

An Exploratory Study of Women in Political Leadership in Nigeria

Authors : Fayomi Oluyemi, Ajayi Lady

Abstract : This article raises the question of political leadership in the context of women's roles and responsibilities in Nigeria. The leadership question in Nigeria is disquieting to both academics and policy actors. In a democratic society like Nigeria, the parameters for a well-deserved leadership position is characterised by variables of equity, competence, transparency, accountability, selflessness, and commitment to the tenets of democracy, but the failure of leadership is pervasive in all spheres of socio-political sectors in Nigeria. The paper appraises the activities of Nigerian women in the socio-political arena in Nigeria. It traces their leadership roles from pre-colonial through post-colonial eras with emphasis on 1914 till date. It is argued in the paper that gender imbalance in leadership is a bane to peaceful co-existence and development in Nigeria. It is a truism that gender-blind and gender biased political agendas can distort leadership activities. The extent of their contributions of the few outstanding women's relative tranquility is highlighted in the theoretical discourse. The methodology adopted for this study is an exploratory study employing the extended case method (ECM). The study was carried out among some selected Nigerian women politicians and academics. Because of ECM's robustness as a qualitative research design, it has helped this study in identifying the challenges of these women thematically and also in constructing valid and reliable measures of the constructs. The study made use of ethnography and triangulation, the latter of which is used by qualitative researchers to check and establish validity in their studies by analyzing a research question from multiple perspectives, specifically Investigator triangulation which involves using several different investigators in the analysis process. Typically, this manifests as the evaluation team consisting of colleagues within a field of study wherein each investigator examines the question of political leadership with the same qualitative method (interview, observation, case study, or focus groups). In addition, data was collated through documentary sources like journals, books, magazines, newspapers, and internet materials. The arguments of this paper center on gender equity of both sexes in socio-political representation and effective participation. The paper concludes with the need to effectively maintain gender balance in leadership in order to enhance lasting peace and unity in Nigeria.

Keywords : gender, politics, leadership, women

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