



Accountability Brief

A Policy Brief on Political Party Administration and Governance in Nigeria: Levels of Gender Mainstreaming and Factors Affecting Women Participation

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Rule of Law & Empowerment Initiative – Partners West Africa-Nigeria
Number 46 Mike Akhigbe Way, Jabi, Abuja.
Phone: +234 809 125 7245

Political Party Administration and Governance in Nigeria: Levels of Gender Mainstreaming and Factors Affecting Women Participation



Executive Summary

Political parties in Nigeria should be compelled to adhere to the provisions of the National Gender Policy and INEC should set up a monitoring framework to compel compliance with a view to agreeing with stakeholders on the penalty that should be meted out to political parties that do not comply.



BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

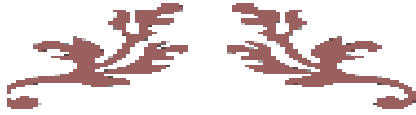
As key institutions of democracy and the political process, political parties should not only provide the platform for democratic accountability, but most importantly, they provide for political representation and inclusivity, especially for the marginalized groups, namely, women, youth and people living with disabilities. Most fundamentally, the inclusion of women and their active participation, especially in party administrative structures are prerequisites for democratic advancement and good governance.

In Nigeria, there are legal and policy frameworks for the inclusion of women, not just in the political process but also in the political party administrative structures. These frameworks include:

- i. Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended)
- ii. National Gender Policy 2006
- iii. Electoral Act 2010 (as amended)
- iv. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Gender Policy 2011
- v. Revised Code of Conduct for Political Parties in Nigeria 2018
- vi. The Constitutions and manifestoes of political parties.

These frameworks clearly provide for gender mainstreaming in leadership positions within the political party structures. However, the extent to which these frameworks have informed significant inclusion of women in the administrative structures of political parties in Nigeria remains debatable.

For instance, Article 12.76(1) of the Constitution of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) relating to the composition of the Board of Trustees, states that:



There shall be a Board of Trustees of the party which shall consist of: ... (d) All founding fathers and founding mothers of the party; (e) Two women selected from each of the six geo-political zones; (f) Three members at least one of whom shall be a woman from each of the six geo-political zones; ... Former Deputy Presidents of the Senate and Deputy Speakers of the House of Representative, who are still members of the Party.



Similarly, Article 12.2(x) of the Constitution of the All Progressive Congress (APC), relating to the composition of the Board of Trustees, provides that the Board of Trustees shall be composed as follows:

- *One woman from each geo-political Zone of the Country nominated by the Zonal Committee for consideration, and subsequent recommendation by the National Working Committee to the National Executive Committee for approval.*

The regulatory and administrative frameworks for all the political parties represented in the National Assembly have provisions for gender mainstreaming and affirmative action. However, the political parties show minimal or no commitment in implementing these provisions and where there is a semblance of implementation, such as in the ADP, APC and PDP, it is only limited to the positions of Women Leaders, which exist as mere tokenism.

Pogoso, I. A. (2012). Gender, Political Parties and the Reproduction of Patriarchy in Nigeria: A

The foregoing clearly indicates that quotas allocated to women in the party constitutions, relating to the composition of the administrative structures of political parties such as the Boards of Trustees, National Working Committees, Party Caucuses and Congresses, which are powerful organs in the parties are, as Irene Pogoso would argue, “mere tokenism.”¹

Using political parties with representation in the National Assembly (Action Alliance [AA], Action Democratic Party [ADP], African Democratic Congress [ADC], All Progressives Congress [APC], All Progressives Grand Alliance [APGA], Allied Peoples Movement [APM], People’s Democratic Party [PDP], Peoples Redemption Party [PRP], and Social Democratic Party [SDP]) as focus, this study:

- i. Undertook an analysis of the political party structure in Nigeria to ascertain levels of gender mainstreaming.
- ii. Identified push and pull factors affecting women’s participation within the party administration; and
- iii. Conducted a comparative analysis across the focal political parties to highlight good and bad practices.

2. REGULATORY AND ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES OF POLITICAL PARTIES

The Constitution of the Federal Republic, the Electoral Act,

Reflection on the Democratization Process, 1999-2011, *Journal of African Election*, 11(1): 100-122.

political party constitutions, manifestos, Code of Conduct and the INEC Guidelines for political parties are the fundamental regulatory frameworks for the organization and administration of political parties. Structurally, the political parties are organized and administered at the Ward, Local Government, Senatorial, State, Zonal, and National levels.



In Nigeria, politics has been highly unpredictable, violent and indecent with critical meetings holding very late at night This has tended to keep women away from participation



Key Findings

In its governance structure, the ADP, as enshrined in its constitution, is committed to ensuring that as much as practicable, 25% of the Executive Council positions at the Zonal, State, Local Government, Ward and Polling Unit, are made up of women, while at the National level, 20% of the National Executive Committee shall be women.

The APC have provision for National Women Leader, and Women Leaders across all levels of administration, and a special provision for Polling Unit Women Mobiliser. However, the constitution of the APC is silent on internal quotas or statement on gender inclusion to ensure women's participation in party governance. In its aims and objectives, APGA seeks to uphold the Beijing Declaration on affirmative action for women. Apart from the National Women Leader, it provides for a Deputy National Women Leader, and six Assistant National Women Leaders. Also, the ADC have put in place strategies to carry along and empower women. It has internal quotas for women in its leadership structure. For instance, two women are appointed into special

committees at the Ward levels and the Senatorial Districts.

From their constitution, the PDP seek to “support the emancipation and participation of women by encouraging their representation at all levels”, so “in nomination for party offices at least 35% shall be allocated to women.” The PDP have provision of a quota for women across levels of party governance. For instance, apart from the provision for women leader in each level of administration, there is a special provision for two women out of five other members elected at the Ward Congress and at least two women of five ex-officio members at the Local Government levels.

Equally, the SDP seek to create opportunities to encourage the full development of the political, social, cultural and economic potentials of women. In its governance structure, the party only has provision for women leaders at the National, State and Local Government levels. Women can, however, compete with their male counterpart for other available positions.

The above shows that the regulatory and administrative frameworks for all the political parties represented in the National Assembly have provisions for gender mainstreaming and affirmative action. However, the political parties show minimal or no commitment in implementing these provisions and where there is a semblance of implementation, such as in the ADP, APC and PDP, it is only limited to the positions of Women Leaders, which exist as mere tokenism. The perception of outsiders is that these positions are

mainly for women mobilization and organization during elections.

Political parties continue to disregard or are selective in the implementation of the provisions of the regulatory frameworks for gender equality because there are no consequences for their minimal compliance or noncompliance, which permeates a culture of limiting the participation of women in party administration

3. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ACROSS POLITICAL PARTIES

3.1 GOOD PRACTICES

Findings

All the political parties have leadership structures at the National, Zonal, Senatorial, State, Local Government, Ward, and Polling Unit levels. At each of these levels, there are female representations in leadership, however, mostly as Women Leaders, Deputy Women Leaders or Assistant Women Leaders. None of the political parties has provisions in their constitutions for Affirmative Action, except for the ADP, which provides that as much as practicable, 25% of the Executive Council positions at the Zonal, State, Local Government, Ward and Polling Unit will be made up of women, while at the National level, 20% of the National Executive Committee will be made up of women.

Based on its philosophy of providing support for the emancipation and participation of women by encouraging representation at all levels, the PDP have an unwritten policy of nominating 35% of positions in party administration for women.

This may well explain the reason the party produced the highest number of female members in the Senate.

Thus, the ADP and PDP are distinct, with the presence of formal rules and/or practices aimed at increasing the number of women in their party administration and governance.

Other parties studied appear to be conscious of the need to commit to legitimizing issues of gender mainstreaming fully. For example, APGA's commitment to upholding the Beijing Declaration on affirmative action for women has led to the creation of positions for Deputy National Women Leader and Assistant National Women Leader to accommodate more women within its party administration. This deliberate strategy has also been put in place at the Zonal, State, Senatorial and Ward levels for women in its leadership structure. For example, two women are appointed into special committees at the Ward levels.

3.2 BAD PRACTICES

Key Findings

The constitutions and manifestos of the other political parties studied do not have deliberate provisions aimed at gender mainstreaming in party administration and governance beyond the creation of offices for Women Leaders and their deputies at all levels of party administration. The worst culprit is the SDP, which only has provision for Women Leaders at the National, State and Local Government levels in its governance structure.

4. FACTORS AFFECTING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PARTY ADMINISTRATION

Several factors exist in political parties that limit women participation in party administration. These factors include the conditions, nature and pattern of party formations, lack of deliberate policy provisions for gender mainstreaming in party

administration, excessive monetization of party administration, intra-party violence, among others.

4.1 CONDITIONS, NATURE AND PATTERN OF POLITICAL PARTY FORMATION

In Nigeria, especially in the Fourth Republic, most political party structures and machinery are controlled and run by a motley group of individuals variously described as “godfathers”, “founding fathers” and “party leaders.” Thus, political relationship within the parties is essentially one between godfathers and patrons that decide which client gets what, when and how.² This has resulted in political parties that are characterized by lack of inclusiveness and absence of internal party democracy, which is a function of the degree of institutionalization, inclusiveness, and decentralization. This has implications for women participation in party administration.

4.2 ABSENCE OF DELIBERATE POLICIES FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN *Party Administration*

Apart from ADP and PDP, none of the parties surveyed has focused policies aimed at mainstreaming gender in the party administration. Even the ADP and PDP which have such policies have failed to ensure implementation so as to

give it life. For the PDP, it is a practice which is not documented as a written policy or as part of the constitution of the party. This most likely explains the reason for not much difference between these albeit ‘progressive parties’ and others in the inclusion of women in the party administration or governance structure.

4.3 EXCESSIVE MONETIZATION OF PARTY ADMINISTRATION

In Nigeria, party formation, structuring and administration, by law is capital intensive. For instance, as part of the procedure for filing registration application, intending parties are to pay a non-refundable administrative fee of one million naira (N1,000,000). It is also required that political parties will have offices and administrative staff in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and in 24 states of the federation.³ If political parties wish to merge, they are required to pay one hundred million naira (N100,000,000).⁴ This is affecting women’s involvement in party administration. Not only do women struggle to raise funds needed to be part of the founding members of political parties, they also do not have the funds needed to contest elections into administrative positions in political parties due to the excessive monetization of the process.

²See Ibrahim, J. (2014). “Introduction: Engaging Political Parties for Democratic Development” in Olu Obafemi, et.al (eds.), *Political Parties and Democracy in Nigeria* (Kuru: National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, NIPSS, pp. 1-18.

³ See INEC Guideline for Registration of New Political Parties, 2014, pp.3-7.

⁴ See Section 83(3)(c) of the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended).

⁵ Ogbonnaya, U. M. (2019). Women in North Central Nigeria: From Voters to Electorates and Contestants. In Kwaja, C.M.A., Ahmadu-Haruna, V., and Duamwan, M. (eds.) *Voices from Below and Above: The Dynamics of Women’s Participation in the Political Process in Nigeria*. Abuja: Cephos and Clems Nig. Ltd for Partners West Africa-Nigeria.

4.4 INTRA-PARTY WRANGLING AND VIOLENCE

The violence and brigandage that has characterized politics, especially in the Fourth Republic, has contributed to impeding the participation of women in party administration. In Nigeria, politics has been “highly unpredictable, violent and indecent with critical meetings holding very late at night.”⁵ This has tended to keep women away from participation.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Section 223(1) (b) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) should be amended to read:
223. (1) The constitution and rules of a political party shall-
(a) Provide for the periodical election on a democratic basis of the principal officers and members of the executive committee or other governing body of the political party; and
(b) Ensure that the members of the executive committee or other governing bodies of the political party reflect the federal character of Nigeria [**and Nigeria Gender Policy 2006**].
- ii. The INEC Guidelines for registration of political parties

Political parties in Nigeria should be compelled to adhere to the provisions of the National Gender Policy and INEC should set up a monitoring framework to compel compliance with a view to agreeing with stakeholders on the penalty that should be meted out to political parties that do not comply.

should make specific and deliberate provisions for gender mainstreaming in the leadership of political parties, at all levels beyond the usual creation of the offices of Women Leaders. For instance, Section 3(e)(iv) should be amended to read “a provision that the membership of the National Executive or other governing bodies of the association at the [**National, State, Local Government and Ward levels**] reflect the Federal Character Principle of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) and [**and Nigeria Gender Policy 2006**].

- iii. Political parties should have constitutions that deliberately and consciously reflect the ideology and manifesto of gender mainstreaming in their governance and administrative structures. Beside the office of Women Leader, the constitutions of political parties should provide for 35% affirmative action in all the executive and governing bodies at the National, State, Local Government and Ward levels. The constitutions should also provide that all positions that have deputies should automatically alternate between men and women members.
- iv. Excessive monetization of the party formation, administration and governance remains a fundamental challenge to gender mainstreaming as it results in the exclusion of the poor and vulnerable groups, especially the women, from active participation. The National

Assembly should amend the provisions of the Electoral Act 2010, to reduce the amount payable by political parties seeking to merge from one hundred million naira to one million naira while INEC should reduce the non-refundable administrative fee for the registration of political parties, from one million naira to one hundred thousand naira.

CONCLUSION

There are structural, legal and policy gaps that need to be addressed to provide the opportunity for women to participate effectively in political party governance, leadership and administrative systems. These include the need to review the conditions, nature and pattern of party formations, the institution of deliberate policy provisions for gender mainstreaming in party administration, the creation of monitoring framework for ensuring implementation of the legal and policy frameworks, where they exist, and the reduction of excessive monetization of party administration, intra-party violence, among others. Political parties in Nigeria should be compelled to adhere to the provisions of the National Gender Policy and INEC should set up a monitoring framework to compel compliance with a view to agreeing with stakeholders on the penalty that should be meted out to political parties that do not comply.