

TITLE PAGE

MDGs AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN NIGERIAN POLITICS

BY

OKAFOR, STELLA IFEADIKANWA

PG/ M.Sc/ 09/50716

**A PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.Sc) DEGREE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE**

(INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS)

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

FACULTY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA

FEBRUARY, 2011

APPROVAL PAGE

This project has been approved by the Department of Political Science University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

BY

DR. A.M OKOLIE

PROJECT SUPERVISOR

PROF.OBASI IGWE

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

EXTERNAL EXAMINER

PROF. E.O EZEANI

DEAN OF FACULTY

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all Nigerian women who have contributed immensely to the social, economic and political emancipation of women in Nigeria.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I most sincerely thank the almighty God for giving me the opportunity, wisdom, strength and zeal to write this M.Sc thesis.

I wish to thank and express my immense gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. M. Okolie, whose intellectual contribution and meticulous corrections of my work made it worthy of presentation. I also appreciate all my lecturers in the Political Science Department for their determined efforts to produce competent and sound Nigeria's future leaders.

My appreciation to my mother, Mrs. Virginia Okafor, my brother and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Cyprian Okafor, and my sister and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Orekyeh, for their wonderful support in this programme.

My gratitude to Mr. Ezeibe, Mr. Aja and Mr. Azom, whose intellectual skills and support of academic materials really helped to the completion of this work. Also to my friends, Godwin, Grace and Ijeoma for their support, love and encouragement in the course of this programme and research.

ABSTRACT

Nigeria is a state that is yet to harness the full potential of all the segments of its vast population. One of the most untapped human resources in Nigeria today is women. This is despite the various measures that have been taken put by both government and non-governmental institutions and organizations. The United Nations in the year 2000 came up with Millennium Declaration which seeks to promote principles of human dignity, equality and equity. The goals place human well-being and poverty reduction at the center of global development objectives with the goal three at the heart of actualizing all other goals. The goal-3 emphasizes promotion of gender equality and women empowerment. The targets of its achievement include the equality or balance of proportion of seats held by women in national parliament against that of men. Although Nigeria is one of the 185 United Nations member states that signed the Millennium Declaration, significant progress does not seem to have been made in the achievement of the goal in five years time which is 2015. Women are grossly underrepresented in Nigerian politics. The percentage of women in the National Assembly is still not yet up to 9%. The poor economic foundation of women hinders women's participation in the National Assembly. Lack of education impedes women's participation in politics as seen in the National Assembly. It denies women high class employment opportunities which would make them economically buoyant. Given the

prevalent situation, this research set out to assess the extent of women's representation in the National Assembly in achievement of the Millennium Development Goal-3 by the year 2015.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Gender inequality in political participation has been a feature of most nations and Nigeria is not exception. Politics remains largely, male dominated in Nigeria and this excludes the overwhelming majority of women who constitute about half of the countries population.

Despite the significant leadership roles played by women in Nigerian communities and informal organizations, before and after independence, their representation in public offices remains relatively lower than that of men. This is as a result of some certain factors. In Nigeria, one of the aspects of politics in which gender inequality manifests is the representation in the Parliament, which is also known as the National Assembly.

However, in all societies, women bear the major responsibility for child rearing and all the basic house chores. Whatever the family structure may be, women spend much more time at home than the men. Yet their household skills, contributions to the planning and management of homes and the crucial roles in childcare are not recognized and these abilities do not seem to qualify the women as shareholders of power through decision making for the society. This has resulted in the massive erosion of political power.

In this regard, international bodies and United Nations have made great attempts to solve the problem of gender inequality in general and rectify the under-representation of women in politics in particular globally. The efforts to achieve this have been through: organization of conferences, conventions, summits, workshops on women and establishment of bodies in promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. Examples of these are:

- Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW, established in 1946)
- The 1960 General Conference of UNESCO which adopted more specific resolutions against discrimination and elimination on women and which also was an elaboration of the universal declaration of human rights.
- The 1975 World Conference in Mexico which established the International Year for Women, outlining a ten-year plan of action on Equity, Development and Peace.
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, 1976)
- UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UNSTRAW, 1976)
- United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW 1976) of which Nigeria is a signatory.
- The 1995 Beijing (China) Conference which has the theme as "Action for Equality Development and Peace. This stressed the issue of inequality between men and women in positions of power and decision-making. The Beijing platform enjoined nation states to aspire to achieve the minimum benchmark of 30% women representation in politics by the year 2005.

All the conferences and established bodies on women's empowerment aim at equality, development and integration of women into active political roles which would yield forth

success in the development and growth of every nation. Despite these efforts, the number of women in leadership and decision making positions in Nigerian politics and administration remains low and all forms of discrimination continued to exist. Hence women were still marginalized in the empowerment process. In some extreme cases, their voices are not heard.

However, United Nations believes and declares that all human beings are born free, equal in dignity and rights. The 1948 UNO declaration of fundamental human rights and dignity of all humans irrespective of age, race and gender has found an express recognition in the world constitutions in its article I.

This is the reason the United Nations continues to pre-occupy itself with enhancement of gender equality and women's empowerment. Hence, UN came up with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). According to Wikipedia (2008), the goals were developed out of eight chapters of the United Nations Millennium declaration signed in September 2000. These are eight goals which have their various targets respectively. The goals are:

- **Goal 1:** Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger
- **Goal 2:** Achiever Universal Primary Education
- **Goal 3:** Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women
- **Goal 4:** Reduce Child Mortality
- **Goal 5:** Improve Maternal Health
- **Goal 6:** Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases.
- **Goal 7:** Ensure Environmental sustainability.
- **Goal 8:** Develop a Global Partnership for Development.

Here, we are concerned with the Goal – 3, which encompasses in its target, the improvement of the proportion of seats held by women in national parliament. All the UN member states have

agreed to achieve the eight international development goals preferably in 2005 and at all levels, by the year 2015.

However, according to William Easterly (2007:2), the MDG campaign has emphasized the failure of sub – Saharan Africa compared to other regions in attaining these goals. Those involved in the MDG effort have been virtually unanimous that sub – Saharan Africa stands out, in that it will not meet any of the goals. Hence, the 2005 UN World Summit Declaration asserts that Africa is the only continent not on track to meet any of the goals of the millennium declaration by 2015. Also, Blair Commission for Africa, 2005, notes that in Africa, the world is furthest behind in progress to fulfill the MDGs. In other words, Africa is well behind target on reaching all the goals. The 2005 World Bank and IMF Global Monitoring Report which was forwarded by James Wolfenson and Rodrigo de Ratois on the grounds that sub-Saharan Africa at current trends will fall short of all the goals.

In respect to goal 3, UN strives to ensure that women have a real voice in all governance institutions so that women can participate equally with men in public dialogue, decision – making and politics. Hence, UNDP advocates and promotes women’s political empowerment, supporting efforts to:

- Increase the number of women in public office.
- Enhance women’s leadership by helping to reform electoral processes, change political parties, and strengthen parliaments, judiciaries and the civil service.
- Strengthen the ability of women’s organization to advocate and implement projects that promote women’s rights.
- Promote judicial reform to ensure equal legal protection to poor women and men.

- Ensure that essential public services like health and education benefit poor women, men, girls and boys equitably.
- Promote the ratification, implementation and reporting on women's international and regional women's instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

In this study therefore, we are concerned with the assessment of women participation and representation in Nigerian politics in line with a balance in proportion of seats held between women and men in the National Assembly, which is one of the targets of goals -3 of the MDGs. In doing this, we are looking at Women's representation in Nigerian National Assembly – the Senate and House of Representative from the Fourth Assembly (1999-2003) to the Sixth Assembly (2007-2011).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Nigerian women are under represented in public offices and men perpetuate active discrimination against women. Because Nigerian women are under represented in political positions, their contributions to national development are cut-off.

In this line, scholars like Omotola(2007) interrogated female representation in Nigerian parliament looking at the era between 1960 and 1993. Temi(2006), limited his study to participation of women in decision-making in 1999 and 2006. Okoronkwo (2000), in her study of gender inequalities in Nigerian politics has limited her research on gender representation in the parliament in 1999. Although these scholars did explore the state of women participation in Nigerian politics, it appears none focused on the latest development in women empowerment in the National Assembly between 1999 and 2011. Again, Ezeani(2010) has focused his research on female and male representation in the fourteen to sixth National Assembly. Although he was

elaborate, he appears to have neglected UN target of achieving the Millennium Development Goal-3.

This study therefore seeks to assess the male and female representation in the National Assembly in response to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal-3, between 1999 and 2011.

The following research questions are thus generated:-

- Has the implementation of MDG-3 balanced the proportion of female legislators in relation to that of their male counterparts in the Nigerian National Assembly?
- Does poor economic base mitigate women's active representation in the National Assembly?

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The objectives of this study are categorized into broad and specific objectives. The broad objective of this study is to interrogate the extent of women's empowerment in Nigerian politics in response to the target of the Millennium Development Goal-3.

The specific objectives are to:

Ascertain whether the implementation of MDG-3 has helped to balance gender inequality in Nigerian National Assembly.

To examine if economic base mitigates women's active representation in the National Assembly.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, this research will contribute an additional body of knowledge to the academic world and to those who may seek to

know more about women and political participation in Nigeria within the period of study. The study will also suggest ways of further enhancement of women participation in politics.

At practical level, this study will be beneficial to women especially those aspiring to political positions. It will also be beneficial to policy makers in general. It will bring them into including a greater part of women into politics. This study will still, aspire women into participation in politics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of relevant literature is based on the following themes deriving from the two research questions:

Implementation of MDG-3 and female legislators in the National Assembly.

Poor economic base and women active participation in the National Assembly.

IMPLEMENTATION OF MDG-3 AND FEMALE LEGISLATORS IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

The Millennium Development Goals were developed out of the eight chapters of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. According to Wikipedia (2010), the goals were signed in September 2000. The goals involved eight goals with 21 targets, and a series of measurable indicators for each target. It recognizes goal 3 as –Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women, with the target of eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015. It goes on to stipulate the measurable indicators by looking at the:

- Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education,
- Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector.
- Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament.

It states that in recognizing the need to assist impoverished nations more aggressively, United Nations member states in 2001 adopted the targets. The aim of the MDGs is to encourage development by improving social and economic conditions in the world's poorest countries. It maintains that the goals are eight international development goals that all 192 United Nations member states and at least 23 international organizations have agreed to achieve by the year 2015.

Report from Economic Commission for Africa (2005;1) states that African leaders, of Nigeria is among, have adopted MDGs as a tool within their wider development planning framework, in order to end the tragic conditions in which so many Africans are deprived of their basic human rights. It holds that by making the goals work as tools for coordinating policy within broader development priorities, African leaders can tackle the extreme poverty that is hobbling their people, make their countries more productive and reduce the risk of conflict. It further argues that despite significant progress some of its regions and countries, Africa fared worst among the world's regions. It saw the slowest progress overall and suffered reverses in some crucial areas. It holds that in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the number of people living in extreme poverty (on S US 1 a day or less) rose from 217 million in 1990 to 290 million in 2000. The majority of who are women,

ECA (2005) also points out that on the political front, more women are in parliaments across Africa today than ever before. But in most countries, African women remain vastly under-represented in politics, in the legislature, at the highest levels of the corporate sector and in economic institutions. It argues that governance, democracy and decision making. It also emphasizes that participation of women is fundamentally important in fighting poverty.

African Forum and Network on Debt and Development, AFRODAD (2005:iv) is of the view that despite rapid advances by some countries that show that Millennium Development Goals are achievable, most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa including the populous nation of Nigeria are yet to mobilize resources, political and financial support to meet specific global challenges. It maintains that a 2003 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) review of Sub-Saharan Africa's social development indicators provides a bleak picture of the regions progress towards MDGs. It further maintains that the number of Africans living on less than \$ US 1 a day is increasing, and Nigeria, with an annual per capita income of barely \$ 300, is one of the 20 poorest countries in the world. Also, Nigeria's debt overhang is considered severe in the context of its development challenges.

AFRODAD (2005) is still of the view that about 70% of Nigerians currently live in absolute poverty (about 84 million people). It requires an annual GDP growth rate of 7.8% in order to halve the number of people in poverty by 2015. This translates to an investment rate of more than 30% per annum.

According to Nigeria's report on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for action and Common Wealth Plan of Action by Federal Ministry of Women Affairs (2004:15-17), despite general acceptance of the need for a gender balance in decision-making bodies at all levels, a gap between de jure and de facto equality has persisted; only very little improvement in the level of involvement of women in decision-making and still a long way to go to the minimum 30% limit. It holds that there is however token representation in the political sphere, indicating a gradual improvement from what obtained about two decades ago. For instance, at the 1985 national election, there was one female out of 95 senators; in 1999, three female senators out of 109 and 12 female members of House of Representatives out of 360.

It further states that 6.72% Nigeria women are slowly making their presence felt in politics and decision-making. At the 2003 general elections, there were two female presidential candidates out of 30. With the outcome of the general elections, two female Deputy Governors (Osun and Ogun States) emerged out of 36 States; 3 female Senators out of 109 with improvement at the House of Representatives, which in 2004 had 24 female members out of 360. The report also presents women's representation in the National Assembly in 1999 and 2003 respectively as 3 female senatorial candidates against 109 seats in 1999 and 2003 constituting 2.8% and 12 female candidates of the House of Representatives against 360 seats in 1999 constituting 3.3% and 23 against 360 in 2003 with the percentage of 6.4. It also summarizes the number of women elected and appointed into political decision-making as of 2003 as follow:

- 6 Female Ministers
- 9 Female Presidential Assistants
- 2 Female Presidential Advisers
- 3 Females in a 109 Member Senate.
- 24 Female in 360 Member House of Representatives
- 38 Female in the 36 States' House of Assembly.
- 5 Female Ambassadors out of 86.
- 2 Female Deputy Governors out of 36.

Az-Zubair (2010:3,4) is of the view that the MDGs are a set of eight interdependent goals that are at the heart of Nigeria's development strategy. She asserts that in 2005, Nigeria negotiated debt-relief of \$ 18bn, translating into debt relief gains of \$1bn each year – \$250m allocated to the states and \$750 dedicated by the FGN to the achievement of the MDGs – a Virtua Poverty Fund (VPF). There is the establishment of the Presidential Committee on the

Assessment and Monitoring of the MDGs and also, Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs given remit to design and guide debt-relief gains through VPF to help achieve the MDGs, reporting quarterly to the president committee.

According to her, MDGs is also sourced from Nigeria's revenue and appropriated through the annual budget. VPF is to provide additional and scaled-up resources to existing MDGs expenditures. MDGs intend to leverage and catalyse reform, improve governance and accountability across government.

Ezeani, (2010) maintains that though there is increased proportion of women in Nigeria's National Assembly, men still constitute the over-whelming majority. He argues that the colonization of Nigeria and the subsequent introduction of capitalism in the country brought about inequality in political participation in Nigeria.

Omotola, (2007:37-41) writing on gender, power and politics in contemporary Nigeria is of the view that only marginal progress has been made in the attempt to achieve the gender balance at all level of governance. Omotola, acknowledging Ude, (2003:3) noted that the political marginalization of women was well-played out during the First Republic (1960-1966) when there were only two female legislators, Mrs. Wuraola Esan and Mrs. Bernice Kerry in the Federal parliament, and two others, Mrs. Margaret Ekpo and Mrs. Janet Muokelu in the Eastern House of Assembly. There was no female Minister. During the second republic, there was one female Senator out of 571, and 11 members of the House of Representatives out of 445. In the 19 States of the Federation, there was no female representation in all the State Houses of Assembly, neither was there a female Chairperson nor councilor at the local government level. Omotola also argues that under the infamous transition programme of General Babangida, the longest and most expensive in Nigeria, (1985-1993), women were also grossly alienated. For instance, in the 19

member Political Bureau of 1986, only two were women. In the 1990 local government elections, 3 women were elected out of 591. In the State Houses of Assembly, there were 27 out of 1172 members, where there was no women legislator in 14 states.

Also, in the House of Representatives, women accounted for 14 out of 589, and 1 out of 91 in the Senate. In his analysis of gender and politics in the decision-making political positions 1999, he observed that there were just 3 female Senators out of 109 with the percentage of 2.8 and 13 female members of the House of Representatives out of 349 with the percentage of 3.6. He maintains that despite the marginal increase of women in public places, women's representation still remains unimaginably poor.

Ogunmola and Isiaka, (2010) writing on the problems and possibilities of achieving MDGs argues that Nigerian government is obviously overwhelmed by the tasks of implementation of MDGs. They are of the view that the real challenge that militates against the realization of the MDGs is those of policy implementation. This is according to them because, adequate budgetary allocations have been made by the government. Also, the implementation of the MDGs has been characterized by deeply entrenched corruption and gross inefficiency and wastefulness.

Recognizing The Guardian 2009b they noted the Senate report on MDGs where MDGs office was described as a "cesspool of corruption and Shady deals". Also, acknowledging Nwokeoma, 2009, they maintain that even the Senior Special Assistant to President Umar Musa Yar' Adua, Hajia Amina Az- Zubair is skeptical about the possibilities of Nigeria meeting the MDGs by 2015 in spite of the huge funding which amounted to N320 billion deducted from the Debt Relief Gains (DRG) devoted to MDGs projects all over Nigeria.

POOR ECONOMIC BASE AND WOMEN ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

Temi (2006:18) recognizes one of the patriarchal socio-cultural barriers that militate against women's effective participation in politics to be the role of money in politics. He noted that women on the whole lack the financial capacity to prosecute their ambitions and agendas. Money is required for traveling, campaigning and other expenses. He urges women to participate in politics in Nigeria irrespective of the negative realities. According to him, democracy cannot be achieved without people's full participation in the political process and in the decision-making of public life. He contends that democracy after all is a form of government in which sovereign power is vested in the people collectively and is administered for them by persons elected or appointed to represent them. Women are half of these people, half of the electorate.

He maintains that women continue to be underrepresented at all levels of government and that there were at the federal level as of 2006, four women Senators out of 109, an increase of 1 from 1999. In the House of Representatives were 22 female members out of 360 members, an increase of 10 from 1999.

Also, Temi is of the opinion that poverty eradication will improve the status and circumstance of women. This is to enable them have the choice and freedom to live beyond basic existence and thereby take interest in their immediate society and its working. He maintains that so long as a woman at any level or strata of society feels she has the freedom of choice and capacity to make decisions in her life, she is capable with the necessary attributes innate or developed to participate effectively in politics at whatever level she chooses.

In contrast to slow increase of female legislators in Nigeria, Rehavi, (2007:2) records a sharp increase in the US State legislatures. This is an increase from 4% of legislators in 1969 to over 22% in 2000. He asserts that nearly 40% of Vermont state legislators are female in 2007.

Rehavi holds that in 2007 alone, United States' Center for American Women and Politics identified 41 political action committees and donor networks dedicated to supporting female candidates.

Eze, (2011:1-2), states that, across the world, poverty wears a woman's face. She battles daily with the greatest obstacles to her well-being and autonomy, struggling to meet her family's most basic needs against deep rooted discrimination, exploitation and exclusion from the benefits of development. She holds that a daunting set statistics reveal that 70% of the 1.3 billion people living in extreme poverty are women, who perform 66% of the world's work and produce half its food while earning only 10% of the world's income and owning less than 1% of its property. Quoting ElyseeYohali of Women for Peace and Human Right, she observed that "women are imprisoned by poverty because they are not part of peace building process, national politics, and their voice is absent from every part of society". She maintains that women's economic empowerment is an essential element for reconstruction and peace building.

Omotola, (2007:37-43), holds that women are economically marginalized. Women are said to have been discriminated against, particularly in terms of employment in the economy due to the occupational structure of employed persons, financial resources and so victims of poverty. He contends that on the socio-economic front,, the percentage of women in the labour force was 35.9% in 1994, 34.3% and 38.1% in 1993 and 1994 respectively. Under General SaniAbacha, there were 20 women out of 360 members of the House of Representatives, and 9 out of 109 Senators. He also acknowledged that, of the 3000 presidential aspirants in 1991, only 8 were women. At the political party level, in Social Democratic Party (SDP) for instance, there were 23,020 (96%) men in executive positions at national and state levels, compared to 958 (4%) for

female. In the National Republic Convention (NRC), men accounted for 19,464 (99.57%) of the executive positions, against 816 (1.88%) for women.

Okoronkwo, (2000:34,35), argues that socio-economic circumstances play an important role in women's legislative recruitment within both long-standing and new democracies. She contends that the economic crises and developing democracy in Nigeria have deepened the risk of poverty for women, and unemployment has become more and more feminized. Lack of similar education requirements alone means that women cannot vie with men in the job market. Again, most women with jobs are kept in low paying jobs especially in teaching, healthcare, service sectors and the rest of the women work as rural farmers. She asserts that women's work goes unrewarded, which makes them economically powerless, and men are better placed as they get more money. She maintains that Nigerian women play significant roles in campaigning and rallying support for their parties, yet they hardly ever occupy decision-making positions in these arrangements. She recognized that in the May 1999 election, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) sources pointed out that in the National Assembly election, only 3 women were elected out of 109 Senate members, 13 women gained the Houses of Representatives.

The Nigerian CEDAW NGO Coalition shadow Report 2008 states that discrimination against women in Nigerian society limits women's involvement in the industrialized sectors and professional fields. Women are predominantly seen in the informal sectors engaging in small-scale agricultural work, food processing and marketing inputs. The government does not usually regulate these fields on informal work dominated by women, and therefore, women remain economically marginalized. It points out that most women in Nigeria do not have access to land as they could not inherit family land and other immovable properties due to some customary practices. Also, women's access to loan from finance houses is very limited due to various

discriminatory internal policies. It also states that rural women represent 76% of the entire population in rural areas; they constitute the larger percentage of the poor; they are less educated and majority of them engage largely small scale agriculture and petty trading. Women also form the larger part of the labour and production force, which produce over 70% of the nations food supply, but they have access to less than 15% of the resources available in the agricultural sector.

The report recorded 13 female members of the House of Representatives against 360 available seats in 1999, 21 female members against 339 seats in 2003 and 25 female members against 358 seats in 2007. While in Senate, it takes account of 3 female Senators against 109 available seats in 1999, 4 female Senators against 109 seats in 2003 and 9 female Senators against 109 seats in 2007. The figures show the low level of women's participation in Nigerian politics.

The related literatures reviewed in this study have attempted to look into gender representation in Nigerian parliament. The works were not elaborated in the issue of MDG-3 and female representation in the National Assembly between 1999 and 2011. Economic base of women as it affects women's recruitment in the National Assembly was not discussed in details. Our study therefore, is directed towards filling this gap by focusing on the gender distribution in the National Assembly between 1999 and 2011 in response to the achievement of MDG3 by 2015. The study will also examine the economic base of women as it affects their representation in the National Assembly.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework adopted in this work is Marxist Feminism. Marxist Feminism originated from Marx and Engels analysis of gender oppression in their work – The origins of the Family, Private Property and the State. Here, they maintain that women's subordination is not as

a result of their biological disposition, but from social relations. The family as an institution is a complex system in which men assume superiority and command the services of women.

According to Steans and Pettiford (2005:159), this theory had developed a more sophisticated analysis of the relationship between capitalism the prevailing process, 'women's work', came to be denigrated and undervalued. Marxist analysis showed how the home and the family had come to be viewed as 'private' areas of human life; clearly separate and distinct from the public realm.... This idealized view of the family disguised the reality of power relations and inequality that permeated both the public and private realms. The construction of a public/private division effectively serves to reduce women and children, to the private property of men. It also rendered invisible the vital role that women's unpaid labour in the home made to the capitalist economy.

Marxist feminism is very useful in explaining and understanding gender inequality in political participation and representation in Nigeria. Especially as seen in the National Assembly. It believes that the capitalist mode of production is the cause of the contemporary gender inequality in the society. In other words, the liberation of women can only be achieved through socialist revolution which will lead to materially changing the conditions of women.

Under capitalism, the distinction between the public world of work and the private realm of the home and the family not only serves to reduce women to the private property of men but also supports and legitimizes male dominance in politics .Politics therefore, belongs to the public sphere which from the Marxist perspective is male dominated. So long as the capitalist mode of production driven by US and the rest of the G8 nation remain the globally dominant mode of production, the role of women in politics would always be subordinated to the role of men like the proletariat is subordinated to the bourgeoisie. The number of female legislators in Nigeria would inevitably remain lower than

that of their male counterpart since capitalism is male sexual division of labour and women's inequality. The theory asserts that private property is the root of women's oppression in the current social context. This is because private property gives rise to economic inequality, dependence, political confusion and unhealthy relations between men and women.

In line with Marxist theory, individual's life is greatly influenced by the structure of his society. Ake, (1981) maintains that:

The economic system is the material foundation of social life. It determines other aspects of social life, particularly, the legal system, political system, the belief system and the morality.

Furthermore, elaborating on this theory is Steans and Pettiford(2005: 159). They state that:

The gist from the emergence of capitalism as a social and economic system brought about a clear distinction between the public world of work and the private reason of the home and the family. This led to particular ideas about what constituted 'work' and 'production' and in this chauvinistic.

HYPOTHESES

This study is guided by the following hypotheses:

The implementation of MDG-3 has not balanced the proportion of female legislators in relation to their male counterparts in the National Assembly.

Poor economic base mitigates women's active representation in the National Assembly.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

For the purpose of data collection method, we shall rely on observation technique. According to Obasi(1999:169), observation can be seen as a purposefully planned and systematically executed act of watching or looking at the occurrence of the events, activities and behaviour which constitute the subject or focus of research or study. Through observation of political phenomena,

accurate descriptions and explanations of such phenomena can be made (Ikeagwu 1998:172). The propriety of observation method to this research is obvious. This is because observation techniques yield data that pertain directly to typical behavioural situations assuming, of course, that they are applied to such situations (Selltiz et al, 1977:201). It is through observation also, that accurate descriptions and explanations of the variables under study can be achieved.

However, due to the nature of this study and the type of data required to test our hypothesis, we shall heavily depend on secondary sources of data. Secondary sources of data refer to a set of data gathered or authored by another person, usually data from the available data, archives, either in the form of document or survey results and code books (Ikeagwu, 1998:211; Asika, 2006:27). Selltiz et al (1977:317) identify the advantages of secondary sources of data to include that of economy. Again, is the fact that much information of this sort is collected periodically thereby making the establishment of trends over time possible. More importantly, the gathering of information from such sources does not require the cooperation of the individual about whom information is being sought.

Therefore, the study will rely on institutional and official documents from international organizations, national government and institution such as UN, UNDP, National Assembly, Ministry of Women affairs and so on. Secondary data such as: textbooks, journals and magazines, articles and internet were also consulted on MDG agenda and women participation in National Assembly in Nigeria.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

In this study, we shall adopt qualitative descriptive analysis. According to Asika (2006:118), qualitative descriptive analysis essentially has to do with summarizing the information generated

in the research verbally. The adoption of the foregoing analytical method is necessary because the study shall principally rely on the secondary sources of data.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS IN NIGERIA

The underrepresentation of Nigerian women in electoral politics is an issue that has become a center of daily conversation. The difference is that women's underrepresentation has not even really found its way into the minds of many Nigerians. Religion and patriarchal system in the present Nigeria have not allowed women's presence into politics to be viewed as significant and important by an average Nigerian. In this chapter, we are going to make a historical overview of women participation in politics in Nigeria within the eras of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial.

2.1 Pre-Colonial Era

Women in the Igbo Society:

The Igbo people are located in the eastern part of Nigeria. Allen (1972), describes Igbo society before colonialism as a "system of diffuse authority, fluid and informal leadership, shared rights of enforcement, and a more or less stable balance of male and female power". As a

result of this, there was no particular individual who held an authoritative position above others. Allen argues that decision-making was not entitled to only one person and there was no obligation that subjected anyone to a certain command. The fluid nature of the society allowed Igbo women to hold political positions. Women were allowed in the Village meetings, which were mostly conducted by men, they were, however, not excluded from contributing. Women held their own meeting called Mikiri. Mikiri was held whenever there were issues to address. These issues were mostly those that directly addressed women needs. During this gathering, women would bring issues such as problems with their husbands or with anyone in the society. More importantly, decisions concerning how market regulations and its progress were often made during the meeting. As Allen notes, prices of goods were set during this meeting and rules about market attendants were made with appropriate penalties for whoever breaks them. These meetings “provided women with a forum with which to develop their political talents, and a means for protecting their interests as traders, farmers, wives and mothers through collective action – against individual women, individual men, and men as a group.

The Ibo society prior to the colonial occupation was in a way independent of each other and of the other parts of the Nigerian. Consequently, its political system was not as strong as the remaining two regions – North and West. Allen described the Igbo society before colonialism as a “system of diffuse authority, fluid and informal leadership, shared rights of enforcement, and a more or less stable balance of male and female power” pg 171. Both women and men had parallel but unequal authority. The positions of women were complementary but at the same as important as the men. Although men held positions as the chiefs of the villages, they did not interfere with women’s affairs. Women were elected to be in control of their own affairs. The women leaders were therefore regarded with similar regards as the male because they held

equivalent authority as that of the men amidst their women folk. As a result of this, there was no particular individual who held an authoritative position above others. Allen clarifies that decision-making was not entitled to only one person and there was no obligation that subjected anyone to a certain command. The most apparent criteria for leadership in the Igbo society were good communication skill (ability to use proverbs which showed one's level of wisdom) and wealth. Women's participation in decision making meetings, which were mostly conducted by men, was not prohibited as long as they engage in discussions that interest the people.

The Igbo society had a complex political system. The diversity and wide spread of the people did not allow for a central governing system. Although a patrilineal system, it was informal and operated in a democratic fashion. The democratic nature of the political system did not allow any sort of authoritarianism. Allen (1972: 173) describes the political system as follows:

In this society, political power is diffuse, and leadership was fluid and informal. Community decision were made and disputes settled in a variety of gatherings – village-wide assemblies, women's meetings, age grades, secret and title societies... Decisions were made by discussions until mutual agreement was reached. Any adult present who had something to say on the matter under discussion was entitled to speak – as long as he or she said something that others considered worth listening to; as the Igbo say, "A case forbids no one.

In village meetings, for example, anyone had the right to contribute. However, there was sex differentiation in political responsibilities. This is because activities that are core to the Igbo society such as farming and trading were divided in terms of gender. As a result of this, and because of the patrilineal set-up of the society, women could not be the head of a family or of a lineage. Nevertheless, according to Gailey (1970:22), women leaders were recognized and they were consulted for advice and also, for their inputs in decision-making process.

Gailey maintains that in the hinterland, the system was divided into different levels with family serving as the core of it, extended family holding the lowest political authority and the town or village groups possessing the strongest political power. In the family system, which consists of the father, mother and their children, ancestry was patrilineal. The father served as the authority voice and the spiritual leader. The extended family, which has the lowest political function, was composed of about twenty or more family who lived in a walled-in area. The head, who was also the political leader, was called an Okpala. The Okapala along with other title holders held the responsibility of decision making. Women were also involved in this process, but they had to hold their separate meetings.

Mba (1992:27), states that the village was the strongest political unit and the village assembly was the main political institution in the Igbo society. It was usually composed of a number of localized patrilineage called the umunna. Each umunna, which was consisted of a number of extended family, chose their leaders who were headed by the oldest man. When there were any minor problems with an umunna, the head of that section would deal with it. Only in situations of major problems were they taken to the council of all the umunnas or the village assembly. Anyone either male or female whose opinion was considered worthwhile was given the right to talk during the assembly. "Proverbs, parable and metaphor" were roots of political discourse. Since every Igbo was raised with the tradition of proverbs, parables and metaphor, politics could be understood and practiced by anyone.

The political status of women was not as high as that of the men. Although there were no constitutions or policies that explicitly excluded women's political participation, they were rarely called upon to talk in village assembly. This was not because women were viewed as weaker or politically incapable. The nature of the Igbo culture gave men a head start so that women were

almost always holding the second positions. Leaders thus were elected based on individuals' achievements, physical strength and most importantly, verbal wisdom. Leaders had to be verbally creative. Leadership was merited and not ascribed. As it will be discovered in the case of the Women's War, anyone, either female or male, could attain a high level of political authority.

The women associations:

As mentioned earlier, the village assembly concerned itself only with issues that applied to all while the men dealt with problems that applied to them. Thus, women also had associations that handled problems facing women. These associations created bonds among women from different villages and helped strengthen their protest as will be seen during the Women's War in 1929.

Mba notes that there were two main women's associations: the association of the wives of the village and the women's titles societies. Each Igbo society had its women's organizations and was independent of the other. Because of the democratic nature of the Igbo politics, leaders were elected informally. A spokeswoman, usually an old woman, was chosen to represent the women's organization. Her role was only to represent and not to rule over the others. She would be the one to take their concerns to the village assembly. Although they operated in a loose, informal manner, "the village wives' associations provided a very effective, clear-cut, and authoritative organization in which all the wives were involved".

According to Allen, one prominent way that these associations convey the women's concerns to the male community was through a process called "sitting on a man". This process

involved going to the house of the offender (a male) and staying there from morning into the night. The women would ridicule the manhood into question by dancing and “singing scurrilous songs which detailed the women’s grievances against him”. This action would go on until the man came out to repent and promise to mend his ways. Many times, “sitting on a man” would result into a measure of punishment for the man from the village council. Other ways of getting their voice across to the men was through boycotts and strikes. When a man offended his wife either by beating her or not treating her well, the women could threaten to leave the village in mass or to not cook for the men. In spite of the simplicity of these actions, they were taken seriously by the men. The male thus responded by giving the women their requests.

ALLEN (1972:171), notes that with the British declaration of Southern Nigeria as a protectorate in 1900, they were able to penetrate the Igbo society. Acting out of ignorance of the Igbo society, the British tried to introduce the ideas of “native administration” which was derived from their experience with the Northern leaders. They were not successful however, considering the fluid and informal nature of leadership, “shared rights of enforcement, and a more or less stable balance of male and female power” that governed the Igbo society. Nevertheless, the Igbo land was finally divided into Native Court Areas under the supervision of some British District Officers. The creation of the new administration marked the falling apart of the Igbo political structure. Creating Native Courts and choosing representatives among the people were against the democratic and informal ruling customs because it placed an authority over the people.

Women in the Western Society:

Similarly, Falola (1995:28), gives examples of women in Yoruba land (the western part of Nigerian) who ruled as kings between 16th and 17th century. These women held authoritative

positions and possessed ruling powers as male kings. Examples of women *Obas*(kings) include OniLuwo of Ile-Ife who was known for her tyrannical reign and the *lobun* of Ondo, a “powerful woman chief who has equivalent power and received same treatment as the male king. Other positions include the “*Ayaba* and *Oloris*(King’s wives), *Iyalodes*(Women’s leaders), *Iyalajes*(Market Women’s Leaders), *YeyeObas*(King’s mother), and *Iyaoloshas*(Godess priests)” . These positions were crucial to the function of daily life. The market women’s leaders, for example, were needed because trade (which was the primary profession of most women) sustained the community’s economy. Furthermore, the market place was usually built around the king’s palace and meetings such as executive meetings and sessions to settle disputers happened at the market place. Therefore, the market women’s leaders had the responsibility to keep order. Abdul-Mumin Sa’ad in describing the role of *Iyalodes*, quotes Awe Bolanle who presents the role of the *Iyalodeas* “equal to all other chieftaincy offices... The *Iyalode*... was the voice of women and she represented their constituency upon regular consultations with them. Often times, the power of the women’s constituency was determined by the political dynamism of the *Iyalode-in-Council*”. These Yoruba women held positions that gave them similar responsibilities as men and were recognized. The absence of their positions would have resulted into a developmental crisis for their society.

Women in the Housa Land:

In Housa land nevertheless, the legacy of Queen Amina of Zazzau has not been lost. Queen Amina reigned in A.D. 1576 and possessed equal access to authority as the men. As Sa’ad (2001:75) records, she was influential in the political development of the emirate of Northern Nigeria. Amina developed her military skill at the age of 16 as a queen’s daughter. As history

has it, she conquered many countries and built walls around them. This she did after the design of her own city of Zazzau. The system is used into the present as fortification in Hausa states. “Sultan Muhammad Bello of Sokoto stated that, ‘She made war upon these countries and overcame them entirely so that the people of Katsina paid tribute to her and the men of Kano [and]... also made war on cities of Bauchi till her kingdom reached to the sea in the south and the west.’ In spite of that, women have the least recognition in the North, the legend of Queen Amina cannot be hidden and it still lives on until today.

2.2 Colonial Era

As Mba (1982:38) noted, the introduction of colonial administration after 1900 sentenced women into a political coma. Their previous political roles became invisible. The colonial administration created a patriarchy government in which women were not allowed to hold any authoritative positions. OkonjoKamene makes similar observation and also suggests that one of the major causes of the absence of women from mainstream politic in Nigeria today is the lack of recognition of the Nigerian women’s political/leadership role in the history of the country. Women in the pre-colonial Nigeria occupied important roles in the traditional political life. In their different regions women were actively engaged in politics and held decision-making roles in the governmental institution in their respective regions. However, the coming of Westernization destroyed their political positions and then marginalized them in the modern political institutions.

Scholars such as Nina Mba and Allen Van Judith have gone to great lengths to emphasize that women have not always been politically handicapped in Nigerian. The unsuitable situation of women under the colonial rule gave them the courage to demonstrate their grievances and speak out, which secured a level of power for Nigerian women. This is seen in

the political activities of women in the Eastern and Western parts of Nigeria in the colonial period which later paved way for them in the political sphere. The nature of women political activities in the colonial Nigeria is explored below.

The Igbo Women in the Colonial Period

Gailey (1972:53), has noted that in the Eastern Nigeria, the British administration under colonialism created Native Councils. Although they lacked any real legislative and judicial powers, the Native Councils helped the British to stay influential in the society. Small courts, through which traditional laws were enforced, served as channels of information and influence for the Native Courts. Each small court had a president, Vice-president and four members and it had jurisdiction in civil matters that involved cases of debt of about £25 and about £50 for inheritance. Above all the different levels of authority was the High Commissioner, who had the power to withdraw “the right of any Native Courts to function or to remove any member from the court”. Warrant Chiefs were chosen among the Igbo men as representatives of the British government. They were responsible for imposing the British rules and regulations. More specifically, the Warrant Chiefs were obliged to make sure that orders from a political officer were respected and carried out. He noted that the new system was a violation of the Igbo concept. As a result of this, the Igbo people were not submissive.

Under the new system, the traditional leaders lost their juridical powers. Women were even more victimized. Mba (1982) noted that there were no female officers chosen. He explains that these new positions were open only to men who had some education or some wealth or who could make themselves conspicuous. Unlike the previous system, women received no recognition in political affairs. Instead of women making decisions on issues that concerned

them, the Warrant Chiefs were in charge. In addition, the women's associations were not allowed nor were they allowed to take any punitive actions such as sitting on the man boycotting or strike. He reports an Igbo woman's statement as reported in the Aba Commission of Inquiry Notes or Evidence: "We don't want chiefs...instead of coming home to consult women, they generally agree with the District Officer straight away" (Mba, 1982: 42). When women took their complaints to the Chiefs, they usually were not treated in a satisfactory manner. The Aba Commission of Inquiry Notes of Evidence states a woman's complaints concerning dowries and divorce: the chiefs in whose houses, cases of divorce are settled don't treat us properly. Generally speaking, the former husbands of the wives whose divorce cases were taken to the chiefs' houses for settlement would not get back their dowries because the chiefs kept them. In spite of the destruction of the women's associations, they were still able to mobilize themselves. Since they were unable to communicate their wants and needs under the new political institution, the women felt victimized and could only find organized protest as the means to get through the system.

The woman's war began in November 1929 when the rumor of taxation on women spread. Taxation was introduced to the Eastern region in 1927 at a time of economic instability. Bolanle (1991:78), noted that the intrusion of the British had opened up the Igbo economy to both regional and international market, which made it vulnerable to the fluctuating international market at the time. With the end of World War one and the world heading for another war, the international market was not doing good. The women greatly felt the consequence because now that their market was governed by the British, their income was not as direct as before. During this time, the price of palm oil, which was the main produce, fell sharply and both middlemen and women had to pay higher levy on some imported materials because the administration had

raised the excise duty on these articles. In addition, it was reported by some women that the officers were mistreating them due to the new political system. Some officers were reported to have taking women's properties and were obtaining wives without paying the full bride-wealth.

In the pre-colonial Igbo society, the market was the main source of income for the women. Mba (1982:78) explains the effect of colonial occupation on women's economic power:

The introduction of cassava, of coinage currency, and the expanded market for palm produce had resulted in many more women...being involved as middle women in the palm oil and kernel trade with the foreign companies. They then purchased imported goods such as cloth, tobacco, cigarettes and spirits and took them back to the villages to sell.

Although this meant a higher standard of living for the women involved, it also made them vulnerable financially. This means that a price drop on the international market also would affect the local market. Since everything was now under the British control, there was no more alternative means of income. Mba mentions that in addition to the price drops, other changes such as the produce inspection that was introduced in 1928 all combined to agitate the women.

There were no guidelines given as to how to enforce the new system, but District Officers were given the authority to assign taxation as they see fit. This resulted in the tax figures varying between £12 and £14, an estimation based on the knowledge that a household's annual income was about £64.139 The women were however against governmental policies that post threats to the well being of women.

Under the old system, as noted by Mba, taxation was understood as "a people's contribution to the running of their society" and this was carried out in terms of "Obligations to perform services and contribute goods"-pg 44. The British system of taxation was compulsory and given at a fixed rate. It thus allowed them to have a stronger control of market prices,

allowing them to change the prices of goods as they thought best. Women were particularly frustrated under the new law because many of them were responsible to pay their own taxes, their husband's and their children's regardless of age. They also saw the taxation and counting of both them and their children as a threat to their fertility and to the lives of their children. Mba (1991:78), acknowledged Enyidia of Oloko, one of the women that testified demanded:

What have we women done to warrant our being taxed? We women are like trees which bear fruit. You should tell us the reason why we who bear seeds should be counted.

Afigbo (1972), explains that in indigenous communities such as the Igbo society, women saw the connection between them and a seed bearing tree – “just as one cannot, in the interest of human beings joke with the survival of fruit-bearing trees, one could not play with the fate of women”. This belief was confirmed in the reaction of another woman when she protested saying “are you still counting ... last year my son's wife who was pregnant died? What am I to count? I have been mourning the death of that woman!”(Afigbo 1972: 79). The explanation goes that the woman saw a connection between the first count and the death of her daughter-in-law. Definitely the taxing system was not going to be effective and not voluntarily accepted by the women.

Men were first to be taxed. Allen noted that in 1925, the Igbo men were counted during census and taxed afterwards even though the British administration had said that there was going to be no taxing. He maintained that the fear that they would be taxed at a time the Assistant District Officer decided to have another census in 1929 raised fear among women, which made them to prepare to attack in any case of confrontation. Gailey (1970:100) explains that the Igbo women did not know how to philosophically process the new changes and the effects they were having on the women's economy:

They could only observe that within a year certain factors had combined to reduce the amount of money that they had.

Taxation, lower prices for raw material, higher prices for luxury items, and new rules for selling produce could all be viewed as stemming from a conspiracy of the Europeans to impoverish them.

Women began to contact each other, planning a secret meeting when they heard the rumor of possible taxing. Gailey noted that their plan was catalyzed when Nwanyeruwa, a woman of Oloko village, was assaulted by Emeruwa. Emeruwa, a mission teacher was sent by Okugo, a warrant chief who had been instructed to do the counting by a District Officer, because he [Okugo] had made himself unpopular through his corruption. Immediately, Nwanyeruwa sent a message to a group of women who had already been meeting concerning the fear of taxation. Messages were then sent to women in other villages, who all came to Oloko village to “sit on” Emeruwa. A number of women were injured while Emeruwa’s servants tried to force them out of his compound. The women’s victory started by making sure that Okugo, the warrant chief, was prosecuted. Okugo was imprisoned for assaulting the women and on December 22, the District Officer “gave the women Okugo’s cap of office”. The Report of the Aba Commission of Inquiry states that by December 1929, ten native courts were destroyed as a result of the women’s protest, a number of others damaged, houses of native court personnel were attacked, factories were looted and fifty-five women were killed. The protest did not die down until early 1930 when the women received satisfying response from the administration.

The women’s war has some political implications. The women were not upset mainly because of the tax and the condition of the market at the time. Instead, they were discontented with the British policies and with a government that had robbed them of all their administrative powers. In addition, according to Ifeaka (1975: 131), they were not represented in any administration nor were their interests considered. They were also aggravated by the way in which the warrant Chiefs carried out their duties. Although it was recognized at the end of the

protest that taxing men would not be stopped, the women settled after they had confirmed that they would not be taxed.

One of the most important achievements of the women's war was the recognition of the need to incorporate women's interests in deciding who gets elected into the administration especially at the local level. Therefore, the courts were re-organized with consideration for women's recommendation. The women were able to bring cases of alleged corrupt Warrant officers who were tried in courts and some found guilty and punished. Some reforms were also implemented due to the women's grievances. Allen noted that one of them was the re-organization of courts so that it not only listened to women's request, but it was conducted to follow the form of the traditional village assembly. The difference was the British influence, which had destroyed the democratic and informal system of the Igbo government. This resulted to the fact that not anyone could take part in the decision-making processes; participation was no longer based on whoever wished to participate. All participation was given to members of the court who were 99% male and rich. Women, therefore, were unable to participate because they lacked the resources. Nevertheless, the Women's war changed the political status of Igbo women, granting them more authority and recognition in the Igbo society. The British administration was shocked at the women's ability to organize such successful protest. One of the members of the Aba Commission of Inquiry, Graham Paul, commented on the confidence of the women who came to testify:

No one listening to the evidence given before us could have failed to be impressed by the intelligence, the power of exposition, the directness and the mother-with which some of the leaders exhibited in setting forth their grievances and the lessons to be learnt from their demonstration should be taken to heart (Oluwabusayo, 2008:8).

Mba (1982:3), noted that in 1930, a woman by name, Chinwe, one of the spokeswomen during the protest, was chosen by the District Officer of Enugu as one of the members of a native court, making her one woman out of thirteen men and the first woman to ever hold such position. From the Woman's war, one cannot ignore the glaring fact that Nigerian women are more than capable to handle political affairs at any level just as good as men or better. The women's protest was not the first attempt at confronting the tax policy. Since the introduction of the policy, both men and women had expressed their disapproval. The men, however, retreated at the confrontation of the British. The women, on the other hand, remained strong and stepped forward even amidst intimidations. Women's organized protest did not stop with this war. The Aba Women's war encouraged women from other regions of Nigeria to press even further as it is with the case of the Western women. It is thus apparent that women are not inferior to men in any way, not even in political affairs. The main problem is that they are not being given the opportunity to exercise their decision-making skills.

The war was a major landmark in the history of colonialism and political development in Nigeria. The 1929 movement thus, created awareness of the women's capacity in the British community in Nigeria and at the same time, a level of confidence was created amidst Nigerians to challenge the colonial government. This confidence eventually led to the 1960 independence.

The Yoruba Women in the Colonial Nigeria

The Egba Women's Associations:

As Mba (1982:39) has it, in 1914, the Sole Native Authority (SNA) was established in the Western region of Nigeria by the British government. It had similar responsibility as the

warrant chief system of the Eastern region. The SNA was separated from the former traditional system in such a way that the Kings were no longer selected by native officers or council. This led to all other ruling positions, including that of men and women being eradicated. Under the new system, men were able to apply for new positions in the SNA, however, women's positions were totally removed. Yoruba women's pre-colonial political authority was completely abolished. Just like the Igbo women, Yoruba women had their place in the political setting of their society. There were examples of female rulers in the pre-colonial Yoruba land who possessed equal authority and held the same ruling power as the male kings. However, after the establishment of SNA in 1914, these women lost all opportunities to obtain any level of leadership. Not only were they not allowed becoming leaders, they were also excluded from any decision-making meetings including those that directly affected them such as marriage regulations.

As in the case of the Aba women, the Egba women were able to rise up against the oppressive institution through their solidarity. In spite of having lost their political power, the women did not loose their power to organize, which they used to their cause. The primary cause of the Egba women's movement forced taxation as in the case of the Aba women's war. Although their fight began with opposing the policy of forced taxation, they proceeded to creating political organizations whose purposes were to directly address the interest of women in Nigeria.

In the colonial era, Mrs. Kuti fought for women's rights amidst all oppositions. Mrs. Tinubu of Egba land also opposed taxation of women and advocated for the reduction of power of the monarch. According to Odim et al (1997:39), Mrs. Kuti, as a woman fighting against the administration in a male-dominated society, was labeled as "aggressive", which was "a common

appellation for women whose forceful personalities lay outside the bounds of acceptable ‘female’ behavior”. They maintain that she derived inspiration from personnel such as Madam Tinubu, Kwame Nkrumah (an independence fighter and first president of Ghana), Mohandas Gandhi, and A. B. I. Olorun-Nimbe (the first mayor of Lagos). Her interests started with advocating the interests of market women and then she expanded these interests when she was elected into the National Council of Nigerians and Cameroons (NCNC) and started to press for more women to be elected into power.

As noted by Mba, Funmilayo’s background and marriage were significant contributors to developing her political interests and activities. After completing her primary education she continued to pursue her secondary education, becoming one of the first females to attend the Abeokuta Grammar School in 1914. She taught at the same school until 1919 after which she traveled to England to further her education. Both her local education and foreign affiliations helped shape her views on nationalism and women’s position in the society. As a Christian, she was devoted to civil service, caring for her community and the people around her. Although she was not a minister herself, her marriage to Reverend Ransome-Kuti in 1925 made her responsible towards her community. In contrast to the male-dominated family structure of their time, the Kutis’ family had no distinction between the wife and the husband. In fact, they refused to keel or prostrate for anyone nor did they condone any one doing the same to them.

Mr. Kuti’s interest in women’s education was also encouraging. He was very concerned about women’s treatment and also advocated for co-education. Although he was a minister, he spent more time outside the church getting politically involved. A year after their wedding, Mr. Kuti succeeded in forming the Association of Headmasters of Ijebu Schools (AHIS). The initial objective of AHIS was to unify primary and secondary school headmasters and principals who

were then divided due to difference in salary but then, the association later expanded its interest to include social and political issues. For example, the association held a campaign against the colonial education policy in Nigeria and demanded for improved working conditions for teachers.

Because of their shared interest, Mrs. Kuti received the support of her husband and was not forced to follow in the footsteps of him; she had her own path, interests and responsibilities in the public. Odim and Mba (1997:46), quote the observation of a *West Africa Magazine* reporter describing Mrs. Kuti as possessing an “air of authority and the look of one whose decision was final... a woman who has to be assessed on her won merits and not as a shadowy reflection of her husband...Emancipation of women has indeed come to the Ransome-Kuti household.” Her independent personality undoubtedly gave a firm foundation to the associations which she formed. These associations will be discussed bellow.

Odim et al maintain that as a member of the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT), Mrs. Kuti was very outspoken and she made sure her voice was heard. NUT was formed in 1931 by the combination of AHIS and Lagos Union of Teachers (LUT), created in 1925 by Mr. Kuti’s close friend Rev. Canon J.O. Lucas. In 1949, Mrs. Kuti became one of the three representatives of NUT on the Central Board of Education of Nigeria, whose responsibility was to develop plan for female students to be technically educated. Johnson-Odim and Mba record that she would often check NUT’s minutes carefully in order to make sure that her views were accurately noted. They also record that her main concern was for women to receive equal educational monetary allowance as men. In 1952, it was noted that Mrs. Kuti urged NUT to ensure an increase of women attendance in their annual conference. MrsKuti established women’s associations which advocated for women’s right and equal treatment with the opposite sex.

THE ASSOCIATIONS AND THEIR ACTIVITIES

ABEOKUTA LADIES' CLUB:

Odim et al (1997:64), note that before the formation of the Abeokuta Ladies' Club (ALC), Mrs. Kuti's leadership had been demonstrated in her formation of clubs that addressed the immediate needs of women in her community. In 1923, two years before her marriage, she created a ladies' club, which consisted of girls and teachers from her school where she was a head teacher. The club was initially interested in teaching the women handicraft and social etiquette. When she moved to Abeokuta after her wedding, she founded a similar club in 1932. The club retained similar aim as the earlier one, but with a difference in that their programs were opened to both females and males – “They organized teenagers of both sex and held picnics, athletic games, and lectures for their entertainment and education”.

Membership in the Ladies' club was exclusive in its early years. Those who became members were suggested at meetings and were invited upon the approval of all members. In 1944, a friend of Mrs. Kuti introduced her to a market woman who had always desired to learn how to read. The market woman also informed Mrs. Kuti of a friend of hers who would hold hymn book upside down in church because of illiteracy. Because of this, ALC expanded its membership to include market women in March 1944, when it was officially launched. At its first meeting in March 15, 1945, Mrs. Kuti was proclaimed the president and the patron.

The presence of market women brought to the attention of the ALC members the problems that these women were face especially the unjust treatment and policies that they were subjected to under the colonial administration. In Abeokuta, the alake was the authority that represented the colonial government at the time. The late 1930s and early 1940s were hard years

for markets women in Nigeria. These women were hit hard with the economic effect of World War II. Rice farmers and sellers suffered the most under the harsh condition. Rice farmers in Abeokuta, for example, were given a fixed measure of rice to be produced – thirteen thousand tons of rice at the rate of £13 per ton with no opportunity to export unless granted permission. The restriction led to smuggling in of rice, which was then sold at cheaper price on the black markets.

ALC came at the right time for market women. At the time of the war, there was also an increase in the demand for rice from the military force in Lagos. The increased demand was hurtful for the market women because there was no benefit, since the military was not paying the cost. Stories of military and the police force seizing bags of rice from market women without payment became rampant towards the end of the war. In 1945, the market women brought the complaint of government confiscating their rice to the ALC meetings. The women also mentioned “conditional sales”. Women sellers were forced to buy items (in addition to their primary goods – rice) that were slow on the market for them to resell. As a result of this, their economic situation worsened. Johnson-Odim and Mba also made mention of the women’s complaint about how the policemen, private subcontractors, and some representatives of the alake would pay them less than the official market price only to sell the items at a higher price to the government. They did this justifying their action by the food quota.

After hearing the complaints, Mrs. Kuti went to the Assistant District Officer (ADO), who told her that no one could sell rice in Abeokuta until the eighteen hundred tons of rice demanded for Lagos by the government had been met.

On September 25th 1945, The ALC took action sending three members and three members of NUT to the ADO. They demanded that the confiscation of rice be stopped, but still

no changes were made. Their next step was to approach the Resident. This action was also to no avail. From there, they lobbied the Egba Native Authority Council (ENA) based on the same complaint and demand on October 29, 1945. When the Council presented the case to the Alake, he refused to address it giving the reason that the control of rice sale was given by the British government. However, after further investigation, Mrs. Kuti found out that the Alake had refused to address the case because he was also involved. He was directing the confiscated rice to his stores for sale and keeping the profit. This final step caught the attention of the government and the confiscation of rice was aborted six days after the press publication. Finally on the 29th of October 1945, the market women with the help of the ALC won their fight. In continuation of their campaign, they took a more public approach by going to the press, *Daily Service*. The newspaper published their concern which ended with this sentence: “We the members of the ALC, on behalf of all Egba women, appeal to the press of Nigeria to help bring the seriousness of the position to the attention of the authorities before it is too late”.

THE ABEOKUTA WOMEN’S UNION

Following the victory of 1945, the ALC expanded its interests and became a more political association. There were still other pressing issues facing women in Abeokuta such as the flat rate of taxation. Although the Aba women’s war had succeeded in stopping the unfair taxation of women in the East, the Western women were still faced by the situation. Vidrovitch(1997:171), described the women’s discontent:

They became more and more impatient not only with the ill-treatment to make them pay that they endured but also with the fact that, despite the obligations imposed on them, they had neither the right to vote nor any representation – merely the right to complain of having been beaten and bullied.

With the women feeling this way their aim was upgraded from just focusing on “alleviation of hardship to the elimination of the causes of hardship”. Thus in 1946, the ALC was changed into the Abeokuta Women’s Union (AWU), adopting the motto, according to Johnson (1982:149), “Unity, Cooperation, Selfless Service, and Democracy”. The objectives and aims of AWU reflected its new interests which were:

1. To defend, protect, preserve and promote the social, economic, cultural and political rights and interests of the women in Egba land.
2. To encourage mass education among the women through teaching its members to read and write.
3. To cooperate with all organizations seeking and fighting genuinely and selflessly for the economic and political freedom and independence of the people.

These objectives also reflected the observation and interests of Mrs. Kuti. She argued that under the indirect rule of the colonial system through the SNA with the alake as its representative in Abeokuta, women had suffered economically, socially and politically. In addition, she maintained that women were not only deprived of their rights to have a say in the government, they were also forced to pay tax, which they could not afford and for which they were not compensated in any ways. She then concluded that the only way to see changes in the way women were being treated was to “organized them to gain political power to demand suffrage, participation in government, and if necessary, changes in the system”. This kind of mindset was definitely needed especially at a time when Nigeria was moving towards nationalism. It also marked a huge development from the Aba women’s approach.

By the mid 1940s, women were still being unfairly taxed and they became impatient with the system. In June, 1946, the AWU started a campaign with the slogan “to taxation without

representation”. Johnson maintains that since 1918 when taxation was imposed upon the citizens of Egbaland, females had been forced to pay tax starting from the age of fifteen, which was considered the marriageable age, while males were not demanded to pay until they turned eighteen. He also notes that the methods by which women were forced to pay tax were even more oppressing. Women were often chased, beaten, their houses were searched, and girls were often stripped by officials, claiming that it was a way to assess the girl’s ages. The campaign began by petitioning the alake to stop these methods and the abuse of women. Instead of granting their request, the alake increased tax rate in October of the same year.

AWU did not relent on its demands. Instead, it intensified its campaign using various means that were at its disposal. They engaged in more use of the press. Vidrovitch notes that some members, including Mrs. Kuti herself refused to pay taxes. Furthermore, Mba notes that AWU used constructed method to prove their case. It employed a certified accountant to review the books of SNA Treasury and to prepare a report of its expenditure. The result yielded that there was an unnecessary expenditure of £24,706, which if it had been spent wisely, women would not have had to pay tax and the administration would still not have lost money. AWU criticized the SNA for careless spending mentioning that “loan to other countries at the time we are in great need of capital for local industries ... is part of maladministration” Mba-pg 148. They proposed that the administration eliminate “redundant personnel”, increase taxes on Syrians and European firms, and that the government should invest in local industries. While focusing on removing the methods at which women were being taxed, the AWU also pushed for “the removal of Ademola as alake, the abolition of the SNA system, and the representative participation of women in a reformed system of administration”. The AWU made sure to keep accounts of its every action and also the complaints that it had against the administration and the

alake. By 1947, the AWU had published a document titled the “A.W.U.’s Grievances”. The document contained AWU’s discontent with the alake and the SNA’s lack of concern for women. Some of the allegations against the alake included sexual relations with women who had left their husbands to take refuge at the palace whom he charged fees for their maintenance and leasing lands that did not belong to him to foreign firms which cheated proper landowners of their revenues. Some of the allegations against the SNA included lack of proper sanitation, medical, and educational facilities for women. AWU charged that as of 1936, the SNA in Abeokuta spent only 0.52 percent of its income on education and as of 1947, there was only one school supported by the SNA.

The women’s struggle continued. On the night of November 29 AWU held its first demonstration outside of the alake’s palace until the morning of November 30th with more than ten thousand women. The solidarity among this huge number of women with a strong executive body which was made off a president, vice-president, a secretary, a treasurer, representatives from the main market associations and from the four sections of Abeokuta. During the protest, the women used songs to ridicule alake and to expressed the sense of their own power. After the protest, the women were promised that the taxation would be suspended and the final decision would be made known to them in three days. Instead, more assaults were committed and more arrests were made. This action incited another protest from the women. The second protest, which lasted from December 8 to 10, followed the pattern of the first. The women, again over ten thousand of them, stayed outside the palace refusing to leave until all those who had been arrested were released. They left the palace premises upon the release of the arrested women on November 10, 1947.

In the meantime, the AWU continued to send letters to major newspapers and sending their petitions to the British administration. By the January of 1949, the AWU could claim victory. Johnson et al (1982:88), note that on January 3rd, the alake abdicated from the throne. Also, the SNA system was changed and four women were granted positions in the new system of administration. Although other forces such as the Ogboni had also contributed to these changes, the women of AWU were undoubtedly key catalysts of the changes.

Mba observes that the struggle of AWU continues into the post colonial Nigeria. In 1952 at a meeting, the Abeokuta Urban District Council planned to bill women for water at the rate of 3shillings per annum per women and was imposed because the council did not have enough money to extend and improve water supply. The AWU again protested in 1959. Finally, in 1960, the government eradicated the water rates for women.

HOUSA WOMEN IN COLONIAL POLITICS

The political role of women in Northern Nigeria had been symbolized in the titles of Magajiya, IyaSaraki, GabsaiYarkunti and Maidaki prior to colonial regime. These titles were abolished with the emergence of the colonial government, and women were usurped of their traditional political role. For example, the magajiya was the princess who presided over grain sellers in the market. But they were then excluded from the political institution of women in the colonial period. This was aided by the Islamic religion which advocated that women had no place in public affair. Hence, Islamic religion alongside with colonial government striped northern Nigerian women their political functions. This made pre-colonial women leaders like Queen Amina of Zaria to remain politically redundant through the period as a consequence of

Pudah obligation which Islamic religion preached. In contrast to Igbo and Yoruba women, Housa women did not exhibit their administrative acumen through organization of revolt against the colonial government.

Generally speaking, there were a number of women who were later appointed into politics. For instance, EffahAttoe (2002), noted that in 1950s, three women were appointed into the House of Chiefs, namely Chief (Mrs.) OlufunmilayoRansomeKuti (appointed into the Western Nigeria House of Chiefs); Chiefs (Mrs.) Margaret Ekpo and Janet Mokelu (both appointed into the Eastern Nigeria House of Chiefs). Margaret Ekpo was a distinguished member of the women's wing of NCNC.

2.3 Post-Colonial Period:

Since independence, Sub-Saharan African countries have been struggling for political development. As noted earlier in this chapter, Subjected to colonial rule for many years, Nigeria lost its indigenous system of government. This is not to wholly blame colonialism for Nigeria's political setback of today. Nevertheless, the introduction of Western system of government resulted in the nature of government (politics) in Nigeria. Today, Nigeria, like other African countries faces problems in political development and the problem of equal gender political participation. Nevertheless, we will examine here, the political participation of women in the pre-colonial Nigeria.

Obviously, despite a significant increase of women in the political sphere, the role of women in Nigeria's post 1960 politics has not been reflected sufficiently, in terms of election and appointments to policymaking posts. Thus, in spite of massive support given to various political

parties by women, women organizations, market women movements etc., until recently, very few women benefited from political patronage.

Attoe (2002), noted that in Southern Nigeria, women already had franchise by 1960. Thus in 1960, Mrs. Wuraola Esan from Western Nigeria became the first female member of the Federal Parliament. In 1961, Chief (Mrs.) Margaret Ekpo contested elections in Aba Urban North constituency under the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) platform and won, becoming a member of the Eastern Nigeria House of Assembly until 1966; Mrs. Janet N. Mokelu and Miss Ekpo A. Young also contested elections, won and became members of the Eastern House of Assembly. In northern Nigeria however, women were still denied the franchise even after independence. As a result of this, prominent female politicians like Hajia Qambo Sawaba in the North could not vote and be voted for. It was only in 1979 that women in northern Nigeria were given the franchise, following the return to civilian politics.

During the Second Republic (1979-1983), there was further progress. A few Nigerian women won elections into the House of Representatives at the national level. Some of these women were Mrs. J. C. Eze of the Nigerian People's Party (NPP) who represented Uzo Uwani constituency in former Anambra State, Mrs V.O. Nnaji, also of NPP who represented Isu and Mrs. Abiola Babatope of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) who represented Mushin Central II of Lagos State. But on the whole, very few women won elections into the State Houses of Assembly during the Second Republic. In this same period, only two women were appointed Federal ministers. They were Chief (Mrs.) Janet Akinrinade who was Minister for Internal Affairs and Mrs. Adenike Ebun Oyagbola, Minister for National Planning. Mrs. Francesca Yetunde Emmanuel was the only female Permanent Secretary (first in the Federal Ministry of

Establishment and later Federal Ministry of Health). A number of women were appointed Commissioners in the states. In 1983, Ms Franca Afegbua became the only woman to be elected into the Senate. Also, very few women contested and won elections into the Local Government Councils during this time.

With the return of military rule in December 1983, the first formal quota system was introduced by the Federal Government as regards the appointment of women into governance. The Buhari administration directed that at least one female must be appointed a member of the Executive Council in every state. All the states complied with this directive; some states even had two or three female members.

In the early 1990s, two women were appointed Deputy Governors. These were AlhajaLatifatOkunu of Lagos State and Mrs. Pamela Sadauki of Kaduna State. Chief (Mrs.) D.B.A. KLiforijiOlubi served as Chairperson of a bank, i.e. the United Bank for Africa PLC. Later on, Dr Simi Johnson and EniolaFadayomi served as Chairpersons of Afribank International Nigeria and Allied Bank Nigeria PLC, respectively. There was, however, no female minister. There was also, no female member of the defunct Supreme Military Council or the later Armed Forces Ruling Council.

In the 1990 elections into local governments heralding the Third Republic, very few women emerged as councillors and only one woman, Chief (Mrs.) TitilayoAjanaku, emerged as Chairperson of a Local Government Council in the West. During the gubernatorial elections, no female governor emerged in any of the states. Only two female Deputy Governors emerged, namely: AlhajaSinatuOjikutuof Lagos State and Mrs. Cecilia Ekpenyong of Cross River State. In the Senatorial election held in 1992, Mrs. KofobucknorAkerele was the only woman who won

a seat in the Senate. Very few women won election into the House of Representatives. One of these few was Chief (Mrs.) Florence ItaGiwa who won in the Calabar Constituency under the banner of the National Republican Convention (NRC). Among the members of the Transitional Council appointed by President Babangida in January 1993, only two were women, namely Mrs. Emily Aiklmhokuede and Mrs. LarabaDagash.

In the Interim National Government of Chief Ernest Shonekan, two female ministers were appointed into the Cabinet. General Abacha had a number of female Ministers at various times in his cabinet, including Chief (Mrs) OnikepoAkande and Ambassador Judith Attah. During the military regime of General AbdulsalamiAbubakar (June 9, 1998 May 29, 1999), there were two women in the Federal Executive Council: Chief (Mrs) OnikepoAkande (Minister for Commerce) and Dr. Laraba GamboAbdullahi (Minister of Women Affairs).

In the Fourth Republic which started on May 29, 1999, the Nigerian political terrain has witnessed an increase in the number of women political appointees, even though women did not perform well at the elections. In the elections held before May 29, 1999, few women emerged as Chairpersons of local government councils. A number of women won elections as Councillors. There is no female Governor in any State of the Federation. Only Lagos State produced a female Deputy Governor in the person of Senator BucknorAkerere.

In the National Assembly, there are only three women in the Senate, namely: Chief (Mrs) Florence ItaGiwa representing Cross River State South Senatorial District; Mrs. Stella Omu from Delta State and HajiyaKhairat Abdul-Razaq (now HajiyaGwadabe) representing the Federal Capital Territory. There are only 12 women In the House of Representatives and these are: Barrister IquoMinimah, Mrs. Patience Ogodo, Lola AbiolaEdewor, Patricia O. Etteh,

Dorcas Odujinrin, J.F. Adeyemi, Binta Garba Koji, Gbenni Saraki, Florence Aya, Linda Ikpeazu, Temi Harrinnan and Mercy Almonasei. While in the State Houses of Assembly very few women emerged as members. While in some States, one or two women emerged in the Houses, most other states have virtually no females in their legislatures. States like Cross River, Akwa Ibom State, Rivers, Lagos and many others do not have female members in their State Legislatures.

Women have been appointed as Commissioners and therefore members of the Executive Councils in all the states, but while some states have one female, others have two females in the Executive Councils. President Olusegun Obasanjo had appointed a number of women into the Federal Executive Council. They were Dr. (Mrs.) Kema Chikwe (Minister of Transport), Mrs. Dupe Adelaja (Minister of State Defence), Dr. (Mrs) Bekky Ketebuigwe (Minister of State, Ministry of Solid Minerals), Dr. (Mrs.) Amina Ndalo (Minister of State, Federal Ministry of Health), Mrs. Pauline Tallen (Minister of State, Federal Ministry of Science and Technology), and Hajia Aishatu Ismaila (Minister of Women Affairs). Chief (Mrs.) Titilayo Ajanaku is the Special Adviser to the President on Women Affairs.

The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs (2004) also recorded the number of women elected and appointed into political decision-making as of 2003. There were 6 female Ministers, 9 female Presidential Assistants, 2 female Presidential Advisers. 3 females in a 109 member Senate, 24 females in 360 member House of Representatives, 38 females in the 36 states' House of Assembly and 2 female Deputy Governors out of 36. Ezeani (2010), has also recorded in 2007-2011 election into the National Assembly, 9 female Senators and 27 female members of the House of Representatives.

From the foregoing, it is evident that only very few Nigerian women have participated and emerged in Nigeria's political landscape, in spite of the pioneering efforts of women like Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti and Margaret Ekpo since the 1950s. Nevertheless, this chapter has brought to bare, the ability and strength of women in the decision-making and political sphere of life. It is seen here, through the roles and positions they held in the different eras of political development, that women are as good as it takes to be in control of power and can act better if social, economic and political obstacles and challenges to their way are removed.

CHAPTER THREE

MDG-3 AND PROPORTION OF FEMALES IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

In this chapter, we proved our hypothesis one which states that the implementation of MDG-3 has not balanced the proportion of female legislators in relation to their male counterpart in the National Assembly.

3.1 Nigeria and the Millennium Development Goals

According to Human Development Report 2003, the world leaders gathered at the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000 to commit their nations to strengthening global efforts for peace, human rights, democracy, strong governance, environmental sustainability and poverty eradication, and to promoting principles of human dignity, equality and equity. This is following the United Nations Declaration which states that:

We recognize that, in addition to our separate responsibilities to our individual societies, we have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level. As leaders we have a duty therefore to all the world's people, especially the most vulnerable and, in particular, the children of the world, to whom the future belongs (HDR, 2003: 27).

The resulting Millennium Declaration adopted by 189 countries, includes urgent, collective commitments to overcome the poverty that still grips most of the world's people. Global leaders did not settle for business as usual because they knew that business as usual was not enough. Instead they committed themselves to ambitious targets with clearly defined deadlines. At the 2000 summit the UN General Assembly also asked the UN Secretary-General to prepare a road map for achieving the Declaration's commitments. This results in the Millennium Development Goals, made up of 8 Goals, 18 targets and 48 indicators. The goals are:

- **Goal 1:** Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger
- **Goal 2:** Achieve Universal Primary Education
- **Goal 3:** Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

- **Goal 4:** Reduce Child Mortality
- **Goal 5:** Improve Maternal Health
- **Goal 6:** Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other Diseases.
- **Goal 7:** Ensure Environmental sustainability.
- **Goal 8:** Develop a Global Partnership for Development.

All the UN member states have agreed to achieve the eight international development goals preferably in 2005 and at all levels, by the year 2015. The Goals are unique in their ambition, concreteness and scope. They are also unique in their explicit recognition that the Goals for eradicating poverty can be achieved only through stronger partnerships among development actors and through increased action by rich countries— expanding trade, relieving debt, transferring technology and providing aid (HDR, 2003).

The Millennium Development Goals are collectively seen as an agenda for accelerating human development. They address many of the most enduring failures of human development. Unlike the objectives of the first, second and third UN Development Decades (1960s,1970s, 1980s), which mostly focused on economic growth, the Goals place human well-being and poverty reduction at the centre of global development objectives with goal-3 at the heart of actualizing all other goals. Hence, “Gender equality and the empowerment of women are at the heart of the MDGs and are preconditions for overcoming poverty, hunger and disease. But progress has been sluggish on all fronts—from education to access to political decision-making” Millennium Development Goals (Report 2010:4). Goal-3 has its target as elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and at all levels by 2015. The indicators are as follow:

- Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education.
- Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector.
- Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament.

The Goals and the promotion of human development share a common motivation and reflect a vital commitment to promoting human well-being that entails dignity, freedom and equality for all people. The Goals are benchmarks of progress towards the vision of the Millennium Declaration—guided by basic values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance and respect for nature and shared responsibilities. These values have much in common with the conception of human well-being in the concept of human development. They also mirror the fundamental motivation for human rights. Thus, as recognized by HDR 2003, the Goals, human development and human rights share the same motivation.

Every *Human Development Report* has argued that the purpose of development is to improve people's lives by expanding their choices, freedom and dignity. Hence, poverty involves much more than the restrictions imposed by lack of income. It also entails lack of basic capabilities to lead full, creative lives which involves when people suffer from poor health, are excluded from participating in the decisions that affect their communities or have no right to guide the course of their lives. Such deprivations distinguish human poverty from income poverty. The Millennium Development Goals are intended to ease the constraints on people's ability to make choices. Still, the Goals do not cover all the crucial dimensions of human development. In particular, they do not mention expanding people's participation in the decisions that affect their lives or increasing their civil and political freedoms. But then, participation, democracy and human rights are, however, important elements of the Millennium Declaration. The Goals provide building blocks for human development, with each relating to key dimensions of this process. The Goals also reflect a human rights agenda—rights to food, education, health care and decent living standards, as enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Hence, the Millennium Development Goals Report 2010 asserts that “the Goals represent human needs and basic rights that every individual around the world should be able to enjoy—freedom from extreme poverty and hunger; quality education, productive and decent employment, good health and shelter; the right of women to give birth without risking their lives; and a world where environmental sustainability is a priority, and women and men live in equality”-MDG Report (2010:3).

The Goals also recognize the responsibility of developing countries for their development, while placing more concrete demands on rich countries. Defining the responsibilities of all countries was crucial for developing countries. Goal 8, for a global partnership, has no time-bound, quantified indicator to monitor progress and hold actors to account, as Goals 1–7 do. But its inclusion in the Goals is a significant step towards “solidarity”—a basic principle of the Millennium Declaration.

The March 2002 International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico, reaffirmed the world’s commitment to the Millennium Declaration and its development targets. The conference advanced new terms for a global partnership based on mutual responsibilities between developing and rich countries. It also reaffirmed the primary responsibility of national governments for mobilizing domestic resources and improving governance—including sound economic policies and solid democratic institutions. Also, it reaffirmed commitments by rich countries to work towards a supportive international environment and increased financing for development. These commitments received additional backing at the September 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Nevertheless, the global community, often led by the United Nations, has set many development goals since the first Development Decade of the 1960s—and has a history of many failures. For example, in the Alma Ata Declaration of 1977 the world committed to health care for all people by the end of the century. Yet in 2000 millions of poor people died of pandemic and other diseases, many readily preventable and treatable. Similarly, at the 1990 Summit on Children, the world committed to universal primary education by 2000.

The Goals are ambitious in the sense that they reflect the urgent need for much faster progress on development. They are intended to mobilize action, not name and shame. They place demands on all actors to identify new actions and resources so that they can be reached. The poorer the country is, the greater the challenge. Contrast what Mali will have to do to halve poverty by 2015, to 36% and reduce under-five mortality by two-thirds, to 85 per 1,000 live births, with Sri Lanka's task of cutting poverty to 3.3% and under-five mortality to per 1,000 live births. That does not mean that Mali is destined to fail. Rather, it reveals the huge challenges facing the poorest countries and the enormous efforts needed from the international community. Moreover, success should not be judged simply by achieving the Goals on time. Halving poverty by 2015 is not the end of the road, because countries must continue to halve it again and again.

Idowu (2010) has acknowledged that Nigeria was part of the United Nations Millennium summit, and hence, signed the MDGs declaration for which it set up a special department. To implement the Millennium Development Goals, Nigeria set up the MDGs committees in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. Indeed, the setting up of MDGs committees in both the Senate and the House of Representatives is a testament to the level of enthusiasm that Nigeria attached to the implementation of the goals. In the Senate, there is the Establishment of the Presidential Committee on the Assessment and Monitoring of the MDGs and the Office of the

Senior Special Assistant to the President on MDGs given remit to design and guide debt-relief gains through Virtua Poverty Fund to help achieve the MDGs, reporting quarterly to the presidential committee. The need to facilitate support for the MDGs in Nigeria is the sole task of the office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Millennium Development Goals.

At first, the MDGs appeared to be gaining momentum in Nigeria with the apparent direct involvement of the National Assembly in the project. Apart from approving a national budget for the initiative, members of both the Senate and the House of Representatives are assigned quick-win MDGs projects by the Federal Government, which are to be located in their senatorial districts and federal constituencies. It is the responsibility of each lawmaker to ensure that the quick-win MDGs projects in his or her constituency get implemented within the stipulated time, and according to plan.

Efforts have been made to ensure the facilitation of MDGs, For instance, according to Az-Zubair (2010), Nigeria negotiated debt-relief of \$18bn in 2005, translating into debt-relief gains of \$1bn each year of which \$250m was allocated to the States and \$750m was dedicated by the FGN to the achievement of the MDGs –a Virtual Poverty Fund (VPF). In the 2008 budget also, the MDGs funding came from the Paris Club Relief Gains, while the sum of N25.3 billion was budgeted. As programmed, the objectives were to improve economic activity and encourage the active presence of the Federal Government in all senatorial and federal constituencies in Nigeria. To fast-track the implementation, senators and representatives were asked to determine the project types and locations, and they were expected to liaise with the MDGs office in the presidency to ensure full implementation.

For senators and House of Representatives members, the areas of project interventions tend to be more on health, education and water supply. There are many other things that the government padded into the main sectors for senatorial districts and federal constituencies.

Idowu (2010) has acknowledged that the 2008 MDGs quickwin projects were done in 6,504 locations across Nigeria, with a total of 2,596 contracts awarded for projects in 36 states of the federation. The implementations of MDGs quick-win projects followed a similar pattern in 2009. Although, this time, it was the Federal Government which made provisions for funds in the 2009 appropriation. With the sum of N21 billion on ground, the Senate was allocated the sum of N5.4 billion for projects, while the House of Representatives got the sum of N11.5 billion. Additional consultancy services gulped the sum of N3.9 billion. For that fiscal year, building construction took an overall 1, 0151 contracts, while supply of medical equipment took 22 contracts, as 13 contracts were awarded for supply of medical drugs and 735 for the supply of education furniture and books/teaching aids., while 619 contracts went into construction of boreholes . On the whole, the 2009 MDGs quick-win Projects intervened in 5,732 locations with a total of 2, 404 contracts.

The constituency projects allotted to the House of Representatives and the Senate were not all the MDGs projects in Nigeria. Nigerian women, too, have been enjoying special considerations in the budget. For instance, since one of the cardinal objectives of the MDGs hangs on promotion of gender equality and empowerment, the planners have been harping on the need to eliminate gender disparities in schools at all levels in Nigeria by 2015. Against this background, Idowu noted that the government of Nigeria is attempting to muster the political will to place women at the centre of development agenda, by way of ensuring gender budgeting, gender mainstreaming, and through institutional structures and processes.

He also noted that given the aggression that the presidency has been putting into the execution of the MDGs initiatives in the country, Nigeria may well be on the verge of fulfilling the goal of poverty reduction by a considerable margin. But all may not be well with policy makers, given the challenges that they have been encountering in the process of executing projects. The first of such challenges is the adoption of innovative procurement process. This is occasioned by late confirmation of funding for the MDGs quick-win projects for every budget. It had necessitated a combination of the use of roll-over contractors and direct allocation of contracts. The process often times runs into hitches in the face of the challenges posed by the Public Procurement Act, and the need for the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) to approve contracts at every stage. More of such challenges were reportedly encountered in the 2008 budget, for instance.

End of the year mopping up of funds is another challenge confronting implementation of the MDGs. Idowu captured this through a report which says: “Advanced payment to contractors commenced in December, 2008. Many contractors received their cheques just before the end of the year and they were affected by the mopping up of funds at year end. The contractors had to wait till the release of funds in 2009 before they could cash their cheques and return to sites”.

The Niger Delta crisis is another major challenge standing in the way of MDGs in Nigeria as also noted by Idowu. He captures a report by the MDGs office which says: “Performance of MDGs quick-win projects in nine Niger Delta states have been relatively poor. The poor performance is largely due to unattractive cost of the contracts occasioned by the grave environmental, community and security challenges in the area. The main challenges of the riverine locations are transport logistics, access difficulty, community interference, high cost of labour and security. Most riverine locations cannot be reached by road transport. Contractors,

therefore, have to travel by motor boats or by ferries. These challenges made the costing adopted for projects generally unattractive to contractors. The consequence of the above was a high rate of project abandonment and general poor performance.’’ In line with this, HajiaAz-Zubair, Senior Special Assistant to the President on the Millennium Development Goals, has reported challenges of implementing MDGs to be:

- 1. Abandoned projects, often concentrated in particular Millennium Development Areas.
 - Reflect delays in budget appropriation.
 - Compounded by weak capacity to implement procurement processes and develop robust systems.
- 2. Coordination and communication with implementing agencies is difficult.
 - Appropriation shows only a weak link between our plans (MTSS, MDGs Needs Assessment and Costing, etc.) and what is to be implemented
 - Responsiveness of MDA Management & MDGs Task Teams has reduced over time.
- 3. Project and data management in the absence of a comprehensive IT system.
 - Begins with the Budget process, which can generate duplications and omissions from agreed priorities.
- 4. Quality of work and equipment is highly variable.
 - This often reflects a lack of skilled human resources in rural areas and inadequate planning/specification.
 - But also weak supervision and accountability.
- 5. Sustainability is weak.
 - Federal MDAs are not good at consultation with communities and other tiers of government.
 - Provision for recurrent expenditure is low and poorly managed
 - Allocation of staff and consumables is sporadic and varies greatly between localities.
 - At the local level there is a near absence of processes and systems
- 6. Learning on the job with new systems such as public procurement and e-payment processes has led to some delays.
 - Importance of clear training and sensitization with all stakeholders on new systems.
 - The need to be very pro-active to build upon our experience to further refine systems.
- 7. Non-compliance of MDAs with workplans.
 - In 2009, batch release of capital warrants to MDAs without a specific amount specified for MDGs projects has led to low prioritisation of MDGs projects.

–Task Teams in MDAs have become less effective over time due to changes in rank and composition

–In particular, OSSAP-MDGs are rarely invited to procurement planning meetings.

Nevertheless, much as the programme on MDGs enjoys the acceptance of members of the National Assembly, some of them have also been identified as being part of the challenges of project implementation. Members had been accused of changing the location of projects sites at will, while insisting that the changes were adhered to – Idowu (2010).

3.2 Gender Discrimination in Nigerian Electoral Politics.

There has always been bias and prejudice against women in all societies and in all epochs. Discrimination against women is manifested in all spheres of human relations. It has always come in different forms: socio-cultural, economic, religious, and most importantly, political. Perhaps, the greatest manifestation of women marginalization is in politics. Despite constitutional declaration of the equal status of both sexes in most countries of the world including Nigeria, gender discrimination remains fully entrenched in the power configuration of the societies, with consequences of limiting women's participation in the political process.

The Section 42 of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria for instance, expressly stated that Nigerian citizens have the right to freedom from discrimination on the basis of, among other things, sex. But then, the fact remains that marginalization of women in the electoral politics is very obvious. It is in recognition of this imbalance that all countries were mandated as the outcome of Beijing Conference of 1995 to allot at least 30% of their elective and appointive

positions to women. As a result of this, the number of women in electoral politics seemed to be on the increase, yet, they are still grossly underrepresented.

Hence, women have not made much impact on the Nigerian political scene since the introduction of electoral politics in Nigeria by the Hugh Clifford's constitution of 1922. According to Nda (2003:33), women's participation in decision making at all levels has been very low. This is to say that women are at the periphery of Nigerian politics, though they have been constituting a larger proportion of active voters. For instance, out of the 47 million Nigerians registered as eligible voters in the 1999 elections, 27 million were women, representing 57.4% of registered voters.

The election of women into the federal legislature started manifesting in the second Republic since independence in 1960. In the Republic before it, no woman was able to win election into the federal legislature, though three women were elected into the Eastern House of Assembly in the 1961 regional elections. In the second Republic, the high point of female achievement was the election of the only female senator, Franca Afegbua, into the Senate in 1983 (Oleru, 1999:47). Unfortunately, she served for only three months before that Republic collapsed.

During the transition programme of Ibrahim Babangida in 1992, only 8 were women out of the 300 gubernatorial aspirants, representing a paltry 2.6%. Even as of that time, none of the women was able to make it to any of the government houses. Also, of the party executive positions of the parties that operated in that era, women held only 4%. In fact, in studies conducted by Ako-Nai (2005:491); Mohammed (2006:51); and Okoosi-Simbine (2006:153), the inability of women to occupy party executive positions has been seen as a major cause of women marginalization in politics, especially during party nominations. Bruce (2005:506) noted that

even during the 2003 elections, the experiences of women at party primaries were not by any standard better than what it had been in previous elections, He maintains that evidence abounds as to deliberate maneuvering and proclivity for preferences for male aspirants over their female counterparts by party loyalists and stalwarts.

By 1999, at the dawn of the fourth Republic, the story was still the same. Out of a total of 11, 117 available electable positions during the 1999 elections, only 631 women contested, which is a mere 5.6%, not of the total number of contestants, but of the number of positions available for contest. Of the 631 female contestants, only 180 (143 of whom were elected as ward councilors) managed to win, representing 1.6% of the electable positions. In other words, of all electable positions available during the 1999 elections, only 1.6% was occupied by women (Ilo and Alumona 2009:117).

On this grounds, the 2004 Nigerian Federal Ministry of Women Affairs Report on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and Commonwealth Plan of Action, observed the representation of women in the 1999 general election as seen in the table below:

Table 3.1: Women's Representation in 1999 General Elections

| S/N | Position | No of Available Seats | No of Women & % of Total in 1999 |
|-----|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Presidency | 1 | 0 0% |
| 2 | Senate | 109 | 3 2.8% |
| 3 | House of Representatives | 360 | 12 3.3% |
| 4 | Governorship | 36 | 0 0% |
| 5 | State Houses of Assembly | 990 | 12 1.2% |

Source: Federal Ministry of Women Affairs (2004)

Thus, attempt is made to look at women's representation and election in the 2003 and 2007 general elections which are the most recent in Nigeria and which seem to have brought a

lasting democracy to Nigeria. During the 2003 general elections, the percentage of women who got involved in the contest was far below that of men. The tables below indicate this.

Table 3.2: 2003 Governorship Election: Distribution of Contestants on Gender Basis

| No of seat available | Total no of contestants | Total no of male contestants | Total no of female contestants | % of female contestants | No of women elected | % of women elected |
|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 36 | 320 | 313 | 7 | 2.19 | Nil | Nil |

Source: INEC (2003)

Table 3.3: List of Female Contestants in the 2003 Governorship Election.

| S/N | State | Name | Party |
|-----|-----------|---------------------------|-------|
| 1 | Akwa-Ibom | Maria NyongIkpe | AD |
| 2 | Delta | Agbajo, O.T. | ANPP |
| 3 | Ekiti | RemiOkebunmi | APGA |
| 4 | Enugu | LorretaAniagolu | NCP |
| 5 | Kogi | Love L. Emma | AD |
| 6 | Lagos | KofoworolaBucknor-Akerele | UNPP |
| 7 | Osun | AlukoFolashade | NNPP |

Source: INEC (2003)

From table 3, one could easily deduce the fact that none of the women contested under the platform of a major party. The few that contested under major parties did so where those parties were not strong enough to see them through. For instance, the AD was active in 2003 only in the southwestern part of the country and not in Akwa-Ibom and Kogi States. The APGA

too was only active in the south-eastern part and not in Ekiti. The UNPP, NNPP and NCP did not command any strong followership in any part of the country in 2003. However, Ogun, Osun, Ekiti, and later Anambra States, produced female Deputy-Governors.

Table 3.4: 2003 State Assembly Table Elections: Distribution of Contestants on Gender Basis

| No of seats available | No of All contestants | No of male contestants | No of female contestants | % of female Contestants | No of women elected | % of Women elected |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 990 | 4,591 | 4,438 | 153 | 3.33 | 35 | 3.54 |

Source: Adapted from INEC (2003)

Table 3.5: 2003 National Assembly Election: Distribution of Contestants on Gender Basis

| | No of seats available | No of All Contestants | No of male contestants | No of female contestants | % of female contestants | No of women elected | % of Women elected |
|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Senate | 109 | 624 | 589 | 35 | 5.61 | 4 | 3.67 |
| House of Reps. | 360 | 1,736 | 1,649 | 89 | 5.13 | 22 | 6.11 |

Source: Adapted from INEC (2003)

In 2003, however, no woman occupied the Government House of any of the 36 states as the Chief Executive in Nigeria. For the State Houses of Assembly, only 3.54% of the seats were occupied by women. For the House of Representatives, only 6.11% of the seats were occupied by women and in the Senate, they had only 3.67% of the seats. Looking at the 2007 general election, an improvement in the election of women is seen, though it has remained relatively low

and marginal in terms of redressing the imbalance between the males and the females. The tables below show this.

Table 3.6: 2007 State Assembly Elections: Distribution of Winners on Gender Basis

| No. of Seats Available | No. of Men Elected | No. of Women Elected | % of Women Elected |
|------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 990 | 937 | 53 | 5.4% |

Source: Adapted from INEC (2007)

Table 3.7: 2007 National Assembly Elections: Distribution of Winners on Gender Basis

| | No of Seats available | No of men elected | No of women elected | % of women elected |
|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Senate | 109 | 100 | 9 | 8.3% |
| House of Reps. | 360 | 334 | 26 | 7.2% |

Source: Adapted from INEC (2007)

Table 3.8: 2007 Governorship Election: Distribution of Winners on Gender Basis

| | No of Seats available | No of men elected | No of women elected | % of women elected |
|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Governor | 36 | 36 | Nil | - |
| Dep. Governor | 36 | 30 | 6 | 16.7% |

Source: Adapted from INEC (2007)

Table 3.9: List of Female Deputy Governors Elected after the 2007 Elections

| S/N | State | Name | Party |
|-----|---------|------------------------|-------|
| 1 | Anambra | Mrs. Stella Odife | PDP |
| 2 | Imo | Lady Dr. Ada Okwuonu | PPA |
| 3 | Lagos | Lady Dr. Ada Okwuonu | AC |
| 4 | Ogun | Alhaja Salmot M. Badru | PDP |
| 5 | Plateau | Mrs. Pauline K. Tallen | PDP |
| 6 | Osun | Erelu Olushola Obada | PDP |

Source: Adapted from INEC (2007)

Though the percentage of women elected into the State House of Assembly rose from 3.54% in 2003 to 5.4% in 2007; 6.11% to 7.2% (for House of Representatives); and 3.67% to 8.3% (for senate), it is still far behind that of men as well as the 30% international benchmark. Moreover, the increase was as a result of the growing political consciousness of women and the activities of women organizations and civil society organizations. It was not in any way due to any deliberate government policy geared towards enhancing women participation in electoral politics. Hence, the facts presented on the tables above are not in consonance with a government that claims to be gender sensitive.

3.3 Women and Political Participation in Nigeria.

Section 40 of the 1999 Constitution guarantees the right of every citizen to associate and freely assemble with other persons, right to belong to any political party, trade union and any other association. Section 77(2) also confers the right to register and to vote for the purpose of election on every citizen that has attained the age of 18 years. A key policy document that supports women's participation in political and public life is the National Gender Policy 2006. The fifth objective of the Policy is aimed at achieving minimum threshold of representation for

women in order to promote equal opportunity in all areas of political, social, economic life of the country for women, as well as for men.

According to the 2008 CEDAW Report on the implementation of CEDAW in Nigeria, the outcome of the 2006 census records that women constitute 48.78% of the national population of Nigeria, but this numerical strength has never found corresponding expression or representation in Nigeria's political life and decision-making processes. It maintains that Women are inadequately represented in the National Assembly, at the State Houses of Assembly, and at the Local Government Councils. They are either completely absent or grossly under represented. The problem of under representation of women in politics and decision-making is beyond the usual supposition that "there are no suitable women" to fill vacancies and or take up political appointments. It also holds that the systemic exclusion of women from leadership and decision-making is further reinforced by the patriarchal structure of the Nigerian society. But then, political participation is a tenet of democracy that is found to be unrestrictive and liberal. Okolie (2004:53) notes that political participation has to do with freedom of expression, association, right to free flow of communication, right to influence decision process and the right to social justice, health services, better working condition and opportunity for franchise.

Arowo and Aluko (2010:581) acknowledge that all groups (including those of women) seek to influence the dispensation of power in line with their articulated interests as a fundamental motive of political participation. They hold that Women also increasingly, seek power equation and distribution and redistribution of resources in their favour. Careful observations have indicated that the involvement of women in Nigerian politics is largely noticeable at the level of voting and latent support.

As stated in 2008 CEDAW report, there has been a meagre increase in the participation of women in politics from 1999 to 2007, hence, Fourth Republic to Sixth Republic. The table below shows progressive but little improvement that women have made since 1999.

Table 3.10 Percentage increase in Women's Representation since 1999

| | 1999 | 2003 | 2007 |
|--------------|------|------|------|
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Men | 98% | 96% | 94% |
| Women | 2% | 4% | 6% |

Source: The Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition Shadow Report (2008), New York, United Nations Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women

It also presented the representation of men and women in the 2007 general election as follows:

Representation of Men and Women in 2007 General Election

| Positions | Men | Women | Total |
|------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| Senate | 100 | 9 | 109 |
| House of Reps | 333 | 27 | 360 |
| Governors | 36 | 0 | 36 |
| Deputy Governors | 30 | 6 | 36 |
| House of Ass | 939 | 54 | 990 |
| Total | 1438 | 96 | 1531 |

Source: The Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition Shadow Report (2008), New York, United Nations Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women

The report notes that in the 2007 general elections, a few political parties took measures to increase the participation of women in politics. As noted, the strategy used was to give women aspirants a concession not to pay the fees for the nomination forms which the men had to pay. This effort did not help in increasing women's political participation as intended, rather, party

leaders used the fact to ridicule women's participation or withdraw their nomination as the party's candidate/delegate in favor of men who were able to pay huge amount for the nomination form. In most political parties, women politicians are mere praise singers, mobilisers and party supporters, and only few women are effective party delegates.

3.4 Women in the National Assembly

As earlier noted in this chapter, the importance of women's representation in politics is recognized with the inclusion of an indicator that addresses that in MDG 3. Ezeani (2010) observes that one of the spheres of politics in which gender inequality manifests is the representation in the National Assembly. Arowo and Aluku (2010:584) noted that for the past 27 years, election of women into the National Assembly has not gone beyond 8.3%.

This is not to say, however, that there has not been a progressive increase in the trend of women representation in the National Assembly but the representation is considered low considering the international standard of balancing the sex distribution. The total representation of women in the National Assembly is far short of the MDG target of gender parity, though it is less than five years to the target year.

For the purpose of this study, we are going to look at women in the National Assembly from 1999 to 2003 (fourth Assembly) and 2007 to 2011 (Sixth Assembly). Attempt is then made to analyze the level of representation of Nigerian women in the National Assembly by looking at the gender distribution. Table 1.0 below presents the numerical and percentage distribution of Senators by gender in the fourth Assembly. The table shows that out of a total of 109 Senators, 106 or 97.2% were men, while 3 or 2.8 % were women. This implies that women were grossly underrepresented in the Senate than men.

Table 3.11 Numerical and percentage Distribution of Senators by Gender in the fourth Assembly, (1999- 2003)

| Gender | No. of Senators | % Distribution |
|---------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Male | 106 | 97.2 |
| Female | 3 | 2.8 |
| Total | 109 | 100 |

Source: National Assembly Statistical Information (2008- 2007).

Table: 3.12 Numerical and percentage Distribution of Honourable Members of the House by Gender in the Fifth Republic (1999- 2003).

| Gender | No. of Hon member | % Distribution |
|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Male | 347 | 96.4 |
| Female | 13 | 3.6 |
| Total | 360 | 100 |

Source: National Assembly Statistical Information (2008- 2007).

Distribution of Legislators by Gender in the Fifth Assembly (2003-2007)

Table 3.12 presents the numerical and percentage distribution of Senators in the Fifth Assembly.

As shown in the table, out of a total of 109 Senators, 105 or 96.3% were men while an insignificant number 4 or 3.7% were women.

Table 3.13: Numerical and percentage Distribution of Senators by Gender in the Fifth Assembly (2003-2007).

| Gender | No. of Senators | % Distribution |
|---------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Male | 105 | 96.3 |
| Female | 4 | 3.7 |
| Total | 109 | 100 |

Source: National Assembly Statistical Information (2008:5).

Table 3.13 Shows the numerical and percentage distribution of Honourable members of the House by gender in the fifth Assembly. The table reveals that out of a total of 360 Honourable members of the House, 338 or 93.2% were men while only 22 or 6.1% were women. What is clear from tables 11 and 12 is that men dominated the Fifth Assembly while the women were in the minority.

Table: 3.14 Numerical and percentage Distribution of Honourable Members of the House by Gender in the Fifth Republic (2003- 2007)

| Gender | No. of Hon. Members of the House | % Distribution |
|---------------|---|-----------------------|
| Male | 338 | 93.9 |
| Female | 22 | 6.1 |
| Total | 360 | 100 |

Source: National Assembly Statistical Information (2008:43).

Distribution of Legislators by Gender in the Sixth Assembly (2007-2011)

A detailed analysis of the distribution of legislators by gender in the sixth assembly reveals the predominance of men over women. Table 3.13 for instance, shows that out of a total of 109 Senators, 100 or 91% are men, while only 9 or 8.26% are women. Similarly, Table 3.14 reveals that out of 360 Honourable members of the House, 330 or 92.50% are men, while 27 or 7.50% are women.

Table 3.15: Numerical and percentage Distribution of senators by Gender in the Sixth Assembly (2007-2011).

| Gender | No. of Senators | % Distribution |
|---------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Male | 100 | 91.74 |
| Female | 9 | 8.26 |
| Total | 109 | 100 |

Source: National Assembly Statistical Information (2008:43).

Table 3.16 Members of the House by Gender in the sixth Assembly (2007-2011).

| Gender | No. of Hon member | % Distribution |
|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Male | 330 | 92.50 |
| Female | 27 | 7.50 |
| Total | 360 | 100 |

Source: National Assembly Statistical Information (2008:43).

Women representation in the National Assembly as seen in the analysis above is very poor for a country that aspires to achieve the set goals of MDGs. UNIFEM (2010:13) asserts that Women's participation is essential to gender-responsive governance. Where women's voices are heard, policy better reflects their lives. Where under-representation persists, women's interests are repeatedly ignored. It also acknowledges the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the saying that " Social, political and economic equality for women is integral to the achievement of all Millennium Development Goals. Until women and girls are liberated from poverty and injustice, all our goals — peace, security, sustainable development — stand in jeopardy" (UNIFEM, 2010: 2).

Hence, from the study in this chapter, it is found that despite the implementation of Millennium Development Goals, there is still gender imbalance in the distribution of female and male legislators in the National Assembly. It is found here that there is still gender discrimination in the Nigerian politics as seen in the National Assembly. The highest percentage representation of women being 8.26 against 91.7 male senators and 7.50 against 92.50 males in the Sixth Assembly respectively. This validates the hypothesis that- the implementation of MDG-3 has not balanced the proportion of female legislators in relation to their male counterparts in the National Assembly. This is to say that with the little progress so far, the probability of Nigeria achieving MDG-3 in 2015 is at stake.

CHAPTER FOUR

ECONOMIC BASE AND WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

In this chapter, we test our hypothesis two which states that poor economic base mitigates women's active representation in the National Assembly.

4.1 Conceptualizing Economic Base

In Marxist theory, human society consists of two parts: the base and superstructure. The base comprehends the forces and relations of production, that is, the employer-employee work conditions, the technical division of labour and property relations into which people enter to produce the necessities and amenities of life. These relations determine society's other relationships and ideas, which are described as its superstructure. The superstructure of a society includes its culture, institutions, political power structure, roles, education, rituals and state. The base determines (conditions) the superstructure, yet their relation is not strictly casual because the superstructure often influences the base. The base however, predominates. Hence, according to Marx (1859:182), in his *Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, noted that:

In social relations of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which raises a legal and political structure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.

The base therefore, entails economic elements as well as the whole productive relationships. Historically, the superstructure varies and develops unevenly in society different activities, for instance, art, belief, economics, politics, education, etc.

Furthermore, Ake (1981:4), maintains that it is the economic factor which is the decisive of all the elements of society and which largely determines the character of others. He insists that there is the interaction of the different elements of social life, especially economic structure, social structure, political structure and the belief system. Here, it is the economic factor which provides the axis around which all the movement takes place, and imparts certain orderliness to the interaction. Ake recognizes the primacy of material or economic conditions. He maintains that “those from the economically privileged groups tend to be better educated, more cultured, to have higher social status, to be more successful professionally and politically” (Ake 1981:2). Certainly, those who are privileged economically, tend to preserve the existing social order meaning that inequality tends to reproduce itself endlessly in a series of other inequalities.

The above proposition and explanation shows the importance of economic conditions in understanding society. Hence, it helps to understand the nature of social relations that exists between the male group and the female group in the society, and in term of political marginalization of women.

4.2 Economic Condition of the Post-Independent Nigerian Women

Nigeria is a patriarchal society where male superiority and preference prevails. The situation brings about women’s discrimination in the society which shapes their life patterns including their economic well-beings. In this regards, the Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition Report 2008:51 asserts that discrimination against women in Nigerian society limits women’s

involvement in the industrialized sectors. It also reports that gender stereotypes also limit women's involvement in professional fields such as in Medicine, Information and Communication Technology, Engineering etc. Women are predominantly seen in the informal sectors engaging in small-scale agricultural work, food processing and marketing inputs. The government usually does not regulate these fields on informal work dominated by women and, therefore, women remain economically marginalized.

Acknowledged by this report, women's access to loan from finance houses is very limited due to various discriminatory internal policies. Sometimes, women are asked to get a male guarantor or to access loans through their husbands. Most women are out rightly unaware of or unable to comprehend the usually complex credit policies and hence could not access them. This area has also been left unregulated by the government. The Federal Government's budget has also not been gender sensitive so far, as the Federal Ministries of Women Affairs and Social Development usually have financial challenge, while the budgets assigned to other sectors of the economy do not quote specific allocation for gender needs.

It is observed that most women in Nigeria do not have access to land, as they could not inherit family land and other immovable properties due to some customary practices. Even the Land Use Act also makes it difficult for the poor, majority of who are women to own land. There is no tax relief/reduction for married women with children whose husbands are still alive, even when such women are breadwinners. Although the government reported this as a challenge, there are no measures in place to address this issue.

With the advent of democratic transition in May 1999, various economic reform strategies aimed at debt reduction, poverty alleviation and wealth creation were launched. The National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), was launched in March

2004. NEEDS is the government's blue print for economic recovery and reconstruction. It is aimed at restoring the nation on the path of real economic growth and development, nationalize the provision of NEPAD and also move towards the actualization of the MDGs and the Beijing Platform for Action.

There were also government policies established by the government in order to promote and empower women in the rural Nigeria. These were The National Economic and Empowerment Development Strategies (NEEDS); the State Economic and Empowerment Development Strategies (SEEDS); the Local Economic and Empowerment strategy (LEEDS); and the National Gender Policy in 2006. These were the measures and programmes aimed at reinforcing women's economic well-being in the rural areas. As acknowledged on the page 5 of the 2004 WIN report on the Status of Women in Nigeria, rural women represent 76% of the entire population in the rural areas and constitute the larger percentage of the poor; they are less educated and majority of them engage largely in small scale agriculture and petty trading. Women also form the larger part of the labour and production force, which produce over 70% of the nation's food supply, but they have access to less than 15% of the resources available in the agricultural sector. Their indispensable labour is unacknowledged, unpaid for, and poorly taken into account in national development plans and policies

The pro-poverty reduction strategies of the past government of Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007), such as NEEDS (2004) and SEEDS (2005) have not helped the situation of Nigerian women in rural areas, as their implementation has been fraught with great challenges. The strategies in sectoral employment policy as articulated by NEEDS/SEEDS that are meant to empower rural women ranged from increased productivity of small farmers; new jobs in rural

areas rising from improved rural infrastructure; and rural telecommunication. However, there is nothing to show that these strategies are being implemented in rural areas.

The efforts of the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development indifferent skills acquisition and training programmes have done little or nothing to reduce poverty level among women because most of the beneficiaries of the training and skills programme lack the take-off capital to establish a trade. As stated in the government report, 58.70% of the beneficiaries only acquired skills. Skills acquisition alone is not enough if it is not backed up with adequate financial assistance. This becomes imperative as the number of women below the poverty line is 65% compared to that of men which is 35%, and women's purchasing power is also very low. (The National Gender Policy, 2006: 4-5.)

On the property right, the various customary laws operative in most parts of Nigeria still regard women as part of the property owned by her husband and that all properties acquired during the subsistence of the marriage belongs to the husband, even where she has contributed to the acquisition and development of the property. At divorce, she is not entitled to maintenance and custody of the children of the marriage. She also loses the right to be accommodated by her ex husband even where she is granted the custody of very young children.

In terms of employment, the Nigerian Constitution does not guarantee the right to work. The closest Constitutional provision on means of livelihood is enshrined in Chapter II of the Constitution, which is non-justiceable. Furthermore, the language does not denote it as rights. Section 17(3) provides that "The State shall direct its policy towards ensuring that-

- (a) All citizens, without discrimination on any group whatsoever, have the opportunity for securing adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunity to secure suitable employment;
- (b) Conditions of work are just and humane, and that there are adequate facilities for leisure and for social, religious and cultural life;
- (c) The health, safety and welfare of all persons in employment are safeguarded;
- (e) There is equal pay for equal work without discrimination on account of sex, or on any other ground whatsoever;
- (f) The evolution and promotion of family life is encouraged.”

Discrimination in employment and wages is still rampant in both the government and private sector despite the fact that Nigeria is signatory to the International Labour Organization Convention 111, which deals with discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. For instance, it is noted in the National Gender Policy (2004:4), that the composition of the work force in the Federal Civil Service which is the largest single-entity employer in Nigeria is inclined in favour of men as 76% of the work force is men whilst women comprise 24%. Women hold less than 14% of total management level positions in the Federal Civil Service. In the medical field, which involves highly skilled and relatively well-remunerated work, women represent 17.5% and men 82.5% of those employed. The extractive industry with annual business volume of over US\$42m has almost zero level participation of women.

CEDAW Report 2008 noted that, Women are responsible for carrying out 70% of agricultural labour, 50% of animal care related activities and 60% of food processing activities. Despite the role that women play in the agricultural sector, their contributions are not valued or recognized nor are they reflected in the National Accounting Systems. Consequently, the issues and concerns of women employed in the agricultural sector have been largely overlooked in programs dedicated to improving agricultural productivity. Women have access to less than 20% of available agricultural resources, a serious impediment to maximizing agricultural production.

Men are generally presumed to be the chief actors in agricultural production and, as such, are often the main participants in and/ or recipients of program-related support. The Millennium Development Goals Report (2010:24) has affirmed to this by observing that Women are overrepresented in informal employment, with its lack of benefits and security.

Institutional practices and perceptions of gender roles also have an impact on the equitable enjoyment of privileges and incentives, in both urban and rural settings. A case in point is the tax regime, which generally assumes that male ‘breadwinners’ bear the sole responsibility of meeting the financial and material needs of the families and neglect to acknowledge the existence of female-headed households. Accordingly, tax benefits related to child care are restrictively granted to male workers (also excluding single mothers and divorced women with children in their care as well as married women, some of whom, are family breadwinners), as a result of being denied access to these benefits, the affected women tend to pay relatively higher taxes.

As identified by the Nigeria’s Report on the Beijing Platform for Action by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs (2004:18), Implementation of the initiatives and programmes aimed at women’s increased participation in decision-making are being hindered among other factors by:

- Patriarchal political system/Male preference in politics.
- Disadvantaged economic status of women.
- Lack of human and financial resources for training and advocacy for political careers.

The Report maintains that despite general acceptance of the need for a gender balance in decision-making bodies at all levels, a gap between de jure and de facto equality has persisted and there is only very little improvement in the level of involvement of women in decision-making and still a long way to go to the minimum 30% limit. On this ground, the MDGs Report

2010 asserts that Women are slowly rising to political power, but mainly when boosted by special measures like,Electoral systems, quota arrangements and other affirmative action. Hence, economic factors pose a serious challenge to women’s election and representation in the National Assembly.

4.3 Formal Education and the Nigerian Women

Backwardness in women education has been a serious concern to the global society. Osuofia et al (2009:81), has acknowledged that the backwardness in terms of women education can be traced to the traditions and cultures of Africans in general and Nigeria in particular. In Nigeria, different roles have been assigned to the male and female child. According to Osuofia et al, the male child is expected to be the head of the family while a female child is brought up with the notion of being subservient and taking care of the home. As a result of this, men were taught hunting, fishing, wrestling etc in the olden days and were more educated with the introduction of formal or western education. The women on the other hand were prepared and taught how to manage the family and excite the husband. Faseke (2001:2) points out that while this sex role has encouraged the boys to excel, it tends to discourage the girls from excelling.

In Nigerian society, the responsibility assigned to boys prepares them to be creative and innovative while the girls are expected to be gentle, docile and timid in preparation for marriage. The situation is still felt in the present Nigeria as the CEDAW Report (2008:39), asserts that disparity in educational opportunities still pervade the Nigerian environment. It maintains that “the non-discrimination educational opportunities in Nigeria tend to be circumscribed by the patriarchal structures and negative gender stereotypes that are pervasive in our society”-pg35.

This has negatively affected the education of women in formal education as most parents especially in rural areas are of the view that after training their females in line with formal education, they end up getting married into another man's family where they will have and train their children. Because of this, parents believe that girl's education is for another man and so, waste of money.

Osuofia et al (2009:81), have maintained that education of both male and female is important for the civilization and development of any nation and also for the actualization of Millennium Development Goals. They also note that despite the fact that education is important for development, women education has been neglected in Nigeria in spite of their huge population which form 49.69% of the total population and hence, almost half of the populace. Quoting SAPA 1993, they hold that 61% of the total female population falls under illiterate group as against 37.7% literate male population, while being of the view that this discrepancy is completely unacceptable if Nigeria is to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. In line with this, Saadawi (1980:1) argues that it is not possible to escape the fact that the under privilege status of women and their relative backwardness lead to essential backwardness in society as a whole. Hence, Osuofia et al maintain that it has become extremely important that if the MDGs were to be achieved by the year 2015, the government must encourage the education of females as well as put a stop to early child marriage of girls.

The efforts of Nigerian government in education have not yielded significant positive results on girl's and women education. Girl-child educational attainment in Nigeria is still low, especially in the Northern Nigeria. The 2004 Nigeria's Report on the implementation of Beijing Platform of Action asserts that:

The literacy Gender Parity Index (LGPI) remains about 0.8%. Although the women adult literacy rate declined from 44 to 41%, only little progress has been made in eliminating the wide gender gap. Further desegregation of the literacy figures on zonal, sectoral and age-wise show consistently higher literacy rates for males. The higher the education level, the less the percentage of girls compared to boys. The gender gap in educational enrolment is higher in the Northern States with average of about 21% and 1.8% in the Southern States(NRIBPA, 2004: 8).

The National Planning Commission and UNICEF (2001) noted that at the primary level, there were stark geographical disparities in access to education in the North as the greatest disadvantaged area in the Federation. They noted that in 1996, the gross enrolment ratio (GER) was below 20percent in several northern states and below 15percent in Jigawa, Kastina, Sokoto and Yobe whereas, some southern states were in the 50-60 percent range. In junior secondary enrolment girls remained doubly at a disadvantage in most northern states especially in the rural areas, not only were overall enrolment rates much lower than in the south, but proportionately fewer girls were enrolled. Nwangwu and Ifeanacho (2009:137), observe that in Northern Nigeria,(among the Hausa ethnic group), women's education hinges on two things, namely, knowledge of religion (Islam) and loyalty to the husband). The society does not regard the high literacy attainment of a woman as the husband may decide to prevent his wife from working.

Also, the 2008 Nigeria's CEDAW Report acknowledges that:

Disparity still exists in literacy rate between men and women, male adult literacy rate is 70.1 % compared to female adult literacy which is 54.6%75. The tertiary education sub-sector presents a more gruesome picture. The percentage of females in higher education in Nigeria is 39.9%; a wide disparity also exists in traditionally male dominated disciplines such as the field of engineering. The ratio of girls to boys in technology oriented disciplines, especially the field of engineering is about 1:20 (female/male) (CEDAW, 2008: 39).

The report blames the situation to lack of political will on the part of Nigerian government to ensure that every Nigerian child especially female children have access to quality basic education. It is also of the view that the impact of full market liberalization of Nigeria's economy and its integration into the global economy especially since 2003 has impacted negatively on the right of the girl-child to education. While the girl-child and the boy-child suffer economic dislocation as a result of neo-liberal economic policies, the girl-child, because of her culturally constructed position as the domestic gender suffer even more. As a result of this, many girl-children drop out of school while many others are withdrawn to raise funds for the education of the boy-children, or to take care of the elderly, the sick and the young ones.

From the above study, it is obvious that Female education in Nigeria still has a long way go in order to meet the present challenge of development. A country like Nigeria must add more power on its elbow in order to see that the female populace is properly educated for a better society.

4.4 Patriarchy, Masculinity and Male Dominance in Nigeria

Patriarchy structure has been a major feature of the Nigerian traditional society. Olabisi (1998:6), while acknowledging that Nigerian society has been a patriarchy society from time immemorial, maintains that there are clearly defined sex roles, while various taboos ensure conformity with specified gender roles. She maintains that it is a structure of a set of social relations with material base which enables men to dominate women.

The term is seen as a system of male authority which oppresses women through its social, political and economic institutions. Originally used to describe the power of the father as head of household, the term 'patriarchy' has been used within post 1960s feminism to refer to the

systematic organization of male supremacy and female subordination (Kamarae, 1992; Stacey, 1993; Olabisi, 1998; etc.). It is observed in these literatures that the establishment and practice of male dominance over women and children, is a historic process formed by men and women, with the patriarchal family serving as a basic unit of organization. A patriarchy is considered the head of the household and within the family he controls productive resources, labour force, and reproductive capacities based on the notions of superiority and inferiority and legitimized by differences in gender and generation.

Patriarchy is a system of social stratification and differentiation on the basis of sex, which provides material advantages to males while simultaneously placing severe constraints on the roles and activities of females. On this ground, Karam (1998:1-4), maintain that patriarchy is shown in the existing ideology and practices of states and society by male control in kinship, family, ownership of property, and the exploitation of women remains a source of benefit for men as head of family and head of states alike. Due to the practice in Nigerian culture, the belief is that women should only be socially involved in the home, looking after the family whereas men should be the only participants in public affairs, politics, income generation, decision-making and other public functions. Karam observes that it is believed that women who risk upsetting this creed are regarded as rude and bizarre by their fellow women who are comfortable by their customary ways of thinking.

In the Nigerian context, males are classed as having the qualities of strength, vigour, virile/powerful courage, self-confidence and the ability to meet the outside world. While, women oversee the domestic chores. They kept houses, processed and cooked all foods. They also help in the planting and harvesting of food crops and cash crops. They were primarily responsible for the bearing and rearing of children from birth on; men were only called upon to

assist when extraordinary discipline was considered necessary especially for the boys (Aweda, 1984:184). Nigerian women are also subjected to the control of their husbands. Unmarried women, divorcees and widows are in worse positions in terms of properties and power while single females are considered unacceptable and are given few rights to own land and other possessions. Widows and divorced women are usually subjected to harassment from the society and from the former husband's family.

In the aspect of masculinity and male dominance, there is always male superiority and preference. This is always associated with the roles of both sexes in the family and public places. Roles of men in the family are closely linked to the attributes of masculinity. Brittan (1989), identified some of these attribute of masculinity in his explanation to that. According to him, he maintains that:

Masculinism is the masculine ideology that justifies and naturalizes male domination. As such, it is the ideology of patriarchy. Masculinism takes it for granted that there is a fundamental difference between men and women, it assumes that heterosexuality is normal, it accepts without question the sexual division of labour, and it sanctions the political and dominant role of men in the public and private spheres (Brittan, 1989:4).

But then, Bernard (1981:3), has argued that:

It is not so much the specific kinds of work men and women do – they have always varied from time to time and place to place – but the simple fact that the sexes do different kinds of work, whatever it is, which is in and of itself important. The division of labour by sex means that the work group becomes also a sex group. The very nature of maleness and femaleness becomes embedded in the sexual division of labour. One's sex and one's work are part of one another. One's work defines one's gender.

In the above statement, it means that one's roles determine one's gender and one can easily tell one's sex by the work performed if there should be assignment of roles to genders. This therefore, shall be the basis of analysis of sex. Short (1996), has gone a long way to explain that masculinity is not a biological category as much as a social construct is subject to change, that masculinity is not fixed, it is a relational, constantly shifting attribute defined in relation to the feminine; that masculinity is a site of interconnection and tension with other sources of social differentiation; that masculinity is both lived and imagined desires; and that masculinity is not only socially constructed and reconstructed, it is spatially grounded.

Thus, the study in Nigeria by The Social Sciences and Reproductive Health Research Network, (1999:69) has found that masculinity and manhood are constructed through a gradual, timely, and orderly process, of socially prescribed, family centered and community related roles and responsibilities. The extent of these (male) focused roles is, to a large extent, undertaken by women at the household level, where primary socialization takes place. Boys are taught by their mothers and shown by their fathers how to be a man and they are excused from performing 'female' tasks around the house. Though generally, Nigerian society is patriarchal, yet where matrilineal nature is found such as in Ilaro community in the Western part of the country, there were no observable differences in the expectations of male responsibility. In this line, the CEDAW Report, (2008:19) contends that Socialization in a patriarchal culture like Nigeria makes domestic chores and domestic affairs to be seen as the concern for women while men are associated with occupying public positions. It maintains that some women are perpetrators of sex roles and gender stereotypes due to lack of awareness of the impact of such roles on the promotion and protection of women's rights. Government in their part, in collaboration with

faith based organizations has not created enough awareness programmes to use religion as a vehicle to promote women's rights.

As noted earlier in this chapter, patriarchy, gender roles and stereotypes still dominate all aspect of women's lives in Nigeria, resulting in an unequal access to and unfair distribution of resources. It also accounts for the greater number of females in the informal sector and have impeded economic productivity. Gender stereotypes are reinforced in Nigeria as series of the agents of socialization such as the family, schools, religious institutions, and the media have become custodians as well as disseminators of gender roles, stereotypes, prejudices and discriminatory cultures. Girls and boys grow up in Nigerian society to accept male superiority over female and the patriarchal structure has become the unquestionable phenomenon. The CEDAW Report 2008, notes that the " Teachers, Religious Leaders, Parents, Police Officers and Artistes in Nigeria usually work to promote obnoxious customary beliefs and practices that violate the rights of women. Consequently, customary practices such as female genital mutilation, preference for male-child, and widowhood rites are still prevalent in most parts of Nigeria" (CEDAW, 2008:23).

Gender stereotypes and masculinity in Nigeria are further reinforced by lack of national legislations in protection of women's right, and in Nigerian constitution, economic, social and cultural rights which are of importance to women are not guaranteed despite the fact that these rights are crucial to the promotion and protection of women's human rights and will further aid the full advancement of women. The language of the Constitution is also not gender sensitive, as the pronoun 'he' is used in all places where women and men are referred to. The gender insensitivity of the language and provision of the Constitution is an indication that the government corroborates gender stereotypes. As noted in the chapter three of this study, this

reflects in composition of the work force in the Federal Civil Service which forms the largest single-entity employer in Nigeria. It is noted that 76% of the work force is men whilst women comprise 24% and hold less than 14% of total management level positions in the Federal Civil Service.

In this chapter, we are able to discover that Nigeria is a patriarchal society where discrimination against women prevails. This discrimination in turn, affects negatively, their different aspect of life including their education and economic well-being. Hence, their economic base is poor. It is discovered here that women do not have equal access to formal education and well paid job with men. As a result of this, a higher population of women is mainly represented in the informal and private sectors. This hinders their representation in the National Assembly. Through this, we affirm our second hypothesis that- poor economic base mitigates women's active representation in the National Assembly.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 SUMMARY

In this study, Nigeria is identified to be one of the countries that signed millennium declaration and has been working towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. This study assessed the level of women participation and representation in Nigerian politics with focus on the National Assembly, in achievement of Millennium Development Goal-3 by the year 2015. The study reviewed women's political participation in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Nigeria with a view to showcase women's ability and effectiveness in the art of decision-making. The study also examined the role of women's economic base and formal education as determinant factors in women's participation and representation in the National Assembly, while still assessed gender discrimination in electoral politics. The study was motivated by the desire to provide answers to the following questions:

1. Has the implementation of MDG-3 balanced the proportion of female legislators in relation to that of their male counterparts in the National Assembly?
2. Does poor economic base mitigate women's active representation in the National Assembly?

Marxist Feminism theory was adopted in this study. The theory originated from Marx and Engels. It states that the subordination of women is not as a result of their biological disposition, but from social relations which exist in the family as a complex institution of capitalism. In the family, there is the separation of the public and private areas of life. Men are the superior class in the labour relations and reduced the women to the private life which is the home, hence, private property of men. Here, the contribution of women's unpaid labour to the capitalist economy is also rendered invisible.

The theory is relevant to this study because it helped us to explain why women are marginalized in the public life. It aided to explain and understand gender inequality in political participation and representation in politics as seen in the National Assembly. Through the use of the theory, we understand why the poor economic base of women, and the negative effect of this in women's representation in the National Assembly. We also understand the reason women's contribution and roles in the society are not recognized, as seen in different phases of Nigerian development.

In this study, the research was meant to achieve certain objectives. The broad objective is to interrogate the extent of women's empowerment in Nigerian politics in response to the target of the Millennium Development Goal-3. The study is guided by the following hypotheses:

1. The implementation of MDG-3 has not balanced the proportion of female legislators in relation to their male counterparts in the National Assembly.
2. Poor economic base mitigates women's active representation in the National Assembly.

The work was divided into five chapters. The first chapter contains the introductory aspect of the work. It dwelt on the conventional research requirement such as the introduction, statement of problem, objectives of study, significance of the study, literature review, theoretical framework, hypotheses, method of data collection and method of data analysis.

Chapter two of this study dwelt with the historical overview of women participation in politics in Nigeria. It examined women participation in politics, in different eras of political development in Nigeria. These eras as identified in the study are the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras of political development. It concluded that women has the ability to handle political and decision-making, but are being challenged by some factors which may be social, economic or political.

Chapter three evaluated Nigeria's implementation of the MDG-3. It maintains that MDG-3 seeks balanced inclusion of men and women for equal representation in the parliament. This chapter also examined the level of women's representation in the National Assembly. The study found out that women's representation in the parliament is still very low, far from the target of the MDG-3. This is despite the huge population of women in Nigeria which is not less than 48% of the total population. It found out that the highest representation of women ever in the National Assembly was in the Sixth Assembly which records 8.2% Senators and 7.50% members of the House.

The chapter also examined the level of gender discrimination in Nigeria by looking at the level of women's representation in the electoral politics and political participation in general. It found out that there is still bias and prejudice against women in the political sphere. It concluded that the implementation of MDG-3 has not balanced the proportion of women in the National Assembly in relation to that of their male counterparts. Also, that Nigeria still has a long way to go in achieving this, and this is under probability.

Chapter four of this study examined the economic base of women as it affects their representation in the National Assembly. The research found out that women has poor economic base. As noted in the chapter, women are mainly represented in the low paid and informal sectors, where their contributions and labour are not recognized. They also have poor educational background which renders them uncompetitive with men in the professional and formal sectors. This affects their economic life and poses a barrier to their representation in the National Assembly. The chapter also affirms that patriarchal system in Nigeria poses a serious threat to economic growth of women. It concludes that poor economic base mitigates women's active

representation in the National Assembly. Finally, chapter five dwelt on the summary, conclusion and recommendation.

5.2 CONCLUSION

To conclude this work, we have to assert that despite the constraints and challenges of implementing MDG-3, little progress has been achieved, but there is still much to be done to reach the target specified in the Millennium Development Goal-3 by 2015. Government has only paid lip service to MDG-3 since women are severely excluded from politics, decision-making and leadership positions as seen in the National Assembly. Consequently, Statistical review of women's representation in the National Assembly reveals that women have consistently been marginalized. There seems to be no visible means of addressing the economic marginalization of women. There are neither national laws, or effective policies and programmes by political parties and the government to ensure that many women are elected and appointed into the Parliament. Government should work hard to actualizing MDG-3 because, it holds the key to further progress on all of the MDGs and is essential to meeting the promise of social justice outlined in the Millennium Declaration.

Based on our investigation so far, we therefore state as follows:

1. There is still gender imbalance in the legislative representation in the National Assembly, despite the implementation of MDG-3.
2. Poor economic base of women contributes to women underrepresentation in the National Assembly.

The above findings validated our hypothesis as stated in chapter one of the research. We therefore conclude that Millennium Development Goals has not really given way to women empowerment in Nigerian politics. Our recommendation in this study s based on our findings. Hence, we recommend that:

- There is need for the Nigerian government to step up action towards ensuring equal represented of female and male in the National Assembly.
- Reserving spaces for women in the National Assembly forums and putting in place measures for them to participate meaningfully.
- Political Parties should have a quota system of proportional representation of women and men.
- Government should pay greater attention to the efforts to ensure women's ownership of land and other properties through policy formulation reform, revision of the legal systems and changing customary practices.
- Government should enable women have access to higher skilled jobs, through improving education opportunities and eliminating discrimination in labour markets.
- The Nigerian Government should recognize the high premium placed on education in National Development and ensure that every Nigerian child especially the girl-child has access to functional, free and compulsory basic education.
- Government should demonstrate requisite political will to confront patriarchy, and ensure that all the cultural barriers against the girl-child's right to education are removed so as to bridge the gender gap in access and opportunity to education. The recommendation is not limited by these above. However, it is expected that these few suggestions will go a long way in addressing the issue we found out in the course of this study.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books:

- Ake, C.(1981). *A Political Economy of Africa*. USA, Nigeria: Longman Publishers.
- Asika, N.(2006). *Methodology in the Behavioral Science*. Lagos: Longman.
- Coquery-Vidrovitch, C. (1997).*African women: A Modern History*. Boulder, Colo: Westview Press.
- Faseke, M.(20010. *The Nigerian Women: Her Economic and Socio-Political Status in Time Perspective*. Ibadan: Agape Publications.
- Gailey, H. (1970). *The Road to Aba: a Study of British Administrative Policy in Eastern Nigeria*. United States: New York University Press.
- Marx, K.(1959). *A Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Mba, N. (1982). *Nigerian Women Mobilized*. Berkeley: Institute of International Studies University of California.
- Obasi, I.N (1999). *Research Methodology in Political Science*.Nsukka: Academic Publishing Company.
- Ojiakor, N. et al (1991). *Nigerian Socio-Political Development Issues and Problems*. Enugu: John Jacob Publishers.
- Okolie,M.(2004). *Political Behaviour*. Enugu: Academic Publishing Company.
- Saawi, N.(1980). *The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab World*. London: Zed Book Ltd.
- Sapiro, V. (1983).*The Political Integration of Women Role*. London: Wionois University Press.
- Selltiz, C. et al (1977). *Research Methods in Social Relations*.London: Methuen and Co. Ltd.

Book Chapters

- Aina, I.(1998). “Women, Culture and Society” in S. Amadu and A. Odebiyi (eds.), *Nigerian Women in Society and Development*. Ibadan: Dokun Publishing House.
- Ifeka-Moller, C.(1975). “Female Militancy and Colonial Revolt: The Women’s War

of 1929, Eastern Nigeria”. In Ardener, S.(ed.), *Perceiving Women*. London: Malaby Press Limited.

Karam, A.(1998). “Power, Democracy and Women in the Middle-East”, in Karam and Zadar (eds), *Islam(2000): Critical Insights*. London, Pluto Press.

Kramarae, C.(1992). “The condition of Patriarchy” in Kramarae, C, and S. Dale(eds.), *The Knowledge Explosion: Generation of Feminist Scholarship*. London: Teachers College Press.

Sa’ad, A. (2001). “Traditional Institutions and the Violation of Women’s Human Rights in Africa: The Nigerian Case”. In S. Rwomire (ed.), *African Women And Children: Crisis and Response*. United States of America: Praeger Publishers.

Stacey, J.(1993). “Untangling Feminist Theory” in Richardson, D. and V. Robinson(eds.), *Introducing Women’s Studies: Feminist Theory and Practice*. London: Macmillan.

Government and Official Documents:

Az-Zubair, H.A. (2010) “Success and Challenges of Implementing and Monitoring MDGs-Related Projects”. A Publication of Federal Government of Nigeria.

CEDAW(2008). Coalition Shadow Report on the Review of the Government of Nigeria’s 6th Periodic Century Report (2004-2008) on the Implementation of CEDAW in Nigeria. Submitted to the 41st Session of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women. New York.

ECA, (2005) The Millennium Development Goals in Africa: Progress and Challenges. A Publication of Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa.

Human Development Report(2003).

INEC(2003ion). *Compendium of Results of the 2003 General Elections*, Vol.1: Presidential and National Assembly Elections, INEC, Abuja.

INEC(2003). *Compendium of Results of the 2003 General Elections*, Vol.11: Governorship and State Assembly Elections, INEC, Abuja.

INEC(2003). *Preliminary Results of the 2007 General Elections*. Abuja: INEC.
Laws of the Federation of Nigeria(2004).

Ministry of Women Affairs, (2004) "Nigeria's Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and Common Wealth Plan of Action". A Publication of Federal Ministry of Women Affairs. April, 2004.

Muhammed, S.(2006). "Enhancing Women Participation in Politics and Governance", *Nigeria's 2007 General Elections: The Critical Challenges Ahead*. Abuja: INEC.

National Assembly Statistical Information (2008:43)

National Gender Policy(2006).

Ogunmola, D and I.(2010), Meeting the Challenges of the Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria: Problems, Possibilities and Prospects. A Publication of Center for Peace Studies, University of New England, Australia.

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Lagos: Federal Government Press.

UNDP, *Human Development Report (2005). International Cooperation at a Crossroads: Aid, Trade and Security in an Unequal World*. New York: Oxford University Press.

UNIFEM(2010). Gender Justice: Key to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

United Nations(2010). *The Millennium Development Goals Report*. New York: United Nations.

Women Advocates Research Documentation (Gender Audit of 2003).

Women in Nigeria(1994). A Report on the Status of Women in Nigeria.

Journals Articles

Agbalajobi, D.T (2010) "Women's Participation and the Political Process in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects", *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, Vol. 4, N02.

Allen, Van Judith (1972). "Sitting on a Man": Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women. *JSTOR: Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines*, Vol. 6, No. 2.

Arowolo, D and Aluko, F.S. (2010). "Women and Political Participation in Nigeria". *European Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 14, N0.4.

- Awe, B. and N. Mba(1991). "Women, Family, State, and Economy in Africa".
Women's Research and Documentation Center (Nigeria).*JSTOR: Signs*.Vol. 16, No. 4.
- Aweda, A.(1984). "Sex-Role Inequalities in the African Family: Contemporary
Implications".*Ife Social Sciences Review*, Vol. 7, No. 1 & 2.
- Bernard, J.(1981). "The Good-Provider role: Its rise and Fall". American
Democratic Politics and Sustainable Development in Africa".*Journal of Sustainable
Development in Africa*, Vol. 12, No.4.
- Duke, J. (2010). "The Dynamics of Women Participation in Nigeria".*European Journal of Social
Sciences*.Volume 14, No.4.
- Johnson, C. (1982)."Grass Roots Organizing: Women in Anticolonial Activity in
Southwestern Nigeria". *JSTOR: African Studies Review*.Vol. 25, No. 2&3.
Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa.Vol.10, No.4, 2009.
- Omotola, J.S. (2007) "What is this Gender Talk All About After All? Gender, Power
and Politics in Contemporary Nigeria". *African Study Monographs*, 28 (1):33-46
"Process in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects", *African Journal of Political Science and
International Relations*, Vol. 4, N02.

Seminar Papers:

- AFRODAD, (2005) The Politics of MDGs and Nigeria: A Critical Appraisal of the
Global Partner for Development (Goal8).A Publication of African Forum and Network
on Debt and Development, Harare.
- National Planning Commission and UNICEF (2001). Children's and Women's Rights
in Nigeria; A Wake-Up call. National Planning Commission Abuja, Nigeria and
UNICEF.
- Okoronkwo, C.C (2001). Gender Inequalities in Nigerian Politics.Ph.D Thesis,
Selton Hall University.
- Rehavi, M. (2007). Sex and Politics: Do Female Legislators Affect State Spending?
Job Market Paper.
- Temi, H. (2006) Is there a Future for Democracy in Nigeria? A Text of public
lecture delivered by Honourable, member for Warri Federal Constituency, House of
Representatives of Nigeria, at the Department of International Development, Oxford
University, on Monday 5th June 2006.

The Social Science and Reproductive Health Research Network(1999).

Websites:

Eze, N. (2011), Gender, Conflict and MDGs. Retrieved on 30th February 2011 from www.womenforwomen.org.uk.

Idowu S.(2010). As National Assembly Mobilizes Support for MDGs. Called on 7th March, 2011 from <http://www.tribune.com.ng/index.php/nationalassembly>.

William Easterly (2007), How the Millennium Development Goals are Unfair to Africa. Retrieved from www.brookings.edu/global

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marxist-feminism>

<http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/documents/07>

Wikipedia (2010) millennium development Goals: