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Women participation in politics: A comparative assessment of Nigeria and Malaysia

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Abstract

This paper examined and compare the level of women in politics and the gender gap in Nigeria and Malaysia. Indeed, the two nations under study are patriarchal in nature where men are giving much power over women. This makes them less active and underrepresented in the political movements in these two countries. This paper is qualitative where related literature was generated through secondary sources of data collection. The materials used for this study include; books, journals, magazines, archives, reports, and newspapers. These documents were systematically reviewed to develop this article. To support the discussion in this study Liberal Feminist theory were used. In explaining this study empowerment theory was used, the theory was propounded by Sara Long we in 1990. Essentially, the assumption of the theory dwells on women empowerment and gender equality. This Theory aims to critically access the level of women empowerment and development. The postulation of the theory is to ensure equal opportunities for both men and women to attain gender parity. This theory will help in abridging gender differences and sustain equal access to education and economy. The study found that women are underrepresented in the politics in Nigeria and Malaysia were most of the political position is being dominated by men over women. In addition, the study observed that women are underrepresented and at the disadvantage not because they cannot perform but rather, they are seen as the weaker sex. Therefore, the study recommended that women should be given distinct attention and equal opportunities as their male counterpart by the various political parties when wishful for any political posts. To encourages women to take part in politics spouses should admire and give women and wife(s), the opportunities to take part and seek for political positions to display their talent and ability for state and national development.

Keywords: an assessment; comparative; Malaysia; Nigeria; participation; politics; women

Introduction

In everywhere in the world God in His wisdom created man and women for a purpose; determined their gender and provided everyone in the gender group for possible development and improvement in all difficulties. However, state and its other establishments are man's establishment for the survival of both genders beside any other creatures by providing the necessary environment for each living being to pursue its goals and ambitions in a peaceful and more prepared means.

According to Mama (1995:37) ^[21]; Ragins, Townsend, & Mattis (1998) the statutory and legal status of women, and women's involvement in policy and decision making have long been taken as key indicators of the general level of democracy, generally on the basis that.

Since women constitute a historically burdened and relegated set, and at least half of most national inhabitants, their level of political participation and representation is very important. This is as true of African countries as it has been in Western Europe, North America, and Asia. The trend of the gender breach is a phenomenon that cuts across the entire societies in the world. In fact, it has become a universal topic that pushes the need for equal opportunity for both genders of various societies in the world to accomplish human development. Gender inequality between women and men is a universal phenomenon that needs to be addressed with a high sense of belonging (Tunde and Zakuan, 2017) [37]. It is observed that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been concentrating on accomplishing goals that can improve human development and it is against this background that the yearly index was established. The current 2015 Human Development Report displays the gender disparity in work with men controlling the world's paid work and women succeed in the world's unpaid work (Selim, 2015) [32].

Though, the vulnerability of gender disparity is widespread in Africa and Asian continents which consistently Nigeria and Malaysia individually fit in to. However, gender disparity is a universal problem that affects many countries of diverse continents, it is exceedingly noticeable in Africa and Asia. However, societal rules and regulations, custom and tradition, physical strength, economic prowess, educational attainments, among other factors play vital functions in the day to day's activities of a human being in the state. Competing for the inadequate resources in the society is a common feature at both intra- and inters- gender equation levels.

Besides, the normal population of Nigeria and Malaysia is made up of female, the degree of gender disparity is marked in Nigeria. For example, the political atmosphere in Malaysia places women representation in the parliament and state assembly to eleven percent (Tunde and Zakuan, 2017) [37] while Nigeria's 2015 election witnessed less than thirty percent women membership in the elective positions (Akpan, 2016; Akpan, 2015) [27].

Nigeria has one of the lowest rates of female participation in parliament, according to the UN. Women hold only 5.29% of seats in Nigeria's state assemblies, despite women making up half of the electorate. Experts suggest that women could be deterred from entering politics by a patriarchal society and a lack of transparency in the candidate selection process.

According to (Mogherini, 2019) [24] Nigerian women have leadership qualities desired to drive the nation into success. But to join these, they must be given the opportunity, according to the Head of the European Union (EU) Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Ambassador Ketil Karlsen. At a seminar on women's participation in Nigeria's political process held in Abuja on March 23, Ambassador Karlsen said: *"it was an irony that the Nigerian women noted for their courage and honesty are demoted to the background in the politics of their country"* (Mogherini, 2019:1) [24].

Problem Statement

The present level of female in political positions in the two nations is not corresponding to their number in the workforce. The little involvement of women in politics in these countries compounded a problem which created a big vacuum that needs to be filled since women formed a significant and increasing part of workforce and wage service (Fapohuda,

2004) [22]. Women underrepresentation in politics of the two nations under examination has created a wide gap in the political structure. The central argument is that women representation in the two countries is very minimal. Conversely, it is noted that one very important thing is the God-given ability that women are good and better at multi-tasking than their male counterparts (Yesufu, 2018) [45]. It is observed that politics is seen as the right of men not because the law has made it, but because of cultural and religious factors that marginalized women to domestic affairs (Fapohuda, 2004) [11]. He equally observed that women need adequate representation in all sphere of life. The dispute is made that slow progress with women's political representation in Nigeria is intimately connected with the diagnosis of the problem - how the problem of women's underrepresentation is perceived and understood as well as the strategies adopted to address it. Here, the study shows how efforts were made to address women's political underrepresentation in Nigeria have typically focused on expanding women's political resources and how these efforts have produced marginal results and incremental change. Women in Malaysian parliament are underrepresented. She further disclosed that that the little number of women legislators are more responsive to women's interest than their male counterparts, developing unique sets of concerns and priorities and taking leading parts in formulating policies that favour their women counterparts. More so, a study by Zakuan argued that women's representation in legislation is very important because the gender of the legislator does matter. This is due to the fact that women and men have different life experiences, roles, and socialization that shaped their interest, preferences or perceptions. Without adequate women representation, their rights and interest of women in the workforces cannot be efficiently handled by men alone. Given this the paper merit to examining women representation and participation in politics, the gender gap in Nigeria and Malaysia.

Methodology

This study is qualitative research where data are obtained through secondary sources of data collection i.e. past documents, such as articles, books, magazines, newspaper, archives, published and unpublished articles. These documents were thoroughly studied to support the opinions.

Research Design

Descriptive anthropology is one of the qualitative research approaches that help in describing and interpreting a societal culture-shared among the group. In addition to this, it also helps in illustrating and interpreting the common patterns of the culture of a group of people living in a certain place. Ethnography helps the researcher in explaining and demonstrating the total way of lives of people living in a specific location. She further added that ethnography assist the researcher in studying a group that shares the same culture. Concluded accounts of culture sharing group, themes, and sub-themes about a specific group of people or individuals.

Empowerment Theory

This theory was advocated by Sara Longwe, in 1990. The assumption of the theory centered on women's empowerment and gender equality. The aim of the theory is to critically assess the level of women empowerment and development.

Women's empowerment simply means allowing women to take part equally as men in every work of live like men counterpart. And in addition to participating in the development process to achieve or gain control of the factors of production like men in all the societies. The theory aims to ensure equal opportunities to all genders to accomplish gender fairness. The theory believes that with this, the disparity in the politics will be minimized if equal treatment is given to both genders in the economic sectors.

Women in Politics in Malaysia

The participation of women in politics in Malaysia has become obvious since 1945. Before women roles were restricted only to campaigning and voting. However, it is estimated that less than 5% of women are officially involved in politics and compete as aspirants for parliamentary and state assembly seats. In 1995, women's participation has been comparatively inspiring, as 61 women from different political parties contested as contestants. Although the figures still remain quite minimal, women constitute only 4.64% of the total number of aspirants contesting for the total number of 586 seats, at both parliamentary (192) and state assembly (394) positions. However, out of the 60 women contenders, 10 were non-bumiputra women (Mahfudzah Mustafa, 1999) ^[20].

It is observed that women's participation in politics has long been recognized as an important measure of the status of women in Malaysia, the women have indeed stamped their mark in the Cabinet, the Dewan Rakyat and the Dewan Negara (Nation, 2019) ^[25]. The trend in women running for political positions and holding office is gaining momentum, and their contributions and impact would be best seen in about two to three years, said two women in politics (Nation, 2019) ^[25].

In a related development a study by Nyuk Yan Chee showcased that Malaysia is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural country. Information obtained from the statistics department Malaysia there are around 65% Malays and aborigines, 26% Chinese, 7.7% Indians and 1.2 % others. The study noted that Malay people are the main ethnic group in Malaysia and all of them are Muslim. Malaysia gained independence from the British colonizers in 1957. UMNO (United Malays National Organization) has been the main political power in Malaysia until now, and Islam has also become the official religion. As a secular country, the role of Islam was merely ceremonial in the early years of independence and people usually followed patrilineal, matrilineal or bilateral kinship system. However, since the flowering of Islamic educational and missionary activities in the so called 'Dakwah movement' in the 1970s, Islam has become the major factor to change the lives of Malay people.

In Malaysia, women's representation at both the legislative and executive levels cut down painfully short of the 30% goal of women among public sector decision-makers accepted by the Malaysian government since 2004 and highlighted in succeeding national development plans. Decided, Malaysian society is still patriarchal and male-dominated, with men feeling especially threatened by women sharing political power (Yeong, 2018) ^[44].

Nigeria was also colonized by Britain. The British accepted the policy of indirect rule whereby they ruled through the local rulers. They recognized traditional rulers, and where there were many, they selected some people into such positions. They used local officials to manage the areas. They

introduced the use of English language as a means of communication control and introduced British currency as a medium of economic control (Toluwalope, 2016) ^[36].

Women's Under-Representation in Malaysian Politics

According to (Yeong, 2018) ^[44] women's are under-represented in Malaysian policymaking. However, it is understood that only 14.4% of the newly elected federal lawmakers are women, placing Malaysia 134th out of 193 countries in the appropriate ranking. The world averages of female representation for national legislatures are 23.4% for the single/lower house, 22.8% for upper house/senate and 23.3% for combined houses. For the 12 state assemblies that simultaneously went to the polls, women constituted an even lower percentage at 12.3%. The figures are, however, already the highest in history for the country, as the last election in 2013 returned only 10.8 and 11.5% of women lawmakers at the federal and state levels, respectively.

Mogherini (2019) ^[24] noted that about half of the countries of the world manage to help a critical minority in parliament, executive or any position of power or decision-making. She listed Sweden as one of the countries that have been fair to women in terms of political inclusiveness. "*It's suicidal for any political party in Sweden not to subscribe to the principle of gender equality and women's political empowerment.* (Mogherini, 2019:2) ^[24].

She urged Nigeria to take a cue from countries like Rwanda, Bolivia, Mexico, South Africa, Senegal, Namibia, Uganda, Angola, and Zimbabwe, which have some forms of legislative quotas. "We need to understand that every gender quotas, like for instance, the provision in Kenya which is also reflected in the electoral law, which is also being reflected in the political parties' law, cascades in the political processes where the different political actors interact (Mogherini, 2019:2). ^[24]"

Women in Politics in Nigeria

Nigeria is one of the largest countries in Africa blessed with human and material resources. Presently, it has a population of 196,651,048 out of this the male population is 99,579,686 which is (50.6%) and the female population is 97,071,362 which is 49.4% respectively (UNDESA, 2018) ^[40]. It is observed that in the Nigerian context, the numerical strength of the women has been measured to be of great importance that is necessary for the growth of the nation economy and good governance that would enhance social and political development. Therefore, it is expected to change the nation into a better status. Therefore, over many years, scholars have emphasized the importance of women empowerment for National development. But one vigorous element (women education) for accomplishing this is absent (Ali, Zakuan, & Mohammad, 2018a) ^[3].

Nevertheless, reasons for the poor participation of women in the 2019 elections were generally attributed to the country's political arrangement. The two main political parties were blamed of not allowing women 'enough space'.

We failed because there were very few female candidates in the two major parties," explained Abiodun Essiet, who contested in the primary of the APC aimed at nominating its councillorship candidate for Orozo Ward of Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) (Ebuka, 2019) ^[9].

For instance, Mrs Essiet, a nurse and gender activist, had hopes of becoming the first woman elected councilor in the ward. But she did not make it out of the primary, which was pronounced to be oppressed with misdeeds (Ebuka, 2019) [9].

Nigeria is Africa's largest democracy but has one of the lowest percentages of female political participation and representation on the continent. However, it is observed that women make up less than 6 percent of the country's parliament, according to the International Parliamentary Union, and no Nigerian woman has ever been elected president, vice president or governor (Essiet, 2019) [10]. These findings are measured from Liberal Feminist theory, which maintained that women need to be treated with fairness in the political movements of all countries.

In view of the above statement, Yesufu (2018) [45] disclosed that:

We must not forget one very important thing, which is that God-given ability that women are good and better at multi-tasking than their male counterparts. It is no doubt that women are 50% of the nation population, 50% of every solution, 50% of every action, and 50% of everything.

Gender Inequality in Various Organization

However, Global Gender Gap Index was first to make known to by the World Economic Forum in 2006, this is to capture the magnitude of gender differences and understanding their development over a period. It is found and reported that wide gender gap persists in Health and Survival, Educational Attainment, Economic Participation and Opportunity, and Political Empowerment and provides country rankings that permit effective assessments in the regions and income groups. This ranking was planned to bring global consciousness of the challenges posed by gender gaps (Insight Report, 2017; Ragins, Townsend, & Mattis, 1998) [17].

Though,

"The gaps between women and men on political empowerment and economic participation continue widening: only 58% of the economic participation gap has been closed a second successive year of reversed progress and the lowest value measured by the Index since 2008 and about 23% of the political gap, unchanged since last year against a long-term trend of slow but steady improvement" (Insight Report, 2017) [17].

More so in spite of all gender differences at the global level, the problem is more pronounced regional and state level. However, it is noted that out of 142 nations examined by the Index these years, the study further understood that 82 countries have increased their overall gender gap score compared to previous years, while 60 have seen it as decrease. By contrast, last year's Report found negative results in more than half of the nations measured. Furthermore, as detailed in the Report, a number of the regions and nations have crossed symbolic milestones on the path to gender parity for the first time this year. Although this year's edition of the Global Gender Gap Index sees no new entrants to its top 10 list, there have been notable rank changes. The top spots continue to be held by smaller Western European countries, particularly the Nordics that occupy the top three positions, with two countries from East Asia and the Pacific region, one country from the Sub-

Saharan Africa region, one country from the Latin America and the Caribbean region, and one country from the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region also represented. All but three countries in the Index top 10 have now crossed the threshold of closing more than 80% of their overall gender gap up from five both last year and in 2015.

On contemporary drifts, the general global gender gap can be fastened in precisely 100 years across the 106 nations. Compared to 83 years last year. The study found and reported that the greatest stimulating gender gaps remain in the health and economic sectors. The Insight Report (2017) [17] disclosed that the gender gap is widening in the economic. This wide gap cannot be overcome in the next 217 years. However, it is understood that the gender gap is still existing in the education sector, and it is observed that the gap will be minimized in the next coming 13 years. The Insight Report (2017) [17] reveals that gender gap is extensively wide in political spheres, and presently, it holds the broadest gender gap and showing the most progress, even with the slowdown in progress this year. It could be shut in the coming 99 years. The gender gap in the health sector is larger than it stood in 2006. "It is reported that the world regions record a thinner gender gap than they did 11 years ago. It further disclosed that the general global gender gap can be closed in the next 61 years in Western Europe, 79 years in Latin America and the Caribbean, 62 years in South Asia, 102 years in Sub-Saharan Africa, 128 years in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 157 years in the Middle East and North Africa, 161 years in East Asia and the Pacific, and 168 years in North America (Insight Report, 2017) [17]."

It is observed that in the Nigerian context, the numerical strength of the women has been measured to be of great importance that is necessary for the growth of the nation economy and good governance that would enhance social and political development. Nigeria is one of the largest countries in Africa blessed with human and material resources. Presently, it has a population of 196,651,048 out of this the male population is 99,579,686 which is (50.6%) and the female population is 97,071,362 which is 49.4% respectively (UNDESA, 2018) [40]. Therefore, it is expected to change the nation into a better status. Therefore, over many years, scholars have emphasized the importance of women empowerment for National development.

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Similarly, Chadwick revealed that women account for almost 50 percent of the Nigerian population, however, only 6 percent of federal legislative positions are occupied by women. Nigeria currently ranks 183rd on parliamentary gender equality index, with only 10 non-African countries trailing behind. The country representative on United Nation in Nigeria, Mrs. Comfort Lamptey, has said Nigeria is one of the countries with the lowest representation of women in politics across Africa. She expressed this over the weekend in Abuja at the inauguration of a task team to monitor the participation of women in politics (Yesufu, 2018) ^[45].

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) revealed at the annual national convention of the Nigerian League of Women Voters recently that only 62 women won elective positions out of the 2,970 that contested. Six women were elected to the Senate, 11 to the House of Representatives, 40 to the state Houses of Assembly, while four women became deputy governors.

While no woman has been elected as governor since 1999, and the presidential seat appears to be light years away, their number elected to the National Assembly serves, therefore, as the most important barometer to calibrate their inclusion in Nigeria's democracy. The 2019 performance represents 4.17 per cent of the total of elected officials as against the 5.65 per cent in the 2015 general election. The plunge in the Reps figure makes the picture clearer: in 2011, it had 26 women representatives and 19 in 2015 and the 11 just elected (OANDA, 2019) ^[29].

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According to Ibeanu (2009) ^[15] there are four major socio-economic and cultural changes with possibilities to certainly change women's political representation in Nigerian and Malaysian context. He believes that in order to transform women political representation there is a need for the growing "voice" and rising profile of women in the economy, community work and various spheres of professional and

public engagements, in short, there is a need for women empowerment. Finally, is the growing possibilities of women to take up economic responsibilities in the household which was reserved for men and to question the myth of the "male-as-breadwinner" in many middle and low income families (Ibeanu, 2009:5) ^[15].

Comparative Assessment of Women Participation in Politics in Nigeria and Malaysia

It is understood that a lack of improvement in women's political representation in Nigeria context is astonishing bearing in mind the role of women in the country's socio-economic and cultural scene seems to be growing; and it is projected that the growing role of women in the society would explain a better attachment of women in political development.

In a related development Yesufu (2018) ^[45] argued that when more women participate in politics and the political process, it enhances the democratic process and ultimately the development agenda.

In Nigerian context women aspiring to become politicians often encounter a lack of support from a society that is traditional and patriarchal. Some have even experienced gender-based election aggravation and ferocity (Essiet, 2019) ^[10].

For instance, in preparation for 2019 general election, President Muhammadu Buhari signed into law, the Not- too-Young- to- Rule policy which importantly reduced the attainment age that people need before vying for any political posts, and also giving greater chances and inclusion for youth and women. This was done to get enough votes from the youth and women. But, 2019 general election has proved contrary. However, one of the most confusing questions in the Nigerian polity has to do with the role of women and youth in the political system. Until 2019, it has been extensively expected that politics in Nigeria can be controlled, but the new reality from the recent conclusion general election suggests otherwise (Ayomo, 2019) ^[6].

A study by (Devadason, 2017) ^[8] exposed that in the early 2000s, it was recognized by the then Prime Minister, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi that women were relegated in Malaysia. In 2006, Ahmad Badawi guaranteed the women that the government would continue to ease higher participation of women into the nation's labour force and review current laws and regulations that discriminate against women.

He then explained that in 2011, the current Prime Minister, Najib Tun Razak, supported the schema of women under the 10th Malaysian Strategy. The Prime Minister expressed that "measures will be undertaken to increase the female labour force participation rate from 46 percent in 2010 to 59 percent in 2020. The present female labour force participation at 54 percent, though close to the proposed target, is much lower than that of the male labour force participation rate at 80 percent (Devadason, 2017) ^[8].

A study by Yeong (2018) ^[44] showcased that Malaysia graded at a lowly 104th among 144 countries in the 2017 Global Gender Gap Report in overall gender equality covering economic, educational, health and political aspects, its ranking was even more dismal on political empowerment alone: 133rd.

AGAIN, a study by Thornton (2013) ^[13] clarified that in spite of the growing female workforce and participation rates in Malaysia, the country records the lowest senior roles

employed by women in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), at 26 percent, and the third lowest internationally to have women on board-level positions (Chairman, Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Executive Director, and Non-Executive Director). However, from the available information retrieved from Malaysian Annual Report (2014) [5] it was reported that the number of women in companies in Malaysia was a mere 8 percent in 2013. In view of the above argument, it was reported in The Star (2014) that the number of women is 33 percent in the highest positions in the government sector. In addition to this, Women's Aids Organisation WAO (2012) [43] reported that women representation at the international level, for example as Malaysian ambassadors and high commissioners, remains low.

Although, Kamal (2012) [19] disclosed that:

Article 8 of the 2001 amended Federal Constitution of Malaysia (see Laws of Malaysia, 2009) prohibits discrimination based on gender, there have been cases of employers dismissing women who are pregnant or on maternity leave. This has raised questions on how 'discrimination' is defined (only applicable to gender discrimination in employment in public services in the Constitution and to what extent the CEDAW is incorporated into national law.

Barriers to Women Participation in Politics

The researchers found that there are numerous factors to women involvement in politics in Nigeria and Malaysia. A study by Chadwick revealed that women are more likely to be judged unfairly, harshly and inadequately for failing, therefore, the vicious cycle of not daring to put one's head above the bulwark is complete. Those who dare walk against the crowd are walking out of their traditional gender roles, this may lead to aggravation or obvious violence. Liberal Feminist theory kick against this gender differences that led to women domination and subjugation to domestic activities. This is because of the beliefs that both genders are born equal in society and deserved equal treatment.

The study found that another barrier to women in politics in Nigeria is financial difficulties. This is because it is all known that campaigns are expensive, fundraising requires skills some women may not have and can't afford to hire due to intersecting inequalities such as economic inequality, social inequality, and structural inequality (Ali, Zakuan & Ahmad). Women may not be as forthright in asking for contributions and may not have built the social capital needed for a successful campaign.

Women's participation in policy and decision-making process is significant for a nation's development and progress. However, in Malaysia, there are plans, established and global pledges which have been employed to improve women opportunities to be incorporated in the public sphere particularly as policy and decision makers. Despite numerous initiatives, women in Malaysia are still confronting several challenges because of gender disparity in work and cultural issues as well as religious understanding that categorizes women's roles (Hussein, & Mara, 2016) [22].

Similarly, it is observed that women participation in policy and decision making is very low in the Nigerian context this is because of gender inequality in the workplace and all social activities. It is understood that women in Nigeria were marginalized to domestic assignment this is because of the

stereotyped that subjugated women to motherly position to take care of the husband and children at home (Ali, Zakuan, & Mohammad, 2018b) [3]. In line with this, a study by Mustapha and Hamidu (2016) [4] disclosed that women are facing a lot of challenges in the Nigerian politics, this is because women are not adequately empowered as such they are not financially sound.

The High Cost of Election Deposits

Malaysian NGO CEDAW Shadow Report, election deposits in Malaysia are high. Candidates must pay RM15,000 to become a candidate for the federal-level Dewan Rakyat (House of Representatives) and RM8,000 for the state Legislative Assemblies (Women's Aids Organisation WAO, 2012) [43]. The same problem with Nigerian politics where most women cannot compete with men in politics is because of the high cost of election and election process. It is found that to contest for any post in both countries of the study it requires a huge amount of money. Because of these obstacles, only a few women are involved and were able to take part in politics in both nations under inquiry.

Again, in Nigeria to context for any political post, you have to be financially buoyant or you must have a political godfather that would stand for you financially or else you cannot context. It is observed that women are not adequately empowered, because of this they are not financially sound. This what makes them not actively participating in politics (Mustapha and Hamidu 2018) [14]. In a related development, a study by Agbalajobi (2010) [1] disclosed that lack of financial power is a major factor to women participation in politics. He further shocased that for any person to take part actively in politics in he or she must be economically strong. In 2019 general election, the two strong political parties the All Progressive Congress APC and the People's Democratic Party PDP have their pricing of the nomination forms for the various aspirants. However, the expression of interest form is priced: N12million for the post of president, N6m for Governors, N3.5m for Senators, N2.5m for the House of Reps (HOR) and N600,000 for state house of assembly respectively. Nonetheless, APC who is clomouring for "change" in the nation the prices of the nomination forms are significantly higher: N45m for president, N22m for Governors, N7m for Sanators, N3.85m for House of Reps (HOR) and N850,000 for State House of Assembly (HOA). However, inquisitively also the opposition party (PDP) reduced the price of the nomination forms compared to 2015 polls when it was in power. But the ruling party (APC) increased the cost of the nomination forms of the various post for its aspirants (Okogba, 2018) [30].

Considering the above cost implication for polls it is very difficult for women to contest for a political post because of the huge amount impost on the nomination forms and other election expenses. In line with this, a study by Mustapha Ummu and Ahmad (2018) [14] noted that most of the women in the nation are not well empowered because of the patriarchy nature of the country where men have dominated and subjugated women to domestic chores. In addition to that woman are mostly occupying a lower position in all the elective posts. For instance, in 2016 President Muhammadu Buhari, who was seeking a second term, caused controversy when standing next to German Chancellor Angela Merkel, he responded to a question about his wife's political views by saying: "She belongs to my kitchen and my living room and the other room".

Provision of Free Seat to Women

The parties of the ruling coalition do not have quotas or allocation of a free seat to women to increase the level of women's representation and participation in parliament. Only one political party, an opposition party, has included in its constitution a commitment to having 30 per cent of decision-making positions to be filled by women. This commitment was made in June 2009 by Parti Keadilan Rakyat (Women's Aids Organisation WAO, 2012) [43]. In line with this, a report by (Women's Aids Organisation WAO, 2012:102) [43] reported that: *Women political leader was incarcerated for a month without trial under the draconian Emergency (Public Order and Prevention of Crime) Ordinance (EO) for her purported role in an electoral reform campaign. Sarasvathy Muthu, who is the Vice-President of Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM, Socialist Party of Malaysia), was not involved in the electoral reform campaign yet was detained with others for a month.* Contrary to Nigerian politics, there is no party that reserved a seat for women in either upper, lower and state house (Okogba, 2018) [30]. The above findings dispute the postulation of the Liberal Feminist theory, which centered on gender equality among both genders.

Findings

- The found that before women roles in Malaysia were limited only to campaigning and voting it is projected that less than 5% of women are formally involved in politics and compete as candidates for legislative and state assembly seats.
- Islam is the official religion in Malaysia, and it is a secular state. The study found that, since the flowering of Islamic educational and missionary activities in the so called 'Dakwah movement' in the 1970s in Malaysia, Islam has become the major cause to change the lives of Malay people.
- In Malaysia, women's representation at both the legislative and executive levels cut down painfully short of women in the politics as well as the public sector decision-makers.
- The study found that women are underrepresented in politics in Malaysia because of religion and patriarchal nature of the country.
- The study found that the reasons for women underrepresentation and participation in politics were normally attributed to the country's political arrangement. The two main political parties were responsible of not supporting and encouraging women.
- Women in the Northern part of Nigeria are underrepresentation in politics because of religion and patriarchal arrangement of the region.
- Women are not actively participating in politics in both nations under study is because of high cost of election deposit as well as the price of nominating form for all post.
- In the Nigerian context none of the political party allocate a free seats to women to take part in politics.
- In 2019 general election, President Muhammadu Buhari signed into law, the Not- too –Young- to- Rule policy which essentially abridged the accomplishment age that people need before contesting for any political posts, and also giving better chances of the inclusion of women and youth.

Recommendations

Considering the nature of the topic and patriarchal nature of the countries under examination that are characterized by religion, cultural and educational differences, the study came up with the following recommendations

- Nigerian and Malaysian are patriarchal and male-dominated, with men sensitivity specifically endangered by women in power allocation. Because of this, the study recommended for equal treatment among both genders in the countries under investigation.
- The paper recommended that women should be given distinct attention and equal opportunities as their male counterpart by the various political parties when wishful for any political posts.
- To encourages women to take part in politics spouses should admire and give women and wife(s), the opportunities to take part and seek for political positions to display their ability for state and national progress.
- All educationists and religious leaders should give the women folk the support and courage to aspire for a political post in view of their kindnesses as mothers, community organizers, home builders, and political activist and care givers in the state for equal development.
- Women should boost themselves, overlook their gender differences to displays/showcase their potentialities, skills and thrive to excel in their career without deserting their marital responsibilities.
- There is a need for women enlightenment on the importance of women representation and participation in politics as well as the decision-making process in both countries of the study.
- Both nations should give special consideration to women by encouraging and supporting them economically and otherwise to take part in social and political activities.

Conclusion

The paper concludes that Nigeria and Malaysia are patriarchal in nature and are guided by culture, religion, traditions, norms, and values that gave much power to men over women. This makes the women representation and participation in politics law compared to the men counterparts. However, this paper analyzed the degree of women participation in Nigeria and Malaysia politics through scholarly works and the relevant literature were thoroughly reviewed. Given the nature of the gendered societal/patriarchal structure dating from colonial times of both nations, it is noted that they have limited recognition on the women representation and participation in politics of two nations under examination. This paper reasonably concluded that lack of emphasis or neglect on gender dimensions in the Nigerian and Malaysian politics. Despite labour laws and regulations have largely been gender sensitive. It is understood and concludes that women in two nations under investigation are underrepresented in politics. More importantly, the Constitutions have failed to change to implant accordingly the gender dimension in the provisions, despite the rising role of women in the economic development of both nations. Therefore, this paper suggested the critical need for gender equality among both genders in politics of the two nations under examination.

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