

The Legislative Enactments On Women's Inclusion In Governance: A Study Of Lagos State House Of Assembly, Nigeria (2015- 2022)

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ABSTRACT

Women in Nigeria have faced limitations like in different countries of Africa. This has happened in different sectors in Nigeria, most especially the inclusion in governance. Nigeria, like many other countries, has grappled with issues of gender inequality in political representation. This situation has also lowered their expected contributions to Nigerian socioeconomic development. This study examines the legislative enactments aimed at promoting women's inclusion in governance within the Lagos State House of Assembly during the period 2015 to 2022. The research focuses on the efforts made by the Lagos State legislative body to address this imbalance through the formulation and implementation of policies, laws, and initiatives. The study employs qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. The study employs a comprehensive analysis of legislative documents, debates, and official records to evaluate the extent to which the Lagos State House of Assembly has played a role in advancing women's participation in political decision-making. The Feminist constitutionalism theory was used to underpin the analyses of the study. The data was analysed using the thematic method of analysis. The findings revealed the lack of implementation of legislative enactments that encourage the inclusion of women in governance by the Lagos State House of Assembly from 2015 to 2022. It also explains policy areas that parliaments could focus on and the role of technology as a mechanism in legislating policies that will encourage the inclusion of women in governance. The study provides valuable insights for policymakers, gender advocates, and researchers interested in understanding the dynamics of legislative processes and their impact on women's representation and participation in governance. It recommends among other things, the need for gender quotas, and regulations on political party financing that promote women's inclusion.

Keywords: Gender, governance, inclusion, legislature, parliaments, policies, women

Introduction

The augmented adoption of quota laws has corresponded with a surge in the worldwide presence of women in political roles (Clayton, 2016). The increasing implementation of gender quotas in developing nations' national governance may be a contributing factor to the notable success of women in this realm which is a conceivable explanation.

Women make up an extremely small minority of those who hold positions of political power around the world. As of right now, up to twenty-five percent of all parliamentarians around the world are female (United Nations Women, 2021). This is less than the target of thirty percent that was established by 1995's Beijing Platform for Action and was intended to be accomplished by 2005. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (2012), the global average percentage of women in parliamentary representation increased from 19 percent in 2010 to 19.8

percent in 2011.

The increase of women in politics in the West has not been paralleled in Africa, where just 2.4 percent of legislators are female (20% in the upper house and 25% in the lower house). Women make up about 20% of the members in the higher chambers (African Barometer, 2021). This was the most significant shift among lower and single chambers in Djibouti, which in the year 2000 had no female representatives in its parliamentary body. In 2018, the study found, there were a total of 15 female representatives, a 15.4% increase from the previous year's figure of 10.8%. These results were presented at the United Nations headquarters in New York in March 2019 during the Commission on the Status of Women (African Renewal, 2019).

Even though they are grossly underrepresented in parliament, women are becoming more politically engaged in their communities through various organizations and groups. Women make up most members of different political parties in some wards, as can be observed by the often huge participation of women at political rallies and campaign places. This is evidenced by the locations where political campaigns take place.

Research has proven that the engagement of women in governance yields numerous advantageous outcomes, such as heightened gender equality, enhanced economic development, diminished poverty rates, bolstered social cohesiveness, and fortified democratic institutions.

In recent times, Nigeria has undertaken concerted efforts to diminish the gender inequality gap. Nigeria has formally accepted and implemented various regional and global human rights agreements that support and uphold the rights of women. The aforementioned accords consist of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1981), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1981), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966). The resources offered cover a wide spectrum of subjects about women's rights, comprising their civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights, among others. A treaty must be domesticated by the Nigerian Constitution, as outlined in section 12 of the 1999 Constitution, before its implementation.

Statement of the Problem

Numerous nations have enacted legislative measures, such as quotas, and affirmative actions, to augment the level of women's representation within elected entities. These provisions require a specific proportion of seats or positions to be allocated for women, thereby guaranteeing their inclusion in the process of governance. Legislative enactments frequently incorporate anti-discrimination provisions aimed at safeguarding women's rights and promoting equitable treatment within the realms of politics and public affairs.

governance by implementing legal safeguards that mitigate the effects of gender bias and eliminate discriminatory barriers (Boateng, Banham, Kosi, & Ayentimi, 2021).

A distinguishing feature of democracy, in comparison to alternative forms of governance, is the principle that every individual within a society possesses an equivalent degree of influence in the determination of matters that impact them (Gberevbie & Oviasogie, 2013).

Historically and presently, there is a notable acknowledgment of the increasing involvement of women in Nigerian society across social, economic, and political domains, both in previous eras and under the current democratic tenures.

The Nigerian government's dedication to democratic governance inherently promotes inclusivity and the engagement of diverse groups. As a result, women will not be able to make a significant contribution until they have reached the required level of critical mass (Adewuyi, 2019).

Nigeria has struggled to keep pace with the worldwide trend of more and more women entering political office. Although the National Gender Policy -NGP (2006) successfully boosted the number of women to 35% (five percent more than Beijing requested), its implementation has left much to be desired (Alliance for Africa, n.d). Legislative enactments are essential in including women in governance, but the focus has mainly been on national assemblies and not subnational assemblies.

Methodology

Method and Sources of Data Collection

The study adopted a qualitative method of data collection comprising both primary and secondary data sources. A qualitative data collection pattern supports descriptive and content analysis for an accurate assessment of the process, allowing for the analytical evaluation of data obtained from secondary and primary sources. The primary data was collected from the study sample through an interview method, which was used to interview legislators and women's rights activists to learn how enactments can help encourage women's inclusion in governance. The interview data collection method is one of the qualitative methods of data gathering and analysis. This study used the key informant interviewing technique to interview legislators and women's rights activists. The key informant interview is used to obtain knowledge from people who are professionals in the field of interest, though they do not inevitably represent the population. Data was collected using a semi-structured interview for this study. The secondary data was collected from journals, textbooks, newspapers, magazines, legislative transcripts, bulletins,

articles, internet sources, and term papers related to the study area. Data collected from interviews were analyzed using a thematic and descriptive method of analysis. The researcher was able to spot trends or recurring themes in the data thanks to the thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is designed to present data authentically and coherently. The results were interpreted by the research objectives. The responses of the participants were arranged into themes according to the research questions.

Literature Review

Report on Women in Parliaments in Selected Countries

The fundamental principle of human rights, encompassing the provision and utilization of political rights for individuals of all genders, is a crucial aspect of any democratic system. Achieving gender parity in politics can have positive implications for promoting gender mainstreaming across a range of policies. The Inter-parliamentary Union's (IPU) report in 2019, men's representation in legislative bodies across the globe is higher than that of women. The representation of women in lower or single chambers of parliaments has increased to 24.1% by the end of 2018, marking a growth of 13 percentage points from the corresponding figure two decades ago

S/N	Country	Seats	Number of Women	Percentage (%)
1	Rwanda	106	59	55.6
2	Cuba	605	322	53.2
3	United Arab Emirates	40	20	50
4	New Zealand	120	58	48.3
5	Mexico	628	304	48.4
6	Nicaragua	91	43	47.3
7	Sweden	349	164	47.0
8	South Africa	453	207	45.7
9	Grenada	28	11	39.3
10	Andora (One House)	28	13	46.4

Table 1: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU, 2020)

Rwanda

Rwanda is recognized for two significant events: the 1994 genocide, which witnessed the slaughter of over 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus, and for being the initial country to achieve the objective of having 50% female parliamentarians. According to Abbott and Malunda (2016), the former illustrates the government's avowed dedication to promoting gender parity, empowering women, and enhancing women's entitlements. The Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) rise to power has brought about many positive changes in Rwanda, including a more efficient government, faster economic growth, less corruption, and an ambitious plan to modernize the country's economy and raise it from a low- to middle-income status. (UNDP, 2007; World Bank, 2010, Debusscher & Ansom, 2016).

Although women were assaulted and raped during the genocide, men were the ones who were killed, making Rwanda a useful example to explain how women participate in governance. Accordingly, the female population was at 70% after the genocide and is now at 50.83%, almost 30 years later. The fact that women began assuming more traditionally male roles in politics and business during the genocide period and continued to hold those positions after the genocide is another indication of this.

Furthermore, there was a notable rise in the proportion of female representation in the Chamber of Deputies, from 17.1% in January 1997 to 25.7% in November 2000. The Rwandan Constitution of 2003 introduced a quota system to ensure that women were represented in decision-making bodies, with a minimum requirement of 30% of posts (as stated in Article 9(4) of the Constitution).

Sweden

Sweden is renowned for having a high percentage of female politicians. Following the implementation of universal and equal suffrage in 1921, there has been a gradual increase in the representation of women in parliament, with the current proportion of female Members of Parliament (MPs) standing at 45%. During the 1970s, the attainment of the 20% threshold marked a significant turning point, leading to a notable acceleration of progress. The expansion can be delineated as a progressive or iterative phenomenon (Freidenvall, 2015).

Sweden is widely recognised as a paradigm of gender equality, consistently ranking among the most gender-equal nations in international comparisons. Although legal gender quotas face resistance, a significant number of political parties have taken steps to increase the presence of women in elected bodies. The steps mentioned constitute a range of actions that include both aspirational goals and recommended guidelines, as well as mandatory quotas for political parties (Freidenvall, 2015).

The primary feature and approach of Swedish policy domains is the incorporation of gender mainstreaming, which entails the integration of a gender equality perspective into all decision-making processes across all policy

domains and hierarchical levels. As of now,

South Africa

South Africa is often regarded as a notable example of successful women's political representation due to its high percentage of women in parliament, which stands at 45%. The nation has enacted several forward-thinking legislation that provides support for women. At first glance, the portrayal of South Africa suggests a commitment to gender equality as a fundamental aspect of its African identity. However, the intricacies of post-apartheid politics within a democratic nation limited by a fatigued nationalist framework, characterised by pervasive corruption and patronage, in conjunction with exceedingly elevated levels of gender-based violence, present an alternative narrative. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated gender inequality and pre-existing disparities, prompting women's activism and movement building to emerge as crucial mechanisms in combating social exclusion (Gouws, 2022).

The 1996 Constitution of South Africa's Bill of Rights demonstrates the nation's dedication to attaining gender parity by mandating that the government guarantee women's involvement and representation in decision-making procedures. For the first time in history, the nation's constitution included the rights of women, regardless of their race. As per the provisions of Clause 19 [3] [a] of the Constitution of 1996, every adult citizen is entitled to the right to participate in elections and run for public office. In support of this position, Duruji, Olanrewaju, Olu-Owolabi, Duruji-Moses & Chukwudi, (2019) maintained that use of technology is important towards achieving free and fair election.

Theoretical Framework

Feminist Institutional Theory

This study adopted the theoretical framework of Feminist Institutionalism (FI). The objective is to gain an understanding and provide clarification regarding the distribution of power within and among institutions. The FI theory-building project was initiated during the mid-2000s by feminist political scientists who examined the gendered nature of institutions' ostensibly gender-neutral structures, rules, norms, and *practices* and their gendered impacts. Feminist institutionalists derive their inspiration from the discourse on *agency structure* and contend that institutions are not static, monolithic entities that merely control or enable the conduct of social actors within and beyond their boundaries. Rather, they are dynamic entities that undergo constant change (Chappell, 2006; Kenny, 2007).

The feminist institutionalist theory was used to explain the linkage between gender and institutions. According to Chappell's (2010) analysis, the discourse of New Institutionalism has overlooked the topic of gender. Scholars in the field of financial inclusion have successfully addressed the issue of gender and institutional inclusivity in their scholarship programs. Scholars who subscribe to the feminist institutionalist perspective place significant emphasis on the examination of women's involvement in and exclusion from institutional structures, their interaction with institutional dynamics, and the degree to which gender equality initiatives promote the reconfiguration of power relations within institutions. The political project of FI recognises that women persist in experiencing discrimination and reduced levels of representation because of their gender (Chapell, 2006; Chapell & Warren, 2013).

Feminist institutionalism is hinged on the assumption that gender is a social construct, meaning that it is not an inherent or biologically determined characteristic, but rather a product of societal norms and expectations. This implies that our understanding and perception of gender are influenced by the societal, political, and economic circumstances that surround us.

Finally, it assumes that the concept of gender is intricately woven into institutional processes, extending beyond mere existence within institutions. Furthermore, it is intricately woven into the operational framework of various institutions. This implies that gender norms exert influence over the decision-making processes, resource allocation, and conflict-resolution mechanisms employed by institutions (Childs, 2013; Kenny, 2014).

Despite the need for this theory, some authors have found a lot of loopholes in it. Kulawit (2009), explained that the theory needs the deconstruction of the dichotomous relationship between causal explanation and meaning and description, as well as the reformulation of the notion of causality.

Application of Theory

Feminist institutionalism is a theoretical framework within the field of political science that places significant emphasis on the role of gender and gender equality in the functioning of governance institutions. The present study can utilize the theory in various ways as explained below:

The first step involves an examination of the institutional frameworks and regulations that impact the participation of women in legislative processes in Lagos State.

Conducting an inquiry into the involvement of civil society organisations and social movements in advancing the participation of women in the governance of Lagos State is of utmost importance.

The Lagos State House of Assembly

The research was conducted in the premises of the Lagos State House of Assembly. Section 90 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria establishes the Lagos State House of Assembly as a state legislature. It gives legislative authority over the state and is granted certain advantages and protections that enable it to exercise said authority without hindrance. Chukwudi, Osimen, Dele-Dada, and Ahmed, (2024) have laid emphasis on the protection of women in society.

The House is situated in Alausa, in the Ikeja Central Business District, and shares a location with the Lagos State Government Secretariat. Nigeria has had nine distinct assemblies since the implementation of democratic governance. The House of Assembly has been established to disseminate comprehensive information about the extent of duties, amenities, and obligations that are intended for the entire populace of Lagos State. It aims to serve as a guiding force and trailblazer for legislative bodies in Nigeria. Its primary objective is to enact legislation that promotes effective governance, reflects the desires of Lagos residents, and ensures prudent utilisation of the state's resources to maximise benefits for its citizens. The State encompasses a total of forty (40) constituencies, which are dispersed throughout the twenty (20) local governments and thirty-seven (37) local council development areas. (The Lagos State House of Assembly, 2019).

local government regions give rise to inconsistencies throughout the nation (World Bank, 2018).

There are several laws and bills at the federal level that aim to facilitate the participation of women in governance. Lagos state has attained a prominent position within the nation in terms of promoting gender equality, facilitating women's participation, and enforcing regulations and statutes that facilitate such inclusion. (Klintworth, 2023).

The Lagos state government has implemented various legal frameworks and policies to advance gender parity, fairness, and societal integration. The legislative acts are the Child Rights Act of 2007, the Domestic Violence Act of 2007, and the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act of 2010.

has taken steps to ensure gender parity in the state's governance framework by promoting the representation of women. During the 2019 elections, the house witnessed an increase in female representatives elected, amounting to a total of six (6).

In summary, although there remains room for improvement in enhancing women's involvement in government and politics, the Lagos State House of Assembly has taken certain measures to foster the integration of women in the state's governing framework.

Women's Inclusion in Governance in Nigeria

The hindrance of women's involvement in governance has surfaced as a noteworthy barrier to Nigeria's economic advancement in contemporary times (Orisadare, 2019). Detrimental to the process of nation-building and development. For a society to progress, it is imperative to achieve a more equitable distribution of political power between genders, with equal representation for both men and women. The present democratic process in Nigeria has resulted in a notable social development challenge of inadequate representation of women in elective positions. The prevalence of male hegemony in the country results in a lack of motivation for female participation in legislative bodies, despite Nigeria's aim to achieve a 35% quota for women in political and non-elective roles through affirmative action. The representation of women in various tiers of government has persistently been inadequate (Kelly, 2019).

Significance of the Study

This study serves as a scholarly resource for thinking about how to address the problems of women in government leadership roles in the international community. It will also shed light on the necessity of enacting laws that support women's inclusion in the state house. Women's participation in government is crucial to the nation's economic and political growth, and so should be actively pursued by all governments. This research informs relevant stakeholders and the legislative body in making gender-responsive policies that will encourage women's inclusion in governance. It will also provide insights into the effectiveness of policies and encourage a certain level of women's representation in legislative bodies. This is beneficial to students and academics who have an interest in the knowledge of enactments that encourage women's inclusion in politics at a lower level beyond a central government.

Preamble

This Presentation and data analysis of the primary data obtained from the conducted interview is done in this chapter. The data were analysed using themes derived from the interview results. Secondary data that are in line with the themes are also presented and analysed. Such data are sourced from newspapers, books, online sources, and academic articles that address the subject matter. The research questions and propositions of this study will also be analysed according to these themes,

Demographic Analysis of Interview Participants

This section entails the presentation and analysis of the demographic data of the interview respondents which

are from the Lagos State House of Assembly and Women Rights Activists who reside in Lagos.

Table 2: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Items	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	7	100%
	Total	7	100%
Organisations	Women Advocates and Research Documentation Centre	1	14%
	Partnerships for Justice	1	14%
	Women's Rights Activists	5	72%
	Total	7	100%

Source: Author's Field Survey (2023)

Table 2 shows the demographic classification of the respondents that were interviewed for this study and the organisations with which the respondents were chosen.

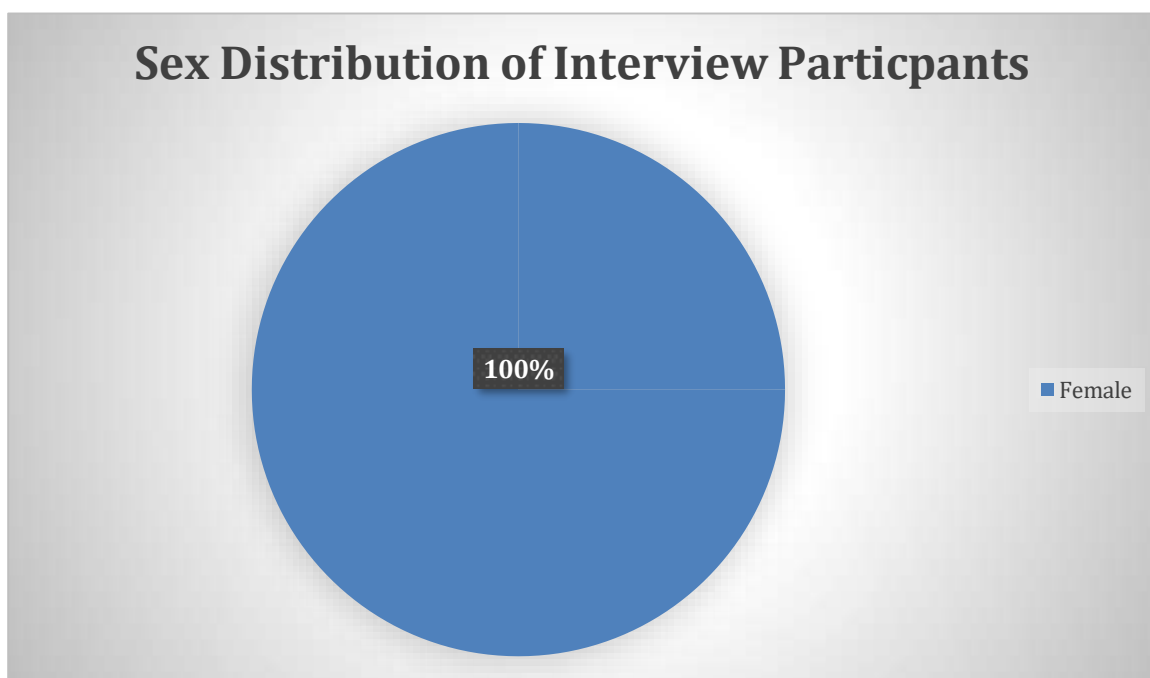


Figure 1: Pie-diagram showing sex distribution of interview participants

Source: Author's Field Survey (2023)

The Pie-chart figure above (Figure 4.2.2) shows the sex distribution of the interview participants. It reveals that 100% of the interview participants were female.

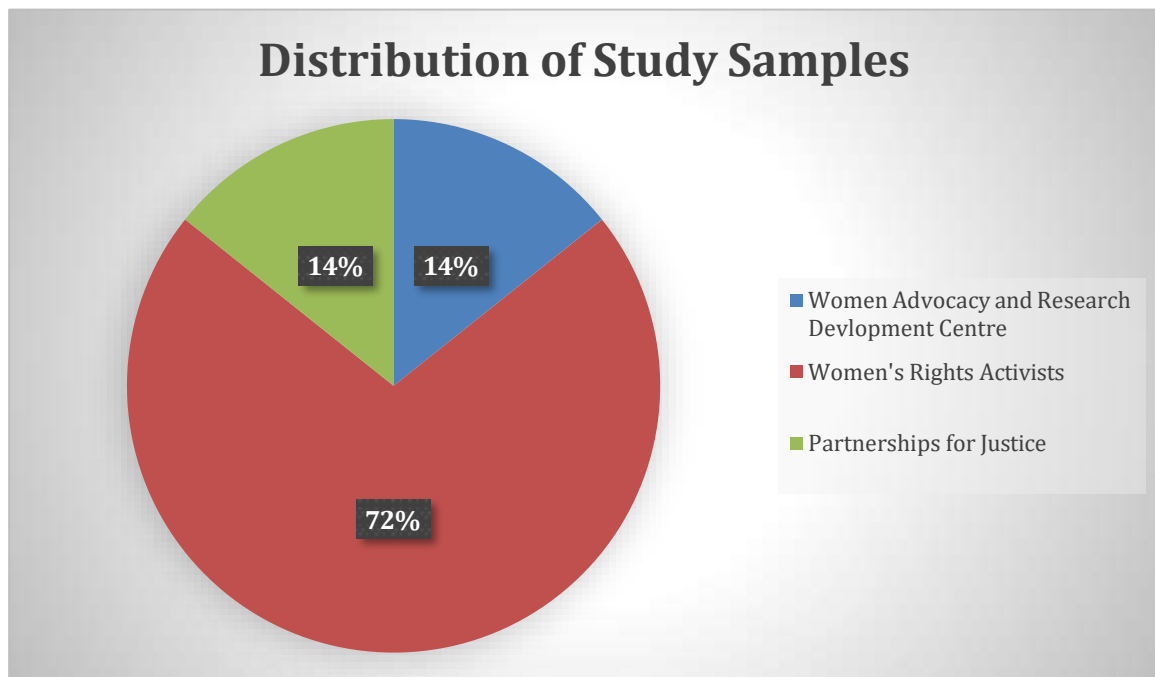


Figure 2: Sample Distribution

Source: Author's Field Survey 2022

Figure 2 entails the distribution of the study sample, which are Partnerships for Justice, Women Advocacy and Research Development Centre, and Women's Rights Activists. It shows that 14% are from the Women Advocacy and Research Development Centre, 14% from Partnerships for Justice, and 72% are women's rights activists.

Comparing the Legislative Enactments on Women Inclusion in Governance in the National Assembly and Lagos State House of Assembly 2015-2022

The National Assembly and State assemblies play the same roles at different levels. While the National Assembly is a bi-cameral legislature consisting of the Senate and the House of Representatives, the state Assembly is a unicameral legislature at the subnational levels of government. Because Nigeria is a federal system of government, bills passed at the national level can be adopted by the state assemblies while the state assemblies also legislate policies that will be beneficial to their respective states (Ogunsanwo, 2017).

There have been several legislations sponsored by members of the National Assembly that have women's inclusion connotations, which, if implemented will see to the encouragement of women's inclusion in governance. But only a few state assemblies have been able to take the initiative and pass the same bills. Lagos state has laws that protect women against gender-based violence according to Participant 1 (2023), those laws have not reflected in increasing the participation of women in governance. Participant 5 (2023) also affirmed this by saying:

No specific enactments have been made by the Lagos State House of Assembly on Women's Inclusion in governance, but the House of Assembly encourages women's participation and they have been able to make up for those lags in representation in executive councils and appointments of women in top rated roles within the civil service.

Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill (GEOB)

The Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill (GEOB) sought to provide men and women with equal access to educational, career, political, and societal opportunities, regardless of gender, age, or social standing, while protecting Nigerian women from violence and granting them the same marital rights as men, including the right of widows to an equitable inheritance of their husband's property (Agbalajobi & Oluwalogbon, 2019). The bill was first introduced in 2010 by Senator Chris Anyawu in 2010 and was able to progress beyond the second reading stage. It was later reintroduced in 2016 by Senator Abiodun Olujimi with a modified edition. While this modified version was analogous to its previous provisions, the new objective was to promote the equality, progress, and development of all citizens of Nigeria.

Some of the temporary special measures identified by the Bill are:

- a minimum of 35% of all offices, positions, or appointments reserved for women in the political and public sphere.
- a minimum of 35% of all offices, facilities, positions, or appointments reserved for women in employment, credit, or other economic spheres in public and private institutions.

- parity for boys and girls, men and women in educational placements and scholarship awards - parity in enrollment and retention of boys and girls in primary school enrolment
- a minimum of 35 percent reserved for women in all other cases (PLAC, 2020)

These measures agree with what Participant 3 (2023) says, they opined that the need for affirmative action and gender quotas is one of the things that these legislative enactments should look into because gender quotas affirm for surety of women contesting for the available seats.

Policy Transfer from the National Assembly to the Lagos State House of Assembly

Through legislation such as the National Gender Policy, the National Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill, and the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, Nigeria has made endeavours to promote women's participation in governance. These initiatives emphasise the significance of women's participation and representation in political leadership positions and decision-making processes.

Institutional Barriers that Affect Legislative Enactments on Women's Inclusion in Lagos State House of Assembly

Numerous factors and obstacles can impede the implementation of legislative measures within the House of Assembly. The factors identified encompass a wide spectrum, ranging from the patriarchal orientation of the Nigerian society to the structures of political parties, as well as the inadequate representation of women in legislative bodies and the limited availability of resources and data.

Patriarchal Society and Patriarchal Institutions

Participant 5 (2023) said, "Nigeria is a patriarchal society, and this has affected the passage of bills that support affirmative action and women's inclusion in government. There needs to be a dismantling of these patriarchal institutions for there to be free passage of these bills." Participant 6 (2023) agreed that there was a need to address patriarchy and the institutions that support the patriarchy.

In consensus with the above views, Agbalajobi and Oluwalogbon (2019) expounded that the patriarchal nature, religion, and culture have been a major reason why the bills were not passed. The patriarchal institutions have in turn prescribed gender roles responsibilities and practices.

Participant 3 (2023) also opined that there are certain societal and religious norms dictate strict gender roles that delineate behaviors, duties, and obligations for males and females both men and women in Nigeria. Usually, individuals perceive the realm of politics as a domain exclusively reserved for men and are hesitant to participate. Those who do manage to participate are often satisfied with occupying subordinate positions.

The Underrepresentation of Women in Politics

Participant 4 (2023) explained that the under-representation of women in governance has posed a barrier to legislating policies that will further include more women's participation in governance as seen. Participant 1 (2023) also explained that with the Lagos state assemblies having just 7.5% women representation in the 8th and 9th assemblies, there will be no likeliness that there will be enactments that will promote the inclusion of women in the Lagos State House of Assembly. In line with this, Participant 3 (2023) opined that if most of the house, who are men in the legislature disagree with any bill even if it was sponsored by a woman, there will be no progress when such a bill is raised in the house.

Political Parties Structures and Nomination Process

Political party structures are major hindrances to the enactment of policies in the legislature. Participant 4 (2023) opined that there is an issue of godfatherism within party systems in which godsons are mainly men. On this, Participant 5 (2023) opined that party leaders can affect the party's stance on legislation boosting women's involvement if they make it a priority and exhibit a strong commitment to gender equality. thus, legislators who are members of said parties cannot sponsor bills that focus on promoting women's inclusion in governance.

According to Ette and Akpan-Obong (2022), in addition to facing hindrances from party leaders and influential figures, women are systematically disempowered and discouraged within the organisational framework of political parties. Political parties serve as crucial entry points to the political arena. Gberevbie and Oviasogie (2012) suggested that political parties can abolish all forms of nomination fees paid at the political party level, as is currently the case in some of the larger and more well-known political parties in the nation, as well as eliminating the non-indigene syndrome clause (a system carried over from pre-colonial Nigerian societies where each ethnic group fought for political identity and self-preservation) in their nomination process.

National Assembly Support for Women Inclusion in Governance in Lagos State House of Assembly

The National Assembly plays a crucial role in enacting Policies that will help the Lagos State House of Assembly, and this will be discussed under the following themes. One of the major roles of the national assembly is to enact policies that will encourage women's inclusion in governance. This can be enforced for state

assemblies through policy transfers and

Enacting and Enforcing Legislation

Participant 1 (2023) stated that:

The National Assembly has the authority to pass laws that advance gender parity and facilitate the participation of women in decision-making processes. The proposed legislation may encompass clauses about gender quotas, affirmative action, and equitable opportunities for women in political leadership roles

In consensus with this view above, Nwabunkeonye (2014) asserted that the issue of women's limited involvement in politics in Nigeria due to discriminatory socio-cultural and religious practices warrants a thorough examination by relevant stakeholders, including traditional/religious leaders and government officials. Lawmakers must discourage cultural and religious practices that perpetuate discrimination against women and ensure that those who engage in such practices are appropriately penalised as a means of deterrence.

Establishing Gender Responsive Policies and Guidelines

Participant 4 (2023) opined that the national assembly can make and use policies and rules that take into account women's needs and provide a framework for getting more women involved in government. Participant 6 (2023) agreed that policies that should be made can look at things like how candidates are chosen, how parties get money, how elections are run, and how to build people's skills.

In agreement with this, Odedina and Nwogwogwu (2020) asserted that the decisions made by policymakers hold significant influence over societal outcomes. In cases where a specific demographic is not adequately represented, their interests may not receive adequate protection within the public sphere.

Strengthening Institutions

There is a need for the provision of gender-responsive institutions and the strengthening of those institutions. Participant 3 (2023) gave the opinion that the national assembly can help set up and improve governmental systems that work to get more women involved in running the country.

Stakeholder Actions in Promoting Women's Inclusion in Governance

Advocacy and awareness-raising

Participant 3 (2023) suggested that:

Stakeholders can undertake advocacy initiatives that will promote awareness about the importance of women's inclusion in government. They can work with the Lagos State House of Assembly to advance gender-sensitive policies, laws, and practices. They can highlight the benefits of women's leadership and inspire public support for gender equality through campaigns, public forums, and media outreach.

Participant 2 (2023) explained that there is a need for awareness for many women to be voted into government roles and the legislature. Women achieve more when they feel empowered (Chukwudi, Okoya, Adebajo, Adekunle, 2023). In this direction, advocacy should be taken seriously and there is a need for more pressure on the government and the general public to do the right thing concerning enacting these legislations, Participant 5 (2023) agreed that there is a need for education for the general public because we are still stuck with old mentalities that have affected women in getting into power.

In consensus with the above views, Gberevbie and Oviasogie (2012) asserted that it is imperative to promote and encourage all women advocacy groups across the nation to exert significant pressure on both the government and the public to provide support for women's political participation. In support of this, Chukwudi, Gberevbie, Abasilim, and Imhonopi, (2019) maintained that it is the responsibility of the government to ensure the progress of all of its sectors.

Capacity Building and Training

Stakeholders must engage in capacity-building and training programs for women to demonstrate their preparedness to assume leadership positions in governance. This is what Participant 7 (2023) posited:

Civil society organisations can help women get more involved in politics by giving them training and programs that help build their skills. These programs can focus on leadership skills, running for office, public speaking, analysing policies, and making plans. Civil society organisations can help women participate more successfully in governance by giving them the knowledge and skills they need.

Participant 6 (2023) agreed that there is a need for capacity building and training for more women. Although many civil society organisations have started this, capacity building needs to be shown its effectiveness and with funding. In accordance, Chukwudi, & Ojo, (2023) have emphasized the importance of civil society groups in societal development and women empowerment.

In agreement with the opinions above, the Institute of Media and Society (2023) asserted that there is a need for all stakeholders to recommit to building the capacity of women and also get involved in training women who would eventually run for politics.

Policy Areas for the Lagos State House of Assembly in Including Women in Governance

Participant 6 (2023) explained that:

the existence of a Ministry of Women Affairs and Women schemes can help in the need for those policies that would help the Lagos State House of Assembly in including Women in Governance. One such policy area will include the education of women by the Ministry of Women Affairs and the mentorship of women done by said ministry.

Participant 7 (2023) opined that:

If it is possible, the Lagos State House of Assembly can focus on domesticating ratified international treaties and on increasing the number of women in the Lagos State House of Assembly. This will in turn produce a sizeable number of women that would be represented in the National Assembly from Lagos State.

These responses further showed that there is a need for the Lagos State House of Assembly to focus on policy areas that will encourage the legislation on women's inclusion in governance. It further shows that structures are already in place, but there needs to be a mechanism that will drive those structures to work and the put in place. Also, there is a need for the domestication of international treaties that have been ratified by the federal government. This will further increase the inclusion of women in the Lagos State House of Assembly and will translate to the National level. Every administration need to be successful in order to have excellent governance, and Nigeria's governance has failed due to a number of political issues, including unemployment and poverty, as well as stark differences between the country's north and south (Aluko, Apeloko, Chukwudi, Paimo, 2023).

The Role of Technology in Promoting Women's Inclusion in Governance

Participant 5 (2023) explained that:

Women now have better access to information because of advances in technology, notably the internet and digital platforms. It enables people to keep updated about political processes, policies, and involvement possibilities. Women are better able to make educated decisions, participate effectively in government, and fight for their rights and interests when they have access to information. Women may now participate in online advocacy and mobilisation initiatives because of technological advancements. Women may connect, share their stories, and amplify their voices through social media platforms, online forums, and digital campaigns. These platforms assist in mobilising support for women's participation in governance by increasing awareness and rallying public opinion in favour of policy reforms.

Participant 6 (2023) buttressed it with this: Women's inclusion is aided by technology, which provides venues for online voting, virtual town halls, and digital consultations. Oladipo & Chukwudi (2023) in the same position emphasized the importance of social media in the empowerment of women. These strategies enable women to participate in politics despite geographical, time, or other restrictions.

The above responses show that technology plays a very serious role in promoting women's inclusion in governance. In a now globalized world, the need to include technological aspects in legislating policies that will drive inclusion will now be more needed. Technology also plays a role in bringing up initiatives that will ease the need for the mobilization of women in governance.

Summary

This study analysed the legislative enactments on women's inclusion in governance in the Lagos State House of Assembly between 2015 to 2022. To achieve this purpose: the study adopted the following specific objectives:

- I. Examine how the legislative enactments on women's inclusion in governance affect the Rwandan Parliament
- II. Identify the challenges facing legislative policies that encourage women's inclusion in Kenyan governance.
- III. Assess possible mechanisms on how legislative policies encourage women in Namibian governance.

The conceptual basis of the study was formed by exploring certain crucial concepts and themes such as the concept of governance, inclusive governance, and women's inclusion in governance. The study also explored some international policies on women's inclusion in governments and further reported women in parliaments in selected countries. It explored women's inclusion in governance in Nigeria and some policies that have encouraged women's inclusion in governance. It also explored some challenges of women's inclusion in governance in Nigeria. The study is theorized on feminist institutionalism which examines the institutional framework and regulations that impact the participation of women in legislative processes in the Lagos State House of Assembly. The historical design and the descriptive survey were adopted as the methodological design of this study. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were carried out among women's rights activists and civic society organisations that had in-depth knowledge about women's inclusion in governance in Lagos State as a reflection for countries within the international community.

The thematic method of analysis was used to analyze the primary data obtained from the in-depth interview. The transcribed responses were categorized to achieve the objective of the study.

Contribution to Knowledge

The study contributed to knowledge by establishing and providing a comprehensive legal framework, implementation challenges, policy initiatives, historical factors, and potential areas for improvement in promoting women's participation and empowerment in global governance.

Recommendations

Women's inclusion in governance is a prevailing issue globally, both national assemblies and state assemblies need to see the need to legislate policies that will encourage more women to be included in governance. Based on the outcomes of this study, the following recommendations are put forwards

- i. It is recommended that gender-sensitive policies be developed and implemented to facilitate the representation and participation of women in political processes. The policies ought to tackle hindrances such as discriminatory practices, restricted access to resources, and social norms that impede the participation of women in governance.
- ii. It is recommended that unambiguous targets and measurable indicators be established to assess advancements in augmenting women's representation. Advocate for legislators to prioritize gender equality and women's rights concerns within the legislative agenda. This can be done by defining clear targets, identifying key indicators, and using a set baseline data, to mention a few.
- iii. There is a need for the implementation of strategies such as gender quotas, regulations about party financing that promote women's involvement, and the provision of support mechanisms for female candidates. It is recommended to advocate for the implementation of these reforms to promote gender equity and fairness in the electoral process.

Conclusion

The research sheds light on the legislative processes and policies about the participation of women in governance within the context of Lagos State and how they reflect in the international community. The study has examined legislative enactments and policy frameworks, yielding significant findings regarding the endeavors undertaken, obstacles encountered, and prospects for augmenting the involvement and portrayal of women in political procedures.

The statement underscores the necessity of persistent endeavours to augment legislative dedication and give precedence to gender parity within the legislative program. The research highlights the importance of implementing electoral reforms, enhancing capacity building, and promoting leadership development programs to enable women to engage in politics effectively. These initiatives are crucial in providing women with the essential skills and resources required for their political empowerment.

Furthermore, the research highlights the significance of cooperation and involvement with various stakeholders such as women's associations, non-governmental organisations, and other governmental bodies, in advancing the participation of women in governance. The significance of gathering gender-disaggregated data, implementing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to monitor advancements, and ensuring responsibility in attaining gender parity objectives is underscored.

The study's recommendations provide a strategic plan for the Lagos State House of Assembly and other parliaments globally and other pertinent stakeholders to tackle the identified deficiencies and obstacles. Through the implementation of these recommendations, it is feasible to establish a legislative environment that is more inclusive and gender-responsive, thereby promoting the participation and representation of women. This study enhances the current body of knowledge on the participation of women in governance through the provision of factual data, policy examination, and actionable suggestions that are tailored to the Lagos State House of Assembly and the International Community. The aforementioned process serves as a mediator between scholarly inquiry and practical implementation, enabling the conversion of research outcomes into concrete policy modifications and measures. The study's contribution to the broader objective of achieving gender equality and empowering women in political processes in Lagos State and beyond is through the identification and resolution of barriers that hinder women's inclusion in governance.

Limitations of the Study

This study is not free from limitations.

Firstly, the study is limited to the analysis of one parliamentary body as a reflection of the international community, and it's limited to policies that include only women. Secondly, the study is limited to the unavailability of legislators for interviews. Finally, the study is limited by scope which is from 2015-2022.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The limitations of the study led to the formulation of the following recommendations for subsequent research:

- i. The scope of the study is limited to just the House of Assembly in one country's parliaments. In

- subsequent research, other legislative chambers might be incorporated.
- ii. Future research may conduct interviews with members of legislative bodies.
 - iii. Subsequent studies may opt to investigate a different period within the scope of the study to investigate.

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The authors do not have any form of conflicting interests.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What specific legislative enactments exist at the National Assembly about women's inclusion in governance?
2. Have any legislative enactments from the National Assembly been implemented or adopted by the Lagos State House of Assembly to improve women's participation? in governance?
3. What challenges, if any, hinder the implementation of legislative enactments aimed at improving women's inclusion in governance at the Lagos State House of Assembly?
4. In your opinion, what more can be done at the national level to support the Lagos State House of Assembly in promoting women's inclusion in governance?
5. What specific policies or initiatives has the Lagos State House of Assembly implemented to encourage women's inclusion in governance?
6. How can civil society organizations and other stakeholders support the Lagos State House of Assembly in promoting women's inclusion in governance?
7. What factors have historically hindered women's inclusion in governance at the Lagos State House of Assembly?
8. In your opinion, what are the most important policy areas where the Lagos State House of Assembly can focus its efforts on encouraging women's inclusion in governance.
9. What role can technology play in promoting women's inclusion in governance at the Lagos State House of Assembly?