

**THE QUEST FOR GENDER BALANCED POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN AFRICA: A
SYNCHRONY TOWARDS CONTINENTAL DEVELOPMENT**

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ABSTRACT

Gender issues have continued to provoke debate of international and regional dimension owing to persistence of gender disparities in political leadership especially in Africa. For long, mantle of leadership is concentrated in the hands of African men while the continent lags concrete development, both in infrastructure and human. Of course, ample efforts are being made to bring women folks into the corridor of African political leadership as more states domesticated gender-based international treaties and declarations. Perhaps, good governance might occur in concrete terms. Despite these efforts, studies have shown lopsided representation of African women in the political governance. Hence, this paper explored the trend of women representation in African political leadership; investigated factors contributing to the lopsided representation of African women in political leadership and reviewed state-based mechanisms installed to stimulate women involvement in African political leadership. The study concluded that there is insignificant increment in the number of women participation in African political space. Thus, more efforts should be made in attracting and keeping African women in the political terrain.

Keywords: *Gender, Leadership, Political Leadership, Political Representation, Development and State.*

1. Introduction

The common apothegm that “what a man can do a woman can do better” has failed to concretely manifest in the global political terrain. Despite a number of global response to even gender disparities in political leadership, success recorded fall short the gap between men and women representation in political leadership. According to Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU), despite

much progress in recent decades, gender inequalities remain pervasive in many dimensions of life - worldwide. But while disparities exist throughout the world, they are most prevalent in developing countries. Gender inequalities in the allocation of such resources as education, health care, nutrition, and political voice matter because of the strong association with well-being, productivity, and economic growth. These patterns of inequality begin at an early age, with boys routinely receiving a larger share of education and health spending than do girls, for example. Women are vastly underrepresented in decision-making positions in government, although there is some evidence of recent improvement. Gender parity in parliamentary representation is still far from being realized. Without representation at this level, it is difficult for women to influence policy. A strong and vibrant democracy is possible only when parliament is fully inclusive of the population it represents (IPU, 2018).

Parliaments cannot consider themselves inclusive, however, until they can boast the full participation of women. This is not just about women's right to equality and their contribution to the conduct of public affairs, but also about using women's resources and potential to determine political and development priorities that benefit societies and the global community (IPU, 2018).

Though, a number of countries across the continents of the world posted positive trend of women involvement in politics. For instance, the Inter-Parliamentary Union situation report as at June 1, 2018 identified Rwanda with highest per cent of women in national parliaments with 61.3% in Lower House and 38.5% in Upper House. The following countries also made top ten states with higher percentage of women involvement in National parliaments. These include in a particular order, Bolivia, Grenada, Namibia, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Sweden, Mexico and South Africa. This trend exists for the fact that women's participation in politics is important for improved governance in Africa. Ballington (2008) noted that "the attainment of gender equality and the full participation of women in decision making are key indicators of democracy. The involvement of women in all aspects of political life produces more equitable societies and delivers a stronger and more representative democracy."

However, old democracies like United States of America and United Kingdom are down to 19.5% (lower House); 22% (Upper House) and 32% (Lower House); 25.7% (Upper House) respectively (IPU, 2018). These figures, however, contended with the view of Paxton, Kunovich and Hughes (2007) that women's political involvement greatly differs within and between countries. United Nations (2017) reported in its often revealing facts and figures on status of women involvement in political arena. Its summary shown that as of June 2016, only 22.8% of all national parliamentarians across the globe were women and only 11 Heads of state and just 12 heads of Government were women. The report further stated that 38 countries account for less than one tenth per cent in parliaments across the world and up to four assemblies had no woman as a member.

United Nations reported that mean percentages of women representation in parliaments varied regionally. Nordic countries (41.7%); Americas (28.1%); Europe (26.5%), Sub Saharan Africa (23.6%); Asia (19.4%); Arabians (17.4%); and Pacific (17.4%). These statistics indicated a negation to the international agenda of gender balance in political leadership and decision making despite implementation of recommendations set by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and other international declaration and treaties such as United Nations Charter on Human right (UNCHR) of 1945, The Universal Declaration on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women of 1967, the 1979 Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW – First International Bill on Women's Rights). Randall (2011) argued that women's level of political representation remain low and noticeable improvement is gradual. The realm of politics has been considered as one of the most challenging spheres of public life for women to enter and their participation in parliament is crucial for fair representation of women in society.

Premises have been offered to buttress argument in favour of the quest for a gender balanced political leadership.

First, the expectation of a democratic configuration that allocates political relations and powers between men and women with primary agenda of gender parity in terms of inclusiveness,

participation, representativeness and accountability in the institutions of democracy (Community of Democracies, 2017). This is thus, captured by the Warsaw Declaration on Democracies that “Informed participation by all element of society, men, and women, in a country’s economic and political life, including by persons belonging to minority group is fundamental to a vibrant and durable democracy”. This position adds more credibility to the global calling for more women appearance in the political environment. On the contrary, literature overwhelmingly supports the premises that politics remained primarily a male dominated affair as political combination and permutation in many states parade men- centered political leadership (Aswath, 2015).

Second, the disparity in female component of the world population as against female representation in political leadership. Evidence depict that female represent almost 50% of the world population, yet less proportional per cent of the women folk could be found in the corridor of politics (IPU, 2017). For instance, women- politicians most often in Africa find themselves in a difficult position while struggling to involve in political leadership, owing chiefly to African culture orientation on the role of woman in society (Ebeku, 2005).

More importantly, despite a men-dominated African political leadership, development in African has remained elusive. For instance, Community of Democracy (2017) asserted that African continent is lagging in the level of development, poverty rates soar and underdevelopment dominated most African countries. Women according to Otieno (2014) occupy prominent role in African context, their campaign mantra is rooted in institutional change, conflict management, representational change, promotion of democracy and good governance. Cole (2011) and Inter parliamentary Union (2013) established Rwanda, an African State, as the leading women-dominated political leadership country, not only in Africa but all democracies. This paper therefore employed secondary data and qualitative approach to broach women involvement in political leadership in African by exploring the trend of women representation; investigating factors contributing to the lopsided representation of African women in political leadership; reviewing state-based mechanisms instituted in African with a view to suggest workable solutions towards attracting and keeping African women in the political terrain using Nigeria (most populous state in West Africa); Ethiopia (most populous state in East Africa); Egypt (most

populous state in North Africa) and South Africa (most popular state in South Africa) with more emphasis on parliamentary representation.

2. Conceptual Report

Gender

Gender has been widely used as an inflectional form of limitations that is academically emphasized, literally juxtaposed of its sub-class technically applied in its operations and representatively. On that note, the onus and necessity for operative word of gender equality instigates the influent alarm for gender know-how balancing. Similarly, the encapsulation of gender application aggravated from the marginalization of sub-class in the contextual application of the term on the subject matter.

However, elucidating gender as defined although “sex” is a biological terminology- an anatomical distinction between being a male and a female (Ama, 2012:6). The creations of this scholars simplified the complexity of usage in each way and manner to avoid analogy and bewilderment of conceptuality. Although in the winds of Ememuo (1999:227) defined gender as a more or less a social construct – “Socially constructed inequality between women and men”. According to him, his perception was viewed as an attempt to elaborate the stratification between men and women but subjected to narrow view of superiority of men on women.

Leadership

Ememuo (2000) analyses four kinds of leadership theory: trait, contiguity, situational and constitutive persecutions. He categories these according to whether they emphasized the individual or the context as “essential term on essentialist. Thus, leader is a leader in respective of their gender symbolism through capacity to be able to deliver positive calls for attention.

Political Participation and Representation

Political participation and representation grammatically within countries political participation is a voluntary act which encompasses wide range of political activities, including voting at election, contesting for political and party offices, attending political rallies, joining political parties and among others. Although, these political activities are considered to be “open” to all qualified citizens, especially in liberal democracies irrespective of disparities in wealth, education, gender (Awofeso and Odeyemi, 2014).

Maclosky (1968) in Awofeso and Odeyemi (2014) defines political participation as voluntary activities shared by members of a society in the selection of their rulers and directly or indirectly involve themselves in the formation of public policies. From the above definition, it appears that those actions (e.g voting campaigning, contesting at election) must come or should come in un-reluctantly from the individuals before it can be conceived as being a political participants. Political representation, the gladiatorial activities/domination had always favoured the male gender in Nigeria since independence till date. Similarly, a summary of gender representation in the National Assembly, Political appointment and coupled with bureaucratic offices since 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011 periodic regime put together, shows that women were ridiculously under represented by 5% in respective post both elective, selected or randomised and tiled post. In that circumstance, no women had ever ascended the office of the senate president, while the only female Patricia Effeh, who was elected as speaker of the house of Representative in 2007, was impeached by a male dominated House before the end of her tenure (Eyeh, 2010; Irabor, 2012; Chukwu, 2013 in Awofeso and Odeyemi, 2014).

Development

The scholarly views on development is articulated as being in layers, in casual, not accrued to sudden event but an event that must occur/surface as requirement of each steps are fulfilled. Babangida (1992) comforted that women to be part of any major developmental process, and the reason according to him is their numerical strength, they are industrious and enterprising and they are good managers. Therefore, any natural development programme without women will

not be meaningful and through, this, can be affirmed that women are indispensable in development belt in social, economic political, bureaucratic and cultural setting.

3. Theoretical Basis

The tenets of Feminism and Theory of Democracy were employed to support the construct of this paper. These theories provided foundation stone for crux upon which a gender balanced crusade in political setting is based.

Feminism and Women Participation

Feminism as a theory has its roots in women advocacy. It is based on women's right movement. In discussing feminism, the works of Wellstone (1794), Kolmar, Wendy and Bartowski and Fracas (2005) cannot be overlooked. The theory captured the men's and women's social preferences, experiences and gender politics. The major constituents of feminism at the beginning, was to ensure universality of women character while the modern perspective of feminism derived its strength from the committed struggle for voting rights. It emphasizes the dynamics of social segmentation with more prominence to individuality and diversity. It extends its cover to social context of relationship between genders. Cost (1987) carefully submitted that the waves of radicalism embedded in the feminist movement are largely based on socio-political rights. The theory established that the stereotype native upon which body of women is viewed and the class they belong to, contributed to the roles allotted to the women folk in the society. The theory further established gender as a social philosophy that exerts greater emphasis on behaviours, actions, and appearance required of male and female in the society.

Feminism adopts intersectionality as an instrument suitable for explained domination in the society with more emphasis on dominating factors such as race, sex, class, nation and sexual orientation. Supporters of feminism believe that through intersectionality, a more clever explanation can be offered to describe the basis for simultaneous, multiple, overlapping and contradictory systems of power that determine societal decisions that relate to social and political life in the society (Wikipedia). It focuses on specific areas such as language, societal

structures, psycho-sexual development and politics (Grawford and Unger, 2000; Humm, 2003). Feminism as a theory parades different theoretical perspectives such as cultural feminism, ecofeminism, libertarian feminism, materials feminism, Gender feminism and radical feminism.

This paper therefore explored feminism as theoretical path because it gives credence to priority between men and women in terms of political economic and social role in the society. This core premise provided a strong and surviving footing for feminism as a theory. Specifically, radical feminism gives more theoretical and literature support in view of the quest for gender balanced political configuration around the globe especially in Africa. The argument here is the view that oppression of women is a more fatal form of oppression, it is fundamental. It touches issues of social change especially in a revolutionary proportion. This theory queries certain roles allotted to women in the society based on the biological antecedents. It attempts to draw distinction between genetically determined behavior and culturally-determined behavior in order to free both men and women as much as possible, this position correlates with the drive to balance gender representation in political leadership as evidence posit men dominated political leadership in Africa.

Theory of Democracy and Women Participation

The indicators and principles of democracy are the reflections of democratic theory both is practice and as well as an activity. Dahl's efforts in *Democracy and its Critics* (1989), where he posits what he calls the 'idea of intrinsic equality' as axiomatic. Consider, for example, an effort to understand the complexity of politics at a given time in what Dahl (1989) calls a **“Modern Dynamic Pluralist Society”**. We could locate, and attempt to characterize, the nature of political battles within a number of separate spheres of activity. The above assertions enunciated the parameters that are incorporated in Dahl's democratic theory as a mirage of what should be in politics. However, the spheres of influence according to Robert Dahl's theory modern dynamic pluralist's society which on the other hand can be understood by men and women in politicking. Similarly, modern and dynamism are in tandem with each other as

a result of negating the old principles of democratic practice i.e the ancient practice of democracy in Athens. Meanwhile as a result of modernization and dynamism of uniqueness of societal problems calls for pluralist of society's such as the political participation, representations and political leadership of both men and women.

The value of political equality is central to normative theories of democracy (Tremblay, 2007). Social justice and gender equity require greater participation by marginalized or under-represented social groups, one of which is women (Moghadam, 2010). Anne Phillips (1998) puts four arguments to support women's political representation: (i) women politicians act as role models for aspiring women candidates; (ii) numerically equal representation of women and men in parliaments is a sign of justice; (iii) only women are positioned to represent women's interests; and (iv) women political representation revitalizes democracy. Also, Suzanne Dovi (2007) added two other arguments: (v) according to the trust argument, women's political representation is necessary for women to put their confidence in political institutions; and (vi) the legitimacy argument contends that the presence of women representatives increases the legitimacy of democratic institutions (Kantola, 2009).

This theory is suitable for this paper because women are still poorly represented in the political arena throughout the world. Studies have shown that a range of factors influence women's access to legislative arenas (Tremblay, 2007). The independent variables identified by previous studies can be grouped into three umbrellas: social-economic factors, political factors and cultural factors (Moghandam, 2010).

4 Literature Review

This section reviewed extant literature on trend of women representation in African political leadership that contributed to the status of women involvement in political affairs in Africa, broached the trend of women representation in political position with specific focus on parliamentary representation while efforts were also made to examine mechanisms put in place to strengthen the drive for women participation in Africa especially in Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt and South Africa.

4.1 Trend of Women Representation in African Political Leadership

The emerging trends in women's political participation in Africa have been exhibited by the increase in the number of women in parliament (Sibonokuhle and Sani, 2013). Literature confirmed an African country, Rwanda as the leading state in term of women representation in the mainstream politics globally. According to (Cole, 2011) Rwanda has been ranked first globally as it has more than fifty percent of women in its elected public offices. The Rwandan experience has proven to be a referenced landmark not only in Africa, but for all democracy. However, it appears that only Rwanda in African continent has been able to achieve this great fit as many countries in Africa still lag behind.

Nigeria

In Nigeria, the Beijing Declaration of 1995 which was built on the argument that women's political participation, as recognised globally, is an essential determinant of the status of women in any particular country and this is expected to exert considerable influence on women participation in Nigeria's political landscape (Sibonokuhle and Sani, 2013). Yet, evidence from Nigeria shown a negation to this global expectation. Women remain severely underrepresented in the decision-making process and positions in Nigeria (Ette, 2017). A review of trend of women in Nigeria especially at the parliamentary level revealed a stagnation against expected participation of women (INEC, 2015; Onyenwere, 2017). Table 1 shown poor outlook on women involvement in political leadership in Nigeria since her return to democratic dispensation. The distribution reported a topsy-turvy nature of women involvement in political representation. For instance, the highest number of women in Federal House of Representative was 36 as against 334 men parliamentarians in 2011 general elections, a mere 10% of the total 360 seats available in the green house. Number of women representatives have remained unprogressive since the current dispensation in Nigeria. Historically, 12 women represented in the house in 1999, 21 women in 2003, 23 women in 2007, 36 women in 2011 and 15 women in 2015. This trend was also recorded in the senate, as highest women representation ever recorded was 8 women senators, representing less than 8% representation. For the record, Nigeria had 106 male senators against 3 female senators in 1999; 103 male senators against 6 female senators in 2003; 101 male against 8 female

senators in 2007; 102 male senators against 7 female senators in 2011; 103 male senators against 6 female senators in 2015 (INEC, 2015; Onyenwere, 2017). This trend casted doubt on the series of mechanisms and initiatives implemented to stimulate women participation in political terrain.

The low level of participation of women in Nigerian politics is explained by the view of Ette (2017) – the increasing interest of women in Nigerian politics has not improve their visibility and this is normatively problematic owing that it reinforces the patriarchal formation within the Nigerian political space. This is because of the pervasive persistent of patriarchal domination in the Nigerian political space (Bvukutwa, 2014).

Table 1 Distribution of Parliamentarians by Gender (1999-2015)

Year	Senate			House of Representative		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1999	106	3	109	348	12	360
2003	103	6	109	393	21	360
2007	101	8	109	337	23	360
2011	102	7	109	334	36	360
2015	103	6	109	345	15	360

Source: INEC, 2015; Onyenwere, 2017.

South African

Statistics South Africa (2015) reported that in South Africa, inclusion of women in the senior managerial positions, both in the private and public sector is an important indicator of prioritising women’s voices in decision-making. For example, female representation as CEOs in parastatals, mayors, ambassadors, and in other government structures is critical in ensuring access to political decision-making. In 1985, only about 3% of the members of the white parliament were women. Since 1994, national elections have ushered in a positive shift in women representation in parliament. Largely due to the African National Congress’ (ANC) commitment to initially include a 33% quota for women on their election party list, there were

101 women out of 400 seats in the first post-apartheid National Assembly in 1994 and by 1997; 111 of the 400 members of the National Assembly were women due to redeployments, resignations and other political changes in the national assembly. According to Hausmann et al (2008), South Africa is amongst the top six countries in the world where women hold more than 40% of parliamentary seats (Hausmann et al, 2008: 10; 16; 28; 316). South Africa's ranking in political empowerment increased the proportion of women in the national parliament from 25% in 1994 to 30% in 1999 and 44% in 2009 respectively. The proportion slightly decreased to the current 42% in 2014. South Africa's performance in respect of political representation of women is firmly above the 30% which the CEDAW committee felt it was necessary for "critical mass" and which is recommended in the Beijing Platform for Action (SSA, 2015).

Obviously, great strides have been made on the political front, particularly when one considers that women comprised less than 3% of parliamentary seats at the end of the apartheid regime's rule in 1994. This shows significant progress and the country has shown increased political commitment beyond the 30% inclusion of women to almost 50% representation

Egypt

Egypt being the most populous state in North Africa has over the years produced shocking evidence as far women political participation is concerned. Evidence in literature disclosed that women's status in Egypt has regressed in the realm of civil rights, freedoms and equal representation. Women have been denied their fair share of representation clinching only 2% of the 2012 parliament seats; while 12% of seats were preserved solely for women in the 2010 parliamentary elections during Mubarak era (Dyer, 2013: 61f; El Baradei and Wafa, 2013: 43; Abol-Qomsan, 2014). Moreover, the revocation of women's quota in the parliament in Article 11 by the 2013 and 2014 constitutions, while the 2014 constitution provided a quota for women only in the local councils (Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 2013: Article 11; Constitution of the Arab republic of Egypt, 2014: Article 11).

According to Inter-Parliamentary Union, the number of female candidates in the 1995 elections in Egypt increased to 87 (2.1%) from only 1.5% (42) ; the representation of women in 1995 was the least since the 1970's only 5 women (1%) were able to obtain seats out of the 444 member parliament. The President used constitutional right to appoint 4 women raising the total number of women representatives to 9 (1.9%). only 6 (1.3 %) women managed to obtain seats in the 2000 elections. Similarly, after presidential appointment, 13 female members emerged that is 2.9%. The number of women members in Egypt's upper house reached only 18 out of 264 members; about 6.8% of the total number in 2000 (Makram-Ebeid, 2000). This low representation for women continued in the next elections (2005-2010), it did not exceed 2%, i.e. 9 members (only 4 elected) of a total number of 454 (www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/2097_95.htm). In 2010, the percentage of women's representation in Egypt rose to 12% out of the 510 member parliament (Tadros, 2010) while only 11 women won seats in the House of Representatives; 9 elected and 2 presidential appointees in the 2011-2012 Parliamentary elections in Egypt.

The statistics above once again casted doubt on the efforts made so far in Africa to strength the movement for incursion women into African politics, though we must not lose sight to the fact that Egypt is an Arabian state, as such the Islamic teachings that de-emphasis involvement of public functions might not be unconnected to the current ratings of the country especially in the area of women empowerment in politics.

Ethiopia

According to Inter-Parliamentary Union (2018), number of women parliamentarians in Ethiopia has maintained a steady and gradual increase since 1997. It subsequently moved from 2% in 1997 to 38.8% in 2015 representing 1800% increase over the span of 18yrs (IPU, 2018). The update shown the percentage of women in Ethiopian Parliament in the following sequence: 1997 – 2%; 2000 – 7.7%; 2005 – 21.9%; 2010 – 27.80%; 2015 – 38.80% (IPU, 2018). This trend confirmed the impact of efforts made so far in bringing women folk into politics and decision

making in Ethiopia, though, more women preferably could be drafted into political circle in the country.

Comparatively, these trends indicted Nigeria and Egypt in the efforts to bring African women into politics as the two countries posted unfavourable trends along women representation in their countries. On the contrary and more favourably, South Africa and Ethiopia stand on positive note, as the mobilisation of women into political landscape has reflected in the growing number of women parliamentarians in the two countries.

4.2 Factors Contributing to the Lopsided Representation of African Women in Political Leadership.

One of the important reasons why women have not received adequate benefits from years of planning and development is their inadequate representation, non-participation and non-involvement in the preparation and execution of plans for their economic development and social justice through decentralized institutions. (Shamim and Kumari, 2002). Studies have shown that a range of factors influence women's access to legislative arenas (Tremblay, 2007). The independent variables identified by previous studies can be grouped into three umbrellas: social-cultural factors, economical factors and religious factors (Moghandam, 2010; Kassa, 2015). These factors are fairly considered in the subsequent paragraphs.

Socio-cultural Factors

Kassa (2015) observed that traditions continue to emphasize women's primary roles as mothers and housewives as well as restrict them to those roles. A strong patriarchal value system favours sexually segregated roles and traditional cultural values militate against the advancement, progress and participation of women in any political process. According to this ideology, women should only play the role of 'working mother', which is generally low-paid and apolitical. Cultural ideas about women affect women's levels of representation throughout the political process, from an individual woman's decision to enter politics, to party selection of candidates, to the decisions made by voters on an election day (Kunovich, Paxton &

Hughes, 2007). Women are overburdened with different household activities like cooking, take caring kids, washing and so on. These activities make women busy in the household and impede their involvement in the politics. Stereotyped notions about women constitute major barriers; societal perception about leadership ability of women, women's lack of assertiveness is some barriers that hinder the participation of women (Ethiopian Ministry of Women Affairs, 2006).

Economic Factors

Women's participation in political life depends largely on their access to employment which gives them not only material independence, but also certain professional skills and greater self-confidence (Kassa, 2015). Socio-economic status of women to a greater extent play a significant role in enhancing their participation and representation in political decision making bodies. Shvedova (2002) argued that social and economic status of women in society has a direct influence on their participation in political institutions and elected bodies. Most women are financially dependent on their husbands or relatives, this make it difficult for them to enter in political campaign. It is therefore, important to make it easier for women to access economic resources in a bid to expand women's presence in the political realm (Tovar, 2007; Seyedeh, Hasnita & Hossein, 2010).

Religious Factors

Religion is another important source of cultural beliefs in most countries. Arguments about women's inferiority to men are present across all dominant religions, and religion has long been used to exclude women from aspects of social, political, or religious life around the world (Kunovich, Paxton & Hughes 2007). Major religions of the world are differentially conservative or patriarchal in their views about the place of women, both in the church hierarchy and in society. For example, Protestantism promotes non-hierarchical religious practices and more readily accepts women as religious leaders compared with Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity. And Islamic law is typically interpreted in a manner that constrains the activities of women (Ahmed, 1992; Meyer Rizzo & Ali, 1998). Religion is one of the

anachronistic cultural beliefs in many communities in the country that excludes women from the mainstream of leadership. This smeared negative impact on women's status in society as well as limit their opportunities in politics and public life.

Hence, attention at national and regional level should be directed towards economic, socio-cultural and religious factors inhibiting the interest of African women in political leadership if gender balanced leadership is something to reckon in African continents.

4.3. Mechanisms Installed to Promote Women Participation in African Politics

Studies revealed that African countries have attempted series of mechanisms to promote more women in the political terrain. However, these are not self-fixed in terms of its operations i.e. the party concerned must on the other hand develop voluntary and keen interest in exercising their right including the subject matter. In recent times, it has reported that most of the African leaders have adopted the international policy framework at the fourth world conference on women held in Beijing in 1995, drew attention of persistent inequality between men and women. The Beijing platform affirmed the exclusion of women from formal politics, in particular, raises a number of specific questions regarding the achievement of effective democratic transformations, in practice. The Beijing platform for action emphasized that women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for justice or democracy, but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interest to be taken into account. Without the perspective of women at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved.

The National Policy on Women amongst other things promotes Affirmative Action that would bring about up to 30% women's representation in legislative and executive arms of government (CEDAW Nigeria, 2004). Affirmative Action has been defined as a body of procedures designed to combat discrimination against marginalized groups especially women.

In essence one can say that the National Gender Policy embodies the basic principles of the National Policy on Women as well as other International policy recommendations for gender equality, it is more or less working towards similar objectives as the former documents or policies. In addition to the national gender being put in place to facilitate the participation of women in politicking also can be traced to the quota system in most of the African countries. In that circumstance.

African Education and Training policy was issued in 1941. Following the Educational policy, three Education Sector Development Programs (ESDP) were developed for translating the policy statement into action. The programs goals relating to gender equity include: Increasing primary enrolment ratio, increase girls' share of enrolment in primary schools; Improve the quality of educational facilities; and improving teachers training; Reform the curricula to make it relevant and gender sensitive; Reduce the drop-out rate and repetition rate of girls by half, and increase the number of schools especially in rural areas. This amount to the enlightenment of women in respect to the political activities believed to have been tied to only male subjects.

Quota systems for women aim to ensure that women constitute a certain number or percentage of the members of a body, committee or a government, so women are not isolated from the political life. It is a form of affirmative action designed to help women overcome the obstacles that prevent them from entering politics in the same way as their male colleagues (quotaproject.org 2017). There are three main types of gender quota policies: reserved seats, party quotas and legislative quotas. Reserved seats establish seats that only women are eligible to compete for. Party quotas are set by political parties in order to aim for a particular number of women among their candidates for political office. Lastly, legislative quotas are a legal requirement that apply to all political groupings. It sets a minimum for the share of women on the candidate list (Burnet in Franceshet et al 2012; quotaproject.org 2017). Quota systems generally aim to ensure that women exceed a predefined share of a political body. In some countries, political quotas are applied as a temporary measure until the barriers for women's entry into politics have been removed. However, most countries having applied quota systems

have not limited their use of quotas to a set timeframe (Burnet in Franceshet et al 2012; quotaproject.org 2017). Similarly, the party quota system came to limelight at the inception of the fourth republic which emphasized on 30% of positions exclusively reserved for women.

Thus, despite the various measures in configuring African women into the political power, the impact of such mechanisms has not been felt most especially to a large extent, adapted themselves. The only playing ground where atmospheric conditions have favour in as much those principles have failed in other African countries is Rwanda, having successfully acclimatized its' system to gender stratifications which has been able to reflect on the women political participation and representation in the corridor of power..

6. Prospects of Women Involvement in Political Leadership

The prospect of women in political development is like exploring an area endowed with mineral resources. Nevertheless, the outstanding panorama effects of women participation in politics cannot be over-emphasized because of the possibility to corroborate intensive effort in developing African continent with their wealth of experience and peculiar character. Similarly, (Kassa, 2015) if women are allowed and an enabling environment is created, it will address their basic problems and needs in the community; and ensures the openness (transparency), real fight against rent-seeking (mainly the recently rampant corruption), accountability, political commitment, political leadership, and political responsiveness of the existing national, regional, zonal/districts, and local levels political democracy, democratization process, and governance of the governments and political institutions, and promotes peace and democratic development in any country as a whole. On the contrary, women are being seeing as weaker vessels. But in a scenario that the dominated gender has failed the fulfilment of political development purpose consequently calls for total overhauling of efforts most especially in annexing women intellectual capacity into governance.

Conflict Resolution: Before, during and after the exit of colonial dwellers on the soil of Africa, conflict has been the major discourse of contentions that has marred the activities of local areas development and of course, it has disrupted the communal peace that was built by

the precolonial tenets which was later broken by the foreign infiltrations. However, the impact of women in conflict has been unappreciated by the male gender. The increased participation of women in peace talks is important as the peace agreements are not what they used to be. Initially, these agreements just marked a ceasefire between the warring factions but now they act as a political framework to a better society. In this map, women would like to have their say so that in the end there exists an all-inclusive roadmap (Otieno, 2013). Thus, there were lots of lobbying that took place before women could finally sit at the negotiating table. It is also evident that peace management goes beyond the negotiating table and on day to day activities where women seek to tackle in managing and resolving conflicts. It is however sad to see that this input though very vital effort is being given little recognition.

Change discourse: The language that has been used in legislature has been sexist in the world over. This language is a product of both culture and the traditional male dominance in parliament. According to researchers, this language reflects the ills of the society which are: gender bias and social exclusion of women from certain roles. Language such as chairman send a negative message, that only men can have those positions, that only men have the ability to take on those positions (Otieno, 2013).

Impact of output: As a result they formed a cross-party women caucus which engaged both men and women in and outside the parliament. Some of these laws were: The Equal Opportunities Commission Act (2006), The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2009), The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (2009), and the Domestic Violence Act (2010) (Otieno, 2013). For instance, part of African women have been able waged war against early girl child marriage and bring back our girls group chaired by former minister of Education in Nigeria Dr (Mrs) Oby Ezekwesili.

Improved Governance: Studies have shown that where women have achieved critical mass, there is less corruption in the state compared to when there are few women in legislature. Numerous explanations to this have emerged. There are those who say that corruption is likely to run more in already established networks and men having more networks, relying on old

boys, make them more susceptible. Women on the other hand have very few links therefore as ‘newcomers’ no one would like to involve them in the said activities (Otieno, 2013).

Environmental shaping: In terms of creating a competitive environment among the competing spheres either between man to man or woman to woman. In this context, large number of women is consistently representing the phases of business developments. In terms of development of the economy, women are better positioned in this regard, this fit can also be brought to political scene

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper therefore arrived at the point that African states initiated series of mechanisms and ad hoc-based initiatives such as 30% affirmative action, national policy on gender parity, national gendered based institutions, quota system at national and political party levels but huge disparity still exist in terms composition of men and women in African political leadership. Certain African states recorded noticeable improvement in women representation in political terrain especially Rwanda but this considerably, is not significantly replicated in most of the African countries. Therefore, there is need for a more aggressive, well-coordinated, output-oriented approach to attract and keep more African women into political circle. In view of the above, the following recommendations were offered.

1. There should be general and total overhauling of political orientations either from the perspective of government, non-governmental bodies, religious institutions, and cultural institutions among others in a synchronized effort in achieving gender balanced political leadership.
2. Encouragement of girl child education i.e catch them young mantra should be injected into national education system with more emphasis on the importance women political leadership and decision making.
3. Cultural practices that put women at the disadvantages at the political front should be systematically eradicated through public enlightenment and education
4. Political parties should be legally empowered to reserve a specify quota for female politician who are willing to participate in political affairs.

5. Establishment of institutions especially at the national level that monitor compliance with existing legislation backing women representation in leadership positions.
6. Electoral body should put up a stringent condition against political parties that deviated from Electioneering rules and practice regarding women participation.
7. Mutual support, teamwork and networking by women nationally and internationally, irrespective of race and religion should be ensured.

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