraints frequently interrupt girls' educational pursuits, reducing their chances of acquiring the qualifications and skills necessary for political leadership. This finding aligns with Ojo's (2002) argument that traditional gender roles continue to restrict women's access to education and public leadership opportunities.

Another important finding was that educational attainment alone does not automatically guarantee women's political inclusion. Even educated women often face institutional barriers within political parties and electoral systems. Male dominance in party leadership structures, candidate selection processes, and political patronage networks creates obstacles that hinder women's access to elective positions. This finding supports the views of Pogeson (2012) and Waylen (1996), who argued that political institutions often perpetuate gender inequalities through exclusionary practices that favor male aspirants.

Furthermore, the study highlighted the economic dimension of educational inequality. Rising educational costs, widespread poverty, and competing family obligations discourage many women from pursuing higher levels of education. As a result, educational disadvantages limit women's access to political opportunities, leadership training, and influential networks necessary for political success. The interaction between economic hardship and limited educational opportunities therefore contributes to the persistent underrepresentation of women in elective political offices.

The quantitative findings reinforced the qualitative results by demonstrating a strong relationship between educational attainment and women's political participation. A substantial proportion of respondents agreed that low educational attainment significantly hinders women's involvement in electoral politics. The findings indicated that women with higher levels of education are more likely to possess political awareness, participate in political party activities, and develop aspirations for elective leadership positions. This supports the findings of Tama and Maiwuya (2022), who concluded that education enhances women's political efficacy, confidence, and participation in governance processes.

Similarly, the findings corroborate the work of Ejukonemu et al. (2023), who identified education as a key driver of women's political participation. Education increases awareness of civic rights, democratic processes, and leadership opportunities, thereby empowering women to engage more effectively in political activities. Through educational advancement and political enlightenment programmes, women become better equipped to join political parties, participate in electoral campaigns, contribute to community decision-making, and contest elective offices.

Overall, the study concludes that educational attainment is a critical determinant of women's participation in elective political positions in Taraba South Senatorial District. While improving women's access to education can significantly enhance their political involvement,

achieving meaningful representation also requires addressing socio-cultural, economic, and institutional barriers that continue to limit women's political opportunities. Therefore, efforts aimed at promoting women's political participation must combine educational empowerment with broader reforms that foster gender equality within families, communities, political parties, and electoral institutions.

Conclusion

This study concludes that low educational qualification remains one of the most significant factors limiting women's participation in elective political positions in Taraba South Senatorial District. Evidence from both qualitative and quantitative analyses demonstrates that educational disadvantage operates alongside socio-cultural, economic, and institutional barriers to constrain women's political involvement and leadership aspirations.

The study established that limited educational attainment contributes to low political awareness, inadequate leadership skills, reduced self-confidence, and limited access to political networks and opportunities. Furthermore, early marriage, childbearing responsibilities, traditional gender expectations, and discriminatory educational practices continue to undermine women's educational advancement and political empowerment. The findings also reveal that even educated women face systemic barriers arising from male-dominated political party structures, unequal access to campaign resources, and exclusionary candidate-selection processes.

The study, therefore, argues that enhancing women's educational opportunities is a necessary but insufficient condition for achieving gender parity in elective politics. Sustainable progress requires comprehensive reforms that address educational inequalities, patriarchal social norms, economic constraints, and institutional discrimination within political systems. Increasing women's representation in elective offices is not merely a matter of social justice; it is also essential for strengthening democratic governance, promoting inclusive development, and ensuring that public policies reflect the interests and experiences of all segments of society.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are advanced:

- i. **Institutionalization of Universal Girl-Child Education**

Governments at the federal, state, and local levels should strengthen legal and policy frameworks that guarantee compulsory, free, and quality education for every girl child. Existing educational policies should be effectively implemented and monitored to ensure that girls, particularly in rural communities, are not denied educational opportunities due to poverty, cultural practices, or gender discrimination.

- ii. **Affirmative Action and Gender Quotas in Elective Positions**

The government should enact and enforce affirmative action measures, including constitutionally backed gender quotas and reserved seats for women in elective offices. Such measures would help address historical inequalities and enhance women's representation in political institutions at the federal, state, and local government levels.

- iii. **Expansion of Educational Opportunities for Women**

Scholarship programmes, bursaries, adult education initiatives, literacy programmes, and vocational training opportunities should be expanded to enable women who missed

formal education to acquire the relevant knowledge and skills necessary for political participation and leadership.

iv. **Political Capacity Building and Leadership Development**

Political parties, civil society organizations, and governmental agencies should organize regular leadership training, mentorship programmes, political education workshops, and campaign management seminars specifically targeted at women. Such initiatives would strengthen women's confidence, leadership competencies, and electoral competitiveness.

v. **Reform of Political Party Structures**

Political parties should adopt gender-sensitive internal policies that guarantee equal opportunities for women in party leadership positions, candidate nomination processes, and decision-making structures. Party constitutions should include enforceable mechanisms to prevent discrimination against female aspirants.

These recommendations, if effectively implemented, would contribute significantly to reducing gender disparities in political representation and fostering a more inclusive and participatory democratic system in Nigeria.

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