A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN EKITI AND ONDO STATES OF NIGERIA, 2007-2019

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria, by global and regional standards, has low rates of women representation in politics. Even though women make up about half of the population, this numerical strength has not translated into political power. Rather, it has only helped their male counterparts to continually gain power since women's participation in politics has mostly been limited to voting. Even with the development of National Gender Policy which recommended 35% affirmative action for a more inclusive representation of women both in elective and appointive positions, and its five-year implementation plan of 2008, women's political participation has remained pathetically low. Women in Ekiti and Ondo States are not left out in this abysmal underrepresentation as they continually struggle to be accepted as equal stakeholders in democratic politics, despite the fact that these states have one of the highest literacy rates in Southwest Nigeria. This study provides a comparative study of women political participation in Ondo and Ekiti States between 2007 and 2019. The study applies both quantitative and qualitative methods. A total of 200 questionnaires (100 for each state) were administered, and data collected from secondary sources were critically reviewed. The study reveals that the patriarchal nature of the society has created women's inferiority complex and unacceptability, thereby alienating them from mainstream politics. It is recommended that, rather than pay lip service to women empowerment, government should tackle inhibiting factors which continue to relegate women to the background by entrenching guidelines for the implementation of gender policies.

Keywords: Ekiti State, Nigeria, Ondo State, Political Participation, Women.

INTRODUCTION

At both the national and international levels, there is a growing academic interest in the level of participation of women in politics (Fayomi, 2015). Literature abounds on the low level of women's participation at the highest levels of political activity. This accounts for their invisibility in the top positions of power locally and internationally. According to the World Bank data on population, Nigeria's population as at the year 2020 is estimated to be 206,139,589 and women constitute about half of this figure. In spite of this huge number, women are not well represented in governance as the history of political transformation in Nigeria is replete with issues of male dominance and women tokenism in participation in public affairs (Aina &Olayode, 2012). In fact, the results of the 2019 general elections is worrisome as it appears that women's low participation in elective positions have gone from bad to worse with women making up a meagre 4.17% of elected officials (Onyeji, 2019). This shows a decline from the 2015 elections where women formed 5.65% of elected officials.

Nigeria, like many other nations in the world, is responding to the clarion calls made variously by the United Nations to rid societies of all forms of discriminations, especially gender-based discriminations and violence against women. It is a signatory to the 1979 Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), The African Charter on Human and People's Rights, The Beijing Platform of Action, and the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa otherwise called the Maputo Protocol. Furthermore, Nigeria took a bold step in the year 2000 when it adopted and passed into law the National Policy on Women. The policy was later converted into the National Gender Policy (NGP) which was launched in 2007 (Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development, 2006).

Various factors have been hypothesized to be affecting women's political participation across the globe. Four of the most important factors are socioeconomic development, cultural factor, historical legacies stemming from a society's cultural and political traditions, and institutional design factors (Amadiume, 1997; Akiyode-Afolabi & Arogundade, 2003). However, what is unclear is the degree to which these factors influence women's political participation in various political environments. It is against this backdrop that this study examines political participation of women in Ondo and Ekiti from 2007 to 2019. This study endeavours to understand whether or not these four factors affect political participation of women in Ekiti and Ondo states during these years.

This paper is split into seven sections. Following this introduction, the second section reviews the concept of political participation and the theoretical framework, while the third section explores women and political participation in Nigeria in the fourth republic. The fourth section presents an overview of women political participation in Ekiti and Ondo states from 2007-2019, while the fifth section presents the methodology. The sixth section focuses on data presentation and discussion of findings. The last section concludes the discussion and recommends ways through which women's political participation can be engendered.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
Concept of Political Participation

Political participation, like most concepts that are used today is an unfolding concept. From direct participation of the Greek city-states to the Schumpeterian

rejection of that model, the concept has been central to every discussion about democracy (Beck, 1997). Democracy is inconceivable without political participation. Without political participation, there will be no need for elections and voting in a democratic system. Political participation affords citizens in a democratic setting an opportunity to communicate information to government officials about their concerns and preferences and to put pressure on them to respond (Eremenko 2008). Political participation is the voluntary activities shared by members of a society in selecting their rulers and directly or indirectly involving themselves in the formation of public policies (Weiner as cited in Awofeso and Odeyemi 2014). This is in line with the argument of George-Genyi (2015) that political participation describes the voluntary or non-coercive involvement of citizens in the political affairs of their country. In other words, political participation does not have to do with the use of force.

Political participation refers to the activities of the mass public in politics, including, for example, voting in elections, helping a political campaign, giving money to a candidate or cause, writing or calling officials, petitioning, boycotting, demonstrating, and working with other people on issues (Uhlaner, 2015). It is the involvement of the citizens in the political system, a means of exercising one's civic responsibility in political systems for the overall development of the nation (Falade as cited in Fayomi & Adebayo, 2017), and a way of trying to exercise influence over the political process (Lewu 2005). For Maclosky (1968), political participation is a series of voluntary activities through which members of a society share in the direct or indirect selection of rulers and formation of public policy. Political participation has to do with the voluntary involvement of citizens in the political affairs of their country. Through political participation, citizens are able to communicate with the government.

According to Pausch (2011), political participation has two main qualities. One, from a structural point of view it strengthens and legitimates democratic political systems. Two, from an individualistic perspective, it leads to political freedom or at least to the individual's impression to have a say on political matters (Pausch, 2011). Sanghera (2005) identified two forms of political participation. These are legal forms of political participation and illegal or contentious forms of political participation. Legal political participation means those types of participation that are stipulated in the constitution such as the right to vote and be voted for while the illegal political participation includes such activities like political violence, political terrorism, etc. Milbraith (1965) categorized political participation into two: Category A and B. Category A comprises the gladiatorial, transitional and the spectatorial levels. Gladiatorial activities include being a candidate for office, attending caucus meetings and contributing time or funds to political campaign etc. Transitional activities include attendance of political meetings or rallies, and making contact with politicians; and Spectator activities include wearing of campaign shirts, initiating political discussions, voting, and exposing oneself to political stimuli. Category B on the other hand represents the lowest level of participation characterized by total apathy to political issues. Those concerned may neither register nor vote. Going by this categorization, it is obvious that Nigerian women belong to the transitional and spectator levels of category A, and category B. However, for the women folk to be seen and heard in the political business of the country, they must participate actively at the gladiatorial level because, the political power that women in

a society have can be linked directly to the degree of their participation in the political process of that society (Lewu, 2005).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Women's low political participation can be understood within the theoretical explanations of the glass ceiling theory. The term 'glass ceiling' was first propounded by Carol Hymowitz and Timothy Schellhardt in an article published in the March 24th edition of the "Wall Street Journal" in 1986. This article revealed the invisible barriers that impede the career advancement of women in the American workforce (Afza & Newaz, 2008). The Federal Glass Ceiling Commission (1995) refers to glass ceiling as an artificial barrier to the advancement of women and minorities. The 'glass ceiling' explains the failure of many women to advance past a certain point in their occupations and professions, regardless of their qualifications or achievements (Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia & Vanneman, 2001). It also refers to situations where the advancement of a qualified person within the hierarchy of an organization is halted at a particular level because of some form of discrimination, most commonly sexism or racism (Afza & Newaz, 2008). According to Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia & Vanneman (2001), a glass ceiling is a specific type of gender or racial inequality that can be distinguished from other types of inequality. It does not refer to all gender disparities, but rather to those that are more pronounced at higher levels of an organizational hierarchy than they are at lower levels (Purcell, MacArthur & Samblanet, 2010).

The "Glass-Ceiling Theory" focuses on the ways in which the structure of work organizations, especially those with large proportion of white-collar workers, establish women in subordinate positions i.e. they put a 'glass-ceiling' over women's opportunities (Kanter, 1977). Kanter further described work organization in terms of three dimensions, viz: opportunity, power and proportions. In explaining opportunity, Kanter noted that people with less opportunity tend to be low in self-esteem and aspiration while people with more opportunities are competitive and have greater self-esteem. Power on the other hand is the capacity to mobilize resources in support of individual interests. In terms of proportion, Kanter stated that small proportion tends to be highly stressed and stereotyped while the large proportions invisibly fit in with the group, find networking and the acquire sponsors. These explanations by Kanter can be related to the Nigerian political arena in relation to women political participation. Women are not given the opportunity to exercise their political right such as occupying key political positions ranging from the local government to the federal government level of decision-making. Instead, they are subjected to certain appointed positions. In terms of power, Nigerian women are just as Kanter described those with low power, while men are those with high power particularly during elections. Talking about proportions, Nigerian women are the small proportion limited by patriarchy. They are stereotyped and highly stressed with responsibilities. Hence, there is a need for women and government to acknowledge the glass ceiling and make conscious effort to break it.

Women and Political Participation in Nigeria in the Fourth Republic

Since 1999 when Nigeria transitioned from military rule to democratic rule, women are yet to occupy up to 50% of elective positions. Since 1999, Nigeria has never produced a female President or Vice-President although there have been female aspirants who contested for such offices in general elections. Women have only been availed the opportunity of being elected as Deputy Governor and as members of the National Assembly and State House of Assembly. It is pertinent to note that

women are almost invisible in Nigeria's political arena because after six consecutive change in democratic government, women's participation has been on the decline. In 2003, only 21 (6.1%) women out of the 339 members won seats in the House of Representatives and 4 (2.7 %) women were elected into the Senate, which make just 8.8 percent women representation in the national parliament (Ojo, 2003:16), and of the 990 seats available for the States House of Assembly in the country, 38 (3.84%) women were elected (Adu, 2008). In 2007 only 26 (6.9%) women out of the 358 seats were elected into the House of Representatives, 9 (8.3%) women out of the 109 seats were elected in to the Senate, and of the 990 seats available for the States House of Assembly in the country, 57 (5.5%) women were elected (Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition Shadow Report, 2008:10). This trend shows an improvement in women representation, courtesy of the efforts of the Obasanjo administration to involve more women in his political administration. As a result, political parties took a decision to waive for the women the payment of pre-registration levies for political aspirants in the country (Akiyode-Afolabi & Arogundade, 2003).

With the introduction of the National Gender Policy in 2007, and its implementation plan of 2008 one would expect a spike in the number of women's participation in politics, but rather, there has been a continuous decline which is worrisome. At the April 2011 polls, women won 25 (6.9%) seats out of the 360 seats available at the House of Representatives, 7 (6.4%) women out of 109 senators while at the State Houses of Assembly, there were 68 (6.9%) women out of 990 persons (Okoronkwo-Chukwu,

2013). In the 2015 elections, women recorded low participation compared to the previous ones. In 2015 only 14 (3.8%) women out of the 360 seats were elected into the House of Representatives, 8 (7.3%) women out of the 109 seats were elected in to the Senate, and of the 990 seats available for the States House of Assembly in the country, 54 (5.45%) women were elected. The situation was not any better in the 2019 general elections. At the National Assembly, women won 12 seats out of 360 at the House of Representatives, 7 seats out of 109 at the Senate and 44 out of 990 seats at the State Houses of Assembly, while the number of female deputy governors declined from 6 in 2015 to 4 (Onyeji, 2019).

In the present administration of President Mohamadu Buhari, only 7 (16%) out of 42 ministers are women (Obiezu, 2019), although there is a slight increment compared to his first tenure in 2015 with 6 female ministers. This clearly shows that the problem is not really about women not participating but rather a lack of adequate support from the male gender because even in terms of appointive positions, the country has failed to meet up with the 35% affirmative action. The British Council report in 2012 stated that Nigeria stood at 118 position out of 192 countries in terms of gender parity, and then fell to the 133rd position in 2019, lagging behind African countries like South Africa and Rwanda. Nigeria still falls short of the desired result of giving females the opportunities and access to opportunities to advance socially, economically and politically (Adu, 2008). Given this level of under-representation, women are unable to significantly influence public policy outcomes because they have very few advocates in public institutions.

Table 1- Number of Women in elective positions from 1999 to 2019

Office	Seats Available	1999	2003	2007	2011	2015	2019
President	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vice President	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Senate	109	3	4	8	7	8	7
House of Representative	360	12	23	26	26	14	12
Governor	36	0	0	0	0	0	0
Deputy Governor	36	1	2	6	3	4	4
State House of Assembly	990	12	38	57	62	54	44

Source: *Maureen (2011); Eyeh (2010) (2012); Irabor (2012) and Okoronkwo-Chukwu (2013); Nse Etim (2015); Onyeji (2019).*

An Overview of Women's Political Participation in Ekiti and Ondo States from 2007-2019
A. Ekiti State

Ekiti State was carved out of Ondo State on 1st October, 1996 with its administrative capital at Ado Ekiti. Ekiti State has 16 Local Government Councils and the House of Assembly has a total of 26 seats. Geo-politically, the State is divided into three senatorial districts: Ekiti Central senatorial district, Ekiti North senatorial district and Ekiti South senatorial district.

Since the beginning of democratic rule in 1999, the position of women in Ekiti state has only slightly improved compared to that of Ondo State. In 2003, there was a female deputy governor in person of Abiodun Olujimi, and between 2010 and 2014, the state had 2 female Deputy-Governors. In other words, the office of the governor and deputy governor in the state has not necessarily been an all men affair. Out of 26 seats at the Ekiti State House of Assembly, women representation in the 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 elections were 0, 4, 2, and 4 respectively (Adefemi & Agunbiade, 2019). At the National Assembly, the number of female representatives from Ekiti state at both the House of Representative and the Senate has been very low. In the 2011 National Assembly election that was conducted, there was no female representative from Ekiti state at both the House of Representative and the Senate (INEC, 2011). The 2015 National Assembly election was better as two women were elected as senators while the House of Representative members from Ekiti were all men (INEC, 2015). In the 2019 elections, the state produced one female House of Representative member and 1 female Senator (Ogunje, 2019). At the Local Government level, between 2010 and 2014, the state government made use of caretakers instead of elected local government heads. Despite this, the appointments did not favour women. However, in the Local Government election conducted in December 2019, only one female Local Government Chairman in person of Mrs Motunde Fajuyi was produced out of 16 local governments (Nejo, 2019).

B. Ondo State
Ondo state generally referred to as the "Sunshine State" was created on February 3, 1976 from the defunct western region. It originally included what is now Ekiti state, which was split off in 1996. The state contains 18 local governments and the House of Assembly has a total of 26 seats. Geo-politically, the State is divided into three senatorial districts: Ondo Central

senatorial district, Ondo North senatorial district and Ondo South senatorial district. Just like every other state in the federation, Ondo state women have played almost no role in the state politics. Various movements to increase women political participation in the state have not yield a satisfactory result. Since the beginning of the Fourth Republic in 1999, the state has neither produced a governor nor a deputy governor as it appears that those key positions have become exclusively reserved for men. At the State House of Assembly, women have been severely underrepresented. In the 2007 and 2011 State Assembly elections, one female representative each was elected into one of the 26 seats. In 2015, the number of women representation increased to 2 and for the first time, in the history of the State House of Assembly, a female speaker was produced (Adefemi & Agunbiade, 2019). In 2019, the number of women elected into the State House of Assembly was also 2. At the local government level, the state has not conducted any local-government elections since the dissolution of those elected in 2009. Successive governments have continued to appoint local government caretaker chairmen for the period of six months or more. However, despite the fact that it has been more of appointive positions than elective positions at this level since 2007, the number of women appointed as caretakers has been very low. For instance, out of the caretakers appointed into the18 Local Government Areas of the State in 2009, only 2 were women.

In 2015, of all the local government caretakers appointed, none was female. Year 2017 and 2019 appointments were not any better for women as only 2 women each were made caretakers at these periods. For appointive positions, women have not really fared well in the state. In the year 2011 there were 2 female commissioners, in 2013 it was just one female commissioner and in 2017, there were 3 women out of 17 commissioners. A group of women under the auspices of the Ondo State Women Must Count (OSWMC) in 2017 kicked against the marginalization of women in the cabinet of Governor Rotimi Akeredolu saying that the list of names of commissioners forwarded to the State House of Assembly which contained only two females was unacceptable (Sahara Reporters, 2017). Also, in 2019, the Association of Female Politicians (AFP) in the state has decried the acute marginalization of women in political and other public offices stating that "over the 20-year period from 1999-2019, Ondo women have continued to witness abysmal representative percentages across the state" (Akingboye, 2019). From the foregoing, one can safely conclude that women has been relegated to the background in terms of participation in the state's politics in spite of various movements and forums that are being organized in the state by both the government and NGOs.

METHODS
Population of study
Both primary and secondary sources of data have been used for the purpose of this study. Secondary data involving thorough library research and published or unpublished materials such as government gazettes, bulletin, magazines, journals, newspapers, articles, relevant textbooks and materials from internet are used to construct supporting reviews of the study. The study areas are Ondo and Ekiti States of Nigeria. However, because the entire population cannot be used due to complexities and volume involved, focus was on the state capitals and administrative headquarters of the two states – Akure (Ondo State) and Ado Ekiti (Ekiti State).

Participants
A total of 200 questionnaires were administered (100 in each of the study areas – Akure and Ado Ekiti) among

women through the State Secretariats and Local Government Secretariats, NGO Offices and private offices. 200 filled in valid questionnaires were received back and used for the study. A structured, closed-ended questionnaire using 5-point Likert scale with end points ranging from "strongly agreed (5) to strongly disagreed (1)" on the factors affecting women political participation in Ekiti and Ondo states was used to conduct this study. These factors are economic factors, cultural factors, historical legacies and institutional structures. The respondents were also asked to indicate their age, marital status, occupation, and educational qualifications. Descriptive statistics was used with percentages and frequency tables. Chi-square test was employed to show the influence of socioeconomic, cultural, historical and institutional design factors on women political participation in Ekiti and Ondo States at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Table 2: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

	Ekiti State		Ondo State	
Age Distribution	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
18-30	50	50%	36	36%
31-40	39	39%	44	44%
41 above	11	11%	20	20%
Distribution of Marital Status of Respondents				
Single	50	50%	31	31%
Married	46	46%	65	65%
Divorced	2	2%	4	4%
Widow	2	2%	-	-
Occupational Distribution of Respondents				
Civil service	22	22%	31	31%
Public service	18	18%	28	28%
Private	60	60%	41	41%
Educational Distribution of Respondents				
Primary	4	4%	2	2%
Secondary	25	25%	28	28%
Tertiary	71	71%	70	70%

Table 2 shows that 50% of the total respondents for Ekiti state fall between the age 18 and 30, 39% fall between age 31 and 40 and 11% fall between 41 and above, while in Ondo state, 36% of the total respondents fall between age 18 and 30, 44% fall between age 31 and 40 and 20% fall between ages 41 and above. Furthermore, in the two states, most of the respondents have high literacy level as over 70% of the respondents have qualifications up to the tertiary level. This enabled the researcher to get good information; as the respondents understood the study and were able to contribute to the subject matter.

Response to factors affecting women's political participation

Table 3: Ekiti State Respondents

Variables	Strongly Agreed (%)	Agreed (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagreed (%)	Strongly disagreed (%)
Economic factors					
Educational Resources	12	18	5	45	20
Occupational Resources	15	48	14	17	6
Financial Resources	16	16	11	26	31
Literacy level	5	21	20	33	21
Cultural Factors					
Inferiority complex	14	22	16	18	30
Moral beliefs	17	17	1	43	22
Women's political competence	32	55	3	9	1
Males' dominance	17	38	16	22	7
Cultural values	2	32	2	16	48
Historical Legacies					
Religious heritages	13	15	10	33	29
Family responsibilities	21	55	2	22	-
Exclusion of women during military regimes	30	27	4	22	17
Exclusion of women during colonial period	21	33	19	10	17
Female subordination to male	28	32	14	24	2
Institutional structure					
Women under-representation in party executive	22	57	8	8	5
Lack of quota system	54	24	15	7	-
Lack of Proportional representation	44	33	22	-	1

electoral system					
Non-implementation of gender policies	44	43	11	-	2

Table 4: Ondo State Respondents

Variables	Strongly Agreed (%)	Agreed (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagreed (%)	Strongly disagreed (%)
Economic Factors					
Educational Resources	11	2	23	25	39
Occupational Resources	13	14	28	29	16
Financial Resources	30	54	7	4	5
Literacy level	13	32	12	25	18
Cultural Factors					
Inferiority complex	15	5	9	43	28
Moral beliefs	13	17	7	30	33
Women's political competence	44	44	8	-	4
Males' dominance	35	42	9	7	7
Cultural values	23	39	13	17	8
Historical Legacies					
Religious heritages	18	15	11	35	21
Family responsibilities	31	57	9	-	3
Exclusion of women during military regimes	21	31	21	22	5
Exclusion of women during colonial period	19	19	30	27	5
Female subordination to male	19	41	17	20	3
Institutional structure					
Women under-representation in party executive	17	25	24	17	17
Lack of quota system	34	50	9	6	1
Lack of Proportional representation electoral system	32	41	15	10	2
Non-implementation of gender policies	35	60	2	3	-

Hypothesis Testing

Based on the responses generated above, attempt is made to examine the implications of socioeconomic developments, cultural factors, historical legacies and institutional design factors on women political participation in Ekiti and Ondo States along these three hypothesis:

1) Socioeconomic development has no influence on women political participation in Ekiti and Ondo States.

2) Nigerian culture and historical legacies do not contribute to low women political participation in Ekiti and Ondo States.

3) Nigerian political structures have no influence on women participation in Ekiti and Ondo States' politics.

The acceptance or rejection of these three (3) research hypothesis were tested using chi-square at 0.05level of significance. The results of the statistical tests are presented in the table below:

Table 5: Chi-square test showing the influence of socioeconomic, cultural, historical and institutional design factors on women political participation in Ekiti and Ondo States

Hypothesis 1: Socio-Economic development has no influence on women's political participation in Ekiti and Ondo States					
Ekiti State			**Ondo State**		
Observed(o)	**Expected(e)**	**Residual**	**Observed(o)**	**Expected(e)**	**Residual**
12	20	-8	11	20	-9
18	20	-2	2	20	-18
5	20	-15	23	20	3
45	20	25	25	20	5
20	20	0	39	20	19
100	**100**		**100**	**100**	
X^2 **Cal**= 45.080; **d.f**=4; X^2 **Tab**= 3.357			X^2**Cal**=40.000;**d.f**=4; X^2 **Tab**= 3.357		
Hypothesis 2: Nigerian cultural and historical legacies do not contribute to low women political participation in Ondo and Ekiti States					
Ekiti State			**Ondo State**		
Observed(o)	**Expected(e)**	**Residual**	**Observed(o)**	**Expected(e)**	**Residual**
14	20	-6	15	20	-5
22	20	2	5	20	-15
16	20	-4	9	20	-11
18	20	-2	43	20	34
30	20	10	28	20	8
100	**100**		**100**	**100**	
X^2 **Cal**= 8.080; **d.f**=4; X^2 **Tab**= 3.357			X^2**Cal**=48.200;**d.f**=4; X^2 **Tab**= 3.357		
Hypothesis 3: Nigerian political structures have no significant influence on women participation in Ondo and Ekiti State					
Ekiti State			**Ondo State**		
Observed(o)	**Expected(e)**	**Residual**	**Observed(o)**	**Expected(e)**	**Residual**
9	20	-11	8	20	-12
24	20	4	9	20	-11
2	20	-18	37	20	17
51	20	31	46	20	26

14	20	-6			
100	**100**		**100**	**100**	
X^2 **Cal**= 56.400; **d.f**=4; X^2 **Tab**= 3.357			X^2**Cal**=24.800;**d.f**=4; X^2 **Tab**= 3.357		

From the result of chi-square test on the influence of socioeconomic factor on women political participation, Ekiti State indicates 45.080 X^2cal which is greater than table value of 3.357 at 0.05 alpha levels. Also the result of Ondo state indicates 40.000 X^2cal which is greater than table value of 3.357 at 0.05significance. The null hypothesis that socioeconomic development has no influence on women political participation in Ekiti and Ondo States was rejected. Hypothesis 1 is therefore rejected for both states hence establishing that socio-economic development factors such as financial strength, educational resources and occupational resources have influence on women political participation in Ekiti and Ondo States.

On cultural and historical legacies, Ekiti State indicates 8.080 X^2cal which is greater than table value of 3.357 at 0.05 alpha level. Also the result of Ondo state indicates 48.200 X^2cal which is greater than table value of 3.357 at 0.05 significant. Hence, the null hypothesis that Nigerian cultural and historical legacies do not contribute to low women's political participation in Ondo and Ekiti States was rejected. Hypothesis 2 is therefore rejected for the both states hence establishing that Nigerian cultural and historical factors contribute significantly to the low women political participation in Ekiti and Ondo States. As regards institutional designs, Ekiti State indicates 56.400 X^2cal which is greater than table value of 3.357 at 0.05 alpha levels. Also the result of Ondo State indicates 24.800 X^2cal which was greater than table value of 3.357 at 0.05significance. Hence, the null hypothesis that Nigerian political structures have insignificant influence on women political participation in Ondo and

Ekiti States was rejected. Hypothesis 3 is rejected in each of the states hence establishing that Nigerian political structures have a significant influence on women political participation in Ondo and Ekiti States.

DISCUSSION
From the study conducted, the result on hypothesis one shows that socio-economic development has influence on women's political participation in Ekiti and Ondo States. Women in these states do not have the financial strength to stand against men in elections because election in Nigeria is expensive. Hence, rather than commit their financial resources to political activities in the state, they prefer to invest in other economic activities since the likelihood of being supported by their parties and winning elections is low. Hypothesis two revealed that Nigerian cultural and historical legacies contribute to low women political participation in these two states. The country's cultural factors in this regards include patriarchy system and male domination. These relegate women to the background. Politics is seen as a man's business where no woman need apply. The society sees women as purely ornamental and as such tag women who are involved in politics as promiscuous thereby discouraging husbands from supporting their wives' political ambition. Another key factor that limits women's political participation in the two states is the culture of political violence, an environment that is not so healthy for women. More so, religious practices that restrict women to family responsibilities and the exclusion of women from colonial administration and military rules in the country have created a legacy that limit the improvement of women's political participation in Ondo and Ekiti States.

Hypothesis three revealed that Nigerian political structure has influence on women political participation in Ekiti and Ondo States. Though Nigeria is a signatory to the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and eventually came up with its own gender policy in 2007, the government has only paid lip service to global campaign on gender balance. As a matter of fact, the National Gender Policy has failed to fulfil the purpose for which it was created. It is more or less like a paper work and far from being a reality. From the foregoing, it shows that the finding of this study validates the existing literature that socio-economic development, cultural values, historical legacies and institutional structures are major factors affecting women political participation not only in Nigeria, but across the globe. All these factors have hindered women from going beyond the conventional level of voting to the gladiatorial level in politics.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has examined women political participation in Ekiti and Ondo States under the dispensation of democratic governments from 2007 to 2019. There is no much difference in these states in terms of women political participation as women in both states are faced with the same hurdles. Despite global campaign for gender equality, women political representation in these states has failed to achieve the critical mass of 30% women representation at both the states' and national parliaments. It is only reasonable that women, who constitute half of the country's population, should find prominence in the political development of the nation. The voice of this very important, yet marginalised, group needs to be heard. Perhaps if women are well represented at the national and state assemblies, they can sponsor more people-friendly and humane bills as women are considered the more empathetic gender.

This issue of low women political participation has endured for so long that it needs to be consciously addressed. Of course, it will continue to draw more attention, discussions and write-ups until there is an obvious improvement on the level of women involvement and participation in politics. For there to be an improvement on women political participation in these two states, the following policy recommendations are suggested. One, there is a need for affirmative action measure. Rather than a voluntary action, guidelines for implementation must be entrenched. Past experiences have shown that states are not making any decisive effort to attain the 30% women representation in both appointive and elective positions not to talk of ensuring a gender balance. Two, focus more on the education of the male gender on the need to change their orientation towards women political participation and to understand the importance of the contributions of the female gender to national development. Three, electoral quota system should be adopted as this is the fastest way to improve women participation. That is, a constitutional provision stating certain percentages of the seats in the National Assembly, States' House of Assembly and Local Government Councils should be reserved for women. Finally, the Ministry of Women Affairs and other government machinery for women's advancement should be strengthened. For instance, the ministry of women affairs in Ekiti and Ondo States are nothing but mere political propaganda that lack tangible and practicable realistic policies and plans for women empowerment.

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