

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS IN IDEMILI NORTH L.G.A. IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract: *The study analyzed the gender equality and women participation in politics in Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State. The objective of the study is to find out whether gender inequality has affected women participation in politics in Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State; examine the level of women participation in politics in Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State; examine the effect of woman participation in politics on development of Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State. Three research hypothesis and three research questions are formulated in line with the above objectives of the study. Descriptive survey design method was used; the sample techniques employed simple random sampling. The population for this research work is 4212, women. It comprises of all the women in Idemili in Anambra state from the age of 30 and above while the sample size is 809 through Borg & Gall (1973) formular. The researcher distributes eight hundred and nine (809) questionnaires but only seven hundred and forty-two (742) copies of questionnaire were retrieved. Structured questionnaire were use to gather information from the population. Percentage tables and ANOVA method of data analysis was used to test the questionnaire. The finding of the study shows that Gender inequality has significant influence women participation in politics in Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State. There are factors responsible for levels of women participation in politics in Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State. Woman participation in politics has significant effect on development of Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State. The study recommends that Political parties should be required to set aside quotas for female candidates. Political parties should implement the recommended 35 per cent affirmative action strategy to ensure that at least 35 per cent of female candidates appear on their primary and final candidate lists. Policies on economic and social empowerment are needed to strengthen women to participate on an equal footing with men in political participation.*

Keywords: *Gender equality, Women participation, Politics, Idemili*

INTRODUCTION

Women's involvement in politics varies throughout the world and their participation in politics and the democratic process has become an integral part of contemporary discourse on development and governance. In spite of the clamor for women's political empowerment by international organizations, research consistently shows that in many parts of the world women still linger on the fringes of political realm and their participation in government structures and the democratic process remains low (Vissandjee et al, 2016). The growing debate by scholars and intelligentsias about the role of women in politics globally is an issue that has generated

serious controversies than resolving the perceived gender inequalities in terms of participation in Nigeria politics they advanced or developing.

Several arguments have cropped up about the place of women in politics over the years. Thus while the conservative theorists (Arowolo and Aluko, 2015) argue that the actual role of women and in fact, female folks generally ends in the kitchen, the liberalists (Erunke, 2019) have variously opined that women's political process as those of their male counterparts, and hence, such responsibilities cannot be washed away in the societal scheme of things. Women's participation in politics differs around the world, and today's discussion of development and governance are incomplete without mentioning how they participate in politics and the democratic process. Research consistently demonstrates that in many parts of the world, women still linger on the periphery of politics, and their participation in governmental structures and the democratic process remains low (Oyekanmi & Orulebaja, 2014; Akeusola, Oyekanmi & Shittu, 2018). This is in spite of the clamor for women's political empowerment by international organizations.

Gender inequality in Nigeria represents a distinct dimension that exacerbates and is exacerbated by the country's governance issue, which is caused by religious fanaticism and ethnic chauvinism. Gender inequality in the arena of Nigerian politics has not received adequate attention. Instead, over the years scholars have devoted attention to the general phenomenon of gender inequality in Nigeria. For instance, Makama (2020) opines that women constitute about half of the population of the Nigerian state and are known to play vital roles as mothers, producers, managers, community developers/organizers, etc. Their contribution to the social and economic development of societies is also more than half as compared to that of men despite their dual roles in the productive and reproductive sphere.

Gender inequality is often stern in social structures that have institutionalized conceptions of gender differences. Cultural stereotypes are possible explanations for gender inequality and the resulting gender disparity. Gender inequality has been a constant violation of human rights thus causing gender discrimination and abuse of rights. In the aspect of the female gender, the inhumane treatment of women particularly caused a need for gender self-awareness thus bringing women to participate in political matters. The introduction of the Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria in which Nigeria and other world leaders agreed to put an end to poverty, and gender inequality and promote women empowerment among others by 2015 has been an abysmal failure in the drive for women's inclusion in the electioneering process in Nigeria (Mordi, 2019).

Women's political participation and the need for gender equality have become focal points of contemporary women's rights movements globally. Since the 19th century, the struggle for women's social, economic, and legal rights has led to the formation of several women's organizations with the objective of achieving freedom, liberation, and ultimately gender equality between men and women. Enjoying equal rights when it comes to politics, education, and economic aspects is very essential, equality being the condition of things in which all persons in a given society enjoy similar rights, freedoms, and status, including potential civil laws, freedom of speech, and fair opportunities to certain public goods and services (Khan, 2021).

Perhaps, the greatest manifestation of women marginalization is in politics. Despite constitutional declaration of the equal status of both sexes in most countries of the world, gender discrimination remains fully entrenched in the power configuration of the society, with consequences of limiting women's participation in the political process. In Section 42 of the

1999 constitution of Nigeria, for instance, it is expressly stated that Nigerian citizens have the right to freedom from discrimination on the basis of, among other things, sex. In as much as there is no legal document or government policy that runs contrary to this constitutional provision or puts official stamp on the marginalization of women in politics in the present-day Nigeria, the fact remains that it is fully entrenched in the system, even if unofficially.

Otherwise, there would not have been talks on the part of government to redress the imbalance. The point being, made here is that it is in recognition of this imbalance that all countries were mandated to allot at least 30% of their elective and appointive positions to women. It is in recognition of this marginalization that Nigeria formulated the National Policy on Women and other such policies. It is also in recognition of this fact that almost all the political parties in Nigeria, during the election into the fourth republic, gave women aspirant's nomination forms free of charge Agbalajobi (2018).

Despite the constitutional provisions, local and international declarations of gender equality, and the attempts by government and the political structures to solve the problem of gender imbalance in politics, series of injustices are still always meted out to the womenfolk (sadly by the people, agencies, and structures that claim to have interest in redressing it). These injustices are perfected by the government and the political structures mostly occupied by men. It is against this backdrop that the study examines gender equality and women participation in politics in Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine gender equality and women participation in politics in Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State. Specifically, this study seeks to:

1. To find out whether gender inequality has affected women participation in politics in Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State.
2. To examine the level of women participation in politics in Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State.
3. To examine the effect of woman participation in politics on development of Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Gender Inequality

According to Dim & Asomah, (2019), gender often sets the expectations of both males and females and what each group can and cannot accomplish based on cultural and religious norms, which frequently inform legal, and legislative instruments deemed discriminatory towards female counterparts. According to Kasomo, (2012), gender is not just about roles but also about relationships. Gender inequality is the disparities among individuals based on gender. These disparities include discrimination in terms of wealth, opportunities, resources, services, benefits, decision – making, status, power and influence. Gender discrimination or inequality is as old as human race and continues to be with us in various proportions and dimensions across societies.

This is corroborated by Duru (2014), expressing the view that gender inequality could be traced to the intellectual works of Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels. Their writings created a social consciousness and an idea of social oppression. They were against women's discrimination and

subordination as these were not linked to biological difference as held by society but by social arrangements that have clear and traceable history. Marx and Engels argued that the family institution is the basis of women subordination and blamed the society for legitimizing family system as a structure that is fundamental in all societies.

Women and Political Participation in Nigeria

Momodu (2003) submits that the issues of women's political participation and representation in politics and governance should be seen from four perspectives. Access to political institutions, participation (which includes control of power within such institutions), quantitative and qualitative representation and the end result will be social and political transformation in the polity. Women's political empowerment can be enhanced when these four conditions are fulfilled. The view that women in politics matter is sustained by three reasons: First, politics is an important arena for decision making. Individuals who hold official positions in government get to decide how to allocate scarce resources, such as tax revenues.

Politicians make political decisions that may help some people at the expense of others. Decisions by politicians often affect people's individual choices by encouraging some behaviours and outlawing others. Second, political power is a valuable good. Politicians hold power over other social institutions, such as the family. Third, holding a political position is 'to hold a position of authority (Paxton, 2010). Women in positions of authority and power can influence decisions on issues that bother on women and impact positively on the lives of female gender.

Political participation, according to Igwe (2002), is the degree and forms of involvement of the people in governance and related institutions of society, such as the economy and culture. In its active sense, it involves participation in political campaigns and debates, attending caucus or strategy meetings of political parties, voting during elections, standing as candidates for elections, and holding of government and party posts. Okolie's (2004) definition goes beyond this to include freedom of expression, association, right to free flow of communication, influence decision process, and right to social justice. According to him; it also expresses such rights to demand for better social and health services, better working conditions, and increase in wages, amongst others.

However, we shall use it here in a very restricted sense to mean involvement in electoral politics only that is, standing as candidates for elections. . The essence of political participation in any society, either civilized or primitive, is to seek control of power, acquisition of power and dispensing power to organize society, harness and distribute resources and to influence decision making in line with organized or individual interests (Arowolo and Abe, 2008). All groups (including those of women) seek to influence the dispensation of power in line with their articulated interests as a fundamental motive of political participation.

Women, in their gradual consciousness of state of mind also, in recent times, increasingly seek power equation and distribution and redistribution of resources in their favour. Although, careful observations have indicated that the involvement of women in Nigerian politics is largely noticeable at the level of voting and latent support. Adeniyi (2003) has identified violence and other forms of electoral conflicts perpetrated and perpetuated by men and male youths as the major barriers confronting and inhibiting women active participation. Women's participation in politics and the series of their engagement in election processes and activities is an essential marker of the maturity and efficacy of democracy. The pre-colonial era where cultural values were respected; was also characterized by ignorance and deprivation. Men were

considered superior and the various existing traditional and customary beliefs and practices relegated women to the background in society (Sule & Haour, 2014).

Theoretical Framework

The work is anchored on Marxist Feminism and Gender Mainstreaming Theory

Marxist Feminism

Marxist feminism according to Ferguson and Hennessy (2010) is a branch of feminism focused on investigating and explaining the ways in which women are oppressed through systems of capitalism and private property. Marxist feminists contend that women's liberation can only be achieved through a radical restructuring of the current capitalist economy in which much of women's labour is uncompensated. In the same vein, influential work by Marx and Engels (1848) laid the foundation for some of the early discourse about the relationship between capitalism and oppression. The theory and method of study developed by Marx (1859) termed historical materialism, recognizes the ways in which economic systems structure society as a whole and influence everyday life and experience. Historical materialism places emphasis on the role of economy in determining the base of the society. According to Engels (1884), the shift from feudalism to private ownership of land has had a huge effect on the status of women. In private ownership system, individuals who do not own land or other means of production are in the views of Engels in situation of enslavement –they must work for the owner of land in order to be able to live within the system of private ownership.

Engels (1884), explains that the transition to this type of system resulted in the creation of separate public and private spheres and assigned access to waged labour disproportionately to men. Ferguson and Hennessy (2010), contend that such gender oppression is closely related to class oppression and the relationship between men and women in society is similar to the relations between proletariat and bourgeoisie. On this account woman's subordination is a function of class oppression, maintained like racism because it serves the interest of capital and the ruling class; it divides men against women.

Also Vogel (2013), states that in the capitalist system, two types of labour exist. The first is the productive in which the labour results in goods or services that have monetary value in the capitalist system and thus compensated by the producers in the form of a paid wage. The second form of labour is reproductive, which is associated with the private sphere and involves anything that people have to do for themselves that is not for the purposes of receiving a wage (i.e. cleaning, cooking, having children) both forms of labour are necessary, but people have different access to them based on certain aspects of their identity. Women are assigned to the domestic sphere where the labour is reproductive and thus uncompensated and unrecognized in a capitalist system. It is in the best interest of both public and private institutions to exploit the labour of women as an inexpensive method of supporting a workforce.

Hartmann (1981) contends that for the nuclear family, the power dynamics dictates that domestic work is exclusively to be completed by the woman of the household thereby liberating the rest of the members from their own necessary reproductive labour. Marxist feminists argue that the exclusion of women from the productive labour leads to male control in both private and public domains. They also believe that women's liberation will be achieved when capitalist system is eliminated through socialist revolution that would usher in better conditions for women.

The application of Marxist feminism is useful in explaining and understanding gender inequality and women participation in governance with a focus on Enugu state. The theory is apt in investigating and analyzing the ways in which women are oppressed through the system of capitalism and private ownership of property. Women's subordination is not a result of biological disposition but of social relations and men's efforts to control women which have become institutionalized in the family and legitimized through patriarchy. The assignment of productive labour which attracts wages to men and reproductive labour without wages to women. Consequently, women are excluded from public sector reserved for men and consigned to the domestic sphere of caring for the family. This has made women to be dependent on the men for living including financial dependence. Women must be confined to the private domain and attempt to venture into public sector such as politics characterized by violence and attendant consequences is always seen as deviant behavior.

Empirical Studies

Obi, Okoli, Chiaghana & Ono (2022) examined the relevance of political campaigns in influencing Anambra women participation in politics. The specific objectives are; to find out the number of Anambra women who are exposed to political campaigns, to ascertain the sources of political awareness campaigns available to Anambra women. This study was designed as a survey. Using an online sample size calculator, a sample of 385 women was drawn from 24 villages that were randomly selected. Representing the 21 LGAs in Anambra state. The study was anchored on two theories; the individual differences theory and the selective perception media effect model. Findings from the survey indicate that Anambra women are not necessarily influenced by the awareness campaigns but by their personal decision and that religious belief and fear of name tagging are still major constraints to active participation of Anambra women in politics. The study concluded that there are still barriers that are limiting the Anambra women from participating in politics which are socioeconomic and cultural in nature. The study recommended, there is a need to increase political awareness campaigns using different mediums and to re-strategize on how to represent such campaigns to dispel the fears of Anambra women towards active participation in politics. It also recommended that the government should help create an equitable platform that will encourage women to participate actively by addressing decisively all the socioeconomic, cultural and political factors that limit women empowerment.

Tama, & Maiwuya, (2022) examined why women are marginalized and the factors responsible for the low level of women in political participation in Taraba and Nigeria. In achieving this, Documentary research using descriptive and content analysis were generated from secondary data. This study reveals that some women that contested for key political positions were either refused to be voted for by the men or see as weaker folks for governance. In addition, some group of politicians, especially the men, rejected a call for gender equality bill and calling it a means for women empowerment. Most importantly, this study also discovered that Nigerians see religious and cultural beliefs to be more superior to Nigeria's constitution thereby discouraging women and creating a low level representation of women in government when compared to men. There is need for women to be enlightened on their potentials, study the nation's constitution thoroughly and avoid intimidation by men on political participation.

Wuya. (2021). *Gender and the Imperative of Women Participation in Governance: Prospects and Challenges* This studied focus on mainstreaming strategies has not borrowed the rich socio-cultural contexts that are not related to the country's intellectual environment. The first section of the studied argues that certain factors have been attributed to this sorry situation of woman

such as; social, political, socioeconomic, identity politics and gender dynamics have significantly affected the active participation of women in governance. Scholars tend to Present African cultures and traditions as the reasons for the prevalence of poor responsiveness to gender mainstreaming and social acceptance of the concept. With relevant illustrations and cases this paper demonstrates the need for Nigerian's mainstreaming strategies and programmes to consider economic, social, religious and cultural realities of women which keep them at the margins of power. It is against this background that the paper concluded these challenges can be harnessed as opportunities to change the narrative and involve the women in governance.

Uwa, Anegbode Daudu, and Oyewole (2018). Women's participation in politics is a contentious issue in the Nigerian political life. Over the years marginalization has characterized women participation in politics due to various inhibiting social, cultural and religious forces. These forces affected women's perception of politics leading to a very low level of political interest, knowledge and activities of women in politics. Nigeria politics became male - dominated almost making the women virtually politically invisible. However, various moves to inculcate skills and knowledge that will liberate women from abject poverty (socially, economically and politically) are on. These will go a long way to increase and improve women participation in politics in Nigeria. Women are believed to have an exciting political prospect in Nigeria. The issue of inequality has therefore been perceived by different people especially the women folk as an attempt to erode their fundamental rights. In short, Women Participation in Nigerian politics is a topic of importance. Politically, women have been relegated to the background, despite the tremendous effort put forward by government and non-governmental organizations following the declaration made at the fourth World Conference on women in Beijing, which advocated 30% affirmative action and National Gender Policy (NGP) recommendation of 35% affirmative action for a more inclusive representation of women both in elective and appointive positions. It is worthy to note as revealed by this paper, that Nigerian women are still being marginalized due to the style of leadership inherent in the country. Despite the challenges women are facing, it was discovered that women activism and advocacy, education of women, positivity on the part of successive governments towards women empowerment and interest of women to participate in politics is getting a lot of positive energy. It is therefore, an indication that the participation of women in politics has a bright future. But, this is not without that, relevant stakeholders are advised to advocate for the protection of women from abuse, empower them economically and politically and review the necessary legislations to accommodate the growing interest of women in politics both elective and appointive positions.

Ezeokafor, Jacobs, and Ekwere (2021) determine the influence of cooperative society on women empowerment in Nigeria with particular interest in Awka North LGA, Anambra State. Specific objectives were to determine the influence of social activities of cooperative society on women empowerment; and ascertain the influence of economic activities of cooperative society on women empowerment. Two hypotheses were tested from the responses gathered from the field. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to determine the sample size of 91 respondents from the population of 118, representing a 77% response rate. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, means, percentages, and tables were used to present the data obtained to achieve the study objectives. While the classical linear regression technique using the ordinary least squares (OLS) approach was used to test the hypotheses. Findings revealed that the social activities of women cooperatives in Awka North LGA have significant influence on women empowerment index (F ratio = 4.887; Significant at 0.001). Which shows that social activities of women cooperatives are important determinants of women empowerment. It was also revealed that the economic activities of women cooperatives in Awka North LGA have

significant influence on women empowerment index (F ratio =9.917; Significant@ 0.001). Which implied that efforts at encouraging and promoting economic activities/farming of members of women cooperatives are critical determinants of women empowerment. Among other recommendations, concerted efforts should be made by the government, civil society groups, NGOs, and cooperative societies in raising awareness among rural women on the benefits of joining cooperative societies and a channel for promoting their economic wellbeing and empowerment.

METHODOLOGY

This study was concerned with gender equality and women participation in politics in Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State. It therefore requires a specified methodology that will be used to obtain relevant data, present, analyze and interprets the result of the study. The research design that was adopted in this study is the survey design. The data for this research work were collected from primary and secondary sources. The population for this research work is 4212, women. It comprises of all the women in Idemili in Anambra state from the age of 30 and above. The sample size of 809 was derived from Borg & Gall (1973) formular. The researcher made use of questionnaires as instrument for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages while the hypotheses were analyzed using ANOVA at the appropriate level of confidence (0.05).

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter presents the data obtained from the respondents through the administered questionnaire. Eight hundred and nine (909) were administered, among the successful and highly educated Igbo traders in Nnewi spare parts markets in Anambra state and its environs. However, seven hundred and forty-two (742) questionnaires were retrieved. Therefore the analysis and interpretation of data were only based on the returned questionnaire. The validity and reliability of this study is highly ensured, despite the number of questionnaire not returned.

Respondent rate of the collected questionnaire

S/N			Percentage Returned
1	Copies of questionnaire Distributed	809	100
2	Copies of questionnaire Returned	761	94.1
3	Copies of questionnaire Rejected	19	2.34
	Copies of questionnaire used	742	91.7

Source: Field Survey 2024

From the table above, eight hundred and nine (809) copies of the questionnaire were distributed. Seven hundred sixty-one (761), were returned which represent 94.1, while nineteen were rejected because they were not properly filled. Seven hundred and forty-two (742) which represents 91.7% were used in the analysis.

Demographic characteristics of Respondent

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Married	326	40.5	43.9	43.9
Valid Single	141	17.5	19.0	62.9
Valid Widowed	129	16.0	17.4	80.3
Valid Divorced	72	8.9	9.7	90.0
Valid Separated	74	9.2	10.0	100.0
Valid Total	742	92.2	100.0	

Source: SPSS Version 21, 2024

The above table reveals that the three hundred and twenty-six (326) of the respondents which represents 43.9% were married, while one hundred and forty-one (141) respondents which represent 19.0% were single. Again, one hundred and twenty-nine (129) of the respondents which represents 17.4% were widowed, seventy-two (72) of the respondents which represent 9.7% were divorced in our selected population sample for this study. Lastly, seventy-four (74) respondent which represent 10% were separated The implication of this is to enable us to know the number of married, single, divorced and widowed respondents that successfully returned their questionnaire.

Level of Education

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid WAEC	579	71.9	78.0	78.0
Valid OND/HND	70	8.7	9.4	87.5
Valid BSC	52	6.5	7.0	94.5
Valid MSC	41	5.1	5.5	100.0
Valid Total	742	92.2	100.0	

Source: SPSS Version 21, 2024

The table above indicated that five hundred and seventy-nine (579) respondents which representing 78.0% maintain to acquire have acquired WAEC, while 9.4% of the respondents which represents seventy (70) acquired OND/HND. However fifty-two (52) which represent 7 percent either have BSC. Forty-one (41) respondents which represent 5.5% acquire MSC. This

is one of the demographic item which helped us to identify the education qualification of the respondent.

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	30-40	146	18.1	19.7	19.7
	41-50	297	36.9	40.0	59.7
	51-60	173	21.5	23.3	83.0
	61-ABOVE	126	15.7	17.0	100.0
	Total	742	92.2	100.0	

Source: SPSS Version 21, 2024

The table above shows that respondents whose age bracket falls between 30-40 yrs were one hundred and forty-six (146) which represent 19.7 percent. This is followed by those with age bracket of 41-50 years with two hundred and ninety-seven (297) which represents 40.0%. Also those within age bracket of 51-60yrs were one hundred and seventy-three (173) which represents 23.3%. This is followed by those with age bracket of 61-above years with one hundred and twenty-six (126) which represents 17.0%. The implication of this age distribution is to enable us to check if the questionnaire was directed to the right age group.

Hypotheses Testing

Test of Hypothesis One

Ho₁: Gender inequality has no significant influence women participation in politics in Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.655	2	.328	12.778	.005 ^b
	Residual	23.464	740	.118		
	Total	24.119	742			

Sources: SPSS Output 2024

In testing this hypothesis, the F-statistics and probability value in table 4.3 is used. Strategic environmental variables have a F-statistics of 12.778 and a probability value of 0.000 which is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypotheses which state that Gender inequality has significant influence women participation in politics in Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State

Test of Hypothesis Two

Ho₂: There are no factors responsible for levels of women participation in politics in Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	183.254	2	29.006	35.028	.000 ^b
	Residual	75.986	740	.828		
	Total	259.240	742			

Sources: SPSS Output 2024

Second hypothesis has f-statistics of 35.028 and a probability value of 0.000 which is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypotheses and conclude that, There are factors responsible for levels of women participation in politics in Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State.

Test of Hypothesis Three

Ho₃: Woman participation in politics has no significant effect on development of Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.746	2	.373	7.286	.002
Within Groups	161.869	740	1.305		
Total	162.614	742			

Sources: SPSS Output 2024

The test conducted revealed that the large significance value (F.sig<.002) indicate no group differences. Since the F-value of 7.286 with a significance of .002 is less than .05 (i.e .002<.05), there exist no group difference. Therefore, Woman participation in politics has significant effect on development of Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State

Summary of Major Findings

The increasing global campaigns by women's movements for gender equality have raised popular consciousness and intense academic discourse on the poor participation of women in politics across the globe. Since sustainable democratic government relies upon the participation of all citizens in determining through elections and political processes, who governs them, the imperative of women's involvement in political and human development cannot be over emphasized. Despite the increasing agitation for gender equality all over the world however, for years, women record poor participation in politics and decision making positions. This is despite the fact that women constitute about half of the world's population. The dismal participation of women in Nigeria's political development became a worrisome phenomenon when after four consecutive successful legitimate change of government through democratic electoral process following the nation's return to civilian regime in 1999; Nigeria fails to

achieve the critical mass of 30% women's representation in the National Assembly. Like other countries in the world, women constitute half of the Nigeria's population, yet this numerical strength of Nigerian women does not translate to increase in women's participation in political activities in the country. The following findings were review

- i. Gender inequality has significant influence women participation in politics in Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State
- ii. There are factors responsible for levels of women participation in politics in Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State.
- iii. Woman participation in politics has significant effect on development of Idemili North L.G.A. in Anambra State

Recommendation

- i. Political parties should be required to set aside quotas for female candidates. Political parties should implement the recommended 35 per cent affirmative action strategy to ensure that at least 35 per cent of female candidates appear on their primary and final candidate lists
- ii. Policies on economic and social empowerment are needed to strengthen women to participate on an equal footing with men in political participation.
- iii The government should tighten the legal framework so that female politicians in Nigeria can contest any electoral fraud.

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