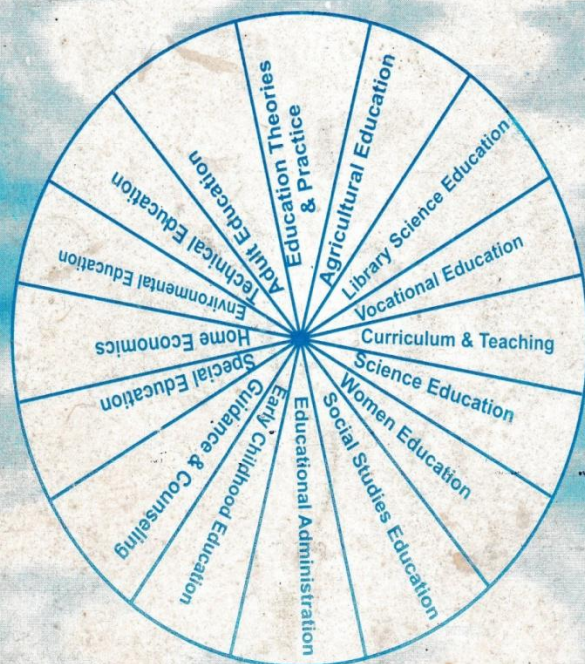


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WOMEN INVOLVEMENT IN POLICY-MAKING IN NIGERIA: THE CASE OF AKWA IBOM STATE

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Abstract

Despite the advances towards recognition of women's political, economical and social interaction with men during the 21st century, there is a continuing lack of women policy-makers in Nigeria. Women are largely absent from positions in the local, national and international institutions that govern our daily lives. This observation is that women tend to be discriminated against when it comes to participation in political activities or decision-making processes. Women's continuing absence from key positions in the political, economic and social institutions is not only disappointing but also nauseating. This problem seems to be acute in Akwa Ibom State, our area of investigation and also in Nigeria in general. This work investigates in depth female gender and political participation and their involvement in the decision-making processes. Problems confronting women in their political nature have been highlighted and solutions proffered.

INTRODUCTION

The marginalization and brutalisation of women in the Nigerian society, especially in Akwa Ibom State has instigated academic's interest in gender-oriented issues. Gender and political participation in Nigeria vis-à-vis Akwa Ibom State has been an issue of concern to many women activists.

Women constitute more than 50% of the total population in every society, yet events appear to have moved to a pedestal that can no longer be accepted by the female sect. Success, it is accepted, should be achieved through hard work and competition, but the society has made it impossible for the "other

sex” to compete favourably with men. Although women participate in political activities, though, not in the same number as the men, it is still difficult to find a situation where females are nominated for higher positions in government. This has continued to happen because the party chairman is a man and the men hold other important positions in the party.

Although women play vital role, in campaigning and mobilising support for their individual parties, it is rare to find them where the “power” belongs. Where women are to be relegated at the back, religion, tradition and beliefs, are brought in to solidify the society’s grounds for treating women as ‘second’ class citizen. In spite of many female organisations that have been established for sole purpose of fighting for women’s rights, it is still impossible for the women to acquire up to 5% position in policy-making institutions.

It is on record that women fight poverty here in Akwa Ibom State. The establishment of many cottage industries such as cassava frying industry, soap making industry, pottery industry, fish smoking industries and others, can testify to the policy-initiatives of women in the state. Women in Akwa Ibom State are good at mobilisation and formation of co-operative societies and it’s running, effectively. The implementation of self-help projects is also a sign of the achievement of women in the state.

METHODOLOGY

This work, which utilises multivariate analytical methods, precisely quantitative and qualitative methods are often on to resolve contradictions, and to enhance feasibility of the usual intractable problems of discrepancies between theory and reality. This work also makes use of the existing concepts as

currently in vogue for use by both practical and theoretical scholars in matters affecting women folks.

In the methodological process, this work acquaints itself with the understanding of knowledge already established by competent scholars through intensive and extensive review of literature. The investigating searchlight is beamed on the socio-political administrative structure as it affects women folks in decision-making processes.

MEASUREMENT

Measurement is undertaken with the use of statistical methods embracing simple percentage analytical method and the chi-square test of significance. The measurement is based on a 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis is considered valid at that level and above, and invalid below that level. In addition, this work juxtaposed the hard data obtained from questionnaire, face-to-face interview with documented information and personal observation as another way of validating the reliability and validity of the findings.

HYPOTHESES:

1. The insignificant number of women in policy-making institutions in Akwa Ibom State is directly related to women’s inability to participate effectively in politics.
2. The insignificant number of women in policy-making processes in Akwa Ibom State is dependant on women’s position in that society.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This work is based on a descriptive design. However, a preliminary study was conducted which provided appropriate information for research.

POPULATION COMPOSITION

The theoretical population comprise staff of Ministry of Women Affairs, Staff of Governor's Office, Women in Academic (University of Uyo Branch), Staff of the Department of political Science and Public Administration, Staff of the University of Uyo, Members of women organisation such as WIN, FAIWA and other non- governmental organisation such as UMEEF FOUNDATION for orphans.

SAMPLING AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Samples were chosen through randomisation.

INSTRUMENT FOR DATA COLLECTION

The principal instrument used in data-collection in this work was structured questionnaire where the responses helped to validate the research hypothesis. Another instrument used for data-collection was structured questions for face-to-face interview. A general survey of public administrative systems was carried out.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

The questionnaire, which was the major instrument, was tested for validity using pre-test method. This was pre-test for soundness of the research and was structured in accordance with the objective of the study. In order to ensure that the instrument used by the researcher was reliable, the researcher carried out a post-test to ascertain the reliability of the instrument.

CHI- SQUARE STATISTIC; was used in testing the hypothesis.

Chi-square (χ^2) test technique is a non-parametric test, which does not; require the assumption made about the shape of a distribution. The Chi-square (χ^2) test deals with discrete data, which have distinct values with no intermediate point.

The chi-square test is also one-tailed test skewed to the right. The formula for computing the chi-square (χ^2) is thus: $\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$

Where:

f_o	=	Frequencies observed
f_e	=	Frequencies expected
Σ	=	Summation of sum of the ratio over all categories
$f_o - f_e$	=	the difference between observed frequencies and expected frequencies
$(f_o - f_e)^2$	=	The square of $f_o - f_e$
$\leq (f_o - f_e)^2$	=	The squared average number of difference in terms of the expected frequencies
χ^2	=	The calculated value of the sum of all the squared average differences.

The use of Chi-square statistics for the validation of the research hypothesis, imbibes the degree of freedom (df) which is calculated using the formula: $df = (r - 1) (c - 1)$

Where;

r	=	the number of row in the particular table of interest
c	=	the number of columns in the table of interest

The entire tests were conducted at 0.05% level of significance. While the table value is known by taking the value that corresponds with the particular degree of freedom and the level of significance. The value was used in accepting or rejecting research hypothesis.

DATA ANALYSIS

A frequent count of all responses received from the questionnaire was made. The request of the responses to the questionnaire were analysed and interpreted using simple percentage (%) to determine the actual number of questionnaire returned for testing.

The Chi-square test of significance was used to analyse and validate the research by conducting the test at 0.05 level of significant.

QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTIONS

12	No women shall ever be appointed the rector of either of the two tertiary institutions owned by Akwa Ibom State
13.	There will never be a female democratic governor in Akwa Ibom State
14.	The Akwa Ibom State Legislature will never have a female member because females are regarded as incompetent administrators

THE CHI-SQUARE TEST

Table1: Questionnaire responses for questions 12, 13 and 14 were used in testing hypothesis 2

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
Q12	25 (35.31)	46 (38.28)	43 (45.20)	49 (44.21)	163
Q13	52	26	48	48	174

	(37.69)	(40.86)	(48.26)	(47.19)	
Q14	30 (34.01)	44 (36.87)	46 (43.54)	37 (42.58)	157
Total	107	116	137	134	494

H_0 = there is no significant difference.

H_1 = There is a significant difference

Table2;

C-R	Fo	Fe	fo - fe	(fo - fe) ²	$\frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe}$
1-1	25	35.31	-10.31	10.296	3.010
1-2	2	37.69	14.31	204.776	5.433
1-3	30	34.01	-4.01	16.0801	0.472
2-1	46	38.28	7.72	59.5985	1.5569
2-2	26	40.86	-14.86	220.819	5.4042
2-3	44	36.87	7.13	50.8369	1.3788
3-1	43	45.20	-2.2	4.84	0.1070
3-2	48	48.26	-0.26	0.076	0.0014
3-3	46	43.54	2.46	6.0517	0.1389
4-1	49	44.21	4.79	22.944	0.5189
4-2	48	47.19	0.81	0.6562	0.0139
4-3	37	42.58	-5.58	31.1364	0.7312
					18.769

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{d.f.} &= (r - 1)(c - 1) \\ &= (4 - 1)(3 - 1) \\ &= (3)(2) \\ &= 6 \end{aligned}$$

The Chi-square table value at 0.05 level of significance with df of 6 is 12.59.

Decision Rule

If the calculated Chi-square value is greater than the table value, the Null hypothesis is rejected. Since 18.169 is greater than 12.592, the Null hypothesis that the insignificant number of women in decision-making processes in Akwa Ibom State is not directly related to women's position in the society is rejected.

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSE TO QUESTIONNAIRE USING SIMPLE PERCENTAGE (%)

Table 3;

S/n	Questions	Yes	No	Percentage of total Yes (%) No	
1.	The Nigerian Society Prefers male leaders to female leaders	110	90	55	45
2.	The Nigerian male attitude towards female leadership are deterrent to tapping the great potential resources in female citizens for the development of the nation	80	120	40	60
3.	The move for equal treatment of women as their male counterparts in Nigeria is viewed with serious resentment by men	120	80	60	40
4.	Most husbands discourage their wives from participating in the programmes initiated to mobilise women for political activities	90	110	45	55
5.	Most religious groups in Nigeria prohibit women from participating in politics	130	70	65	35
6.	Political parties give women equal opportunities as their male counterparts to aspire for political position	50	150	25	75
7.	Politics is regarded as a dirty game suited to only men	140	60	70	30
8.	Most men prohibit their wives from participating in politics	120	80	60	40
9.	In Nigeria, no women shall ever be nominated a party chairman	150	50	75	25
10.	Akwa Ibom State will produce more than 5 female commissioners in 3 years times.	140	60	70	30
11.	In Akwa Ibom State, no woman shall ever be head of a Village community.	200	0	100	0

Testing The Attribute Of Female Policy-Makers

1. Female Executives are more approachable than their male counterparts
Low 1 – 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 high
2. Female executives are more concerned with staff's problems than their male counterparts.
Low 1 – 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 high
3. Female executives are more committed to their duties more than their male counterparts.
Low 1 – 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 high
4. Female executives are less strict in enforcing discipline than their male counterparts.
Low 1 – 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 high
5. Female executives are more conscious of the effect and intended consequence of decision-making than their male counterparts.
Low 1 – 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 high

EVALUATION

5	-	10	very low
11	-	15	moderate
16	-	25	relatively high
26	-	50	high

Summary

No of Respondents	Ranking	Grading
10	5 - 10	Very low
40	11 - 15	Moderate
70	16 - 25	Relatively high
30	26 - 50	High

Decision: from the above scoring it is demonstrated that female are not to be blamed for their insignificant number in public policy-making processes. It can be seen from the scoring table that 30 out of 150 respondents scored between 16 and 25 marks, which is relatively a high score.

A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR WOMEN IN AKWA IBOM STATE

From the perspective of the research findings here, it would be profitable for the Government of Akwa Ibom State and in Nigeria as a whole to include a large number of women in policy-making processes. The current ratio of 19:3 (male/female) in the Akwa Ibom State Executive Council, 31:0 (male/female) in the 31 Local Governments in Akwa Ibom State, 31:1 (male/female) in the Akwa Ibom State Legislature falls short of the 30% recommendation during the Beijing Conference. The 20% reservation recommended by African leadership is not only meager but also conservative in nature. At least, given the population of women in Akwa Ibom State vis-à-vis men, women should constitute 50% of the

policy-making members in Akwa Ibom State and also the same proportion for the whole Nigeria.

In areas cleared to be women sector, adequate leadership training should be provided led by women. Few will disagree that the development of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria and Africa in general cannot be done without adequate women policy-makers in the affairs of the society. It may be this inadequacy that have hampered the development generally in Africa, this is not to say that the low women representation is the only factor but extremely, contributes the major one. Men in Akwa Ibom State should encourage their women to aspire as leaders in the Public Sector by sponsoring them and backing them up during elections. Men in Akwa Ibom State should regard the women as colleagues that can equally contribute effectively to the development of the their societies by exercising their leadership potentials.

Individual countries should enforce the enforcement of Rights of Women by International and National Bodies. It has been observed that there are many countries, which have not observed the decision.

The women need to be sensitized to take their academics seriously by also being science-oriented, that is getting themselves more into the areas of Engineering, Architecture, town planning, and allied disciplines.

The women should take advantage of the mass campaigns organized by The Ministry of Women Affairs, Youths and Social development in political and economic activities. Non-Governmental Organizations are also doing their best to educate the women.

More women should join the political parties and participate actively to enable them have opportunities, to be nominated and voted for during the next

democratic elections. There should be a conscious and determined effort by the Nigerian women vis-à-vis, the Akwa Ibom State women to improve in the political participation at all levels.

Women are known to be active and successful home managers so they can transfer their leadership skills to the public sector.

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