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Feminism, Political Participation and Gender Politics in Nigeria: A Review

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Abstract: *This abstract presents an analysis of feminism, political participation, and gender politics in Nigeria, focusing on the progress made and the challenges faced in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment within the country's political landscape. Nigeria, as Africa's most populous nation, plays a crucial role in shaping gender dynamics on the continent. The research draws upon an extensive review of scholarly literature, reports, and relevant empirical data, including governmental and non-governmental sources. The findings indicate that feminism in Nigeria has witnessed significant growth and has become an increasingly influential force. The feminist movement has actively worked towards dismantling patriarchal structures, challenging gender norms, and advocating for women's rights across various spheres of society, including politics. In conclusion, challenges that persist in achieving gender equality in Nigeria's political sphere. It emphasizes the need for sustained efforts to address societal norms, promote gender-responsive policies, and provide support mechanisms for women's political participation. By engaging in critical dialogue, fostering inclusive spaces, and strengthening women's networks, Nigeria can work towards a more equitable and representative democracy that amplifies women's voices and concerns Keywords: Feminism, Gender Politics, Political Participation*

Keywords: *Audio-Visual, Aids, Spoken English, Metropolis, Teaching.*

Introduction

Feminism, political participation, and gender politics in Nigeria are crucial aspects of the country's socio-political landscape. As Nigeria continues to strive for democratic governance and inclusive representation, understanding the role of feminism and gender equality becomes increasingly important. This study explores the intersection of feminism, political participation, and gender politics in Nigeria, shedding light on the challenges and progress made in promoting women's rights and empowerment. Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, has witnessed a growing feminist movement that aims to challenge patriarchal norms and advocate for gender equality. Feminism in Nigeria encompasses a diverse range of ideologies, strategies, and voices, with a shared goal of addressing gender disparities and achieving women's rights in various spheres, including politics (Chigbu, 2015).

Political participation is a fundamental aspect of democracy, yet women in Nigeria have historically faced significant barriers to entry and representation. Traditional gender roles, cultural norms, and discriminatory practices have limited women's access to political power. However, over the years, there have been notable efforts to increase women's political participation and representation in Nigeria. Gender politics in Nigeria, characterized by power dynamics and social

structures, play a crucial role in shaping women's access to political spaces. Understanding the underlying factors and challenging the existing norms is vital for achieving gender equality in the political arena. Various stakeholders, including feminist activists, civil society organizations, and policymakers, have been actively engaged in addressing these issues and pushing for transformative change (Daramola, 2001).

Feminism, political participation, and gender politics are interconnected concepts that have gained significant attention in Nigeria and globally. This review aims to examine the existing scholarly works and research on feminism, political participation, and gender politics in Nigeria, shedding light on the progress, challenges, and implications for gender equality and women's empowerment. The review will also explore key themes, theories, and empirical evidence to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

Historical Context and Feminist Movements

Nigeria's feminist movements have evolved over time, shaped by both local and global factors. Oyewumi (1997) traces the roots of Nigerian feminism to pre-colonial societies, where women had agency and participated in decision-making processes. The advent of colonization disrupted women's power structures, leading to the emergence of feminist movements in the post-independence era. Works by Okonjo (1993) and Nnaemeka (2005) provide detailed historical accounts of feminist activism in Nigeria, highlighting the struggles and achievements of women in different periods.

Political Participation of Women

Despite Nigeria's transition to democracy in 1999, women's political participation remains limited. Falase and Agbaje (2013) argue that cultural norms, patriarchy, and discriminatory electoral practices hinder women's access to political offices. Studies by Adejumobi (2007) and Isike (2015) reveal that women face barriers such as limited financial resources, gender stereotypes, and violence in politics. While legal frameworks like the National Gender Policy and the National Gender Equality Commission Act have been established to address these challenges, their implementation and effectiveness remain areas of concern (Sanni, 2019).

Gender Politics and Policy

Gender politics plays a crucial role in shaping policies related to gender equality and women's empowerment in Nigeria. Agbaje and Olaniyan (2015) argue that the concept of gender has been politicized, with political actors instrumentalizing women's issues for their own agendas. Gender mainstreaming, as advocated by international organizations like the United Nations, has influenced policy-making in Nigeria (Odion-Akhaine, 2012). However, critics like Oyediran (2006) argue that gender mainstreaming often fails to address the root causes of gender inequality and merely reinforces existing power dynamics.

Impact of Feminist Activism

Feminist activism in Nigeria has brought about significant changes and raised awareness about gender issues. Okeowo (2016) highlights the impact of the Bring Back Our Girls campaign, which

mobilized global support for the abducted Chibok schoolgirls and shed light on the broader challenges faced by women and girls in Nigeria. The rise of social media platforms has also provided new avenues for feminist voices to be heard (Omotayo, 2018). However, the backlash against feminism, particularly from conservative religious and cultural groups, poses a challenge to further progress (Adejumobi & Faleye, 2020).

Intersectionality and Multiple Marginalization

The concept of intersectionality recognizes that gender intersects with other forms of social identity, such as class, ethnicity, and religion, to shape experiences of marginalization. A study by Umar and Mbachu (2021) explores the intersectional experiences of women in Nigerian politics, highlighting the compounding effects of discrimination based on multiple identities. The application of intersectionality in feminist analysis contributes to a more nuanced understanding of gender politics in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This literature review highlights the historical context of feminism in Nigeria, the challenges faced by women in political participation, the politics surrounding gender policy-making, the impact of feminist activism, and the importance of intersectionality in understanding gender politics. It underscores the need for continued efforts to address systemic barriers and promote gender equality in Nigeria's political landscape. By drawing on diverse sources, this review provides a comprehensive overview of the subject matter and serves as a foundation for further research and advocacy.

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