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**Augustine Eguavon Ainabor**

Auchi Polytechnic (Nigeria)

**Grace Iyi Ibe-Enwo**

Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic (Nigeria)

## **Analysis of Factors Responsible for the State of Women Participation in Governance in Edo State of Nigeria**

**ABSTRACT.** The paper analyzed the factors responsible for the state of women participation in Governance using Edo State of Nigeria as a case study. It examined the level of influence of women participation in state governance in Edo State of Nigeria. It also assessed as well the extent education influences women participation in the governance of Edo State of Nigeria. In order to achieve the above objectives, two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Questionnaire was used as the primary instrument for data collection. The population of the study was 4,625 key politicians across the three senatorial districts in Edo State while the sample size which was determined using the Taro Yamani formula was 368. The Chi-Square( $X^2$ ) test of proportion was adopted in the analysis of data. After statistically analyzing the data obtained from the primary source, it was found that there is low participation of Edo Women in the governance of Edo State of Nigeria. It was also found that there is a relationship between educational attainment of women and their low participation in the state governance of Edo State of Nigeria. The implication of the study is that there is need for policy action on the part of the state government in order to encourage more women to participate in the governance of the state. The paper recommended among others that the Edo State government should as a matter of deliberate policy, encourage girl-child and women education to enable more women access quality education that will equip them to face men in the field of politics and governance in the state.

**KEYWORDS:** education, gender imbalance, governance, politics, women participation

### **Introduction**

Women's participation in governance the world over has been at the front burner of every political debate. Of the numerous women issues being addressed globally, one notable aspect that is very crucial in attaining the goal of gender equality is giving more women the opportunity to

participate in politics and decision-making. In Nigeria, and Edo State in particular, politics is presumed to be a man's domain, where no woman needs venture into because of the patriarchal nature of our society which tends to promote discrimination against women, low level of education of the girl-child, the traditional perception of women's role in the society, socio-cultural/economic factors militating against women as well as apathy or lack of interest on the part of women. According to the United Nations Statistics Division (2020), data from 133 countries shows that women constitute 2.18 million (36 per cent) of elected members in local deliberative bodies. Only two countries have reached 50 per cent, and an additional 18 countries have more than 40 per cent women in local government.

Worthy of note is the fact that the low representation of women in the governance of Edo State has over the years not received scholarly attention. Women underrepresentation in the governance of Edo State is not only an indication that there has not been a full democracy in place but lack of women in governance means that the state will not be able to benefit from the potentials and contribution of women in terms of the overall development of the state. There is need for Edo state government to consciously promote gender equity in political representation so that both male and female can contribute equally to the overall development of the state. This view is supported by Devlin and Elgie cited in Hadjis (2003), Aderlini (2004), Maveneka (2004), Hamadeh-Banerjee and Hadjis (2013) with regard to the benefits of women's political participation. They have, in their researches, found that women parliamentarians add new dimensions or different emphasis to a range of health, legal and social policy issues, such as HIV/AIDS and property right. That, an increased number of women in parliament in Rwanda, has contributed to setting a platform for development, empowerment and advancement of women in all sectors. Thus, it is strongly believed that increased women participation in the governance of Edo State will promote comprehensive development, empowerment and the advancement of the cause of women and children.

To Adenike (2013), despite being a patriarchal society, Nigeria has a rich history of women breaking the mould to participate in political governance. To her, our pre-colonial history is replete with the exploits of Queen Amina of Zaria, who led armies to drive out invaders from Zaria; and Moremi of Ile-Ife, whose sacrifice for her people speaks of selfless leadership that we are so bereft of these days. Our recent past speaks of prominent women leaders like Fumilayo Ransome Kuti, a crusader and challenger of despotic leaders,

who led Egba women on a protest against taxation, Margaret Ekpo, a prominent civil rights activist; and Hajia Gambo Sawaba, who championed the cause of the oppressed in Northern Nigeria. Iyalode Tinubu of Lagos exemplifies the rich participation of women in the economic scene. The legacies of these women are at risk of extinction (Adenike, 2013). In Edo State of Nigeria, the political arena is not different from other parts of the world as there is political imbalance in favour of men. Women are rendered nearly invisible and excluded from the political space which is often regarded as the male preserve, thereby depriving the state from benefiting from their potentials and contribution to development.

## Literature Review

Oronsaye-Salami (2005), observes that one of the greatest challenges of the Edo woman today, as with all Nigerian women, is her exclusion from the political space and her invisibility in political affairs. Arising from this invisibility, it is obvious that only few Edo women have actually gained access to the political arena in Edo State. Since the creation of Edo State in 1991, women representation in governance has always been minimal below 30% affirmative action as against 50/50 in other parts of the world like Germany (Oronsaye-Salami, 2005). In spite of women's efforts in the mobilization of voters, their contributions are often trivialized. Since women constitute a substantial portion of Edo State's population, excluding them would rob the state of fresh ideas and inputs in governance, thus posing a significant threat to democracy. Arising from the above, it is clear that since the introduction of civil democracy in Nigeria in 1999 till date, governorship and deputy governorship positions, position of speaker or deputy speaker of the legislative house in Edo State have been dominated by the males to the detriment of the females. Besides, there has been no evidence to show that Edo women have ever been given opportunities to contests these posts. There is a need to make a case for Edo women in these positions in the next political dispensation come 2024 governorship election. Edo State is no doubt, wasting precious resources today as she abandons thousands of women, talented women for that matter, who are ready to use their professional expertise in public life, but are unfortunately underrepresented in the positions of political leadership in every sphere in the state.

Women's political participation can be classified as inclusion in the (1) Executive branch as female head of the country, cabinet members, or

heads of the government, (2) Legislative branch, as representatives in the parliament and national assemblies and (3) judicial branch. According to Agbalajobi (2021), there are few women in political and leadership spaces in Nigeria. Currently, only seven (7) out of 109 senators and 22 of the 360 House of Representatives members are women. She went further to explain that factors such as women's poor access to education hence poor access to gainful employment, and high cost of politics prevent women from standing for political positions. Often, women don't have enough money to pay for the mandatory expression of interest and nomination forms required by political parties to run for positions on their platforms. To Aluko (2011), the absence or under-representation of women in the very process of decision-making and implementation undermines the fundamental concept of a democratic form of governance which assumes that participation and representation in all areas and levels of public life should be equally available to women and men. Singh (2011) is of the view that exclusion of women from decision-making in politics more often than not, results in policies and schemes which are at best indifferent to women's realities and at worst, contribute towards their future marginalization. Inclusion of women and giving them power in political institutions furthers involvement of women's voices in decision-making all-round the globe.

According to Banda (2021), the continent has long committed to improve gender equality in political decision-making as shown through the Maputo Protocol that offers specific provisions on women's political participation. At global level, Sustainable Development Goal Five on gender equality provides for the increase and meaningful participation of women in political decision-making. This global agenda to be achieved by 2030 will remain a dream if Africa does not change its systems, practices and policies to ensure that more women sit on the political decision-making table. Dimkpa and Wilcox (2008), in their study titled "Perceptions of Women on Factors responsible for low Female Participation in Politics in Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria", adopted a survey design to study a sample of 200 women comprising 122 married and 78 unmarried women selected from two institutions namely University of Port-Harcourt and University of Port-Harcourt Teaching Hospital, all in Rivers State. The data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and chi-square statistic at 0.05 level significance. The result revealed that lack of finance was the main factor responsible for low participation of females in politics as indicated by 91% of respondents. Others included poor self-image (84.3%), religious attitude (79%), socio-cultural attitude (77%) and

lastly, lack of education (74%). The study however, recommended that the National Council of Women's Society should organize workshops for educating women and campaigning for attitudinal change in them, while Federal Government should fund campaigns for women vying for elective positions among others.

In Kenya, Kasomo (2012) observes that women make up a little above half of the entire population and constitute a critical portion of promoting democratization of political system in the country. However, available data shows that they are underrepresented in political appointments in government. The reason possibly responsible for this state of affairs, could be that adequate attention and solution have not been given to gender issues in electoral politics. This gives upper hand to men to the detriment of women.

Nigeria's Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)/Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) Coalition Shadow Report (2008) states that from the 2006 census, women represent 48.78% of the national population of Nigeria, but this population of women has never found commensurate expression or representation in Nigeria's political life and decision-making processes. Women are underrepresented in the National Assembly, at the State Houses of Assembly, and at the local government councils. They are either completely absent or grossly underrepresented. The report went further to state that the challenge of low participation of women in governance and decision-making is beyond the usual assumption that "there are no suitable women" to occupy vacant positions and or take up political appointments. The systemic denial of women of access to leadership and decision-making is further exacerbated by the patriarchal hierarchy of the Nigerian society.

A UNDP (2009) found that in many states in Nigeria, during the 2007 elections, 15 states (Edo State inclusive) and FCT did not have women as members of their legislative houses. In fact, women's political participation in decision-making in Nigeria has continuously been on the downward trend across states... At the level of government, participation in politics is still dominated by men. Ajibade, Ocheni and Adefemi (2012) in their work "Factors Militating against Women Active Participation in Politics in Ofu Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria" investigated factors working against women in actively participating in politics. The population of the study consists of franchise age which is 18 years and above. A total of 550 women were selected from eleven wards, adopting the multi-stage cluster sampling method. Data for the study were obtained through triangulation of quanti-

tative and qualitative methods. Out of the 550 questionnaires administered, 450 were suitable for analysis. Data obtained through questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive technique such as frequency counts and percentage while data collected through interview method were content-analyzed. The study revealed that factors such as Low level and or lack of education, inadequate financial resources, enlightenment and lack of clear policies by political parties towards women's political ambition, are responsible for the low level of participation of women in politics. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others, that political parties should have a clear policy with regard to women's political ambition, as this will help women to know how to go about their political venture.

Table 1. Comparison of Women representation in 2003, 2007 and 2011 general elections in Nigeria

Position	No of available seats	No of women elected in 2003	No of women elected in 2007	No of women elected in 2011
Presidency	1	0	0	0
Senate	109	3 (2.27%)	9 (8.26%)	8 (7.34%)
House of Reps	360	21 (5.83%)	25 (6.94%)	12 (3.33%)
Governorship	36	0	0	0

Source: Gender Audit and IPU PARLINE Database, 2012

## Statement of the Problem

Despite the freedom to participate in politics by both eligible men and women in Nigeria, the political scene in Edo State has been highly dominated by men-folk at all levels of governance even though evidence abounds that women constitute more than 50 percent of Nigeria's population as they continue to be underrepresented as voters, leaders and as elected officials at all levels of governance in Edo State.

## Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the level of influence of women participation in state governance in Edo State of Nigeria.
2. To determine the extent education influences women participation in state governance in Edo State of Nigeria.

## Methods and Materials

In order to achieve the above objectives, two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Questionnaire was used as the primary instrument for data collection. The population of the study was 4,625 key politicians across the three senatorial districts in Edo State while the sample size which was determined using the Taro Yamani formula was 368. The Chi-Square( $X^2$ ) test of proportion was adopted in the analysis of data.

## Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses formulated for the study were tested.

1.  $H_{01}$ : There is no statistically significant difference in the level of influence of women participation in governance in Edo State of Nigeria.
2.  $H_{02}$ : There is no statistically significant relationship between education and women participation in state governance in Edo State of Nigeria.

Table 2. Distribution of key Respondents across the three Senatorial Districts of Edo State

LGA by Senatorial District	Councillors	No of party exco	L.G. Chairmen	Vice Chairmen	Secretaries	Supervisory Councilors	House of Assembly	State Exco
<b>Edo South</b>							24	23
Egor	10	220	1	1	1	6	-	-
IkpobaOkha	10	220	1	1	1	6	-	-
Oredo	12	264	1	1	1	6	-	-
Orhunmwon	12	264	1	1	1	6	-	-
Ovia North-East	12	264	1	1	1	6	-	-
Ovia South-West	10	220	1	1	1	6	-	-
Uhunmwode	11	242	1	1	1	6	-	-
<b>Edo Central</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Esan Central	10	220	1	1	1	6	-	-
Esan North-East	11	242	1	1	1	6	-	-

Esan South-East	10	220	1	1	1	6	-	-
Esan West	10	220	1	1	1	6	-	-
Igueben	10	220	1	1	1	6	-	-
<b>Edo North</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Akoko Edo	10	220	1	1	1	6	-	-
Etsako Central	10	220	1	1	1	6	-	-
Etsako East	10	220	1	1	1	6	-	-
Etsako West	12	264	1	1	1	6	-	-
Owan East	11	242	1	1	1	6	-	-
Owan West	11	242	1	1	1	6	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>4224</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>23</b>

Source: Ainabor's Field Survey, 2021

Table 3. Frequency distribution of returned valid questionnaire by local governments of Edo State

<b>LGA by Senatorial District</b>	<b>Questionnaire Administered</b>	<b>Questionnaire returned</b>	<b>Percentage Administered</b>	<b>Percentage Returned</b>
<b>Edo South</b>				
Egor	20	20	5.4	5.4
IkpobaOkha	20	20	5.4	5.4
Oredo	22	22	6.0	6.0
Orhumwon	22	22	6.0	6.0
Ovia North-East	22	22	6.0	6.0
Ovia south-West	20	20	5.4	5.4
Uhunmwode	20	20	5.4	5.4
<b>Edo Central</b>				
Esan central	20	20	5.4	5.4
Esan North-East	20	20	5.4	5.4
Esan south-East	20	20	5.4	5.4
Esan west	20	20	5.4	5.4
Igueben	20	20	5.4	5.4



<b>Edo North</b>				
Akoko Edo	20	20	5.4	5.4
Etsako Central	20	20	5.4	5.4
Etsako East	20	20	5.4	5.4
Etsako West	22	22	6.0	6.0
Owan East	20	20	5.4	5.4
Owan West	20	20	5.4	5.4
Total	368	368	100	100

Source: Ainabor's Field Survey, 2021

Table 4. Level of Women Participation in Politics and State Governance

Questionnaire items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
i. The level of women participation in politics and state governance in Edo State is very encouraging.	-	-	86	23.4	192	52.2	60	16.3	30	8.2
ii. The level of men participation in politics and state governance in Edo State is very encouraging.	260	70.7	34	9.2	40	10.9	8	2.2	26	7.1
iii. Men participate more than women in politics and state governance in Edo State.	242	65.8	51	13.9	30	8.2	29	7.9	16	4.3
iv. Women have occupied political positions more than men in the political governance of Edo State since 1999.	32	8.7	52	14.1	253	68.8	23	6.3	8	2.2
v. Women participate actively in party activities and political rallies.	34	9.2	262	71.2	48	13.0	18	4.9	6	1.6
vi. Women like being card-carrying members of their political parties.	50	13.6	204	55.4	30	8.2	60	16.3	24	6.5

Source: Ainabor's Field Survey, 2021

Table 5. Education and Women's participation in State Governance

Questionnaire items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
i. There is a relationship between education and women participation in the political governance of Edo State.	26	7.1	158	42.9	81	22	65	17.7	38	10.3
ii. Educational level of women has been responsible for low participation of women in the politics and governance of Edo State since 1999.	64	17.4	187	50.8	62	16.8	41	11.1	14	3.8
iii. Lack of financial opportunities on the part of women can be responsible for their low participation in politics and governance in Edo State.	20	5.4	181	49.2	101	27.4	66	17.9	-	-
iv. Poor self-image or self-confidence of women is responsible for their low participation in politics and governance in Edo State.	26	7.1	229	62.2	49	13.3	38	10.3	26	7.1
v. Apathy or lack of interest is a factor militating against women participation in politics and governance in Edo State.	2	.5	277	75.5	40	10.9	39	10.6	10	2.7
vi. Fear of failure to perform on the part of women is responsible for their low participation in politics and governance in Edo State.	-	-	252	68.5	36	9.8	64	17.4	16	4.3
vii. Edo State government should make it a matter of policy to promote gender equity in allocating positions in government.	44	12	241	65.5	-	-	73	19.8	10	2.7

Source: Ainabor's Field Survey, 2021

## Decision Rule for Hypotheses Testing

As a general rule, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected at the 0.05 level of significance, if the P-value is less than 5% (0.05) i.e.  $P\text{-value} < 0.05$ . Here,  $H_0$  is rejected and the  $H_1$  is accepted. This rule was applied in testing the hypotheses formulated for this study.

### Hypothesis One

$H_0$ : There is no significant difference in the level of influence of women participation in state governance in Edo State of Nigeria.

In order to test this hypothesis, the respondents' opinion on the subject of analysis were obtained and tested for difference between levels of influence of women participation in governance. The Chi Square ( $X^2$ ) test of goodness-of-fit was used to determine the difference in the level of agreement with the statements concerning the difference between men and women in participation in state governance in Edo State. The result is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Chi Square Test on Level of Women Participation in Politics and State Governance in Edo State

Scale of Response	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	$X^2$ Value	DF	P Value
Undecided	26	73.6	597.978	4	0.00*
Disagree	8	73.6			
Strongly Disagree	40	73.6			
Agree	34	73.6			
Strongly Agree	260	73.6			
Total	368	368			

\* Significant at 5% critical level

## Discussion of Results

The test showed a significant difference in the level of participation in political governance between men and women in the state as expressed by the respondents with Chi square value(597.978) significant at 5% lev-

el since the P-Value(0.00\*)<0.05. This implies that men significantly participate more than women in politics and state governance in Edo State. Therefore, the null hypothesis under test is rejected as the study found a significant difference in the level of influence of women participation in governance in the study area.

## Hypothesis Two

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between education and women participation in state governance in Edo State of Nigeria.

In order to test for this hypothesis, education was selected and tested for its effect on the level of participation of women in the governance of Edo State using the chi square test of goodness-of-fit. A summary of result is presented in Table 7 below:

Table 7. Chi Square test on Education and women participation in state governance

Scale of Response	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	X <sup>2</sup> Value	DF	P Value
Undecided	38	73.6	146.538	4	0.00*
Disagree	65	73.6			
Strongly Disagree	81	73.6			
Agree	158	73.6			
Strongly Agree	26	73.6			
Total	368	368			

\* Significant at 5% critical level

## Discussion of Results

The result showed that education significantly influences women participation in the governance of Edo State with the Chi square value (146.538) significant at 5% level since the P-- Value(0.00\*)<0.05. The null hypothesis under test was thus rejected. The conclusion is that the level of education limits women participation in state governance and the general leadership in Edo State.

## Discussion of Findings

1. The study revealed low participation of Edo women in politics and state governance as men participate much more than women in the governance of Edo State. This finding significantly agrees with Tong (2003) whose study of gender gap in political culture and participation in China revealed that women's traits negatively correlated with political culture and participation measures, and that of Dimkpa and Wilcox (2008) whose study of perceptions of women on factors responsible for low female participation in politics in Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria, revealed that women's poor self-image, religious attitude, socio-cultural attitude, and lastly, lack of education are responsible for the low level of women participation in politics and governance.
2. The study also revealed that education has been responsible for women low participation in the state governance of Edo State. For instance, the low level of educational attainment of majority of Edo women has been found to be responsible for their low participation in the governance of Edo State. The inability of women to have access to finance or financial support due to their level of education, also affect their level of political participation. This is why Edo women have not been able to participate like their male counterparts in the governance of Edo State. The study revealed that educational level of women has been responsible for women's low participation in the governance of Edo State. As regards education being responsible for low participation of women in politics and governance in Edo State, the study agrees with the work of Shvedova (2007) on "Obstacles faced by Women in Parliament: *Beyond Numbers*", using Sweden and India as case studies. The result of the study revealed that illiteracy and limited access to education are socio-economic obstacles impacting on women's vertical mobility in politics. This is true as only the few well-educated women in Edo State possess the boldness, courage and the means to compete with the men in the politics and governance of the state.

## Recommendations

1. There is need to address the discrimination against women in the governance of Edo State by allocating political positions to women

on quota basis. A gender quota or representative law that will help the state to achieve this and be committed to the Affirmative Action on women representation should be passed by the State House of Assembly. This will enable more Edo women to participate in the governance of Edo State. Also, political parties in the state must change their programmes and attitudes that tend to perpetuate discrimination against women, if gender equity in political participation in Edo State is to be achieved.

2. Educational level of women has also been found to limit women in participating in politics and governance in Edo State. Edo State government should as a matter of deliberate policy encourage girl-child and women education. This will enable more women to have access to quality education that will give them all it takes to face men in the field of politics and governance.

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