

Politics of Implementation: The Foray of National Gender Policy and Political Development of Women in South-West Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper contributes to the literature on the national gender policy context in Nigeria. It surveyed how policy strategies translated into active mainstreaming of women in the politics of governability of the country. It argued that balancing gender distribution in institutions of governance is premium on the need to deconstruct structurally and socio-culturally induced thinking of gender roles which made reflective gender performance a mirage in Nigeria. This mirrors the saying that “only the wearer knows where the shoe pinches”, that is women are aptly positioned to generate and situate congressional debate on core women-related questions. Drawing on descriptive methodology, empirical data were sought from 375 respondents including political parties [PDP & APC], CDAs and CSOs. Increased sensitization, community mobilization, and a conducive political environment were linked to the policy implementation while affirmative action, gender mainstreaming, and women in elected party positions were ongoing mirages in the history of post-authoritarian gender advocacy in Nigeria. These latter findings cast heavy doubt on the institutional ladder through which women can legislate for their course in the Nigerian polity.

Key words: Gender studies; Politics; Political development; National gender policy; Political development

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1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of gender has continued to generate debate globally despite several efforts to proffer a generally acceptable solution to it. For instance, in the last two decades, international conventions, institutional reports, protocols, declarations, and conferences have been convened to develop consensus as to global response actions toward promoting female gender in society. Examples of these include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1979; the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality (SDGEA) in 2004; the Copenhagen Declaration of the World Summit on Social Development (WSSD) in 1995; the Inter-Parliamentary Union Reports (IPU); the United Nations Women Reports; Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Right (ACHPR); the 1995 International Conference on Women in Beijing. All these international commitments were driven by the United Nations' agenda which reinforces the need to empower citizens, particularly females to strengthen their capacities and involvement in mainstream development (United Nations, 1995).

Countries like Rwanda, Bolivia, and Cuba have directed efforts towards implementing globally accepted mechanisms (such as affirmative action; proportional seats; quota system; national gender policy) in bridging the gap that exists between females and males occupying political and leadership positions. However, the majority of countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have not achieved the targets established at various international conventions and declarations on addressing men-centred electoral recruitment (Isakson, 2010; Bratton and Ray, 2002.). According to United Nations Women, the average

standing of women parliamentarians in the world stood at 26.5 per cent as of April 2023, showing a relatively slow increase of 0.4 per cent against last year. The report indicated that although a few countries have considered improvement towards the 50 per cent target of the Beijing Declaration, only three (3) countries (Rwanda – 61.3%; Cuba – 53.4%; Nicaragua – 51.7%) surpassed the target (World Economic Forum, 2023).

In the Nigerian context, the Federal Ministry of Woman Affairs and Social Development reported that Nigeria is a highly patriarchal society where female citizens are dominated by male citizens in all spheres of life, in response to this; the National Gender Policy was formulated in 2006 with an all-encompassing goal to:

build a just society devoid of discrimination, harness the full potentials of all social groups regardless of sex or circumstance, promote the enjoyment of fundamental human rights, and protect the health, social, economic, and political well-being of all citizens to achieve equitable rapid economic growth; evolve an evidence-based planning and governance system where human, social, financial and technological resources are efficiently and effectively deployed for sustainable development (National Gender Policy: P. vii).

The above extract depicts the holistic approach adopted in the policy. This shows that the issue of gender revolves around all sectors. Like every other member state of the United Nations, Nigeria proceeded to domesticate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 to follow the guideline of the agenda to achieve the expected result. The fifth objective of SDGs focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls but the SDGs baseline report of 2016 showed that women in Nigeria are still faced with issues like gender-based violence and rape culture, female genital mutilation, early girl child marriage, transactional sex, marriage as a means of transaction, forced prostitution, lack reproductive health autonomy, the existence of harmful traditional practices against women among others.

Women's participation in the politics of Nigeria is a significant part of the gender policy and SDGs indicator, despite this, the level of female representation in the politics of Nigeria remains low. Since the inception of the policy, Nigeria has not recorded significant progress in achieving the policy target of 30% in 2007 and 50% in 2011. Although, there is no constitutional barrier to the participation of women in politics and the trend of voters turnout from previous years shows that the level of women's participation, which entails, casting the vote during the election, and attending political meetings has increased from 10% to 40% in 2015. Thereby confining women's political engagements to a marginal corridor of political leadership in Nigeria.

In a bid to establish the veracity of this hypothesis, this contribution provided empirical insights into how the implementation strategies of the National Gender Policy have translated into the political development of women,

especially in the area of political participation in Nigeria. To do this, the Southwestern region was used to mirror Nigeria for field research purposes. This paper is divided into five parts. Part I is the ongoing section, it introduced the focus of this contribution, Part II provided empirical conversations on gender policy regimes in Rwanda. Part III detailed methodical options used for data collection and analysis. In Part IV, findings, hypothesis testing, and discussion were presented, and the final part contained closing remarks and proposed policy options.

2. LEADING WITH EXAMPLES: EMPIRICAL ACCOUNTS OF RWANDA

The ranking of the Inter-Parliamentary Union has constantly placed Rwanda as the leading country among other democracies that achieved thirty per cent (30%) affirmative action for women, even more, in political leadership. Rwanda's parliament has the highest number of women in a single-house parliament worldwide with a 61.3% of women in the lower house. This unprecedented feat by Rwanda generated opposing views from different contexts. The post-war context premised the growing participation of women in national politics and deciding as a reflection of post-war realities – the Rwanda genocide although recorded high-level sexual violence, yet targeted adult and young men (Prumer, 1995) Conversely, the social transformation literature identified several factors that sided with the idea of intentionality (Ruboneka, 2009). For instance, a study conducted by Delvin and Elgre (2008) reveals that Rwandan women have already taken a key position during the war. They indicated that women in Rwanda have always wanted to be in politics even before the war.

Using the explanatory account, Delvin and Elgre review the impact of increasing women's participation using three independent variables namely parliamentary culture; policy agenda, and policy output. Amendment to parliamentary rules mainly in the area of parliamentary rules, hours, and timeline, creation of feminist institutions and gender-oriented laws were among techniques adopted by the in-deepening their representation at the level of the national parliament (Baur & Britton, 2006; Delvin & Elgie, 2008).

In the opinion of Herdon and Rondell (2013) the appreciation of the involvement in National politics is likely linked to the political will of the government, genuine consciousness of women parliamentarians against the dominating ideology of colonial imperialists – this most often termed 'Radical change' by post-Rwanda genocide literature (Uwineza & Pearsons, 2009). The argument of the two contexts provides a sitting background to establish whether or not Rwanda is the leading state in representative democracies in Africa. This clearance is important to disorientate the position that

only the demographic imbalance of men and women gave this accidental position to the country. This current study primed Rwanda as literature established a series of factors and mechanisms that helped the East African State.

For instance, many studies mentioned state-sponsored mechanisms, especially at the ministerial and agency levels some of which include the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF); the Gender Budgetary office in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, National Women's Council, The Gender monitoring office, Gender Desk in the Rwanda National Police and Rwanda Woman's Parliamentary Forum (Pearson and Powley, 2008; Clark, 2012). These fronts are established deliberately to mobilize and sustain more women at the national level. These facts sidelined the post-genocide scepticism held by some writers like Hogg, 2009, who maintained that the government approach was to quiet the dissent of the wars. In contrast to this view, Burnet (2008) upheld the high commendations often allotted to the Rwandan authoritarian government, this he expressed "initiative by an authoritarian government can be positive" In an objective stand, it will not be out of point to state that the aftermath war, most often, leads to demographics imbalance of men and women populations but we must not allow a seemingly natural expectation to water down efforts of the state, especially through policy interventions.

Clark's (2012) investigation into women in parliament revealed woman activism and stable-based support as the major drivers of the women's movement in Rwanda. Women proved their commitment to accepting more political duties by judicious use of leadership positions bestowed upon them. The government of Rwanda through various platforms such as the Local Women's Organization (PRO-FEMMES), Association of Widows of Genocide (AVEGA), and the promotion of women judges in the local court of Gacaca promoted the participation of women in public affairs. From the foregoing, it becomes incumbent for appreciating the efforts of the government in Rwanda. These state-based decisions took place on the eve of the 2003 general election in Rwanda. Measures such as a constitutionally guaranteed quota of 30%, reservation of seats for women in the chamber of deputies (lower house), and prioritization of women in local executives were enforced by the government (Hondrahan, 2004).

Gatsinzi's (2018) field survey in Rwanda primed measures put in place to promote women's participation. The study was limited to the grassroots mobilization of women in Rwanda against the previous studies that focus on national politics. It used a qualitative descriptive method and symbolic representation, Gatsinzi re-examined the way women are mobilized at the grassroots; investigated the public perception of women in politics and explored factors affecting women's participation at the grassroots. The study concluded that the marital status and education level of women in local politics can be identified as factors affecting women in local politics.

The study further established that economic, cultural, and religious factors contributed to the low level of women's participation at the grassroots unlike what is obtainable at the national level. Imploring from Gatsinzi's opinion Women are not using their position at the national level to effect changes at the grassroots. This is because political mobilization and awareness are limited to the national level hearing the grassroots women at the mercy of the men-dominated local politics. There should be a lot of lobbying and influencing of laws and policies at the national level to trickle the effects of their national achievement to the local settings, the political significance of women in Rwanda should not be limited to national policies.

From the foregoing, the Rwanda experience exposed the weakness in the Nigerian quest to onboarding women politicians into core political mantle-ship. Given the vast women fraction of Nigeria's population, the low grip of women in core areas of political space suggests the need to document fresh evidence on the complexity of the implementation of the National Gender Policy in Nigeria.

3. METHODOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION

A survey research method was used for the study. The survey investigated phenomena in their natural setting. This is a great strength in the early stages of the investigation of a problem in that it affords flexibility and versatility. The population for this study (6062) consisted of political appointees, legislature and executive members of the two major political parties (APC and PDP) at the local and state governments level, women groups of the Community Development Association (CDAs) and gender specialised Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that operates in democratic arena, and INEC officers in the selected states.

The study utilised a multi-stage sampling technique. In the first stage, a stratified random sampling technique was used to select Ogun, Osun, and Ondo from the three axes of Lagos/Ogun, Ekiti/Ondo, and Osun/Oyo. The combination of Lagos/Ogun, Ekiti/Ondo, and Osun/Oyo are based on locational proximity, common socio-political orientation, and cultural similarities respectively. In the second stage, one urban and one rural local government area was selected using stratified random sampling techniques from each senatorial district in the selected states making a total of six (6) local government areas in each state. In the third stage, the proportional-to-size sampling technique was employed to select a sample size of 375 respondents (using Yamane's estimation) from the study population.

The study employed both primary and secondary sources of data collection. Primary data was collected through questionnaire administration, while secondary data was obtained from relevant journal articles, internet sources, and official publications/documents. The validation of the instrument was carried out using appropriate measures to validate the degree to which the

responses gathered from the respondents are consistent and reliable to the construct of the research context. This was achieved by giving the questionnaire to faculty experts in gender studies. The data collected were analysed using descriptive and non-parametric statistics such as frequency distribution table, Relative Impact Index, and chi-square.

4. RESULTS, HYPOTHESIS TESTING, AND DISCUSSION

This section presents an analysis of the respondent's views on the outcome of the National Gender Policy on women's political development in the following paragraphs.

4.1 Outcome of National Gender Policy in Women's Political Development in Nigeria

Eleven (11) items tested the outcome to which the implementation of the policy promoted the political development of women in Nigeria. The result of the survey was pulled together using percentages and Relative Impact Index (RII). The percentage was used to identify areas where the implementation of the policy has aided women's involvement in politics by pinpointing the scale with the highest frequency while RII (pooled average of the responses) was used to rank each of the items measuring the outcome of the policy implementation.

Based on this, the analysis of these variables was presented in ascending rank order in Table 1. The survey results indicated that the implementation of the gender policy has to a large extent enhanced the sensitization of women to participating in politics in the study area. This outcome came by with over 203 (60%) responses. Similarly, the pooled average (RII=2.95) of the responses ranked the sensitization of women on political participation as a noticeable effect of the national gender policy among the tested variables. This result shows that the intervention of the gender policy contributed more to promoting women's participation in politics through a series of women sensitization programs.

The survey on community mobilization by women's organizations was ranked second (RII=2.83). The most reoccurring responses were a large extent at 175 (55.2%). This opinion poll indicated that the implementation of the gender policy in the area of community mobilization by women's organizations has enhanced political participation to a large extent. Although going by this analysis, the item (community mobilization) was linked with the intervention of the gender policy aimed at promoting women in politics, the question is has this mobilization staged more women for holding the mantle of leadership either at the local, state, federal, or party levels? Results from the quantitative survey indicated that the implementation of the National Gender Policy created an enabling environment for women to participate in politics in the study area. This position was substantiated

by 189 (59.6%) of the total responses as measured by RII (2.79) which ranked the result third position meaning that the policy enabled participating environment for women. The environmental component of political participation might be provided for every aspiring man and woman through policy implementation although other factors might influence the practicability of the enabling political environment.

Another effect of the implementation of the national gender policy was seen in the reform of traditional structures which had to serve as the basis for relegating women in the political setting. The survey distribution showed that 171 (53.9%) of the opinion gathered supported that the national gender policy promoted reform of traditional structures to a large extent in favour of gender mobilization. The pooled average (RII=2.66) ranked this variable fourth among others. This finding indicated that the deployment of national gender policy in mobilizing women for political participation was enhanced through the reformation of traditional structures in favour of women. Similarly, the implementation of the gender policy has resulted in increased awareness among the traditional council as to the right of women to engage more in political activities. The claim was supported by 171 (53.9%) of the respondents and appeared in the fifth position (RII=2.62) among the tested variables. This implies that traditional elites are more sensitized to the need to support women aspiring to take leadership positions.

Mainstreaming of gender awareness (women) in party politics recorded a low average of the pooled responses gathered from the field survey. The majority of the respondents opted that the effect of the policy implementation on gender (women) mainstreaming in political settings was a small extent at 175 (55.2%) of the total responses. Ranking in the sixth position (RII=2.36), gender mainstreaming a key objective of the policy has remained elusive. This means that the implementation of the policy exerts little or no effect in promoting gender mainstreaming in politics in the study area. The extent to which the implementation of the policy reduces discriminatory policies against women's participation in politics was rated small by 173 (54.6%) of the respondents. The average of the pooled responses placed the efforts to eradicate discriminatory practices in favour of women's political participation in the seventh position (RII = 2.35). This outcome indicated that discriminatory practices are still ongoing at the level of political participation of women despite the implementation of the National Gender Policy.

The analysis of the data sets on the effects of the implementation of the policy ranked implementation of affirmative action, increment of women in elective positions, and improvement in the number of women in appointive positions in the eight positions sharing the equal average of the total responses (RII=2.25).

The policy intervention has not yielded any appreciable improvement in the application of affirmative action in the political setting as 175 (55.2%) of the responses gathered showed a small extent of the effect of the policy on the use of affirmative action.

Similarly, the outcome of the survey indicated that the effect of the policy in mobilizing women for elective and appointive positions was imaginary. These conclusions were supported by 175 (55.2%) and 179 (56.5%) of the total respondents who opined that the extent of the effect of the policy implementation in the areas of elective and appointive positions was not enough. This means that the targets of the policy to implement affirmative action as well as mobilizing more women for elective and appointive positions were not achieved. The survey sought the opinion of the respondents on whether the implementation of the national policy reduces the night meetings often employed by the political parties. This distribution indicated that the night meeting of the political parties has not reduced with 157 (49.5%) of the respondents indicating a small extent and having the lowest impact (RII=1.89) according to the survey. This implies that the implementation of the policy did not eradicate the practices of night meetings among political parties, thereby sabotaging the efforts of married women who might be interested in participating in political activities.

4.2 Hypothesis Testing

Given the categorical nature of the effects of the implementation of the National Gender Policy (NGP) on women's political development set out in the items under

the research instrument, a chi-square (χ^2) test measures the degree of dependency of categorical data. This test was suitable since no single-item statement measures the effects of the policy, as such, the responses (only frequency) were summed up to represent the effects of the policy (categorical variable). Similarly, chi-square (χ^2) assumptions of randomized responses (observations) and independent items were satisfied by the study's survey distribution on the effect of the policy (Kothari, 2004, p.238). To neutralize the unfitted effect in the data, log transformation (In) of the values was used to compute the chi-square (χ^2). The null hypothesis tested that the implementation of the NGP has no significant effect on women's participation in politics. Items measuring the effect of the policy were subjected to a single case chi-square (χ^2) test of the association at a five per cent (5%) level of significance.

As shown in Table 2, the calculated value of χ^2 is 0.381 and the table value of χ^2 for four (4) degrees of freedom (df = 4) at a five per cent (5%) level of significance is 9.488. The calculated value of χ^2 is much lower than the table value meaning that the p-value is greater than 0.05. Therefore, we do not reject the null hypothesis. Thus, conclude that the national policy has no significant effect on women's participation in politics in the study area. This test indicated that government intervention through the national gender policy was not significantly associated with the overall mobilization of women into politics in Nigeria but this does not foreclose governmental efforts in improving the nature of women's participation in politics.

Table 1
Outcome of the Implementation of NGP on Women's Political Development

Items	Scale										RII
	NE		VSE		SE		LE		VLE		
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Increased sensitization of women's participation in politics	-	-	14	4.4	44	13.9	203	64.0	56	17.7	2.95
Increased community mobilization by women's organizations	4	1.3	8	2.5	78	24.6	175	55.2	52	16.4	2.83
Creation of enabling environment for women's participation in politics	2	0.6	12	3.8	76	24.0	189	59.6	38	12.0	2.79
Reformed traditional structures favouring more women in political participation	6	1.9	18	5.7	88	27.8	171	53.9	34	10.7	2.66
Increased understanding of traditional councils on the right of women to participate in politics	10	3.2	18	5.7	86	27.1	171	53.9	32	10.1	2.62
Increased gender mainstreaming in party politics at all levels	-	-	26	8.2	175	55.2	92	29.0	24	7.6	2.36
Eradication of discriminatory policies against women's participation in politics	8	2.5	18	5.7	173	54.6	90	28.4	28	8.8	2.35
Successful implementation of affirmative action	8	2.5	26	8.2	175	55.2	96	30.3	12	3.8	2.25
Increased number of women in elective positions	8	2.5	32	10.1	175	55.2	76	24.0	26	8.2	2.25
Increased number of women in political positions	10	3.2	30	9.5	179	56.5	68	21.5	30	9.5	2.25
Reduced frequency of night meetings by political parties	40	12.6	52	16.4	157	49.5	40	12.6	28	8.8	1.89

Source: Field Survey, 2020

NE – No Extent; VSE – Very Small Extent; SE – Small Extent; LE – Large Extent; VLE – Very Large Extent, RII – Relative Impact Index.

Table 2
Chi-square measuring Outcome of NGP on Women Participation in Politics

Scale options	OF	In (OF) = O	Exp. Freq. (E)	O - E	(O - E) ²	(O - E) ² / E
No Extent	96	1.98	2.65	-0.67	0.4489	0.1694
Very Small Extent	254	2.40	2.65	-0.25	0.0625	0.0236
Small Extent	1406	3.15	2.65	0.5	0.25	0.0943
Large Extent	1371	3.14	2.65	0.49	0.2401	0.0906
Very large Extent	360	2.56	2.65	-0.09	0.0081	0.0031

$\chi^2 \text{ cal} = 0.381$

Source: Author Computation.

NB: $df = (n - 1) = 5 - 1 = 4$, $\chi^2 \text{ cal}$ (Chi-square calculated as in table 4.4) = $\sum (O - E)^2 / E$

$E = \sum (O) / 5 = (13.23) / 5 = 2.65$ (Chi-square assumes that each scale option has an equal chance to the opinion of the respondents).

4.3 Discussion of Findings

From the analysis, variables like the effect of sensitization of women by various organizations to participate in politics, mobilization by women's organizations, and the creation of enabling environment among others were found to be very impactful among the strategies of NGP while attending late-night meetings, affirmative action and mainstreaming of gender into party guidelines are at the bottom of the ladder. The relative impact index was used to rank the level of effectiveness these variables have brought into women's participation in politics.

The sensitization strategy of NGP has brought a significant effect on the involvement of women in politics that was supported by 60% of the respondent who agrees to the fact that the introduction of national gender policy has resulted in continuous and intentional sensitization of the public towards the importance of having women participating in politics. Luke (2019) argued for the agitations of CSOs in collaboration with the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development to improve women's representation in politics their efforts consist of changing cultural norms, programs to empower women through training or mentoring, monitoring fairness, and conduct of elections, and advocating for affirmative action from the state this was made possible by the adoption of CSOs as a stakeholder in achieving the objectives of the policy.

Also, women's organizations have become effective in mobilizing women to participate in the election. This pulled 55.2% positive response. However, this has not promoted the representation of women in political seats. Available pieces of literature suggest that women are used to do the push work of politics, they constitute mass of votes, dance at the rally, go for political campaigns and also the women's organizations mobilize women to vote for men (Atu, Odeh, Odibo & Agbo, 2019). The work of Ogunyankin (2014) highlights women do partake in the political sphere more than before in recent days but when

they do it is often in gendered ways that do not challenge hegemonic patriarchal structures.

The creation of an enabling environment for women in politics has also gained some improvement since the implementation of the National Gender Policy began. 59.6% of the respondent said this has become impactful to a large extent. This was made evident in the improvement recorded in the rate of women's participation in politics. The environment created by NGP was not restricted to the eradication of violence (much has not been achieved in that aspect) but it has brought the consciousness of gender-friendly atmospheres in the political arena. It has become a manifesto of political parties to create inclusiveness of women in politics by creating offices that can be occupied by just women and making instructions that promote the inclusiveness of women in party politics. Having women in political seats, party executives, and contesting for public office is no longer an abnormality unlike before when it must not be heard of. Although the available evidence shows that realizing the objective of the NGP towards the involvement of women in politics is farfetched but substantial developments are recorded.

At the bottom of the ladder for relative impact index ranking weak areas of development concerning the implementation of the Policy. They are, gender mainstreaming into party guiding principles (54.6%), affirmative action and holding of public offices (55.2% & 56.5%), and attending night meetings (49.5%). Looking back at the objective of the policy which expected 50% of women in representation by 2011, and the less than 10% of women we have in political representation till 2019 it becomes a question of what was being done to achieve the objectives. The policy named the political party as a major stakeholder in eradicating gender inequality in the political system and mainstreaming gender into the political parties is the work of political parties.

Oke (2015) argues that the political environment of Nigeria has not been adequately democratized to engage more women in political participation. He went further to explain that gender mainstreaming is an important element of women's empowerment. This means an adequate examination of the consequence of intended actions on men and women which include legal reform, rules, or norms that cut across various sectors. It is a process that encourages the consideration of men's and women's concerns and experiences as a major factor to be considered in the process of 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 no longer in existence. It recognizes that most institutions wilfully and automatically serve the interests of men and encourages institutions to adopt a gender perspective in transforming themselves. It promotes the full participation of women in decision-making so that women's needs

move from the margins to the centre of development planning and resource allocation (Oke, 2015). In support of this observation, it can be said that until the policies and guiding principles of political parties are intentionally reconstructed to accommodate women's participation in politics, achieving a high percentage of women in politics might just be a myth.

The report of this investigation indicated that respondents don't believe that the implementation of national gender policy has resulted in affirmative action and the promotion of women in holding public offices. The use of affirmative action and quota system in Nigeria has become a subject of debate since Nigeria became a signatory to various international treaties geared towards eradicating the discrimination of women and eradicating gender inequality. This has resulted in a lack of achievement of the 35% proposed by the nation. In the same view, Luke (2019) observes that the Nigerian government has been reluctant in implementing laws and regulations to improve gender equality in politics, despite formal support for it. Several bills have been rejected by the legislators to promote gender equality based on them being in contradiction with religious and cultural beliefs. This was evident in the slow progress of achieving more women representation.

The representation of women in politics in Nigeria has the lowest rate both by global and regional standards. 50% was supposed to be achieved by 2011 but as of the 2015 general election women constituted 5.6% and 6.4% in the lower and the upper house of legislation respectively (Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Following the same prevalent pattern, the number of women in the legislation in the 2019 general election was 7.3% in the Senate and 3.1% in the House of representative while out of 36 state governors, there was not a single woman. This level of representation flows from federal to the region and local government across the nation while the political party system has done very little to encourage women's participation.

Attending political meetings at night is a norm in Nigerian politics and the social-cultural responsibility of women does not permit excessive night outings. One will have thought that the creation of a national gender policy must have created an alternative on the night outing to permit women especially the married ones to have opportunities in politics but the reverse is the case when 78.5% of the respondents gave a response that the implementation of NGP has not had any significant effect on the frequent night meetings. Ogunyankin (2014) explained the reason why many women may not agree to the night meetings. The popular belief is that women are naturally supposed to be playing a subordinate role and be "good wife" whose primary role is to value domesticity and stay at home any women who participate in politics are often time viewed as a bad woman for transgressing

her assigned gender role outside her home where she does not belong. This belief has earned many women the name "prostitute" (a name freely used by people to describe female politicians), the lack of support from husbands' families, and the threat of divorce. From the response, it was observed that there is a difference between real politics and surface politics.

5. CONCLUSION AND POLICY OPTIONS

The politics at work over the implementation of the gender policy have shown the unwillingness of the concerned stakeholders in realizing the policy target. They concluded that the National Gender Policy of Nigeria has achieved below the expected results after sixteen years of its existence and the success that can be accorded to the policy is not very impressive. This study suggests a total realignment of the policy to correct the existing abnormalities that pose challenges to the implementation of the policy in Nigeria to give it legal backing and enforce the implementation of the policy on various stakeholders.

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