



An Analysis of the Culture of Patriarchy and the Participation of Women in Politics in Enugu North Senatorial Zone

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Abstract: *The objective of this paper is to examine the cultural factors inhibiting the participation of women in electoral politics in Enugu North Senatorial Zone of Enugu state. This is because global patriarchy has given ascendancy to men in politics, authority and decision-making in and outside the family. 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. This paper analyses marginalization of women in decision-making and the challenges encountered by female politicians on their way to political participation in Nigeria. It also, contends that the power relations that have prevented women from political activism operate in many levels of society, from the most personal to the highly public. It argues that the gender uneven electoral politics in Nigeria is as a result of men's majority 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. The paper notes that socio-cultural, economic, political, organizational, legal and political factors have combined to shape the "home-centred" perception of Nigerian women, and explains the level of participation of women in political and bureaucratic decision-making positions. Data for the study were drawn mainly from primary and such as interview, focus group discussion and secondary sources like journals, textbooks, government and other official publications among others. To reverse the historical under-represented Enugu North Senatorial Zone women in politics, and decision-making in governance, the paper proposes a triad strategy for women disempowerment in the zone. First, is a women friendly legal framework in which affirmative action principles are incorporated into the Nigerian Constitution and Electoral Act. Second, is exhibition of positive role modeling for gender image laundering by the few women in top political and administrative positions. Third, is the advancement of women's agenda and support of party activities as well as funding of women who are actively seeking political offices as a mechanism for addressing the imbalances and injustices against Nigerian women.*

Key words: *Gender, Politics, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Marginalisation, Equal Opportunity Act, Decision-making, National Gender Policy and Patriarchy.*

INTRODUCTION

In the past six decades, there have been concerted and vigorous calls on national governments to adopt and implement gender-friendly policies aimed at greater inclusion of women in national development. Agreed that even the Charter of the United Nations recognizes equal fundamental rights to all, irrespective of gender or race, socio-cultural differences as well as factors related to religion, render this goal almost impossible. These factors, however, is yet to stop the continued agitation for the greater involvement of

women in the affairs of the state through the granting of at least 35% affirmative action and a national gender policy in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, women have several organizations; governmental and non-governmental organizations aimed at complimenting government efforts particularly in the areas of empowerment of women in socio-political areas and social services delivery. With the return of political activities in 1999 several women have held political and appointive positions in Nigeria. Such people include senator (Mrs.) Florence Ita Giwa, a former senator and personal adviser to the president on legislative matters. Dr. (Mrs.) Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, former minister for finance, Dr. (Mrs.) Dora Akuniyili former Director-General NAFDAC and minister of information. Hon. (Mrs.) Abike Dabiri a member Federal House of Representatives etc. The involvement and achievements of these women in Nigerian politics make it easier to understand the fact that women actually have something to offer in Nigerian politics if they are given a level playing ground with their male counterparts.

Enugu North Senatorial Zone is a place where Culture accords leadership and control to men while women are seen naturally as the weaker sex that should be under the protection of men. According to Nwafor and Ezegebe (1998), the typical African culture disenfranchises women. Right from childhood and into adulthood, individually and as groups, women are not encouraged or admitted into community political activities. In other words, women are encouraged to engage in such activities as fetching water and fire wood, cooking food and rearing children and discouraged in engaging from communal leadership roles.

They were not encouraged to read neither were they encouraged to aspire to leadership positions. That notwithstanding, women against all these difficulties are currently found in many professions like: military, police, Navy, legal profession and we now have women pilots, to mention but a few. Therefore, if women can engage successfully in such strenuous professions which ordinarily should be for men, why then are they not maintaining their proper position in political arena; in spite of their population?-

The impression being created by this assumption is that with full implementation of these policies, a bold step would have been taken towards attaining gender equality. To this end, therefore, the paper argues that the empowerment of women does not necessarily have to be political and economic but such empowerment should be prioritized at the cultural sphere because the failure of most women to participate actively in politics can be better explained when examined from the dimension of weak economic base occasioned by cultural impediments.

However, a very serious question and reactions have in recent times arisen as a result of the low level of women's participation in politics in Enugu state. In addressing this problem this study seeks answer this single research question: What cultural factors impede the active participation of women in politics in Enugu North Senatorial Zone? This paper seeks to address this issue. To achieve this objective, following the introduction is the hypothesis and literature review. The next segments address the methodology and theoretical framework of analysis. Discussion, analysis and findings follow. The final segment offers recommendations and concludes the paper.

Hypothesis

In view of all that we have examined above, we now set to examine the following hypothesis. The patricidal nature of the Igbo society is an impediment to the participation of women in politics in Enugu North Senatorial Zone.

Cultural Factors that Militate against the Participation of Women in Politics

The issues of culture and religion are very serious in some societies. Some cultures still do not believe that women can be leaders while men are followers. Because of this, women who venture into politics are seen as cultural deviants. In other words, patriarchy is not only entrenched in the society, but is also elevated to the state of policy. Women are expected to subordinate themselves to men. This is what cost Mrs. Margaret Icheen her seat as the speaker of Benue State House of Assembly. The seat was made so hot for her that she eventually resigned. According to Boserup (1970), Kaufman Dorsey et al (1989), Imam (1990), Will's (1991), UN (1987) Nzomo (1994), among others have posited that the most significant barrier is the socio-cultural system of belief are myths, which informed the socialization process and the gendered education and training most men and women are exposed to from childhood.

According to Nzomo (1994), the sex-stereotypes and gender segregation in employment and allocation of roles in private and public life are fundamentally a product of the early socialization process, the indoctrination of the social environment. In this regard many women's hang-ups and lack of confidence in their ability competently to execute public leadership roles arises from socialization for subordination. However, it is in the social-cultural context that women's secondary role is most evident and has the most important consequences for the participation of women in politics.

In the words of Osinulu,

The consideration of the Federal Republic of Nigeria clearly stipulates that no individual (man or woman) should be discriminated against in the exercise of his or her rights to certain basic necessities of life, citizenship, shelter, education, right to freedom of speech, etc. In practice however, discriminatory practices against the female gender abound in all facets of life. Women are discriminated against at the early stages of life. For instance, the arrival of a baby boy in the family is heralded with great pomp and bride by its parents, but not so with the baby girl. The girl child; in May part of the country is withdrawn from school to help on the farm or share in the household chores, while the boy child is allowed to continue his education uninterrupted. Even where girls do continue their education, the rate of attraction is much higher for girls than boys (1996:20).

These are other discriminatory practices in our socio-cultural environment have had the effect that the average Nigerian woman is timid, uneducated, lack leadership skills and is no match for her male counterpart. She has not been prepared for any leadership position of any sort. Women are expected to support men, not to be seen to be confronting them or demanding equality and thereby fostering hostility and antagonism:

There is no need for a woman to be liberated from man ... the Men own the government. There is a need for women to fully participate in government but we need some level of understanding. We (the NCWS) are not there to take away what they have but we Are there to assist them in doing whatever they do better (Pereira, 2003: 146)

In other words, this thesis posits that women's roles are secondary and are just an additional activity to their domestic roles. Imam et al (1985) and Parpart (1990) among others have documented the woes of the 'double day' that working career women have to bear, especially in Africa where support services are few, absent or even when they exist. Nzomo (1994) quoting Paepart (1990) notes that,

Given the existing gender division of labour, there are not easy solutions for a woman who wants to succeed in her career: most working women juggle harried schedules... having fewer children or becoming single, separated or divorced in order to reduce time spent on husband's care, delay and give up marriage or family and relationships (Nzomo, 1994:205).

A 1987 UN survey further notes that even in the rare occasions when a woman has fought her way into the top decision-making position, further barriers are often erected that contribute to disemboweling her and crowding her effectiveness in that position (UN, 1987:35).

Explaining the socio-cultural sex role thesis further, the 1987 UN study goes on to argue that because people rely on stereotypes to evaluate observed behaviour, there may be perceived conflict between the behaviour that the high position requires and the behaviour general expected of women. And because most leadership positions are filled by men who are used to relating to women as mother, sister daughter or secretary-assistant, many professional male managers may never have had male as a woman 'boss' as top executive. Moreover, due to the deep rooted traditional beliefs about the subordinate role of women in society, both men and women may find it difficult to accord the top female public decision maker the respect and cooperation she requires to be effective (Nzomo, 1994:205).

The second barrier to women's participation in public role and politics is the lack of access to adequate quality formal education thesis. This thesis posits that lack of adequate quality of formal education in itself acts as a major barrier to a woman's advancement to top decision-making level. And because of lack of education, because of the customs in which they were brought up, the men who were in the position to write all the documents are the domineering factors that keep singing that a woman's place is at home.

The lack of education and expertise among the womenfolk in relation to the demands of political leadership is an impediment incidental 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. As a result of her 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. The reasons that account for such that account for such a poor status are not farfetched; the literacy rate is lower for women (54%) than for men (31%) in many parts of the country, girls are withdrawn from schools for various reasons (child marriage, child labour, trading, etc), while for those who do enroll in schools, the rate of attrition is higher for girls than for boys (Osinulu, 1996:21-22).

In political terms therefore, individual resources which include education, personal income, age, marital status, number of children, and view of the spouse among others are significant determinants for the women's participation in politics.

Another factor, which is viewed important, is the political system, as it promotes or hinders women's political activity. For example, the party structure can impede participation of women. Information about politics can be disseminated through channels that men have more access to than women and the language of politics can be a decidedly male jargon, which appears foreign to women. Political ideology can reinforce traditional division of work by gender, with politics being linked to the activities of men rather than women (Haavio \manila, et al, 1985:48). As Agina-ude argues:

It is not known that any political party has any strategy for equal representation in its executive as required by the 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. Experience during the last general elections shows that some parties had unwritten policies against female aspirants. The cases of Chief (Mrs.) A.M Osomo and some others who won the party primaries but were supplanted with men that lost are illustrative. Even though the parties tried to hide the actual reasons for the injustice, they latter admitted that the fear that the women would lose in the final elections was the real motive. Such fears might not have been unfounded as Nigerian electors are still largely biased against women (Agina-ude, 2003: 4-5).

In the words of Sarah Jibril "... how many women qualified to run for the senate? Out of four or five, but only one won, if the party had promoted women's course, more women would have won because they are not mediocre. It appears, in the two parties, men worked against women" (Ogunsola, 1996:77).

In addition to the barrier discussed above, is the lack of adequate finance or amount of money. Politics an expensive business that requires huge sums of money, especially in Nigeria where the amount of money one has in his/her pockets goes a long way in determining one's electoral fortunes. This thesis is that many women are poor, and even the wealthy ones may not be independently so. Hence, they may not be able to afford the enormous amount of money required to fund an electoral campaign (Wills, 1991:22). According to Nzomo (1994), the overall argument then being made in much of the literature of this subject is that socio-cultural, economic, political, organizational, legal and political factors are related to the level of participation of women in political and bureaucratic decision-making positions. Duverger summarizes the constants to women's political participation appropriately as follows:

If the majority of women are little attracted to political careers, it is because everything tends to turn them away from the, if they allow politics to remain essentially a man's business, it is because everything is conducive to this belief tradition, family life, education, religion and literature. The small part played by women in politics merely reflects and results from the secondary place to which they are assigned by the custom and attitudes of our society and which their education and training tend to make them accept as the natural order of things (Duverger, 1975:129-130; Nzomo, 1994:206).

Given the existing man-made barriers to women's participation, most of the literature on that subject suggests, as a matter of strategy, the development of a strong women's movement in each country, in an attempt to overcome obstacles to participation. Women need to support and work for each other to overcome by discriminations. Even where gender equality policies are in place, women need to monitor their implementation as complete reliance on the good will of policy makers and employers many of whom are men, many bring some reforms but not fundamentally change (Wills, 1991:24, Nzomo, 1994:206).

This failure to incorporate women' concerns in decision making represent a major loss for the society as a whole. Women's needs, interests and concerns are not just those of women themselves; but reflect their fundamental roles as mothers, wives and caregivers therefore, incorporating the needs and interests of a women, children, and families (including the male members).

In the words of Oby Nwankwo:

Women were discouraged from seeking political offices by discriminatory attitudes and practices, family and child care responsibilities, and the high cost of seeking and holding public office, socialization and negative stereo tying of through the media, reinforcing the tendency for political decision making to remain the domain of men (Nwankwo, 2009:60).

Oluchi Ikemefuna adds:

Women in Nigeria face a lot of odds when they contest with men. The parties often want those who can match violence with violence, those who can coerce people to vote for them. Men are widely held to be more prepared to engage in violence than women (Leadership Sunday Editorial, 2010:14).

Thus, the gender specific unevenness of electoral politics manifested itself in the following forms:

1. The persisting social resistance and / or lukewarm acceptance of women's participation in political leadership. This is in spite of the spectacular performance of the few women who held sway as heads of ministries and parastatals in this dispensation.
2. Culture of electoral violence that tends to be harsher towards female than male candidates;
3. Feminization of poverty that renders women more financially constrained to manage a campaign than men.
4. Lack of adequate political socialization for leadership that manifests itself in women's exclusion from access to strategic political information and general inability in the art of public oratory and populist campaign and

Women's marginalization in mainstream political party hierarchy and hence. Inability to shape rules of engagement (especially at the nomination stage), which are defined and organized around male norms and values (Nzomo, 2003; Nwankwo, 2009:63). The need to involve women in government is not entirely new given that it dates back to the time of Plato's *Republic*. Plato argued that the only difference between male and female is that which education makes on them. Deducible from this assertion is that education plays an instrumental role in determining the abilities or inabilities of a person. Indeed, Mill (1970) cited in Udebunu (2010) opines that a good part of women's inabilities and differences can be attributed not just to biological identity, but to prejudicial education. Plato sought to free women from their biological identity in order to guarantee successful political enterprise for them. Plato, therefore, suggested a common family structure to free the best men and women (but especially women) from the drudgery of the household which diverts them from their service. To Plato, the home was a stumbling block; a centre of exclusiveness where selfish instincts and stunted capacities flourish, a place of wasted talents and dwarfed powers where the mind of the wife is wasted on the service of the table (*Republic*, 460d). It is pertinent to state at this point that Plato was not really concerned with the rights of women, but with their usefulness.

Plato's belief in the negative effects of tying women to domestic chores to the detriment of service to the state is shared by Tickner (2011:270) when she asserted that:

Even though many women do work outside the home for wages, the association of women with domestic roles, such as housewife and caregiver, has become institutionalised and even naturalized. This means that it is seen as natural for women to do the domestic work. Putting the burden of household labour on women reduces their autonomy and economic security.

Tickner further traced the origins of contemporary gendered division of labour to 17th century Europe. At that time, definitions of male and female were becoming polarized in ways that were suited to the growing division between work and home required by early capitalism. Industrialization and the increase in wage labour largely performed by men, shifted work from home to factory. However,

Assumptions about appropriate gender roles mean that women are often characterized as supplemental wage earners to the male head of household. But estimates suggest that one-third of all households worldwide are headed by women, a fact frequently obscured by role expectations that derive from the notion of male breadwinners and female housewives (Tickner, 2011:270-271).

If this assertion by Tickner is anything to go by, it becomes clear that gender roles are often shaped by social perception on who earns greater wages for the family. The more the wage contribution of an individual to the family, therefore, the more the level of freedom and influence attached therewith. Be that as it may, suffice it to say that the clamour for greater inclusion of women in politics has been largely progressive. This fact is aptly captured by Udebunu (2010:152) when he stated that:

The journey of women emancipation has had a long history much similar to the development of democracy and democratic rights. Today, women have charted a very broad path in socio-political sphere that the question is no longer whether women should be included in the world political programme, but rather to what extent.

It is against this background that Nigerian women have agitated for greater access and representation of women in politics and decision-making.

METHODS

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

The data for this study were gathered from the following sources

Oral Interview

In our interviews, we gathered data from 24 women, four each representing the six Local Government Areas in Enugu North Senatorial Zone. These women are either present or past members of National Assembly, State House of Assembly, leaders in political parties and supervisors in women affairs in Local Government Areas. Also interviewed were six women Leaders, one each representing the six Local Government Areas?

Use of Documents

Data were gathered from Government documents, Textbooks, Journals, Magazines, Newspapers, written Speeches, Unpublished theses, Official documents of United nations. Information from these sources is useful in that they constitute excellent check on data obtained from interview.

Method of Data Presentation and Analysis

The method of data presentation and analysis used in this study is the qualitative and descriptive method of data analysis.

Population of the Study

In this study, our population is made up of all women who are actively involved in partisan politics in Enugu North Senatorial Zone. 30 women (4 each from the 6 Local Government Areas in Enugu North Senatorial Zone) were randomly selected, grouped and interviewed.

Theoretical Framework

Alienation refers to the separation of things, that naturally belongs together, or antagonism between things that are properly in harmony. According to Marx (1841). Alienation is the separation of people from the aspect of human nature. On this note however, the theory of alienation is adopted as our frame work of analysis in this study. According to Varma (2000) society has become large and complex and highly organised, and the basis of its organization is productive efficiency. Man is essentially looked upon as a producer and, because the social organization in which he is carrying on his role is so vast and complicated, personal relations have lost all meaning. Society is relatively affluent. The individual has to remain busy in the pursuit of his vocation that he hardly gets time to look within himself and think of the quality of his own life. Meeting each other in a crowd, commuting or agitating, he finds himself more and more alienated from society. In support of this, Marx (1970) affirms that mans alienation embraces alienation from society, alienation from the state, alienation from those he is working and alienation even from himself. In the same vein, it was the alienation of man as a citizen in his relationship with the state that became the starting point of Marx's philosophical political and social thought (Marx, 1970:19-23).

Other scholars like Fischer (1996:53), Mandel (1970:19-23), Marx (1970:3) believe that there is the existence of inherent contradictions between "part" and "whole" due to the fact that partial interest dominates the whole of the society. These theorists believe that ordinarily human beings are social beings, which have the ability to act collectively to further their interest.

Basic features of the theory:

- The theory permits us to see man as being alienated from himself and from nature.
- Alienation theory believes in the existence of inherent internal contradictions, which made groups of people oppose each other as Strangers, Foreigners, Enemies.

- There is the existence of the effectively self-centered, internally cohesive, practical empirical partiality in the society.

The underlying socio-economic dynamism in the society is both self-centred and out directed at the same time (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/marx's_theory_of_Alienation)

Application to Theoretical Framework

Alienation theory is relevant in the discussion of a group relation prejudice, social identity and social political injustice especially political participation. This theory enhances our understanding of the experience and feelings of women politicians in Enugu North Senatorial Zone when they are deprived full political participation to which they think they are entitled to.

Again, this theory will enable us to understand the nature and character of Enugu North Senatorial Zone as a political enclave. It will explain how patriarchy, unstable Democratic culture and absence of domestication of international conventions alienated women from their political system and deprived them of their basic political rights. The framework will enable us to understand the existing contradiction in the social process and how patriarchy is rooted in the structural arrangement in Enugu North Senatorial Zone. This will further expose the fact that all social structures are interdependent and interact in complex ways.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This sub-section is made up of one sub-theme according to the guiding hypothesis. These include Patriarchy and the participation of Women in politics. The analysis below will capture the hypothesis which states that the patricidal nature of the Igbo society is an impediment to the participation of women in politics in Enugu North Senatorial Zone.

An Analysis of the Culture of Patriarchy and the Participation of Women in Politics in Enugu North Senatorial Zone

Q. Are you married?

Q. Do you have kids?

In response to questions nos. 1 and 2, majority of the respondents are married with kids even though about five out of the respondents affirmed that they were not married.

Q. If the answer is yes who takes care of them when you are not around?

In this case, all the respondents agreed that it is not easy to really be in politics and still take good care of your children. Most of the respondents spoke from their own experiences in a way that expressed the difficulties that is associated with family responsibilities. Women typically are forced to play a triple role when they enter politics, namely they have to work at home, in their jobs and in the political institutions. (http://www.iwraw_ap.org/aboutus/pdf/fpwomen_and_pol_pax.pdf). Since it is hard for a woman to sustain this triple burden, it can pose as a barrier to her political work or her political work can interfere with her work at home or in her vocation. Women receive minimal support from their families. The nature of this support tends to be in the form of encouragement to run for elections but rarely does it extend to helping them fulfill their responsibilities as elected representatives by taking the burden of domestic work off them. Usually women elected officials get help from their husbands in the form of their initial contacts and encouragement to join politics.

The respondents identified cultural values, religious beliefs, men's failure to share the household tasks, child rearing activities and lack of support services as some of factors that inhibits women from participating in public life and political activities in Enugu North Senatorial zone. Liberating women from some of the burden of the domestic work would allow them to engage more fully in the life of their community

Q. How long have you been in politics?

In response to question no 3, majority of the women interviewed have spent about fifteen years in politics. While the other seven respondents have spent about seven years in politics. They also emphasized that the period so far spent in politics were full of humiliation and alienation. Women's historic exclusion from political structures and processes is the result of multiple structural, functional and personal factors that vary in different social contexts across countries.(United Nations, 2005) The elements of enabling

environment for women's participation in politics in Enugu North senatorial Zone becomes very imperative for the sustenance of our Democracy.

Q. Are there aspects of your tradition that inhibits you from participating in politics?

Q. Specify

Findings on no. 4 and 5 of the interview to the thirty women tested the stated hypothesis that "the patriarchal nature of the Igbo culture constrains women's participation in politics". Our hypothesis remains valid here since majority of the respondents agreed that patriarchy is the major cultural factor in Enugu North Senatorial Zone that hinders the political participation of women in politics. Patriarchy as a system of male domination shapes women's relationship in politics. It transforms male and females into men and women and construct the hierarchy of gender relations where men are privileged (Eisenstein 1984). Andrienne Rich defines patriarchy as:

A familial-social, ideological, political system in which men by force, direct pressure or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine what part women shall or shall not play in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male." (Rich 1977: 57).

The gender role ideology is used as an ideological tool by patriarchy to place women within the private arena of home as mothers and wives and men in the public sphere. This is one of the vital factors that shape the level of women's political participation globally. However, this ideological divide is not reflective of the reality. The boundaries between public and private are often blurred in the daily lives of women. Nonetheless, domestic domain continues to be perceived in Enugu North Senatorial Zone as the legitimate space for women while public space is associated with men. Women have to negotiate their entry into and claim on public space according to the discursive and material opportunities available in a given culture and society. Although the gender role ideology is not static rather remained in a flux while intersecting with economic, social and political systems of a particular society, women continue to be defined as private across countries which resulted in their exclusion from politics.

The respondents also revealed that women are not usually allowed to take part in politics because of the role assigned to them by their culture., "The age-old patriarchal system gives primacy to males and perpetuates deep rooted values within society that discriminate against women of all ages, classes, castes and religions. (http://www.iwraw_ap.org/aboutus/pdf/fpwomen_and_pol_pax.pdf) Men are privileged as a result and this privilege extends to several spheres including privileged access to the economic, educational, political and social spheres. Patriarchal norms typically relegate women to the private sphere, place restrictions on her mobility, perpetuate the view that the girl child is an economic liability, and place the responsibility of reproduction squarely on the shoulders of women. Further beliefs, traditions and customs endorse practices that are derogatory to women's dignity and perpetuate stereotype images strengthening the dichotomy of the private being the domain of women and public for men. This in turn restrains the development of self confidence and esteem among women. The cultural norms operate both as a restriction on a woman's mobility as well as an impediment for her participation in the public sphere. These cultural norms are perpetuated and sustained by powerful institutions of family, caste and religion.

The primary area of subordination is the family, where the patriarchal values are enforced, and where the control over women's person-hood is rarely questioned. Women in the family are viewed as liabilities because of which gender-based discrimination in all dimensions of their lives prevails. This is reflected in the alarming proportions of violence against women within the family - female feticide, infanticide, malnourishment, school dropouts, neglect and deprivation through limited access to resources, dowry violence and torture, etc. Further, the support from other family members to play a dominant role in the public domain is not forthcoming and the only time they do so is when they have complete control over the women. This control takes the form of families' only supporting women to get elected in order to keep the position in control of the family but then refuse to help her participate in the daily tasks of the political processes. Furthermore they do not help ease the triple burden that women find themselves having to bear. Women having young children in the family do not have the support system that can free them to participate in activities outside the home. Younger women and unmarried women have more restrictions placed on their participation because of the control exercised on their sexuality.

At the personal level, due to the socialisation process, reinforcing her subordinate position, private and public dichotomy results in the lack of self-esteem and confidence in women and the internalisation of these value systems. This is one of the biggest barriers to their development and participation in public life and

activities. Attitudes of women in power towards themselves and that of other women in the community towards these women in power do not validate their leadership.

The fact remains that there is still poor participation of women in politics. The reason being that of culture of silence on women, poverty, illiteracy and ignorance. However with greater awareness creation on encouragement of women to be involved in politics, there are little changes, but more needs to be done, especially by the government who will ensure that 30% of all government appointments should be women. With this law in place it will be a stand point for both Traditional rulers, Local government authorities and other influential persons in these communities to take a cue from that and encourage such practice in all decision making bodies in our society.

Some of the evidences of poor involvement of women in politics and decision making bodies in Enugu North communities can be clearly seen in this Impact Indicators stated herewith: For instance in Six (6) communities comprising of Nsukka, Igbo-Etiti, Udenu, Igboeze North & South and Uzouwani monitored recently only Ten (10) women leaders have executive post as woman leader in their different registered parties. The 100 women group leaders have taken it as a point of duty to encourage more women to register in political parties as this is the first step of getting the women into political position. However, during this period under review, more than 200,000 women and their families obtained voters cards in all area of study. There was about 70% turn out by our women during the just concluded general elections in April 2015. Even though the number of women that won elective posts is still minimal and nothing to write home about, due to the reasons earlier mentioned. But the concerted efforts carried out on sensitization by government, INEC and all other NGOs in coalition, enabled majority of women to come out en-masse and vote for candidates of their choice.

Supporting the above analysis, Okeke (2000) in his efforts to look at the obstacles to the participation of women in politics in Nigeria pointed out what he called the patriarchal nature of the Nigerian state/Masculine model of politics. According to him, in almost every part of the Nigerian society women are seen as inferior sex. As such lineage is traced to the men rulership from this perspective is also seen as a male affair. This thus gives room for what has been termed masculine model of politics. In this system men dominate the political arena; men formulate the rules of the political game; and men define the standards for evaluation. He went further to say that the existence of this male-dominated model results in either women rejecting politics altogether or rejecting male style politics.

Looking at illiteracy as a barrier, Perez de Cuellar (1989) pointed out that illiteracy is not only an obstacle to effective participation in politics, it also constitutes a threat to the progress and development of the society. In the same vein Ozigbo (1989) emphasized that illiteracy among the women folk has bred many avoidable social ills, especially as regards family and social roles, dropping out of school, early marriage etc. allowing this to continue in Nigeria will untimely affect adversely our quest for better lease of life and relationships nationally and internationally. Attainment of economic and technological heights are impossible without the full co-operation and participation of women in the society. It influences social relationship, the development of skills, the accumulation of financial resources and the formation of sense of worth.

In most traditions and cultures, women are regarded as commodities to be bought and sold. She was not permitted to choose her life partner and when married; was not considered a companion but a servant who was little better than a slave. This is the condition of women in general and it becomes worse when the woman loses her husband by death, her sorrows and woes multiply ten times over, (Nwaturuocha, 2000).

According to Inglehart and Morris (2002) traditional societies are characterized by sharply differentiated human roles that discourage women from working outside the home. Virtually all pre-industrial societies emphasized child bearing and child rearing as central goal for women and their most important function in life, along with tasks like food production and preparation at home.

Eme (2007) also looked at and centrism as a dynamic of patriarchy condition not only as it relates to the levels of political participation among men and women but also as it limits the range of change in the participatory horizon of women whose roles are culturally circumscribed from public sphere.

Concluding on the issue, Citizens Forum for Constitutional Reforms (2005) acknowledges the reality of oppression and marginalization of women across nations, races and ethnicities. Lived experiences of gender oppression for Nigerian women assumes a frightening dimension when factoring in the peculiarities of the feminization of poverty, women access to elective and appointive positions, the enduring native of the ideology of patriarchy and the manner in which religion and culture supply idioms that reinforce the marginality and powerlessness of women.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made

(1) Local Government authorities in Enugu North senatorial Zone have to take appropriate legislative measures to eliminate discriminatory laws and practices regarding succession rights. The discrimination in the inheritance rights has denied and restricted women's enjoyment to the right and control over property. Therefore women have a meager resource, which limits their participation in politics thus impairing the exercising of this right.

2) In Enugu North Senatorial Zone, Election campaigns must be made more safe and inexpensive with serious government initiatives to curb expenditure, corruption, violence and malpractice. The criminalisation and communalisation of politics also have to be firmly checked.

(3)The government and the people of Enugu North Senatorial Zone should liberate their women from political bondage by strictly enforcing all international declarations and conventions aimed at eliminating discrimination against them.

(4)Local Government authorities in Enugu North Senatorial Zone should be able to involve women in the key decisions and policies that concern them. And this can be achieved when they are allowed to occupy key elective positions where they can be opportune to participate in key decision making.

(5)Education of women in Enugu North Senatorial Zone should be made free by the Local Government Authorities. This will go a long way to make women get educated.

(6)To induce more women into the hitherto male dominant arena of politics in Enugu North Senatorial Zone, legal and political awareness need to be consciously promoted amongst women. To facilitate this process, every district should have a political resource centre for women. These centres have to undertake the responsibility of information dissemination and political training for women to exercise their political rights as voters and as political candidates.

A gradual improvement in the proportion of girls enrolled in primary school, though noteworthy, is not yet enough to meet the MDGs target. There are still fewer girls than boys in school. There are signs of backsliding in the number of girls in tertiary education. Measures to encourage girls to attend school, particularly by addressing cultural barriers in the country, and to provide the economic incentives for girls to attend school in the south-east, are urgently required. Although few women currently hold political office, the new policy framework is encouraging. However, gradual gains in parliamentary representation for women need to be greatly expanded in forthcoming elections. Confronting regional variations in the determinants of gender inequality requires policies based on an understanding of the underlying socioeconomic, social and cultural factors. State and local government efforts will thus be critical to the achievement of this goal in Enugu North.

On the abolition of obnoxious cultural practices in the communities, sensitization visits are necessary with periodic monitoring. The people should be sensitized on the ill-effects of female genital mutilation, harmful traditional practices by the people. As a result of this, some communities like Amaezu and Obeagu communities, both in Ebonyi state have instituted in their D&G constitution the inheritance rights especially of their properties on the demise of their husband. They also campaign seriously against Female circumcision which are Still practiced by some people in these communities.

CONCLUSION

This work highlights the cultural barriers to the participation of women in politics, Democracy and the participation of women in politics and international conventions and the participation of women in politics. The study found that so many cultural factors constitute barriers to the participation of women in politics but above all patriarchy has been identified as the fundamental barrier against the political involvement of women in Enugu North Senatorial Zone. We also identified other factors like low level of women's education, violent nature of the political environment especially during elections, the elimination of women from contesting in elective positions at the political party levels and the poverty level of women.

On the level of the enhancement of women's participation in a Democratic era we discovered that Democracy has not helped women to get at least 10% participation in a situation where they constitute about 50% of the entire population. Equity and fairness which is the basic principles of democracy has not been felt in the participation of women in politics at the political party levels where candidates are selected for primaries. It

was also discovered that political parties use zoning as a strategy against women in terms of selection of candidates and for some women who were selected their male counterparts use promiscuity as a campaign strategy against them.

The study also found that although several international conventions have made several agreements in favor of women's participation in politics, but the outcome of these conventions lack domestication. The Government has not been able to raise taskforce teams to enforce these agreements at political party levels. These policies are not followed and the government is not prosecuting or punishing defaulters. We also discovered that INEC is not doing enough in checkmating the marginalization of women at the party levels because they should be able to constitute a sizable percentage of every party candidature as a prerequisite for party qualification and registration.

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