

POLITICAL GLASS CEILING AND THE QUEST FOR NIGERIA'S FIRST ELECTED FEMALE GOVERNOR

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ABSTRACT

The 2015 elections in Nigeria showcased an unprecedented decline in the number of women that won elections in the country since the return to democratic rule in 1999. The concept of the “glass ceiling” is therefore adopted to describe the marginalization of women in politics. It implies that there exist some sort of invisible barriers, or glass ceiling, that hinders women from advancing to a higher level in politics than they already have. The study argues that in Nigeria, such offices as the presidency and governors constitute glass ceiling for women. However, the 2015 election presented an opportunity for the ceiling to be broken in Taraba State when Senator Alhassan sought to win the governorship election under the banner of the then opposition All Progressive Congress. The optimism that followed the expectation that she will shatter the glass ceiling was quashed by her defeat. The study therefore answers the following questions: What were the factors that influenced voter choice in the state? Can Senator Alhassan’s defeat be attributed to gender? What has been left undone by women flag-bearers to engender more favourable electoral outcomes? Official election results and data were gathered from the Independent National Electoral Commission and the Inter-Parliamentary Union respectively. The work heavily relied on empirical evidences from the concluded 2015 gubernatorial election in Taraba State through observation and utilizes available debates to support the arguments for the case study.

Keywords: Gender Equality, Elections in Nigeria, Glass Ceiling, Taraba State, Women in Politics

INTRODUCTION

Political participation is essential for any democracy, but most democracies are plagued by systematic inequalities in participation (Lijphart 1997). One of the most persistent form of inequalities is in relations to gender, such that women are found to participate less than men, and by implications suggesting that half of the population's interests are less well represented (Schlozman et al. 1994). This brings us to the assertion that nowhere else is the gap between potentiality and actuality so wide than on the phenomenon of gender and politics. One of the common assertions in most literatures is the idea that women constitute about half (if not more) of any given population (Agbalajobi, 2010; Fatile *etal*, 2012; Enemuo, 2004), yet in practice, the proportion of women occupying political offices do not reflect this figure.

Following the conference in Mexico City in 1975, and the conferences in Copenhagen, Nairobi, Vienna, Cairo, and Beijing in 1995, women's participation in development and women's access to decision-making positions have become recurrent issues that states and political decision makers have had to grapple with. To this, 'all actors have come to understand the basic notion that women's full participation in public affairs is one of the fundamental conditions for building democracy and achieving harmonious, sustainable development' (Kasse, 2003). Moreover, a true democracy is characterized by the full and equal participation of women and men in the formulation and implementation of decisions in all spheres of public life. No country can call itself democratic if half of the population is excluded from the decision-making process. Consequently, Hogstrom (2016) noted that several researchers have called for more scholars to study gender and politics over time and to focus on changes over time.

While it can be said that there have been huge progress in the number of women in elective positions across the globe, statistics for Nigeria shows that the country is still way behind. For instance, while other African countries like Rwanda, Seychelles, Senegal and South Africa respectively boast of having 63.8 percent, 43.6 percent, 42.7 percent and 42.0 percent of women in their lower or single chambers, Nigeria lies at the 178th position on the global rating by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU, 2016) with just 4.44 percent and 7.34 percent of women in her lower and upper chambers respectively (see Table 1). Countries like Ethiopia and South Africa

have as much as 212 women out of 547 parliamentarians and 168 out of 400 parliamentarians in their lower chambers respectively while Nigeria only has 16 women in her own case. Moreover, the pocket size progress made has recently dwindled as the 2015 elections in Nigeria showcased an unprecedented decline in the number of women that won elections in the country since the return to democratic rule in 1999. Again, the little success made in women representation have only occurred within the legislative arm of government and a zero degree of progress have been made on the frontline of the executive arm of government (state and national level).

Copious studies have been conducted on issues of female participation and representation in Nigeria. Yet, it is worthy to note that most of these scholarly contributions (Ogwu, 1996; Momodu, 2003; Omoluabi and Aina, 2004; Agbalajobi, 2010; Aina, 2012; Pogson, 2013; Olurode, 2013) had largely focused on the challenges faced by females in their bid to participating in politics which have overly impeded their level of political representation in elective positions. By implications, little efforts can be said to have been made in evaluating the issues and factors responsible for the successes of few who had had the opportunity of leadership and likewise specifically analyze the challenges which still remain unswerving in spite of numerous efforts made on gender sensitization and series of women empowerment programmes in Nigeria.

The work therefore observes that the 2015 gubernatorial election in Taraba State offered the closest opportunity of having the first elected female governor in Nigeria as it was the first time a female candidate contested as governor on the platform of a viable political party thus fostering a keenly contested election in the state. Moreover, prior to official announcement by INEC, social media and local supporters went agog of her “near victory” and these expectations became more evident when violence erupted in some parts of the state. Due to this dearth of systematic study on this research theme (gender and voter choice in Nigeria) the work intends to understand the significance of gender on voter choice in Nigeria putting the 2015 Taraba State election in perspective.

The Glass Ceiling, Women's Political Participation and Representation in Contemporary Nigerian Politics

Looking back at the ancient political institutions that preceded colonialism in many societies across Nigeria, there is the tendency to view these societies, when compared with the political institutions of today, as “traditional”, “backward” or even “primitive”. However the pre-colonial societies in many part of Nigeria set the pace for many countries in the world today, in that there was no “glass ceiling” in their political institutions. Women have ascended into position of supreme authority in many of these societies (Lewu, 2003; Awofeso & Odeyemi, 2014; Agbalajobi, 2010) a fact which is yet to be replicated in many of the so called modern countries with democratic political institutions.

The concept of the glass ceiling is used to describe a unique type of gender inequality (Cotter, et al, 2001) that exists at the apex of power and decision making structures. The concept implies that ‘gender disadvantages are stronger at the top of the hierarchy than at lower levels’ (Cotter, et al, 2001). Baxter, et al, (2000), vividly depict the concept when they assert that the; ‘glass ceiling implies the existence of an impermeable barrier that block the vertical mobility of women; below this barrier women are able to get promoted; beyond this barrier they are not’.

This means that where ever women are yet to be represented at the highest decision making level of a society, the glass ceiling exists. The glass ceiling is gender specific in that it discriminates against only women by acting as an obstacle to their aspiration of reaching the highest position of authority. The invisible barrier that the glass ceiling constitutes to the upward mobility of women in politics can be described as artificial (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995; Zamfirache, 2010) in that it is often based on “attitudes” or “stereotype”, without legal standing, that discriminate against women, which have nothing to do with the capability of women to perform when elected or appointed into these (high) positions of authority. Using Nigeria as an example the glass ceiling symbolizes the position of the chief executive officer either at the state or national level that no woman in the country has yet attain.

Political participation on the other hand entails the voluntary activities embarked upon by citizens in their bid to alter the leadership composition of government and its policies (Ayeni-

Akeke, 2008). Political participation is the channel through which the people in a democracy exercise their sovereign powers by subjecting the government, those occupying its structures, as well as its policies to their control. Those who do participate in politics are according to Ayeni-Akeke (2008) most likely to be ‘motivated by their perception of a link between politics and their personal interest.’ This may help explain the gender gap in political participation as more men than women are likely to perceive such link.

Using Mibrath’s classification which categorized political participation into three namely; gladiatorial, transitional and spectator activities, Awofeso & Odeyemi (2014) found the gender gap in political participation in Nigeria by noting that the ‘gladiatorial activities (standing for elections) had always favoured the men.’ It is only at the spectator level (voting, and identifying with political parties) of political participation that women are at par with men. A major reason for this gap is that political participation (such as standing for election) in Nigeria is largely influenced by the desire to “secure economic benefits” on the part of politicians who are willing to unleash violence in their bid of bringing this objective to fulfilment. Therefore more men than women will be willing to stand for election. The poor performance of women at the highest level of political participation (gladiatorial: standing for election) is one of the major factors entrenching the glass ceiling in politics (Lewu, 2003). The root of the gender gap in political participation can also be traced to factors that are not directly related to politics, such as education and occupation which tend to give men advantage, since men are likely to be better educated than women and to work in professions tagged “pipeline professions” such as the military, law, economics, where political leaders are often recruited (Bos & O’Loughlin, 2007).

While political participation is essential for the smooth running of democracy either in its ancient or modern format, it is very difficult to imagine how modern democracy, with its large size and population, will survive without political representation. The practice of handing over the responsibility for decision making and implementation by the citizens to a body of selected or elected persons is what political representation is all about (Childs, Sarah & Lovenduski, 2012). Therefore political representation is restricted in scope as it is limited to only those who occupy the formal structures of government such as the executive and legislative organ.

It is for a fact that the world over women's political representation is very low. Only very few women are elected or selected into appointive positions in government. This is inspite of the fact that women constitute about half of any population (Agbalajobi, 2010; Pogason, 2015). For example, according to IPU (2016), only 22.7 percent of women globally are elected into parliament. This means that 77.3 percent of parliamentarians globally are men. It is perhaps a recognition of this stark reality that makes Htun, (2004) to assert that 'female interests in the world over are represented by men, fathers and husbands.'

From a gender perspective, politics in Nigeria is much dominated by the men to the neglect of women. Firstly, there is the "glass ceiling"- a barrier to how high any woman can aspire to go in politics. This would be seen mainly in the office of the Chief Executive, such as the President and state governors, as no woman has been elected into those offices (see Figure 1). Secondly, the Fourth Republic marked an unprecedented increase in the number of women both in parliament and in cabinet positions, yet, women's political participation and representation remains very low when compared to their proportion of the population.

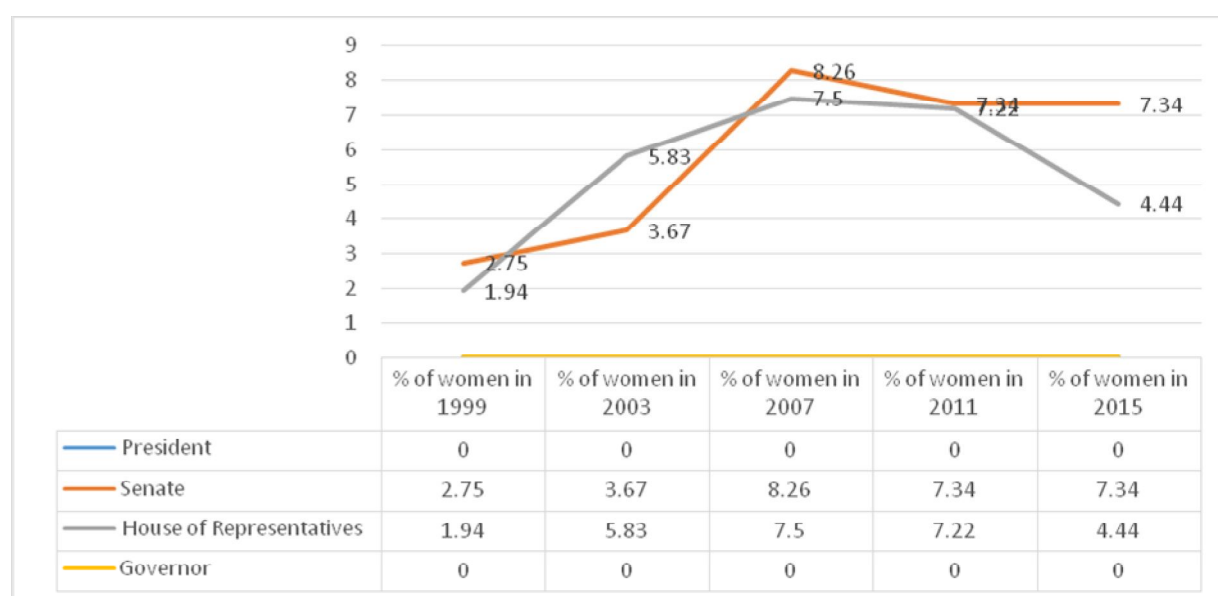


Figure 1: women elected into political offices in Nigeria from 1999-2015

Source: Official Results from INEC 1999-2015

Table 1:the percentage of women in parliaments (global ranking)

Rank	Country	Lower or Single House				Upper House or Senate			
		Elections	Seats	Women	%W	Elections	Seats	Women	%W
1.	Rwanda	16.09.2013	80	51	63.80%	26.09.2011	26	10	38.50%
2.	Bolivia	12.10.2014	130	69	53.10%	12.10.2014	36	17	47.20%
3.	Cuba	03.02.2013	612	299	48.90%	---	---	---	---
6.	Senegal	01.07.2012	150	64	42.70%	---	---	---	---
8.	South Africa	07.05.2014	399	169	42.40%	21.05.2014	54	19	35.20%
14.	Spain	20.12.2015	350	140	40.00%	20.12.2015	265	104	39.20%
19.	Ethiopia	24.05.2015	547	212	38.80%	05.10.2015	153	49	32.00%
97.	USA	04.11.2014	434	84	19.40%	04.11.2014	100	20	20.00%
178.	Nigeria	28.03.2015	360	16	4.4%	28.03.2015	109	8	7.34%

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (situation as of 1st of May 2016) and INEC official results (2015)

Note: The data in the table above has been compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union on the basis of information provided by National Parliaments by 1st May 2016. **193 countries** are classified by **descending order of the percentage of women in the lower or single House**.

It is the position of this study therefore that of all the factors listed as causes of women under-representation in politics namely; socio cultural, economic and political factors, the political factors (rooted in the electoral system, political culture, political parties and nature of electoral campaign) constitute the biggest hindrance to women's political participation and representation in Nigeria.

Women Electoral Performance in Nigeria: The Real Hidden Issues

Nigeria's electoral system, political nature and women candidate chances: A country's electoral system is one of the most important determining factors of how many women will make it into elective positions at any given time. For instance, women are elected in greater numbers into legislative seats (on average 6 percentage points higher) in systems of proportional representation than they are in majority electoral systems. Studies have shown that majoritarian systems, where women compete directly with men in their constituencies, tend to limit the number of women elected. The majoritarian electoral system, characterized by single member constituency and simple plurality is the basis for converting votes into seat in Nigeria, generally

discriminate against women's political representation (Childs, Campbell & Lovenduski, 2007; Studlar, 2007; Hinojosa, 2007). In demonstrating how Majoritarian system negatively affect the election of women, Tremblay (2007) posits that since political parties in Majoritarian systems are to choose one candidate per electoral district, women are unlikely to be nominated by party leaders who are predominately men. Similarly, the "marginal seat syndrome" or "unwinnable constituency candidacy" (fielding women candidates in constituencies where they are less likely to succeed) is a common practice among Nigerian parties that want to *appear* to embrace gender equality but without disrupting the status quo. Thus, it has been argued that proportional representation system is more conducive to elect women (Palmieri, 2011).

In addition to the fact that Nigeria operates a majoritarian system across her national and subnational elections as well as a single member constituency seat system for her parliamentary elections which invariably creates suffocation for women candidates and as such lessen their chances of winning elections, the political landscape of Nigeria is that which is also zero-sum in nature (where winner takes all). This perpetually causes contending groups and political parties to fear the risk of losing elections and by implication not willing to gamble with a woman candidate.

Consequently, the trend of the 2015 electoral outcome is one striking example of this assumption and helps reveal why there was a drop in women performance during the 2015 elections. The 2015 election was by all standard a "critical election" as it was the most competitive election and produced the most electoral turnover in the history of the country. Hence, as the tempo of competition rose, so did the probability of defeat increased, thus, the willingness of political parties to present female candidates reduced as they are often been perceived as "electoral liabilities".

Party viability and candidate chances: The argument is simply that, though Nigeria by law is a multi-party state as provided for in the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, but in reality Nigeria is far from what could be regarded as a true multi-party state. This has been more evident considering the trends of election results since the return to democratic rule in Nigeria. The 2015 electoral outcome helps in categorizing Nigeria as currently a "de facto two-party state" as only two

parties (All Progressive Congress and Peoples’ Democratic Party) occupy the largest chunk of elective positions in the country. For instance; after the 2015 general elections, out of the 360 seats for the lower chamber, APC (212) and PDP (140) won a combine total of 352 seats (97.78 percent); out of the 109 senatorial seats, APC (60) and PDP (49) also won the whole 109 seats; for the gubernatorial election, APC won in 20 states while PDP won in 9 states out of a total of 29 states where elections held; moreover, for the presidential election, APC garnered a total of 53.97 percent of the total valid vote cast while PDP pulled 44.96 percent (98.92 percent for the two parties) leaving just around 1 percent for the remaining 12 parties.

With the foregoing, the fact that Nigeria is currently in reality a two-party state cannot be overemphasized. Thus, this work argues that the party platform through which candidates contest irrespective of their gender remains a huge deciding factor. For instance, as reflected in the 2015 election results (see table 2), candidates who contested on the platform of any of the two major parties (APC or PDP) had more propensity to emerge as winners than their counterparts who contested on the platform of the other parties. This we call the “unviable party syndrome” for women (this is a case where less viable or unwinnable political parties present more women candidates thus creating the illusion that a good number of women are participating in such election).

Table 2: the win rate of APC, PDP and all other parties combined during the 2015 elections in Nigeria.

PARTY	HOUSE OF REPS			SENATE			GOVERNOR		
	TnC	TnCE	% of CE	TnC	TnCE	% of CE	TnC	TnCE	% of CE
APC	359	212	59.1%	109	60	55.1%	29	20	69%
PDP	360	140	38.9%	109	48	44%	29	9	31%
OTHERS	1045	8	0.77%	503	01	0.2%	322	0	0%

Source: INEC2015 official election results

Note: *TnC refers to the total number of candidates; TnCE refers to the total number of candidates elected, and %ofCE refers to the percentage of candidate elected.*

We therefore, argue that the possibility of women winning elections is not as bad as imagined. What actually makes the win rate of women appear excessively low is the huge number of women who contests on the platform of non-viable parties thus contributing to a low cumulative.

As shown in Figure (2) the general propensity of a female candidate to win election into the House of Rep, Senate and as Deputy Governor is 5.3 percent, 5.9 percent and 6.3 percent respectively. But the chances of a female candidate contesting on the platform of either the APC or PDP are as high as 33.3 percent, 41.2 percent and 80 percent respectively.

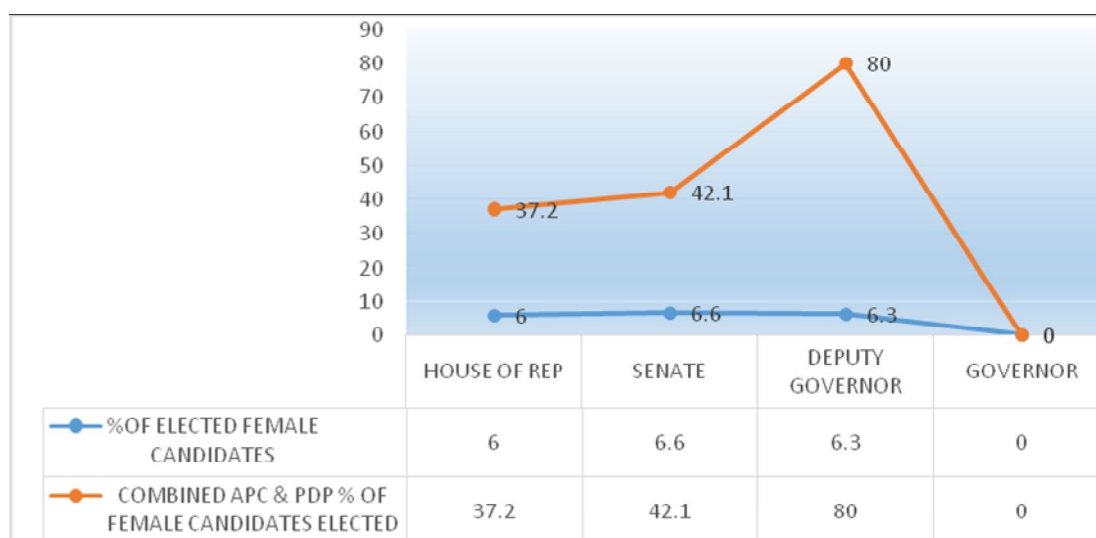


Figure 2: the win rate of female candidates during the 2015 election

Source: INEC 2015 official election results

Alhassan’s Defeat: of Ethnicity And Religion

It has been observed that in Nigeria, voting at elections as well as opinion expressed on salient political issues are mostly influenced by ethnic and religious consideration (Osaghae & Suberu, 2005; Olayode, 2015; Nnabuihe, Aghemalo & Okebugwu, 2014) which reveals how the people within the country are deeply divided along the lines of ethnicity and religion. In the midst of these primary and permanent divisions which sometimes coincide along ethno-religious boundaries in some parts of the country, are other forms of division which do not require “territorial claims”. Such categorization as gender, youth and class are examples of non-territorial division in the country, which elsewhere play a significant role as determinants of

voter's choice and public opinion expressed, but which in Nigeria have little or no effect on the electoral fortunes of political parties and their candidates. This fact can be blamed on the importance which people assign to ethno-religious identities over other types of identities in the country. These strong cleavages played huge roles in determining voters' choices during the 2015 gubernatorial elections in Taraba State.

Taraba state with over 80 ethnic groups is a miniature of the political terrain in Nigeria. The state is further polarized along religious as well as settler/indigenous line which has made it a hot bed for ethno religious violence since its creation in 1991 (Akwara, Azalahu, & Charles, 2014). Cleavage politics which can be described as the politicization of difference in culture, religion and ethnicity or the resort (or even its use) to politics by group(s), which are divided along the lines of ethnicity, religion and other identities, as a means for the elevation of their interests over other groups in their locality, is a major cause of conflicts in Taraba state (Actionaid, 2008). Cleavage politics is chiefly motivated by the perception (on the part of group members) that political engagement will facilitate the transfer of benefits by their representatives in government to their group.

A look at the ethnic background of previous governors in the state before 2015, reveals that no member of the ethnic group with superior numerical strength, such as the Tiv, Jukun, Kuteb, Wurukun, and Fulani has been elected as governor (Ihyongo, 2013). This fact, rather than serve to show the absence of ethnicity as factor influencing politics and voter's choice, only hides the level of ethnic cleavage in the state. This is because in a highly ethnically segmented state like Taraba with over eighty ethnic groups, it is to be expected that no ethnic group can single handedly sway the gubernatorial polls in favor of its members. Therefore, there is need for cooperation and collaboration between and among the ethnic groups in the state if any group is to produce the governor. This is exactly what is lacking among the major ethnic groups in the state. As a state that had experienced series of violent clashes based on ethnic and religious divisions, there is noticeable lack of cordial relation, mutual suspicion and fear of domination, which make cooperation impossible, among these groups with numerical strength. But on the other hand, groups with lesser numerical strength find it easier to form collaborations with other ethnic groups but this time along strong religious lines.

Taraba South Senatorial District, with five local government areas offers a perfect illustration of the kind of ethnic rivalry among the major ethnic groups. The senatorial district is mostly dominated by the Junkuns, Kuteb and Tivs which have history of violent confrontations in the past and also abhor the idea of being dominated politically by any of them (NVF, 2010). This made it difficult for political alliance and collaboration to be made since each group is afraid of being dominated by the others. It also partly explains why, until 2015, no one from the senatorial district and from a major ethnic group, had been elected as governor in the state.

Religious cleavages further divide the people of the state majorly along Christian – Muslim divide, although some of the population profess traditional religion. With the persistent re-occurrence of violent confrontation along religious line, it is clear that religious identity is as strong as ethnic identity in the state. It is widely believed that religion plays a greater role (than ethnicity) at influencing gubernatorial elections in the state. This is due to the fact that, till date, no Muslim has been elected governor. Rather they have played the role of second fiddle as deputy governors. For instance; in 1992, Jolly Nyame a cleric of United Methodist Church and originating from Zing LGA won the gubernatorial election in the state on the platform of the SDP; in 1999 at the return to democratic rule in the country, Jolly Nyame won the election and this time was governor for 8 years; in 2007, Danbaba Danfulani Suntai also a Christian from Bali LGA won the gubernatorial election and was in office until October 2012 when he stepped aside for his deputy Garba Umar (Muslim) after he crashed while piloting self from Jalingo to Yola; likewise in 2015, another Christian Darius Dickson Ishaku from Wukari LGA won the gubernatorial election in the state.

Lack of Gender Solidarity

The impact of ethnic and religious divisions in the state on gender affinity effect (the hypothesis that states that women electorate will vote for women candidates) is negative in this case. If the ideas of gender affinity effect were to be true (positive), it means that majority of women in Taraba state would have voted for the candidacy of Alhassan Aisha, the only female contestant in the 2015 gubernatorial poll in Taraba State. While it is difficult to empirically verify her share of the women vote, events during the electioneering period, especially before the re-run election,

help reveal that some of her most formidable oppositions were women groups, especially the Taraba Coalition of Women Group (TCWG). In one of their press releases which endorsed the PDP candidate, Arc. Dairus Isiaka, and condemned some women groups based in Abuja, that threatened to march naked if Aisha lost the re-run election. The group coordinator, Hajjia Abudullahi Mairo, stated that; ‘...we women of Taraba have unanimously endorsed the PDP candidate and have voted him in an election the same Aisha is plotting to cancel. We must resist her’ (Osayande, 2015). She went further to describe the APC candidate as an immoral woman, not worthy of being voted by women. In her words, she noted that:

...as a coalition of serious minded women, Aisha, in our view is actually a disgrace to the womenfolk of Taraba. Here is a woman whom we can’t say has inspired anyone in terms of matrimony or monetary deals. A serial divorcee, we wonder what she would be teaching our daughters. If she ever gets to Government House, Jalingo, clearly Nigeria would have gotten its first executive Red Light district! We know what we are talking about.

There is no doubt that the gubernatorial election in Taraba has proven the hypothesis wrong since the only female candidate lost the poll. But what does the statement above by the coordinator of TCWG indicate about gender solidarity in the state or Nigeria? Does it mean that women are jealous of each other as it is widely believed or there exists a pull down syndrome among women?

It is the position of this study that in an ethnically factionalized and religiously polarized state like Taraba, electorate are likely to vote for candidates that share the same ethnic or religious identity with them over those candidates that share the same gender with them. This is simply due to the presence of strong ethno- religious identity that exist among the people. Women as a group lack this strong group consciousness and are more likely to align themselves strongly with candidates from their ethnic or religious group. It will therefore be unreasonable to expect women to put up a united front, when they are divided (just like men) along the lines of religion, ethnicity, ideology and party affiliation.

If it has been established that cleavage politics made it difficult for Aisha Alhassan to appeal to and get the vote of all women in the state, thereby making the political glass ceiling difficult to break in the country. Was her gender, then to blame for her defeat? In other words, if she were a

man, would she still lose the election? It is most likely that a man, who is Fulani and a Muslim from Taraba North senatorial district (as Alhassan) contested the 2015 gubernatorial election in Taraba state, such a man would equally lose at the poll. The reason for this is due to the agitations from the people of Taraba South, during the pre-election period for the zoning of the governorship ticket to their zone, since no one from the area has been elected as governor. Also giving that religious affiliation is as strong as ethnic identity in the state coupled with the fact that all previous governors in the state were Christians, a religion said to be practiced by majority of people in the state. One can safely assume that it is most likely for a Christian to emerge as governor in the state than for a Muslim to be elected. Alhassan is not only from Taraba North, a zone that is said to have ruled the state for ten years, she is also a Muslim, and the flag bearer of the main opposition party - odds that were not in her favor.

Way Forward

A Case for Electoral Gender Quotas: It is undeniable that where women are represented in significant numbers, special measures have been instituted. Palmieri (2011) noted that more than 80 percent of countries whose parliaments boast more than 30 per cent women members benefit from the implementation of some sort of special measures; whether legislated or voluntary. Generally, gender quotas are said to be numerical targets that stipulate the number or percentage of women that must be included in a candidate list or the number of seats to be allocated to women in elective positions. They aim to reverse discrimination in law and practice and to level the playing field for women and men in politics. Gender quotas, as they mostly regulate political parties' actions, underscore the notion of political parties as the 'gatekeepers' through which citizens pursue opportunities for political leadership (Dahlerup 2006). It is therefore incontestable that the possibilities of having a good number of women in elective positions all starts from their number in candidacy.

The adoption of gender quotas can take different forms. IDEA (2013) pointed out three major types of gender quotas in politics which are; legislated candidate quota: these quotas regulate the gender composition of the candidate lists and are binding by law for all political parties in the election; legislated reserved seats: these measures regulate by law the gender composition of

elected bodies, by reserving a certain number or percentage of seats for women members; and the voluntary party quotas: these quotas are adopted by individual parties for their own candidate lists, and are usually enshrined in party statutes and rules. Having an existing quota system does not always translate into positive effects as Kang (2013) opined that the effect of quota laws on the election of women varied. While the introduction of quota laws had not evidently increased the percentage of elected women in some countries, such quota laws immensely increased the number of women with great margin. To this, scholars have observed that the effective workings of quota laws is dependent on certain variables among which are; the design of the law, the institutional context, and the agency of women's activists who monitored the quota's implementation, electoral system (IPU, 2008; Kang, 2013; Hogstrom, 2016).

Generally, quotas tend to work best when tailored to a country's electoral system and enforced with sanctions. As shown in table (3) where all the African countries who have adopted one quota system or the other boast of more females in their parliament (at least) than Nigeria. Again, Kang (2013) was able to show the impact of candidate quota on women representation which largely increased the number of women in such arm of government where the quota system was adopted.

Table 3: African countries where gender quota systems are adopted and women performance.

S/N	Country	% of Women		Type of Quota
		Lower/ Single House	Upper House	
1.	Algeria	32%	^a 7%	Reserved seats and legislated candidates quotas
2.	Angola	37%	None	Legislated candidate quotas
3.	Burkina Faso	^b 9%	None	Legislated Candidate quotas
4.	Burundi	36%	42%	Reserved seats
5.	Cape Verde	24%	None	Legislated candidate quotas
6.	Eritrea	22%	None	Reserved seats
7.	Guinea	22%	None	Legislated candidate quotas
8.	Kenya	20%	27%	Reserved seats and legislated candidate quotas
9.	Lesotho	25%	24%	Legislated candidate quotas
10.	Libya	16%	None	Legislated candidate quota

11.	Mauritania	25%	14%	Reserved seats and legislated candidate quotas
12.	Morocco	17%	12%	Reserved seats
13.	Namibia	41%	24%	Legislated candidate quota for sub-national election
14.	Niger	15%	None	Reserved seats
15.	Rwanda	64%	38%	Reserved seats and legislated candidates quotas
16.	Senegal	43%	None	Legislated candidate quotas
17.	Somalia	14%	None	Reserved seats
18.	South Africa	43%	35%	Legislated quota for sub-national election
19.	South Sudan	27%	10 %	Reserved seats
20.	Sudan	31%	35%	Reserved seats
21.	Swaziland	6%	33%	Reserved seats
22.	Tanzania	36%	None	Reserved seats
23.	Togo	18%	None	Legislated candidate quotas
24.	Tunisia	31%	None	Legislated candidate quotas
25.	Uganda	34%	None	Reserved seats
26.	Zimbabwe	32%	48%	Reserved seats

Source: IPU (2016); IDEA (2013)

Notes:

- (a) there is no reserved seat or legislated candidate quota for the Algerian Upper Chamber
- (b) In Burkina Faso, women electoral performance have recently dropped from 16% in 2012 to 9% in 2015 majorly because the country's sanction on gender quota is so soft and easy to balk. The country's electoral law only provides that political parties which fail to meet the quota requirements, would have its funding for election campaigns cut by 50% unlike what obtains in other countries where such lists would be rejected.

Though, most quota systems have majorly been targeted towards achieving gender equality in the parliament as much cannot be yet said about the executive arm of government. But in the case of Nigeria where we have been able to show that there lies more propensity for a female candidate to win elections on the platform of viable political parties (39% in total) than any other party, we also discovered there are no huge variation to the possibilities of winning elections either as a male or female as long as such candidates are contesting on the platform of a viable political party (see table 4). We can therefore assume that if more women emerge on the candidate lists of these parties (the viable parties) we can undoubtedly expect more elected women in government both in the executive and legislative arm.

Table 4: win rate of female and male candidates during the 2015 elections in Nigeria

PARTY	House of Rep		Senate		Deputy Governor	
	%of FCE	%of MCE	%of FCE	%of MCE	%of FCE	%of MCE
APC	20	62	37.5	56.4	100	66.7
PDP	61	35.8	45.5	43.9	66.7	26.9
OTHERS	0	0.97	0	0.3	0	0

Source: INEC 2015 official election results

Note:

%of FCE = percentage of female candidates elected

%of MCE = percentage of male candidates elected

Conclusion

In spite of the fact that no woman has been elected as governor or President in Nigeria, it is perhaps very difficult to prove that political glass ceiling exists in the country. This is because political glass ceiling represents a gender difference that is greater at higher level of politics than at lower levels and therefore represents gender inequality in the chances of women advancing into higher levels. In Nigeria, the electoral performance of women into the legislature and lower levels of executive such as Chairperson of local government has always been poor. Therefore, it becomes difficult to argue that Nigerian women contesting for gubernatorial elections (in which no woman has won) face unique challenges or discriminations different from those faced by other women contesting for elections into the legislative arms of government (in which few women has won).

However the paper was able to prove that political glass ceiling exists within the political parties, especially in the viable parties in the country (like the PDP and APC which are the two dominant parties in the country). Within the viable parties a disproportionate number of men (compared to women) are party officials and are represented at the highest decision making platform of the parties. This fact helps to explain why few women win their party's nomination as flag bearers, which ultimately affects the electoral performance of women. It is the position of the paper that if each of the two viable parties has 30% of its flag bearers as women for the 2015 gubernatorial

elections, there is every chance that at least a woman would have been elected as governor in the country.

The emergence of Senator Alhassan as the flag bearer of the APC in the 2015 gubernatorial election in Taraba state shows that despite the little presence of women at the hierarchy of political party, a woman can still emerge as candidate if she has a strong political base. Her defeat at the gubernatorial polls cannot be attributed to her gender since the electorate were mostly influenced by religion and ethnicity, but her emergence as a gubernatorial candidate coupled with her strong showing at the polls (coming second) help reveals the cracks in the glass ceiling.

Finally, we argue that political parties being the virile tool for representative democracy and a major institution for interest aggregation and articulation must join hands in rebuilding a country which upholds equality and an across the board representation. In order to achieve this, political parties must be willing to play gender sensitive politics which would be devoid of; a male fraternity connection of operation; a male dominated national party executives; godfatherism; money politics; intra-party conflict; rigging; high registration fees; and every other activities which could delimit or discourage better women participation which in most cases cumulate into poor electoral performances for women.

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