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### **WOMAN MOBILIZATION IN NIGERIAN POLITICS: A HISTORICAL REVIEW**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Many Nigerian women are deeply concerned about the low level of women's political mobilization in Nigeria over the decades. To address this issue, this study investigates the causes of the low level of women's political participation in Nigerian politics. This paper employed a case study design, focusing on historical antecedents and a time frame from 1999 to the present. As a form of methodology, the research uses secondary sources from the internet, government publications, newspapers, journals, and pertinent textbooks. The findings of this study are that socioeconomic variables cause low levels of women's mobilization in political activities in Nigeria, the nation's cultural heritage, historical legacies, and instructional design considerations. The study highlights how important it is to deal with the issues that support women's subordination in Nigeria's political structure. As a result, the study concludes that all religious statutes, customs, and ordinances that hinder women's political mobilization must be changed, and that explicit implementation guidance must be provided. The need to foster greater mobilization efforts and empowerment motivated the whole essential of women's political mobilization in Nigeria due to long years of neglect.

**Keywords:** Historical review, mobilization, Nigeria, women, politics.

## INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, politics is primarily a male domain; men control the political sphere, create the political laws, and provide the criteria for assessment. In national politics and the public and private spheres, more broadly, women are marginalized. In Nigeria's political structure, marginalizing women has been routine practice since the colonial era, even though women's poor political engagement is a global issue. According to Bruce (2003), there is no way to overstate the necessity of women's mobilization in democratic governance and human development. All citizens must participate in elections and other political procedures to decide who will rule them in a viable democratic system. The legal standing of women affects their ability to participate in politics and contribute to and gain from social and economic advancement. The statement made by Afolabi (2003) that the objectives of equality, progress, and peace cannot be attained without the active participation of women's perspectives at all levels of decision-making is reinforced by the engagement of women in political activities. In a nutshell, the inter-parliamentary union (1999) said in the universal statement for democracy that a true partnership in societal matters, where people work together in equality and mutually benefit from their differences, is necessary for democracy to be achieved (Jaja & Brown, 2008). Despite growing support for women's equality and the growth of equal political opportunities for women, women have historically had low participation rates in politics and positions of decision-making for thousands of years. This is even though women constitute roughly half the world population (UNDP, 2005). Like in other countries, women make up at least half of the population in Nigeria. As per the 2006 census report, women make up 48.78 percent of the total population. However, this numerical advantage does not inherently correspond to a rise in women's mobilization in political affairs inside the nation. In the 57 years since the country's independence, women have participated in politics and governance to varying degrees, and there have been a variety of limiting factors that have prevented women from participating in politics, according to the official record made public by INEC for the 2015 election. The percentage has scarcely ever been higher than 5.2 percent (NPC, 2006).

The United Nations Convention on the Political Rights of Women was enacted in 1954, granting women equivalent legal protections under national laws as male citizens, encompassing the rights to vote, occupy public office, and access public services. Nigeria adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1985 (Innocent & Nwaoha, 2014). Additionally, Nigeria formed the National Committee on Affirmative Action in accordance with its endorsement of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Furthermore, the Federal Government of Nigeria established the national policy on women in 2000. The strategy aims to eliminate all types of discrimination against women by enhancing strategic human resource development and establishing a comprehensive data repository based on a national baseline survey. Jaja and Brown (2008) asserted that the policy's specific objectives aim to guarantee the effective enforcement of constitutional principles and provisions, while integrating gender perspectives into all policies and programs through a systematic gender analysis at all governmental levels. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, pursuant to Section 40, stipulates that every individual is entitled to assemble freely and associate with others, specifically permitting the formation or membership in any political party, trade union, or other association for the protection of personal interests (Suleiman, 2017).

Section 42 (1) of the constitution stipulates that "no citizen of Nigeria, by virtue of belonging to a specific community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion, or political opinion, shall be subjected to any form of discrimination" (page 46). This research is necessary to set the record straight regarding women's political mobilization from a historical perspective.

Women have historically held significant positions prior to and following Nigeria's independence, yet considerable efforts remain necessary to guarantee their equitable access to economic, social, and political power. The current study is significant because it empirically reviews the historical perceptions of women's political mobilization in Nigeria and draws some valuable lessons for the contemporary time. Nonetheless, women in Nigeria see stagnant progress in political engagement despite the existence of international standards and organizations designed to promote and facilitate their participation in political activities.

According to studies, there is typically more focus on women's issues when more women are in parliament. Gender equality and true democracy are fundamentally dependent on women's political engagement. It makes it easier for women to participate directly in public decision-making and ensures more accountability for them. Consequently, this paper needs to draw the attention of scholars to the imperative of women's mobilization in politics, focusing on Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Mobilization, of women's wing, organization of the women's affairs of a nation for active woman participation in a time of politics or another national emergency. In its broadest sense, mobilization refers to the organizing of all national resources in favor of the politics and technological advancements of the 20th century, especially since the emergence of women's anarchy has increased the complexity of mobilization planning and execution (Tønnessen & Al-Nagar, 2024). The proportion of a country's standing forces—which defend the country during the mobilization phase—to its total war capacity has always varied and been influenced by several variables, including foreign policy, global unrest, the strength and position of allies, and projections regarding the length of time needed to carry out mobilization. A nation's war capabilities can be destroyed before mobilization can begin because of the immense power of nuclear bombs and the speed at which they may reach their targets. Because of this, there is a greater need than ever for the peacetime army, navy, and air force to be well-equipped for counterattacks and to sustain defense. These forces may be the only ones left.

The process of gathering and preparing military personnel and equipment for battle is known as mobilization. The Prussian Army's preparations were referred to as "mobilization" for the first time in a military setting in the 1850s. Since then, mobilization strategies and philosophies have evolved constantly. Demobilization is the reverse of mobilization (Swan & Psarikidou, 2024). Conscription and the construction of railroads in the 19th century created problems for mobilization. The French Revolutionary mass levy of conscripts was formalized through mobilization. Various sociological and technological shifts aided in the transition to a more planned deployment method. These included the railroads for quick military movement and concentration, the telegraph for quick communication, and conscription for a trained soldier reserve in case of conflict. The term mobilization, which can also refer to popular or social mobilization, describes the process of enlisting the support of the public in divisive political campaigns. Mass mobilization directly involves and motivates a large coalition of national and local partners and supporters to demand and raise awareness of a particular development goal. Collaboratively, members of institutions, community networks, civic and religious organizations, and other groups deliver predetermined messages for discussion to specific audiences. As stated differently, social mobilization aims to bring about change by involving several parties in complementary and mutually reinforcing activities. Large public gatherings, including protests, marches, parades, processions, and mass meetings, are often how the process is carried out. These events are typically a component of a protest campaign. Revolutionary revolutions and other grassroots social movements

frequently employ mass mobilization, but it can also be employed by elites and the government as a tool. Erica Chenoweth has demonstrated that the most effective means of influencing public policy is through civil disobedience, based on her analysis of more than 200 violent revolutions and more than 100 nonviolent movements. They found that significant changes in the lives of women can only be guaranteed by the active engagement of about 3.5 percent of the population (Berry, 2015).

The process of Women Mobilization is what transforms a group of people from a collection of passive individuals to an active member of society. These divisions could be based on gender, caste, class, religion, country, ethnicity, or special concerns like nuclear disarmament. There could also be a group that starts to doubt the legitimacy of the current government. The study of woman mobilization examines how and to what extent groups in a democratic system of women are mobilized politically or electorally to have an impact on who rules or how they rule (Chuku, 2009). These organizations are organized for women-only actions like strikes, protests, or insurrection when they lose faith in the democratic system that has been in place or when there are no opportunities for genuine women's participation. In an effort to bolster the legitimacy of the government, the ruling class also attempts to organize support for the regime (Morgan-Collins, 2024). In sociology and women's sociology, the phrase "woman mobilization" has gained widespread usage when used in this manner. It has been explicitly used in the study of electoral politics, national movements, social movements, and revolt (Olufade, 2013). It is also used in the study of "populism," which is defined as any feminist movement that aims to organize people against a state that is seen to be either overly strong or controlled by special interests. Individuals are mobilized against the state rather than as members of specific socioeconomic categories. The mobilization of women has a purpose and an aim. How well women are mobilized depends on several factors, including the range of resources that groups must mobilize, how those resources are used, and the actions taken by the government to limit those resources. A particular social perspective or ideology that establishes the right and wrong of a social issue or problem affecting women and provides guidance for correcting the wrong, leadership, money and its capacity to provide time for women's activities, communication networks, symbol, and the participant's commitment to the cause are all considered politically relevant resources. Each of these elements is thought to have a critical role in whether a woman's mobilization to accomplish her goal succeeds or fails (Ekpenyong et al., 2015).

Woman mobilization is one of the essential elements of a functioning democracy, which may also act as a catalyst for democratic reforms and adjustments inside authoritarian regimes. It was essential to historical revolutions and national movements against colonialism. It has played a pivotal role in numerous contemporary social movements. Extreme right reactionaries also employed mass mobilization. The masses in Germany and Italy were mobilized to create fascism. It was a product of the democratic and popular politics of the age that traditional reactionaries hated. Public theater was a symbolic platform for maintaining fascism, elevated through mass mobilization. It has been explicitly used in studying electoral politics, national movements, social movements, and revolt. It is also used in the study of "populism," which is defined as any feminist movement that aims to organize people against a state that is seen to be either overly strong or controlled by special interests. Individuals are mobilized against the state rather than as members of specific socioeconomic categories. Women's mobilization has a purpose and an objective (Anifowoso, 2004). The extent of resources that organizations must mobilize, the utilization of those resources, and the measures implemented by state authorities to regulate them all influence the effectiveness of women's mobilization. Women's pertinent resources include a specific social perspective or ideology that defines social or women's issues in moral terms, offering a framework for corrective action; leadership; financial resources that enable time for women's activities; communication networks; symbols; and the participants' dedication to the cause. Each

component is considered essential to the success or failure of women's mobilization in achieving its objectives. Women's mobilization is a key component of a functioning democracy, capable of igniting democratic processes and transforming authoritarian regimes. Historical revolutions and national movements against colonialism relied on it. It has been instrumental in various modern social movements. Extreme right reactionaries also utilized mass mobilization. The populations of Germany and Italy were mobilized to establish fascism. It manifested the democratic and populist politics of the day that orthodox reactionaries despised. The public theater served as a symbolic platform for maintaining fascism, which was elevated through mass mobilization (Ngara & Ayabam, 2013).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The paper used the qualitative method. Furthermore, the case study design was adopted for the research because it allowed for pragmatic inquiry into the life experiences of the study informants in a natural setting (Creswell, 2003). The researcher selected several key literatures relevant to the current research for discussion and analysis. The data that were collected from the literature were reviewed to support the findings of this study. Content analysis was employed to analyze the literature reviewed. Recent literatures were consulted and used. This literature was obtained from Google Scholar, Web of Science, and many other reliable sources.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Women Mobilization in Nigeria: Historical Appraisal**

Before colonization, Nigerian women were instrumental in the political structures of their communities. For instance, in pre-colonial Bornu, women were actively involved in state administration. Women were also actively engaged in the political history of Zaria. In the early 16th century, Queen Bakwa Turuku established the foundation for the city of Zaria that we know today. She had a daughter named Amina, who rose to become Queen Amina, a formidable warrior. She enlarged the boundaries and constructed a substantial fortification around Zaria to deter potential invaders. Oba ruled the ancient Yoruba nation with the assistance of numerous women referred to as female traditional chiefs. The narrative was identical in that location. It is impossible to disregard the significant contributions of distinguished women such as Omu Okwei of Ossomari (Delta State), Effunsetan of Ibadan, Moremi of Ife, and Emotan of Benin. Because Nigerian women were denied the right to vote, they were subjected to colonialism. Women in Southern Nigeria were only granted the right to vote in the 1950s, as per Kolawole (2013). Three women were assigned to the House of Chiefs: Chief (Mrs.) Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti was appointed to the House of Chiefs in Western Nigeria, and Chief (Mrs.) Margaret Ekpo and Janet Mokelu were appointed to the House of Chiefs in Eastern Nigeria. There was no practical significance to the women's wings of political parties. The political independence movement in Nigeria was significantly less active among women during the colonial era, particularly as it acquired prominence. Nevertheless, Mrs. Olufunmilayo Ransome Kuti, Chief Mrs. Margaret Ekpo, and Mrs. Janet Mokelu were among the few privileged women who actively engaged in politics and received significant grassroots endorsements.

The Aba women's riot of 1929, which established four divisions in the provinces of Calabar and Afrikpo, Ogoja, was one incident that thrust women into the forefront of Nigeria's anti-colonial movement in its early phases. When colonial control ended in 1981 due to policies detrimental to the



people's well-being, there were uprisings against various ordinances, including the Native revenue ordinance in southwest Nigeria, precipitating this revolt. The Market ordinance in Calabar partly sparked the popular Aba woman riot of 1929. Eastern Nigeria as a whole was engulfed in this riot. Women protest it in the main. The decrease in product costs, the implementation of a new system where produce is purchased by weight rather than quantity, the imposition of direct taxes, and the decline in the value of the jute relative to British coinage. Because the aforementioned factors diminished women's economic power, women perceived these changes as a component of the European Union's plot to make them poorer. This uprising was one of the biggest threats to Nigeria's so-called indirect system. As a result of the women's uprising, the local government system in Nigeria was undergoing serious reform, in the words of Afigbo, "what is known is that it is the riot that shattered the complacent British belief that their rule was welcomed by an overwhelming number of Nigerians." This process thus signifies the earlier start of women's mobilization during the colonial era. The market women under the leadership of Madam Alimotu Pelewura, who chaired the Erok Marker Women Organization, provided the NNDP with enormous support, contributing to its political strength. Pelewura saw the organization solidify to a degree that it had never reached before her death. She led the women in 1951 through their most intense conflict with the British colonial government, their support of the first anti-colonial movement, and significant pre-independence economic hardships. Lagos is where Alimotu Pelewura, a member of the Awoni Yoruba subgroup, was born and raised. She worked as a modest seafood vendor. She reared numerous friends' and relatives' children as her own, just like Madam Tinubu. Before Alimotu Pelewura's affiliation with Macauley, she was a well-known market woman leader. However, there is no denying that her partnership with the NNDP leadership significantly increased her popularity and authority, propelling her into a more expansive leadership role.

Pelewura, as the head of the Market Woman Association, extolled the virtues of devotion and adoration among the about eight thousand Lagos women. Pelewura succeeded in rallying the women of Lagos to back the NNDP. She was able to join the ILU committee in 1932 as a result of her mobilization of women. This body typically rotates with the upkeep of law and order in different Lagos wards. Put another way, the ILU committee provided a forum for market women to be acknowledged for their involvement in traditional politics. Pleura has worked in every aspect of politics and women's mobilization for over forty years. She planned and oversaw protests against colonial policies that the women believed to be against their interests (Innocent & Nwaoha, 2014). The market ladies felt that the colonial administration's decision to relocate the Ereko market to the Oluwole neighborhood of Lagos in the middle of the 1930s was completely inappropriate. Pleura's women demonstrated their strong opposition to the proposal by physically obstructing it. The authorities attempted to enforce the placement despite the women's goal. As a result, their leader was taken into custody, and several of the women were also taken into custody. After protesting, ladies from all over Lagos surrounded the police station and demanded to be detained with pleura, and the women were eventually released. As a result, the Ereko market's scheduled relocation was abandoned but could subsequently be moved to a square location. Ad hoc political activism did not validate women's place in colonial Nigeria's political development. Though they were few, several women took part in the creation of contemporary political parties and pressure groups. Mrs. Obasa founded the Lagos Women's League in 1901 to push for improved hygienic conditions and women's education. Additionally, the issue of underage hawkers and infant mortality was discussed. Lady Abayomi founded the women's party in 1944 under the political climate 1940. The party advocated gender equality and welfare problems despite having few supporters. In addition to starting their own parties, women were instrumental in developing the political parties that ruled Nigerian politics from 1951 till independence. Women developed grassroots support for their parties through the women's wings of these organizations. Nevertheless, a very small number of women were granted entry into the higher echelons of the parties; among them were the spouses of the party

leaders. However, Margret Ekpo of the NCNC was one of the few women who managed to stand out (Onimisi, 2014, 2018). She was an experienced politician who attended constitutional court and was elected to the Eastern House of Assembly in 1953–1954, based on her own merits. The welfare of women, their economic situation, and social welfare in general are topics that the house frequently brings up. During this time, Lady Abayomi, Mrs. Kuti, Miss Young, and Mrs. Femi Pearse were among the other female politicians. While they did not actively engage in party politics in northern Nigeria, women

### **Women's Mobilization in the Post-Colonial Period**

Even though women in Northern Nigeria were still denied the right to vote, Nigerian women from the southern region began actively engaging in the country's political activity in 1960. Mrs. Janet N. Mokelu and Miss Ekpo. A notable example of this, as is Mrs. Wuraola Esan, the first female member of the federal parliament. Due to this denial, Hajia Gambo Sawaba, a prominent female politician in the North, could not submit a ballot or receive support. Women's political engagement experienced a modest increase during the second republic (1979–1983). A few Nigerians were elected to the state house of assemblies, while a few women were elected to the national House of Representatives. Third Republic (1990): The 1990 elections that inaugurated the third republic resulted in a low number of women being elected to serve as the chair of Local Government councils in the country's western region. The only women elected as deputy governors were Mrs Cecilia Expenyong of Cross River State and Alhaja Sinatu Ojikutu of Lagos State. Mrs. Kufo Bucknor Akerele was the sole woman elected to the Senate. Only a limited number of women were elected to the House of Representatives. These limited few included Chief Florence Ita Giwa, who was elected in the Calabar constituency (Anifowoso, 2004).

### **Women Mobilization and the Nigerian Democracy: Drawing an Importance**

The revival of democracy in May 1992 and 1999 instilled hope for a renewed effort to enhance female participation in Nigerian politics. The insufficient representation of women undermines the democratic ideal. Nigerians continue to endorse only 30 percent of the national gender policy and 35 percent of the Beijing Platform for Action, despite extensive efforts. Between 1999 and 2017, five administrations existed. Nigeria experienced 16 years of military intrusion before returning to democratic administration. There is a growing consensus that the authoritarianism that characterized the Third World War did not benefit the people in terms of material wealth, stability, order, or the preservation of human life, nor did it facilitate the pursuit of objectives that were in any way representative of the interests of the majority. Democracy is a clear substitute for dictatorship. Democracy is the obvious counter to authoritarianism; sklar<sup>13</sup> classified participatory democracies and enumerated the characteristics of each type, including goals, social conceptions, the state's role, the political process, citizen participation, and the real-world issues each type gives rise to. Nigeria is best categorized as a liberal democracy because of its unique characteristics, which counteract the advantages of liberalism. This denial has far-reaching implications for women's political engagement. Thus, conducting fresh experiments that account entirely for women's engagement in politics becomes imperative. The 29th of May 1999 marked the official start of the Fourth Republic. A few weeks later, appointment-making at the federal and state levels started. Despite the widespread calls from women to implement the 30 percent affirmative action policy for elective and appointed positions as recommended by the Beijing Platform for Action, to which Nigeria is a signatory, none of the state or federal governments have granted women up to 30 percent of the positions in question.

### **Role of Women Groups in Women Mobilization in Nigeria: Historical Antecedents**

Fewer women were truly active in the colonial era's Nigerian political independence movement, especially as it gained popularity. However, Mrs. Magret Ekpo, Mrs. Olufumilayo Ransome Kuti, and Mrs. Janet Mokelu were among the few affluent women actively engaged in the political process. However, most women were employed as grassroots support mobilization officers. The 1929 Aba Women's Riot, which resulted in four divisions in the Calabar Province and Afrikpo, was one incident that thrust women into the forefront of Nigeria's anti-colonial campaign (Artifalo, 1995). The colonial policies that were detrimental to their well-being starting in 1981 caused this uprising, which in turn resulted in protests various ordinances, including the Native Revenue Ordinance in Southwestern Nigeria, and the end of colonial control. Several factors, including the Calabar market legislation, contributed to the 1929 Aba women's riot, which spread throughout much of eastern Nigeria. Women generally protested it. A decrease in procedure costs, the implementation of direct, and a new system that purchases produce by weight rather than measure taxes and the decline in the manila to British currency conversion rate. Women perceived these developments as a part of the European plot to enhance their lot in life, since all of the aforementioned factors contributed to the decline of women's economic power. Examining results on women's groups' contribution to women's political participation in Osun State, it was duly announced to the members after obtaining permission from the women's group leaders to hold discussions with them on the day of their meetings. Every participant in the study gave their consent to participate. The six (6) women's groups in the ten (10) LGAs sent an average of thirty members each to the meetings. All of the women's organizations included members from a variety of age groups, from young moms in their 20s to older women in their 60s (Acholonu, 2001). The majority of women's groups primarily sought to address the needs of their members in their private lives (households), with a focus on women's empowerment, welfare, and the reduction of poverty.

### **Mobilization of Women Politics in Nigeria 1979 – 2023**

During this time in Nigerian history, women began to fight for equality and become recognized members of society who could significantly contribute to the country's progress. Women's attempts have thus been referred to as struggles since they were up against resistance from their own created center. Mobilization was used to achieve this. Even though they had few possibilities to participate in politics, women organized themselves into a variety of units, groups, and social clubs because they controlled the economy and were not employed in social work. During this period, two wealthy women traders who contributed significantly to political and social transformation were Alaja Akosila and Rukayat Shittu. Their trading activities spread to nearby towns such as Ogbomosho and Offa, where they took advantage of their wealth to expand their influence. Despite not being acknowledged, they continued to play a significant role in the affairs of Kwara state, Ilorin town, and Nigeria. Their amiable nature attracted people to them, and eventually the Market Women Association was established. In Ilorin, women therefore controlled the commercial tempo and had the market system at their disposal. Their grip on the economy grew stronger. They were attentive and loyal to their various trade associations, social organizations, and even leaders; in this way, they earned support from the state government. Contrary to popular belief, women were particularly alert to any change as it was obvious that they wanted to understand what was going on. Through their progressive union and trade union, women in Nigeria were successfully mobilized for political participation. Nevertheless, Maryam Babangida's vision of a better life for rural women during the Babangida regime was projected across all of the federation's states. Incentives were offered to encourage women to enter politics. Final campaigns were organized at various levels, including the zonal, state, and ward levels. While the winners of the Better Life Program in every state were also recipients of the Advancement Program,



women were mobilized as state coordinators under the direction of Mrs. Halima Alayoku. Throughout the program, women were educated through informative seminars, workshops, and antenatal classes. Prenatal classes included antenatal education for expectant mothers, a sample of diapers on a chalkboard, instruction on cassava processing methods, and classes on new farming techniques. The scholarship program, designed to educate women from the grassroots to the graduate level and into the business and public sectors, strongly encouraged the "girl child's" education. These career-oriented courses were created to train and educate those unable to follow a traditional academic path, making them employable (Onimisi, 2014, 2018).

The directorate for social mobilization was established due to the political bureau that the Babangida administration established on January 13, 1986, to direct, monitor, evaluate, and record a national political discourse on a feasible political future and structure for Nigeria. The president notes that in doing so, the social mobilization campaign would include all citizens. The social mobilization effort aimed to raise national awareness on both an individual and collective level (Innocent & Nwaoha, 2014). For many women, Maryam Babangida's improved life for rural women served as an example of how powerful women may use their status for the good of other women. The improved quality of life has coordinated and functioned within its framework at every state level. In Nigeria, the initiative brought together women from all backgrounds to learn about social mobilization. It also forced the wives of local government chairmen and military administrators to take on leadership roles even when they had little or no interest in doing so. Nonetheless, the program aimed to reduce women's poverty through the specified activities. Their involvement in the Babangida administration demonstrated this ambition; in fact, it was the first time that women had expressed interest in running for the presidency. Another tool used by Mrs. Maryam Abacha to mobilize women politically was the family support program (Jaja & Brown, 2008). Mrs. Abacha started the program right after she came to power. The program, which was launched in 1995, was not specifically for women, even though wives of state and local government chairpersons coordinated their spouses. Instead, it was designed to help families improve their financial situation, which means it could impact women's lives. The program also brought about the building of hospitals, the provision of medication, the opening of vacation centers, and the provision of aid to the less fortunate. Family economic distress has greatly decreased thanks to the family assistance programs. Women were either directly or indirectly mobilized through this campaign, which was designed to empower women.

These connections were made because of their disparate trades or occupations. Members of these diverse associations made significant contributions to the lives of their fellow members, yet they also shared ideas, supported one another in times of need, and gave loans to those who could use them. Some members received sponsorship for elective positions through this forum, thanks to the backing of these women's associations (Jaja & Brown, 2008). Most women mobilized for political engagement or activities are, for the most part, market women. The state's governance and mobilization are greatly aided by the contributions of women working in the business sector. These women's groups organized educational programs to inform women about the value of politics and its benefits; depending on the group, interactive sessions were also held on different days. These are active women's groups as well. These women's groups are also active during protests and rallies, where they frequently wear the same outfit in vibrant colors, raising awareness among the public (Ake et al., 2019). These women's clubs have been instrumental in encouraging women from all around the state to come out and participate in the events taking place in the state. In order to enable women to play important roles in society, particularly in politics, these groups, in large part, developed opportunities for social education. As women's consciousness in the state grew, the grassroots began to become more informed and enlightened, and the mobilization groups persisted in providing the support women needed to become

contributing members of society and at home, thus giving rise to this evolution of empowerment (Suleiman, 2017). First and foremost, women's roles as mothers are what the majority of women in the state contribute to development through: trade organizations, market associations, and motherhood. Among the notable groups in Nigeria that mobilize people for elections is Toyin Saraki's group, which works with the governor's wife's office. The group is known for getting women to vote from a variety of backgrounds by encouraging them to join the winning team. This may occur through symposiums, women-focused seminars, and other events that typically raise awareness of and encourage women to enter the political sphere. Since they collaborate closely with their male counterparts, this group is viewed as colors in the state's politics (Ngara & Ayabam, 2013). However, their actions during the 2003 elections that installed Governor Bukola Saraki in Kwara were deemed unworthy.

### **The Political Achievement of Women Mobilization and the Change in Nigeria's Political Structure**

It is, nevertheless, incorrect to claim that women have not made a significant contribution to the political growth of Nigerian society and the structure of the Nigerian politics in term of mobilization as a whole. Among the notable active women are Mrs. Sarah Jibril, Banke Badmus, Humanist Hajiya Gambo Sawaba, Chief Mrs. Margret Ekpo, Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome Kuti, and numerous others. These ladies have left their marks on Nigeria's sociopolitical history (Chuku, 2009). Toyin Saraki, Gbemisola Saraki (Senator), Iyabo Obasanjo, Oluremi Tinubu, Natasha Adiza Akpoti, Bank Badmus, and other female political pioneers from the past and present must also be included. Women's participation in Nigerian politics increased throughout the 1999–2023 new political dispensation in the states. The following women and Nigerian political economy, the role of women in the state's politics as a result of government policies and programs, should be given proper attention while highlighting the involvement and political influence. Throughout history, women have been mobilized by employing lobbyists, vote collectors, and pillars of support for their male counterparts. Nonetheless, women served as grassroots mobilization offices' support. During the time we studied here, a sizable and legitimate network of women's organizations with public interest objectives arose several groups, including thrift societies, progressive unions, market women associations, and numerous other women's forums.

Nigerian women's advocacy groups have made significant advancements and accomplishments that have changed the political structure of the country. The women's organizations actively engaged in state politics by holding rallies and campaigns. In the field of political history, the time signified the beginning of a new age of change and female dynamism. But it is important to note that this ranged from political activism to general participation, involvement, and awakening. Though not radical or all-encompassing, women's political actions have had a considerable impact on gender roles and the political and economic growth of Nigeria. The state's subsequent increase in the number of female politicians suggests that society is finally realizing that women are becoming more and more involved in politics and that they can no longer be ignored. The appointment of women to sensitive positions and public offices, such as permanent secretaries of state ministries, is indicative of these accomplishments. Additionally, the appointment of women to positions as directors, commissioners, special assistants, special advisors, and members of governmental boards is commendable. Upon Bukola Saraki's inauguration as governor in 2003, a few women were appointed to boards (Olufade, 2013). Women's activist Mrs. Bolarin was appointed to the Kwara Hotels board, while Mrs. Onyiyangi was appointed as the county's commissioner for women's affairs. One unique aspect of those Nigerian mobilization groups at the time was the close relationships it fostered between the various classes of women. It could be said that these women shared many political beliefs and interests, which in turn led to a rise in political participation as more women in the state stood for and won elected office. In fact, women in

the states are now in the spotlight thanks to the success of women's mobilization in Nigeria. Women in politics such as Banke Badmus, the deputy speaker of the Kwara State house of assembly, Senator Gbemisola Saraki, the senator from Ilorin, and Senator Oluremi Tinubu, the senator from Lagos, are examples of how the mobilization group has helped women and even their male counterparts succeed (Ekpenyong et al., 2015). The success of Natasha Akpoti and Sarah Jubril can be linked to the grassroots mobilization of women.

## CONCLUSION

The study discovered that pre-established societal norms and beliefs, male dominance and control, and gender and cultural patterns have all contributed to the development of a culture that excludes women from the center of Nigeria's political movement. Others include the belief by women that politics is a dirty game, the lack of funding and resources due to the heavy monetization of politics, poverty and unemployment, a lack of confidence in other women, political violence, political structure, and widespread hatred among women who aspire to political positions in Nigeria. Consequently, female politicians are perceived as ostentatious and promiscuous. In Nigeria, women were invited to participate in the family support program run by the governors' wives. They were also urged to attend numerous incentive workshops and seminars hosted by state and local governments. The initiative was successful in educating women about household chores, child care, and general needs to better themselves. The family assistance program also set up a loan program for women to launch their own businesses and break the cycle of poverty. Women's economic empowerment is necessary since it will have a positive impact on both the lives of impoverished men and women. This empowerment needs to extend beyond the federal or state capitals and figure out how to impact people's lives locally.

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