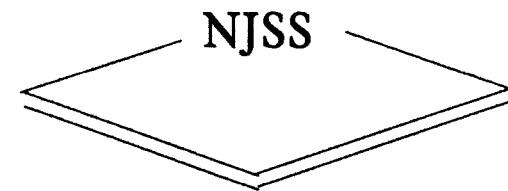


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**The Faculty of the Social Sciences,  
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## EDITORIAL POLICY

The Nigerian Journal of the Faculty of the Social Sciences is a forum for intellectual dialogue among scholars in the fields of the Social Sciences and related disciplines especially in developing and Third World countries.

Specifically, it is an avenue for the dissemination of research reports in Economics, Geography, Urban and Regional Planning, Political Science, Sociology, Psychology, Philosophy and even History. Comments on current issues and research notes are heartily welcome. Book reviews are also of interest to this forum.

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**Newspapers and Magazines***The Herald on Sunday*, (Ilorin).*African Guardian*, (Lagos).*Crossroads*, (Lagos).*Newswatch*, (Lagos).*Vanguard*, (Lagos).*Sunday Tribune*, (Ibadan).**WOMEN AND THE 2003 GENERAL ELECTIONS:  
OBSERVABLE TRENDS, TRADITIONS AND  
TRANSFORMATIONS***Dr. (Mrs.) A.J. Omede***Introduction**

The participation of both women and men in politics has been achieved over the past century through several methods. In Nigeria as in many parts of the world, running for office is an important part of the struggle for power and influence. Though, elections are not the only source of power and authority in any political system, yet, seeking elective office and lobbying for appointments, are major ways of impacting on the polity.

The recently concluded 2003 general election in Nigeria has shown the importance of politics, elections, voting and the various alignment and constant realignment of forces within a political system. One of the important lessons learnt from the 2003 general elections is that women are yet to impact significantly on Nigeria's political terrain. In fact, the outcome of the 2003 elections indicated no appreciable progress from what obtained between 1999 and 2002. What could be responsible for the low political participation of women in Nigerian politics? One could come up with so many reasons. But then, the point could be made that there is an appreciable progress in the number of women who are actively involved in a whole range of political activity. One could still however assert, that in reality, the increase in women participation in politics neither signify actual transformation, nor deviation from the previous pattern of 1999. There is however, a slight improvement on the enlightenment, awareness and deliberate effort to integrate women into the main stream of Nigerian politics.

The preparation, conduct and post election appointments into public offices associated with the 2003 general elections indicated a need to reappraise the concept of active political participation of women in Nigeria. The focus of an affirmative action and the demand for thirty per cent of elective offices should be re-examined.

This study is an effort to put into proper perspective some of my experiences as a participant observer in the recently concluded 2003 general elections in Nigeria. Having served variously both as a resource person to several non-governmental agencies on mobilization of women in politics, as well as the INEC returning officer for the Kwara South Senatorial District and the Ilorin West Local Government Area (during

the Senatorial, Governorship and Presidential elections), one is of the view that a newer approach of understanding Nigerian politics is required by all.

For women to, at least, participate actively in the traditionally male dominated politics and transform traditionally held beliefs and perception, it is important to create an enabling environment and political space which will enhance women's election and other forms of involvement in the nation's nascent democracy.

### Conceptual Clarification

An analysis of politics is needed to enhance our understanding of women's participation in the political system. Politics has generally been defined as the struggle among competing forces (private interests) for the authoritative allocation of public resources through the coercive power of the state. Thus, one would agree that politics is about the determination of who participates in the decision-making process, who gets what resources, in what quantities or quality, and, at what point in time. The quest to control the state involves not only conflict over contending views and positions, but also, the struggle for power, authority, and influence (Dahl, 1976: 25).

Extant studies exist on the subject of the participation of women particularly in the political realm (Omede, 2003. UN, 1985, 15-26; 1991, 1995 & 1997). The most significant aspect of women's active involvement in politics according to the Beijing Platform for Action (U.N. 1995) is that political participation contributes to the redefining of political priorities, placing new questions on political agenda and providing new perspectives on mainstream political issues. Accordingly, the Platform (U.N. 1995) affirmed that the participation of women in political parties is important because it provides a path to power and political decision-making. It also leads to participation in parliaments and other elected bodies, as well as nominations to positions in the cabinet or other political offices and the judiciary.

Be that as it may, one could then expound that political participation is an aspect of empowerment, which provides the opportunities for women to take control of their lives, through acquiring relevant skills to take decisions and act on such decisions without external hindrances. Hence, political participation as a corollary to empowerment is relevant to this study because it is a dynamic process for women, and it involves the following stages:

a. *Access*: Being able to gain access to all public resources.

- b. *Conscientization*: Being aware of their rights and recognizing gender inequalities.
- c. *Action*: Being able to act on their conditions and desires and increase their participation in domestic and public decision-making and other activities that affect their lives directly.
- d. *Equity*: Having fair access to, control and management of public resources including political power (CEDPA, 1997 & USAID, 2002:12).

An adjunct to the above is that every citizen, man or woman, participate and influence the political process. In reality however, there is an unequal degree of political participation and influence (Kupper and Kupper, 1985: 612). Political participation includes those activities by private citizens that seek to influence or to support the government and politics particularly in the selection of governmental personnel and the actions they take in influencing public goods.

The perspective of this study, which is in line with Abrahamson's view (1995:913), is that political participation is a prerequisite for democracy because it enables the society to provide opportunities for large number of citizens to engage in politics. The point could then be made that conventional forms of political participation include among others voting (the most common form), working in a political campaign, joining with others to solve local problems, and attempting to influence political leaders on matters of personal concern.

Milbrath's (1977) study on the various forms of participation by citizens in a polity is also relevant to this study. He (Milbrath) categorized political activities (ranging from the highest to lowest) to include gladiator activities (such as holding public or party office, soliciting funds for the party, contributing time, working in the party office, campaigning and attending a caucus or strategic meeting); transitional activities (such as attending a party meeting or rally, making monetary contribution or contacting a public official); and spectator activities (such as wearing a button or showing a sticker on personal effects, engaging in political discussion and exposing oneself to political stimuli).

The opening of the political space in Nigeria has created an expansion in the scope of the citizen's political participation. Women like the men had also increased the level of their participation in the political process. Access to education, dismantling cultural, constitutional and other social and institutional barriers are

contributory factors in this direction. The various categories of participation identified by Milbrath (1977) particularly voting, mobilizing other voters for campaign, wearing party symbols, etc., are associated with women in Nigerian politics. In the area of party financial contribution, women's impact is however very low.

In the past decades in Western Europe and since 1999 in Nigeria, women have been participating in politics through a wide range of activities. Some of the political activities they are involved in are, casting of votes and contesting elections, participating in election campaigns, mobilization of voters, identification as a partisan supporters, trying to convince others how to vote and working with political parties. Women also utilize various opportunities within the political system to participate informally in the political process. Efforts to express political interests and influence public policy beyond elections, working together with others to address a common problem and attempting to influence policies are also forms of political participation.

Understandably, the need for women to be actively involved in politics is propelled by certain yearnings that must be fulfilled. Lane (1959) for instance, opines that a number of conscious and unconscious needs and motives are served by participation in politics. Economic and material gain, friendship and affection, relief from intra psychic tension, a need to understand the world and self esteem are among major reasons why women just like the men have to influence public decision to better their life chances.

Logically one might surmise that women and other minority groups like the poor and working class are said to possess no real political power (Alford & Friedland, 1975) particularly in the realm of public decision-making. The men and the rich determine the pattern and degree of political activity. Consequently, no nation can boast of equal representation of men and women. This is no wonder why the world average percentage of women in the national parliaments is 11.4 (Krochex and Zandeu, 1999: 252). In any case, the participation by women in politics is desirable if the struggle for empowerment is to be realized. This is important because the need to have political power, wealth, well-being, skill, enlightenment, affection rectitude and relief (Lasswell, 1951) which women have been struggling to attain all these years, can better be achieved through active political participation.

Interestingly, the debate about women's involvement in politics in countries around the world is becoming more vibrant and extensive.

This is evident in the active roles women are playing particularly in challenging inadequate and unjust public policies (Galligan 1998: 1) imposed by society, culture religion and other constitutional and psychological impediments. Consequently, there has been a tendency toward role equity, role change and increasing professionalism and involvement of women in government and other public institutions as far back as the 1980's (Lovenduski J. 1993: 115).

In as much as there are improvements in active participation of women in politics, there remain some obstacles to be surmounted. In particular, the general attitudes toward women are often conflicting. Traditional thinking of the "housewifely" role of the women persists. Yet, the prevailing world wide economic condition also acknowledges the need for women to engage in some activities outside the home. Apart from the issue of familial responsibility, the liberal interpretation of the scriptures, particularly the Quaran, and conscious government policies have played a great role in encouraging women to participate in political activities. Indeed, religious reformers have shown (Jayawardena, 1986:49) that "it was not the tenets of religion that subordinated women, but rather, an incorrect interpretation of that religion (Islam), corrupt practices and additions which later contravened the purity of the original faith."

Expectedly, with the opportunities provided by the activities of reformers, increased women participation in politics could also be attributed in part to the roles played by various governmental, non-governmental, community and social organizations. Embassies and international organizations are also actively involved in cooperative and linkage programmes. Organizations like USAID, UNIFEM, USIS, British Council, the Ford Foundation, and others too numerous to mention have been involved in "maintaining and mobilizing supporters, neutralizing and transforming mass and elite publics into sympathizers, and achieving change in targets" (Galligan, 1998: 9).

In spite of the liberal disposition of men, society and religion toward women in politics, the fact remains that, "there is a little shift from traditional thinking of women's role within the family (Beale J. 1986:9). There is still the contention that any activity engaged in by women in the public realm, should serve to complement her primary duty, which is, home making. To perceive of politics as the ultimo ratio or a career above the home, is to court disaster. This is indeed a tragedy for women.

### Conceptualising Politics In Nigeria

The special way of politics in the country has now become a popular cliché known as Nigerian politics. Nigerian politics has a peculiar character. It has a life of its own. It is masculine in all ramifications, and therein lies the problem of Nigerian women who seek to play an active part in politics.

The disunity among Nigerian politicians, coupled with their pursuit of personal and selfish interests (Lloyd, 1970: 1-13) created the kind of do-or-die, jungle politics prevalent in Nigeria today. The desire to rule at all cost has also resulted in the politics of the highest bidder. Nigerian politics is highly monetized. Apart from huge amount expended by politicians on campaign and mass mobilization, there also exists, a high level of gratification, bribery and corruption (Sklar, 1983:29, Dudley, 1982: 28-29, Oyediran, 1984: 14). The prevalence of tribute, bribery, graft, gratification, etc can also be traced to the customary nature of old system of administration particularly during the system of indirect rule introduced by the colonial administration in early 1930's (Sklar, 1983: 287). This system laid the foundation of contemporary endemic nature of highly monetized Nigerian politics in modern times.

High level of electoral malpractices, rigging, gerrymandering, political intrigues (Dudley, 1982: 160 and Oyediran, 1984: 21), and its associated violence has led to the description of Nigerian politics as an unfavourable political context that do not create an enabling environment for women to fully harness their political potentials as they may wish.

### Observable Trends about Women and the 2003 General Elections

The preparations for the 2003 general election took off in the latter part of 2002. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) made electoral laws guiding party activities public. Significantly, political parties (thirty in all) were registered and given the green light to start preparing for the elections ([www.inecnigeria.com](http://www.inecnigeria.com)).

The registration of parties of such magnitude signified a new dawn in Nigerian politics. One had hoped that the formation and registration of so many political parties would provide a springboard and avenue for a large number of women to foray into high stake partisan politics. True to type, men and women of varied background, ideological orientations and preoccupation, signified their intention to run for elective offices. The political environment in the country however took a violent turn and many women made a *volte-face* when it became apparent that the highest bidder could only win elections.

Unlike 1999 when the political opportunity structure in the policy was virtually closed to women, 2003 on the other hand witnessed a massive mobilization of resources (human, financial) to create an open society that encouraged and witnessed an upsurge in the number of women electorates. Many women came out to vote and contested for elective offices. They also acted as campaigners, educators, mobilizers, party and electoral officials and the like.

Another important observation that changed the nomenclature of women participation was the general level of insecurity associated with the 2003 elections. Political violence and the consequent assassinations of political actors in Nigeria between 2000 and 2003 had some adverse effect on the perception and participation of women in the political process.

The state of insecurity impacted on the feelings of political efficacy among women voters. Majority of the women saw the parties as an avenue to use them as pawn on a chess game. This is more so because the elections did not focus on issues and ideological reforms but rather emphasized personality and the struggle for power to advance individual status. Furthermore, policy statements in the party manifestos of virtually all the political parties are vaguely defined and are perceived less reliable as indicators of what the party will do in government.

One important observation relevant to this study is the decline of women's turnout after the first round of the elections. Most women on observing that the results highly favoured the ruling party assumed their votes would no longer make a difference to the election results. This in one's view, is an indication that the level of competition among the parties was very low. Even though the parties were numbered about 30 in all, it was obvious that the incumbent party the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) had the upper hand in elections. One can then infer that this attitude is in line with the argument, which holds that "where parties are competitive, participation tends to increase, but where a single party consistently wins elections, turn-out tends to be lower (Lipset, 1995: 917).

Another observation made about the electoral behaviour of women during the pre-election period was that the problems associated with the system of voters' registration. The long queue at the polling booths, late arrival of registration materials, inadequate provision of polling stations among others created a situation in which women urban dwellers particularly those in the middle and upper class found it difficult to register their votes.

In another but interrelated dimension, the voters' registration procedure undoubtedly encouraged more widespread political participation among the least educated and low socio-economic groups. The high level of political activities of market women and traders who recruited and mobilized their members in large numbers was particularly relevant. Most women politicians had used the market platform to launch themselves into politics. An interesting aspect of mobilization among women traders and market association was the introduction of the element of compulsion and sanction. Members were expected to comply with the directives to register as voters. Being a card-carrying party member was also an evidence of compliance and acceptance.

Imposition of fines and levies on erring members also assisted in ensuring a high level of political participation by the market women. Thus, the high level of organizational skill exhibited in the mobilization of the women folk through market and trade associations as well as women groups and non-governmental organizations, assisted not only in exerting pressure on the political system, but also in sensitising the women to the opportunities and advancement associated with political participation.

It is important to also point out that during the pre-election period, there existed a marked distinction between the right to vote and participate in elections and the range of participation in political activities. The right of women to vote and stand for elections in 2003 had become a non-issue. Women at the point ceased to be spectators and were instead, fully enmeshed in the political process. Significantly, the range of electoral activities engaged in by the women therein became widened and monumental. Women voted for and contested as presidential, governorship, senatorial, federal and state honourable candidates. Also, women voters also participated in choosing state representatives and local chairmen representatives in all the 36 states and Abuja the Federal Territory.

The pre-April 2003 election period one can say afforded women the chances of actively participating in politics through imparting on them the feeling of party identification and party loyalties to established political parties. This fraternization greatly enhances the opportunities of women participating as elected officials during the April 2003 General elections.

### The 2003 Electoral Outcome: Tradition or Transformation

Though women are now becoming active participants in politics and representing diverse ethnic groups that are readily identifiable in the political system, yet they do not constitute a homogenous elite class. By international standards, the political involvement of the ordinary women in Nigerian politics is generally low. Women voters identified with political parties based on personal identification with a candidate or association with a party-affiliated interest group.

Women politicians made contributions to party by gathering votes from their geographical or ethnic communities based upon their personal relationships with voters. Essentially, the political parties used women candidates to court female votes. The outcome of the 2003 general election results indicated an enlargement of the political space as against 1999. In 1999, while only four (4) parties were registered, in 2003, the electoral system and process was liberalized with the registration of thirty (30) political parties. Undoubtedly, this is a big transformation in the political system itself.

The number of women that contested for elective offices showed a consistency with the increase in political activities engaged by women since 1999. However, the actual results of the 2003 general elections signified that no transformation was made by women in the political arena. The gains recorded were just parts and parcel of the nation's political tradition. This statement can best be appreciated in the light of the analysis of the number of women who participated and won elections into public office during the 2003 general elections.

It would not amount to an understatement to mention that there was an appreciable showing of women who contested for elective office at the federal than state levels. Three women (3 out of 20 i.e. 15%) contested as deputies or Vice presidents. Only two (2) women out of twenty (20) men (10%) contested as presidential candidates. None of these women won the posts contested for. (See: *The Nigerian Tribune*, April 12, 2003: 1 & 2). See also [www.Inecnigeria.org](http://www.Inecnigeria.org).

In 1999, there was only one woman as a deputy governor that was, Mrs Kofoworola Akerele Buknor (Alliance for Democracy AD), Lagos State. Buknor was the only women to occupy such position in all the 36 states of the federation between 1999 and 2003. In the present dispensation 2003 – 2007, two women have emerged as deputy governors. They are Erelu Olusola Obada (PDP) - Osun State and Alhaja Falilat Badru (PDP) Ogun State. The two positions are a slight variation from the one in 1999. This figure represented just 2.7 percent

of the total seats available for the position and is also far below the world average of 11.7% female representation recorded in early 2000 (Daily Times, May 10, 2003; 23).

In the Senate, three women won in 2003 out of the total 109 Senatorial seats. The three are all new to the Senate. The former three female members (1999) were unable to return to the Senate due to various reasons. The new trio are Gbemisola-Saraki-Fowora (formerly in the Federal House of Representatives) elected on the PDP platform and representing Kwara Central Senatorial District; Iyabo Anisulowo (PDP) – Ogun West Senatorial District and Daisy Danjuma (PDP) Edo Central Senatorial District. This figure again represents 2.7% of the total seats available. A recurring pattern as witnessed in 1999.

In 2003, two women were also elected speakers from two states out of the thirty-six in the federation. They are Titi Oseni, (PDP) from Abeokuta North, Ogun state and Eucharika Azodo, (PDP), Anambra state. Azodo was impeached (barely three months into her tenure), for her role in the alleged resignation of Governor Ngige and the scandal of godfatherism politics in Anambra state (The Punch, July 18, 2003). The two positions are just one above 1999.

At the conclusion of the April 2003 elections, the composition of women in the executive cabinet did not record any significant shift from that of 1999. The ministerial list while presenting 40 nominees had only 7 women (less than 15%). One of these 7 was dropped during the screening process. Of the remaining 6 women, only two – Mrs. Rita Akpan and Mobolaji Osomo were given the portfolio of a full cabinet rank, Minister of Women and Youth Development, and Minister for Urban and Housing respectively. This figure did not show wide deviation from 1999.

In 1999, out of a total 65 positions, only 6 (9.1%) were appointed as ministers. The 2003 figure is not too different from that of 1999. Although one may posit that there is a slight increase of women advisers than what obtained in 1999. With respect to political appointments at the federal level, some 13.6 percent of ministers are female and 27 per cent are permanent secretaries. Most of Nigeria's 36 states and Federal Capital Territory (FCT) judiciaries now have women as High court judges, accounting for about 30 per cent of the total number of judges in the country (Federal Government of Nigeria, Report to the United Nations 2004).

### Efforts by Government to Encourage Women in Politics

- (1) The Federal Government in its Report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (Press Release 1427 of 20/01/2004) highlighted some of the steps the government had taken to encourage women's participation in national politics in the country. The salient parts of the report are listed hereunder:
  - a. Government established its National policy on women. The National policy provides for affirmative action to increase to 30 percent the total women's representation in the legislative and executive branches of Government in political party hierarchies.
  - b. The overall goal of the national policy includes mainstreaming gender perspectives in all policies and programs based on a systematic gender analysis at all levels of government. This policy one may say, was a significant way to redirect public policies to promote gender inequality. The increase in the number of women appointed to decision-making levels reflected the administrations resolve to achieve those goals.
  - c. To increase women's participation in politics, the federal ministry of women affairs and Youth Development (FMWAYD) established the national action committee on women in politics. This committee has been working to develop strategies for the effective mobilization and participation of women to register, vote, and be candidates in the electoral process cautionary changes already stimulated by the women development programmes.
  - d. Another Government notable effort introduced to enhance women's political participation was the launching of the "women's money for women's election". A programme titled "Agenda 2003" was also launched by a coalition of women non-governmental organizations to raise funds for women political aspirants.

The purpose of these concerns one may conclude is to provide women with a level ground to enter into politics. Again, the point could be argued that the 30% affirmative action has not been fully implemented. The government had not specified those measurers and strategies of attaining the 30% participation through the affirmative action. Most of the campaigns embarked upon to encourage and mobilize women to participate in politics have not impacted significantly on the political system. Aside from the rhetoric of conference halls and memoranda on pages of newspapers, leaders in the legislative and executive positions have not embark on meaningful steps to address the various factors hindering women's participation in politics.

### **Suggestions for the Active Participation of Women in Politics**

Various strategies exist on the effective participation in the political process. The most important way of "launching" into politics is that a woman should have a starting point. Embarking on a civic project that will later develop into her main constituency is a prerequisite. Thus, through the project the woman in concert with her campaign staff could then start focusing on the following issues (Leuthold, 1968; 15): What experience do I have? What is my base of support? How well known am I in my community? Who will form the nucleus of my campaign organization? How well do I fit into my constituency? How would I lay a plan of action toward winning an election?

Another aspect one has to look at is the morality of women in politics. Conducting one self in a morally acceptable manner, in line with societal imposed norms and values is a culture that has to be imbibed by any aspiring female politician. This could also help the woman in presenting a better personality to the public in general, and the men in particular. The pattern of behaviour expected of a woman who occupies a given position in society is expectedly high particularly at the initial period of seeking office. The lesson here is that whether one likes it or not, except one's father, husband or godfather is a multimillionaire, then, acting in a socially responsible manner with a high sense of humility and respect in the society, is the best and a sure way of starting a political career.

Playing a crucial role in party politics and winning elections also entails attending party caucuses, serving as delegates to nominating conventions, attaching oneself to the campaigns of candidates and the like. Most important, building bridges and playing one's card right also

matters. Involvement in party activities and character building are essential particularly where party organization is strong and endorsement crucial to the successful candidate. Indeed, such services are important pre-requisite to running for elective office (Anderson, 1977: 143 & 214).

Method of campaigning is also essential to electoral success. Campaigning involves mobilizing women, traders and the grassroots. An effective campaign depends on the perception of the woman as a sales person. It involves talking to and convincing the electorates, enduring and tolerating harsh comments, perseverance, etc.

Essentially the woman have to decide on where to run, how to present herself to the public as a candidate, how to organize her campaign, the purpose of the election, the various personalities involved in politics and above all, the nature and terrain of the polity. This process, which involves administering a campaign organization, can be likened to running a small business organization. To be effective however, the woman must also take cognisance of the need to source for campaign finance. Sourcing for funds has a lot in common with "begging for charity".

Networking and collaboration with various women groups and other professional or cultural organizations is also important. Groups and other NGO's working on women related issues could form lobbying groups that will help to modify and transform existing legislations or propose new ones that will facilitate the entrants of more women into politics.

### **Conclusion**

An Observable trend inherent in the 2003 is the tensed atmosphere created by nature of violence and intolerance of political protagonists. Money politics, incumbency, official but undeclared support of candidates and godfatherism "also played major roles in hindering effective participation of women in the 2003 elections. Factors such as culture, religion, and societal perception of the role of the woman as homemakers, etc. are also recognizable.

Majority of women aspirants in 2003, lost out to the men because of the high level of politicking, mudslinging and heavy financial burden involved in campaigning for nomination during the primaries. Other women who had political clout were prevailed upon to concede to the men with promises of better appointments in the future. Political parties fielded very few women. Infact, the low level of success of women at the

primaries has been attributed to certain behavioural patterns and tendencies that men found abominable.

With respect to money, many women do not possess the cash backing to embark on cross country mobilization and other exigencies like gratification for expectant favours. Most of the male politicians on the other hand, have enormous wealth at their disposal to withstand the huge investments made by their contemporaries. Few women who had the backing of their wealthy fathers, husbands brothers, uncles, associates or Godfathers as the case may be, are the ones who were able to make deep incursions into politics.

Two classical examples will suffice. Gbemisola Saraki Fowora for instance is the daughter of the strong man of Kwara Politics - Dr. Olusola Saraki who is not only very influential nationally, but highly opinionated and extremely wealthy. His son Dr. Bukola Saraki also won as Governor of Kwara State. Daisy Danjuma on her part is the spouse of the immediate past Minister of Defence and a very close associate of the President.

One has also observed that most women politicians do not work in concert with various women organizations dotting our national landscape. There is no concerted effort to endorse a particular candidate. In addition, women politicians do not launch campaign funding to enable them realize their political ambition.

A serious issue that women have also had to contend with is the controversy of the appointment of married women into federal institutions and the emphasis placed on the "federal character Principle". Recently, the appointment of Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was marred with controversy with respect to her state of Origin. (Saturday Punch, August 12, 2003: 44 & 45). The point being made here is that the accompanying discourse about the issue state of origin is a "double - jeopardy" for women who aspire to participate in the Nigerian decision-making process. The participation of women in the 2003 elections revealed that most married women who come from different state from their husbands, had to go to their state of origin to contest for their seats. Gbemi Saraki -Fowora to Kwara, Daisy Danjuma- to Edo, Iquoh Minimah in the Federal House of Representatives to Akwa Ibom etc. Government's stand on women's state of origin, in a way, appears to be in sharp contradistinction to some cultures which considered the woman as part and parcel of their society once she is married to their son.

Based on the foregoing analysis, one can therefore conclude that the gap between women and men to participate in political life and in the

area of power sharing, and decision-making remains wide. As a result, women's interest and concerns are not represented at policy-making levels. Consequently, women cannot influence key decisions in social, economic and political areas that affect society as a whole (Report on Beijing Platform for Action, 2000).

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