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ISSN (Online) : 2455 - 3662  
SJIF Impact Factor :5.148

## EPRA International Journal of **Multidisciplinary Research**

Monthly Peer Reviewed & Indexed  
International Online Journal

Volume: 4 Issue:12 December 2018



**Published By :**  
**EPRA Journals**

**CC License**



**EPRA International Journal of  
Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR)**

**BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING FOR NIGERIAN  
WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS: A GENDER  
MAINSTREAMING APPROACH**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Since Nigeria's independence in 1960, women have continued to be underrepresented in politics. Women tend to be limited by various factors, which are found in the system of the society such as patriarchy, structure of production and reproduction, among others. There are perspectives in literature that there exist impermeable and impenetrable barriers that prevent women from reaching top positions in offices. Although women in many parts of the world have made strides into politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century but a remarkable breaking of the glass ceiling is yet to be witnessed. For instance, Scandinavian countries such as Sweden and Norway have achieved gender parity in women representation in politics. While a country like Rwanda is now a global leader in women representation in parliament, and South Africa has made remarkable progress towards gender parity, Nigeria still falls short of the gender equality initiatives by the international community. Against these backdrops, this paper seeks to address the glass ceiling effect for Nigerian women's participation in politics and the extent to which the adoption of United Nations Gender Mainstreaming Approach could help Nigerian women's full participation and representation in politics.*

**KEYWORDS:** *production, women, legislation, policies, decision-making*

## INTRODUCTION

The road to guaranteeing equality between men and women began some decades back (Fabrega, 2009). Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, gender issues turned into a major area of global concern. Seminars, workshops and conferences were held all over the world to discuss women's rights and women progression in all areas of life. For instance, at the 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the global community stressed the importance of women assuming positions of power and influence, not only because their points of view and talents are needed, but also to ensure gender mainstreaming. According to United Nations, **Gender Mainstreaming** is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns, experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.

Prior to the 1995 Beijing Conference, United Nations came up with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1979, which almost all member countries are signatory to, although not without reservations from countries in the Middle East. What is worthy of note is that the United Nations' consistent calls for gender equality through a gender mainstreaming approach have produced positive results in many countries of the world. For instance, the most significant features of the global labor market in the last half of the twentieth century is the increasing participation of women (Bombuwela and Chamaru, 2013).

Around the world, governments have initiated policies that could afford women a voice in decision-making processes. Women as well, are rising up to challenge the patriarchal domination and subjugation they face in their respective societies. Many women groups, agencies and movements are working towards promotion of women's rights and women empowerment, such as the UN Women. Some countries of the world have adopted quota system (either constitutional quota or political party quota) that allow women have equal representation in political decisions. The initiation of gender friendly policies (especially the use of quotas), for example, helped Scandinavian countries such as Norway and Sweden to achieve gender equality at the cabinet level. In Africa, with the use of quota system, Rwanda achieved a great feat in gender equality and it is now the global leader

in women representation in parliament. Other countries like South Africa, Mauritania, and Mauritius etc. have made remarkable progress towards gender mainstreaming.

Despite the world progress towards gender equality in many countries of the world, Nigeria is still not among the 20 countries that have made remarkable achievements in Africa, and it is at the bottom ladder in the world. Since Nigeria's independence in 1960, women have continued to be underrepresented in politics, both in the military era and the civilian administration. Nigeria's first female Minister (Minister of National Planning, 1979-1983/4) in the person of Chief Adenike Egun Oyagbola was appointed nineteen years after the country's independence. While argument could be made that, the authoritarian nature of the military rule could have hindered women political participation, it is important to state that significant changes have not been witnessed in the democratic dispensation.

Scholars have pointed that women representation in politics has remained minimal (Odah, 2003; Adu, 2008; Osondu-Oti and Omole, 2016), except at the level of campaign mobilisation, voting and latent support (Omoniyi, n.d). When one considers the fact that women now account for more than half of Nigeria's population, it is hard to believe the level of women's under-representation in the country's politics (cited in Adu, 2008). The marginalised and subordinate position women found themselves in the Nigerian society have been attributed to different factors, chief among them is colonialism. Prior to the colonial era women occupied important roles in the traditional political lives of their communities such as the Queen Amina of Zazzau who reigned in A.D. 1576 and possessed equal access to authority as the men.

The traditional system, which gave women the chance to have a say, was disrupted during the colonial era and the power lost has never been fully regained. According to Odah (2003), when the colonial government introduced electoral politics, Nigerian women were excluded. There is no gainsaying that colonial administration relegated Nigerian women to the background, and they now have to struggle to return to their 'former' positions (Osondu-Oti, 2016) or to gain a 'better' and 'recognised' positions.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Nigeria women, for instance, are now seen occupying few important positions in political decision-making, a remarkable breaking of the glass ceiling is yet to be witnessed. There are different barriers that prevent women from reaching top positions especially in political offices. In other words, women tend to be limited by various factors, which are found in the system of the society such as patriarchy, the structure of production and reproduction, among others. According to Omoniyi (n.d), the absence or under-representation of women in the world of politics

may not be due to inadequate intelligence to participate but due to other cultural and environmentally imposed obstacles. The objective of this study is to examine the glass ceiling effect for women's participation in politics and the extent to which the adoption of United Nations Gender Mainstreaming approach could help Nigerian women attain political heights. The first Section is covered in Introduction. The Section 2 examines the concept of Glass Ceiling. Section 3 gives an overview of women representation in politics in Nigeria since the country's independence in 1960. Section 4 discusses the Glass Ceiling barriers for Nigerian women and the need to adopt the gender mainstreaming approach. Section 5 contains the conclusion and the recommendations.

### **THE CONCEPT OF GLASS CEILING (GC)**

The Glass Ceiling (GC) is a popular metaphor for explaining the inability of many women to advance past a certain point in their occupations and professions, regardless of their qualifications or achievements (Purcell et al, 2010). Glass Ceiling is one of the compelling metaphors for examining inequalities between, men and women in the workplace (cited in Bombuwela and Chamaru, 2013).

The term Glass Ceiling was popularized in the 1980s following Morrison, Randall and Velsor's (1980) book publication titled, 'Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Can Women Reach the Top of America's Largest Corporations?' It later served as the focus of a U.S government Committee on Glass Ceiling chaired by the then Secretary of Labor, Robert B. Reich. The Committee's Report defined Glass Ceiling as those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization into management level positions (U.S. Glass Ceiling Commission 1995 cited in Purcell et al, 2010). The Report noted that women and minorities encountered substantial GC barriers in their careers. The Report extended the original usage of the term to include racial/ethnic minorities and all managerial and decision-making positions (Purcell et al, 2010). Glass ceiling or what Tlaiss and Kauser (2010) called, 'Glass Wall' (cited in Osondu-Oti, 2016) is a form of gender discrimination in workplace. There exist subconscious discrimination and stereotyping that see leadership as men's domain, and places women in the care for families at homes and doing domestic chores. The stereotyping of women is the top impediment/barrier when it comes to women's progression up the leadership ladder. Such barriers that prevent women from ascending to senior management positions in large corporations have often been described by the metaphor glass ceiling; a transparent barrier, which prevents women from moving up the

corporate ladder past a certain point (cited in Bombuwela and Chamaru, 2013).

Glass Ceiling is seen as an impermeable and impenetrable barrier, which prevents women from reaching senior positions in offices and organisations (cited in Osondu-Oti, 2015). Glass Ceiling applies to women as a group who are kept from advancing higher because they are women (Morrison et al., 1987). Fagenson-eland and Parker (1998) cited in (Osondu-Oti and Omole, 2016) identified features of an organization with glass ceiling. These are organisations that are often non-supportive working environment for women; organisations that tend to highlight gender differences, weaknesses and exclude women from group activities because of gender differences, and organisations that do not tend to help females to prepare for management positions or prepare women workers on how to achieve or balance work with family and personal life issues. Glass Ceiling is not one ceiling or wall in one spot, but rather many varied and pervasive forms of gender bias that occur frequently in both overt and covert ways (cited in Bombuwela and Chamaru, 2013).

### **OVERVIEW OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION/REPRESENTATION IN NIGERIAN POLITICS SINCE 1960**

Nigerian women's entry into the 'corridors of power' or 'arenas of power', whether in governance or political decision-making has been at a very slow pace. After the country's independence in 1960, women progression into the ladder of high political offices has not been entirely encouraging. For instance in the first Republic, no woman was able to win election into the federal legislature, though three women were elected into the Eastern House of Assembly in the 1961 regional elections (Eme et al, 2014). In the Second Republic, only one female Senator, Franca Afegbua, was elected into the Senate in 1983 but served for only three months before that Republic collapsed. Out of the 300 gubernatorial aspirants during the transition programme of Ibrahim Babangida in 1992, only 8 were women and none of them was able to make it to any of the Government Houses, as all the states were won by men (Eme et al, 2014).

However, the year 1999 marked the beginning of a new dawn as Nigeria returned to civilian rule after the demise of military rule (Ngara and Ayabam, 2013). The democratic dispensation afforded women great opportunity to struggle for their basic human rights, and speak against patriarchy and marginalization. Now, women are increasingly vying for positions in governments. Slowly but surely, women have come to occupy 'some' 'space' that democratically corresponds to them (Fabrega, 2009). Nevertheless, their representation in politics is still insignificant, when compared to men. For instance, during the 1999

general elections, out of 11,881 available positions throughout Nigeria, women won just 181 positions (Akiyode-Afolabi, 2003). In key offices such as President, Vice President and Governor, there was no woman. Only one female deputy governor was recorded and that was the Deputy Governor of Lagos State (1999-2003), Chief Kofoworola Akerele-Bucknor. The number of Deputy Governors later rose from one in 1999 to three in 2003 and all of the three came from the Southern part of the country and none from North.

Today, women have been appointed into key positions and have occupied (though few) key offices in Ministries, Parastatals and Government agencies. Women have headed key Ministries such as Finance, Education, Petroleum, Aviation, among others. For instance, during the administration of Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan women were head of key offices such as Dr. Sarah Alade (Deputy Governor of Central Bank); Mrs. Omobola Johnson (Minister of Communication Technology); late Prof. Dora Akunyili (Director General, National Agency for Food and Drugs Control); Allison Maduekwe (Minister of Petroleum Resources); Mrs Evelyn Oputu, (Managing Director of Nigerian Bank of Industry); Prof. (Mrs) Ruqayyatu Ahmed Rufai, (Minister of Education) and Dr. Okonjo- Iweala (Minister of Finance), among others. In the present administration of Muhammadu Buhari, women have portfolios such as Minister of Finance and Minister of Environment, etc. even though women activists and feminists have criticised the Buhari government as not being gender friendly because the number of women in his administration has reduced compared to the Jonathan era. Table I below shows the number of women representation in highest levels of political offices from 1999 (the year Nigeria returned to democratic rule) till date.

Although the National Gender Policy was adopted by the Nigerian government in 2006, but in reality gender mainstreaming remains a distant dream

in Nigeria. The Beijing Platform for Action that seeks 30 percent share of decision-making positions for women is yet to be constitutionally addressed by many countries in Africa, including Nigeria. In Africa, according to data compiled by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, four countries that came closest to achieving 30 percent female decision makers in 1997 were Seychelles (27 percent), South African (25 percent) Mozambique (25 percent) and Eritrea (21 percent), and 36 countries had less than 10 percent female representation in government. At the turn of the century, South Africa increased women representation to 27 percent, Uganda and Rwanda have 25 percent and 48.8 respectively (Egwu 2005 cited in Eme et al, 2014). These countries have subscribed to gender friendly policies that prescribe the use of quotas to close the gap in the underrepresentation of women in public positions.

There is no doubt that quotas whether legally mandated through constitution or electoral process have led to dramatic change in women's political participation throughout the world. For instance, the first 15 countries with the most women in parliament such as Rwanda, Sweden, Costa Rica, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Netherland, Cuba, Spain, Argentina, Mozambique, Belgium, Austria, Iceland and South Africa use political quotas. While countries like Rwanda uses constitutional quota, Argentina uses not just constitutional quotas but electoral and political party quotas. Effective quota systems have helped to get women into federal and state executive councils, parliament, and political parties. According to Henry (2002), because of the cultural bias in testing, as well as the lack of educational opportunity and general social prejudice, government owes people ('in this case, women') who have suffered injustices a special chance to get ahead, even if it entails some bending of the civil service regulations. Thus, the adoption of use of quotas becomes a welcome development.

**Table I: Women Representation in Highest Levels of Political Offices in Nigeria (1999-2015)**

S/NO	Position	Number of Available Seats	Number of Women Elected in 1999	Number of Women Elected in 2003	Number of Women Elected in 2007	Number of Women Elected in 2011	Number of Women Elected in 2015
1	President	1	0	0	0	0	0
2	Vice President	1	0	0	0	0	0
3	Senate	109	3	4	8	7	7
4	House of Reps	360	12	21	27	26	17
5	Governorship	36	0	0	0	0	0
6	Deputy Governorship	36	1	3	6	1	5
7	State Houses of Assembly	990	12	38	54	68	46

Source: National Bureau of Statistics Data, 2015

From the Table 1 above, the number of women in Nigeria's Parliament reduced in 2011 against the feat achieved in 2007. In 2015, another reduction is seen in the number of women in the House of Representatives (see the Table above), against what was seen in 2011. For all the political offices available in 2015, the number of women representation reduced (from what was achieved the previous years), except the position of female Deputy Governor that increased from 1 to 5. The five women Deputy Governors that were elected in 2015 came from the Southern part of country- Enugu State, Akwa-Ibom State, Lagos State, Ogun State and Rivers State), and none from the Northern parts of the country, where Islamic religion to an extent poses great barrier to 'women's rights.'

While this paper is not a comparative study of men and women representation in the political offices in Nigeria, the examination of the current positions of women as well as the achievements they had made since the end of the colonial rule is timely given the clamour for gender equality across the globe. Moreover, women's participation in many national legislatures, state and local governments are not only transforming the politics of the present; it is also altering its future. With increasing women's interests in politics, young women are increasingly becoming aware of their rights to be involved in critical decision-making processes and make valuable contribution to the society.

### **BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING BARRIERS FOR WOMEN: THE GENDER-MAINSTREAMING APPROACH**

In the last few decades, there have been noticeable changes in the roles women play in diverse

societies, shown in women acquiring more education and attaining career heights (cited in Osondu-Oti, 2016). Women have ascended high political offices, such as Presidents and Prime Ministers in countries like Brazil, United Kingdom, Liberia, Germany, South Korea, Liberia, Malawi etc. It has been asserted that in the last two decades there has been an increase in the proportion of women at entry and middle-level management positions, resulting largely from the activities of the women's movement, policies of the political system, and corporate equal opportunity initiatives (Bomuwela and Chamaru, 2013).

However, more than four decades after the first United Nations Conference on Women in 1975, the statistical picture for Nigerian women's participation at high levels of politics and decision-making remains bleak. In the terms of 35 percent affirmative action spelt out by the Beijing Platform of Action adopted in 1995, Nigeria still falls short of implementing the gender mainstreaming initiative. While countries like Rwanda has surpassed the 35 percent women representation in government agenda, Nigerian women are still struggling to win political seats. In area of political appointment, women have been given key positions such as Ministers of Finance, Petroleum, Aviation, Education, among others. In electoral positions, women have competed with men although no woman has been elected as President or Governor of any State in Nigeria. Few women are seen participating and representing in political decision-making. Although the traditional role of women as homemakers is changing all over the world, only few Nigerian women have made their way up the leadership ladder.

There is no doubt that there are barriers that prevent women reaching top position or venturing into

politics. For instance, patriarchy is a major barrier to women ascension to key political positions. Nigeria, just as many other societies, is a highly patriarchal society, where men as seen as the dominant powers and women as subordinate. Many African societies still maintain patterns of male privilege and power, and 'consciously' holds on to the belief that men is to command and women is to obey (Osondu-Oti, 2017). Under such a male-centred system without a female face, women lack access to politics and decision-making and are highly under-represented at most levels of government (Eme et al, 2014). The power relations that have prevented women from political activism operate in many levels of society, from the most personal to the highly public (Eme et al, 2014). It has been argued that limited representation of women in Nigerian politics is because of men's dominance in the political party hierarchy, which places them at a vantage position to influence party's internal politics in terms of selecting or electing candidates for elections, and political patronage (Eme et al, 2014).

There is also the issue of culture and religion that pose great barriers to Nigerian women. It should be recalled that in April 2016 the first Gender Equal Opportunity Bill presented to the Nigerian Senate was rejected and the argument of the Senators was that the country's culture and 'religion' 'forbids' women equality with men (Osondu-Oti, 2016). Although the Modified version of the Bill (where the language of equality has been removed) passed second reading in September 2016, religion and cultural practices play significant roles on 'who' is elected into Nigeria's political offices. The culture of socialisation and the training system, which most men and women are, exposed from childhood place women in subordinate positions, where they have to play a second fiddle. In Nigerian culture, women are expected to manage the home fronts and men are expected to lead the public domain. Thus, the sex-stereotypes and gender segregation in allocation of roles in private and public life are fundamentally a product of the early socialization process and the indoctrination of the social environment (Nzomo, 1994). One major factor attributed to the glass ceiling effect on women is the social role theory. This theory proposes that men and women according to the social roles given to them act the way their genders are stereotyped (cited in Osondu-Oti, 2017). The stereotypical views assigned to genders can act as social norms, which represent how we believe others should act as well as personal dispositions, which represent our beliefs in how we should act. There is argument that people develop gender role expectations at early stage, which endures throughout life. Therefore, social role theory, the cognitive mindsets and cultural beliefs that come with it are important areas to take into account when explaining the glass effect for limited participation of

women in politics. Because of the idea that public leadership belongs to men, women often have more problems when signaling their skills as effectively as possible.

In addition, Nigerian women, especially unmarried, are sometimes hindered, due to the 'success penalty' in the marriage market that comes with women career advancement (Osondu-Oti and Omole, 2016). The penalty women face in the marriage market for choosing another career such as difficulty in finding a husband contributes to women's limited participation in politics (Osondu-Oti and Omole, 2016). Due to the society's great regard to marriage, especially for women, it becomes difficult for unmarried women to venture into politics because of the fear that men might stay away from them. Moreover, politics is seen as a 'dirty game' that only men could play, and women, both married and unmarried are to be excluded.

Women's limited participation in politics is also an obvious feature of the capitalist society. According to Marxist Feminist theory, women's oppression/marginalization is a manifestation of the unjust structure of the society (cited in Osondu-Oti, 2016). Marxist feminists argued that capitalism is the primary oppressor of women given the hierarchical relations of control in the means of ownership of production, and men's dominance in formal sector (cited in Osondu-Oti, 2017). Thus, to Marxist feminists, class relations are primary oppressor of women, and gender relations secondary. These are evident in Nigerian society. The way the Nigerian society is structured is one in which men own the means of production and as such wields the financial power to play politics. Women's works are often domesticated with fewer benefits. Men often have the financial capability that is required to venture into politics compared to women. Women are not economically empowered to play the game of politics. Contesting for any political office in Nigeria requires money, either to buy form or to run a successful campaign. According to Eme et al (2014) in Nigeria, politics is an expensive business that requires huge sums of money, where the amount of money one has in his/her pocket goes a long way in determining one's electoral fortunes. Thus, with the structure of production and reproduction in the society, women find it difficult to afford the 'amounts' of money required to fund an electoral campaign.

Another barrier to women's participation in politics in Nigeria is the political party structure/system. The party structure can impede participation of women because information about politics can be disseminated through channels that men have more access to than women (Eme et al, 2014) do. Party system can reinforce traditional division of work by gender, where men participate fully in decisions and

in choosing candidates and women only play the roles of supporters and voters. While in countries such as Argentina, political parties have adopted quota system to allow women easy access to politics, political parties in Nigeria are yet to take that path, because of the societal construction that presenting a woman as a major flagbearer might hinder the party's chance to win (Osondu-Oti, 2017). Thus, party quota system is yet to be embraced in Nigeria. In the words of Agina-Ude (2003 cited in Eme et al, 2014):

It is not known that any political party has any strategy for equal representation in its executives as required by the Beijing Platform for Action. So far, besides creating the post of the women leader, parties have not adopted any other system to increase the number of women holding party offices (cited in Eme et al, 2014).

The reason behind the non-adoption of quota system among political parties is not far from the society's gender stereotyping and bias against women's leadership.

Another significance barrier to women participation in politics is inadequate formal education or lack of access. The United Nations Development Programme (2006) pointed that women constitute 60 percent of the informal sector workers. It is a fact that Nigerian women are latecomers in acquiring formal education because of the then societal belief that women's education is a waste and ends in the kitchen. Only few women had the opportunity to acquire formal education at independence, and such few either decided to take the bull by the horn or came from an enlightened family. It is not until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century that more women were seen gaining diploma certificates and university degrees. The educational attainment of women widened their horizon and enabled them seek for jobs and participation in key decision-making as well as politics. Nonetheless, in the present Nigerian society particularly the Northern region, education for women has not been totally accepted, as early marriage still thrives (Osondu-Oti, 2015). Young girls in Northern Nigeria still do not have adequate access to formal education. Although many women groups have been engaging in sensitization of the people on the importance of female education, lack of adequate formal education remains an impediment. Osinulu (1996) stated clearly that:

The lack of education and expertise among the womenfolk in relation to the demands of political leadership is an impediment to women's participation in politics. As a result of low educational and professional attainment, they are poorly equipped mentally to venture into the male dominated world of politics. Because of the deficiency in the fields of education, professional ability

and poor leadership skills, the Nigerian woman lacks self-confidence, courage and boldness required to aim for the highest post in political arena... (cited in Eme et al, 2014).

It is also important to state that lack of legal/constitutional backings for women in Nigeria is another impediment to women. Countries like Rwanda, Norway and Sweden achieved gender parity in Parliament due to the Constitutional backings given to equal gender representation. Nigerian government is yet to give such legal backing. In a male-dominated Senate (eight women out of 109 members), it becomes difficult for women to win any vote without the support of men. Nigerian men have often held tenaciously to culture and religion of the country that placed women as subordinate and not equals. Thus, it was, for example, difficult to pass the first Equal Opportunity Bill presented to the Senate (dominated by men).

Given the progress made by other countries of the world, gender mainstreaming as advocated by the United Nations is a necessary approach for Nigerian government to help women break the glass ceiling. The government must make the concerns and experiences of women and men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies as well as programs so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. Gender equality implies equal treatment of women and men in laws and policies, and equal access to resources and services within families, communities and society. To achieve equality requires two-pronged approaches of **Gender Mainstreaming**, which are: 1) systematically analyzing and addressing in all initiatives the specific needs of both women and men; and 2) targeted interventions to enable women and men to participate and benefit equally from development efforts. Gender equality is not solely a women's issue; in fact, it seeks to tailor activities to the beneficiaries of the project from both sexes. Gender equality serves to the advantage of both men and women and it cannot be achieved without the full engagement of both. Thus, to break the glass ceiling barriers and increase the participation and representation of women in politics, there is a need for Nigerian government to work towards implementation of the UN **Gender Mainstreaming** approach.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Across the world, the achievements made by women, especially in the area of politics are undisputable. Women's increasing participation in politics and the holding of key political positions are noteworthy. Different countries in the world have keyed into the UN agenda, of gender mainstreaming

and gender equality, which have afforded women greater voice in political decision-making processes. In Africa, Rwanda's exemplary achievement of gender equality in Parliament cannot be overlooked. While countries of the world continue to strive towards gender equality, Nigerian women's representation in politics is still insignificant. Their political participation is primarily seen in the area of campaign mobilization and latent voting. While Nigerian women have been appointed to head key political offices, their larger participation and representation in electoral politics have been hindered by glass ceiling barriers such as patriarchy, structure of production and reproduction, culture and religion, inadequate formal education, success penalty and lack of legal backings that support equality in the country's Constitution. Nigeria has not adopted the use of quotas that helped some countries (Rwanda, Norway, Sweden, Argentina etc.) to achieve gender parity. In a changing world, and with consistent clamour for gender equality at the United Nations, it is believed that the glass ceiling barriers can only be a bridge (that must be crossed), but not a barricade to women's success and progress. Thus, to join the moving train of gender equality advocates and to support women to break the glass ceiling, Nigeria government should adopt the use of quotas in the Constitution in order to ensure equal representation of men and women in politics. In addition, those restrictive and harsh cultures that trample on the rights of women (for example, cultures and traditions that encourage girl-child marriage) should be abolished by the government, so that women can enjoy their full fundamental human rights.

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