

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Violence and women participation in politics: A case study of Ekiti State, Nigeria**

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**Violence, as an issue, against the participation of women in politics is a recurring decimal in human politicking. Many societies have employed violence as a way of discouraging women's participation in politics without condemning it. This is due to the fact that women are perceived not to be a force to reckon with in politics, especially in Nigeria. This paper, therefore, examines the role of violence in the context of politicking and women's political participation stakeholders, with men, in the political process. Administering 200 structured questionnaires on women and conducting complimentary in-depth interviews on another 50 women, the paper shows that all forms of violence in politics make politics an uninteresting human endeavour for women because it is highly discomfiting for women to survive effectively in any violent environment. Also, other socio-economic, cultural, and spousal factors operate to hinder women from participating in politics. It, therefore, concludes that the widespread use of violence in the struggle for political power is detrimental to the realization of citizens' collective well-being and a stable democracy, in Nigeria. It, however, submits that proper legislation with a robust sanction-system should be put in place for sponsors and perpetrators of violence in politics. In addition, there is a pressing need to sustain awareness and value reorientation campaigns about the significance of politics without bitterness in enhancing social harmony. Without strife, more women can confidently participate in politics and, thereby, contribute their quota to national development.**

**Key words:** Violence, politics, women participation.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Political violence against women's participation in politics has been part of human history. Many societies have lived with it without condemning it, because women are perceived as not a force to reckon with in politics especially in Nigeria. Females constitute a greater proportion of the population in Nigeria; about 49.36% (World Bank Report, 2012) but, in spite of this, they are not 'heard'. Women's contribution to the socio-economic development of human societies is often more than half that of men, by virtue of their dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres. Yet, their participation in the formal political structure and process, where decisions regarding the use of societal resources (generated by both men and women) are made, remain insignificant. Prior to 2005, women's representation in the legislative arm of government around the world was 15% (United Nations Development, Human Development Report,

2005).

The pronounced commitment of international organizations to gender equality and to bridging the gender gap in the formal political arena, reinforced by the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1993 and the Beijing Platform of Actions, 1995 had changed the political landscape with presence of a minimum of 30% of women in the political structure of most African countries, the present Nigerian government even has about 35% women participation at the Federal level. The issue of political participation entails various variables of participation, but basically voting in elections, contesting elective (public) offices held in relation to other representation. Explaining this view Agbalajobi (2010) explained that, the increase of votes cast by women in elections from 10 to 40% of total vote cast in eight years signifies a form of increase in

population. But when the number of women holding public offices, when compared to men, is relatively low, there is under-representation. She asserts further that there may be an increase in participation of women and yet under-representation of women in politics; or there could be high representation of women in politics and yet low participation, depending on the standards used to measure participation. However, in Nigeria today, there is an increase in the level of women participation and yet women are still under-represented especially for elective positions at the local level. It has been reported that politics in Nigeria manifest in acrimony, assault, assassination, intimidation, harassment, maiming and killing (Lawal, 2005). Women who are believed to be "light hearted" cannot struggle in the atmosphere of rancour and violence, cannot risk anybody's life for election victory which Nigerian men in politics care less about (Olugbemi, 2004). Although gender inequality plays a major role in hindering women's participation in politics, political violence has greatly discouraged women from politics. And this makes the low participation of women in partisan politics more problematic.

Succinctly, there is a growing recognition and acceptance across the globe that women have high potentials as they feature prominently in commerce, services, and education. At each level of their involvement, they make remarkable input. Therefore, women who have been able to make positive impact in commerce, education and, even, the family, could also make governance better, if allowed to participate 'freely' and actively in it. It is, therefore, of grave importance to examine political violence as it affects women-participation in Nigerian politics.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Violence is defined by Wolf (1969) as "the illegitimate and unauthorized use of force to effect decisions against the will or desires of others".

Karl Schmit (1968) posits that violence, particularly political violence, represents a disturbance to the political equilibrium system. According to Gurr (1970:2), political violence is all the collective attacks within a political community against the political regime, its actors including competing political groups as well as incumbents – or its policies. Political violence comes in different forms. It can be coup d'état which refers to abrupt change in government brought about by force, by people who already hold some power (either military or political) (Shafritz, 1988). Riot and insurgency are other forms of political violence, just as war, terrorism, sabotage, assassination and a host of others (Tilly, 1978; Anifowose, 1982). Markowitz (2006) viewed violence as the 'original sin' of politics. It is not only characterized by highly organized political acts, such as the removal of a political regime, the imposition of a dominant ideology (or

belief system), and the establishment of a separate state.

## INCIDENCE OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

The Nigerian political scene is bedeviled by violence. This can be attributed to the culture of political activity in Nigeria during the pre-independence period and the early stage of political independence in 1960. Political activities in Nigeria, since the beginning of the current democratic experiment in May 1999, have witnessed tremendous degrees of power struggle and political violence. Available statistics show that over 10,000 lives were lost to violent clashes between 1999 to June 2002. More so, the Nigerian Red Cross, was involved in the resettlement of over 250,000 individuals and 32,000 families as a result of various acts of political violence in the country in 2001 alone (Olukorede, 2002).

According to Dudley (1973), the possession of political power leads directly to economic power. Those who hold positions in the powerstruggle determine the location and distribution of scarce resources. Therefore, politics in Nigeria is the struggle for more money and this means that to get into politics, there is always a price to pay. According to, going into politics, since it entails spending huge sums of money, one will have to be involved in some competition which may precipitate political violence. In view of this, political violence develops as a feature of struggle for power (Adeyemo, 2000).

The employment of violence in the struggle for power has some negative implications for the realization of the collective well-being of individuals and society as a whole. In Nigeria, political violence has become highly disruptive to social life, thereby causing divisions in families and communities as well as causing antagonisms among and within social groups. Nigerians have witnessed several cases of political violence in the form of assassinations, bomb-blasts, intimidations, murders, and destruction of properties in time past and now on the increase. Political violence in the Nigerian context can be regarded as a sort of response to frustrating circumstances (Punch Editorial February 17th, 2003).

In Nigeria, the first notable act of political violence, after independence was the military coup of January 5, 1966, where a group of Nigerian young Army officers-Majors and Captains-seized power, assassinating the then Prime Minister, Tafawa Balewa and Premiers Ahmadu Bello and Ladoke Akintola, of the Northern and Western Regions, respectively (Diamond, 1995). The first significant category of civilian coup occurred in Nigeria on 10th July, 2003, when the former Governor of Anambra State Chris Ngige, was abducted in a grand plot to unseat him. This plot was executed by the late Assistant Inspector General of Police, Mr. Raphael Ige, who later claimed he acted on an "order from the above" though the principal actors to such act remain unknown till today. Political activities in Nigeria, since the inception of the current democratic

exercise in 1999 till the present-day, have witnessed tremendous degrees of power struggle and political violence whereby the number of politically motivated murders is said to be equal to the number of people killed during the Nigerian civil war in 1967 to 1970 (Olawale, 2003).

Over twenty prominent Nigerians were killed during this act of political violence and assassination was called "Trial of Blood". Below is a catalogue of politically motivated violent actions that involved murder or assassination and kidnappings between 1999 and 2011.

- (1) September 9, 1999 - Sunday Ugwu was killed by gunmen who mistook him for his elder brother, Ugwu, a member of the Enugu State House of Assembly.
- (2) December 18, 2001 – Monday N. Fembari, a member of Rivers State House of Assembly, was assassinated.
- (3) December 19, 2001 – Oduanyo Olagbaju, a member of Osun State House of Assembly, was murdered.
- (4) December 23, 2001 – Bola Ige, Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of the Federation was assassinated in his home at Ibadan, Oyo state (Orjinta, 2003).
- (5) August 13, 2002 – Janet Olapade, People's Democratic Party (PDP) leader in Odigbo Local Government Area, Ondo State, was assassinated.
- (6) November 2002 – Dele Arojo, PDP Governorship aspirant in Ogun State, was murdered.
- (7) December 12, 2003 – John Agbatutu PDP, Delta Central Senatorial District aspirant, was murdered.
- (8) March 21, 2003 – Anthony Nwodo, Secretary of ANPP, Ezza North Local Government, Ebonyi State, was assassinated.
- (9) March 27, 2003 – Yemi Oni, Alliance for Democracy (AD) stalwart in Ekiti State, was assassinated.
- (10) April 19, 2003 – Onyewuchilwuchukwu, ANPP stalwart in Ikeduru, Imo State, was murdered.
- (11) April 20, 2003 – Tony Dimegwu, ANPP House of Assembly Member, Imo state was murdered.
- (12) May 3, 2003 – Joyce Fatai, former Nasarawa State Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development, was murdered.
- (13) January 6, 2004 – Aminiasoari Dikibo, South-South National Vice Chairman of PDP, was assassinated.
- (14) March 4, 2004-Luke Shingaba, a Chairmanship candidate in Bassa Local Government, Kogi State, was assassinated.
- (15) March 7, 2004 – Philip Olorunnipa, a Kogi State electoral commissioner, was murdered.
- (16) February 5, 2005 – Sunday Atte, leader of the Legislative Council in Yagba East Local Government Area of Kogi State, was murdered.
- (17) July 30, 2006 - Funso Williams, a Governorship aspirant of PDP in Lagos State, was assassinated.
- (18) August 14, 2006 – Ayo Daramola, a Governorship aspirant of PDP in Ekiti State, was assassinated.
- (19) September 19, 2006 – Mohammed Imam, Chairman of ANPP, Borno State, was assassinated.

(20) September 14, 2007 – Segun Oladimeji, fondly called 'segelu', a PDP member of House of Representatives, representing Akinyele/Lagelu Federal Constituency, Oyo State, was assassinated.

(21) March 4, 2010 Ademola Adegbite, Chairman of the PDP Atiba Local Government, Oyo State, was murdered.

(22) January 1, 2011- Akpan, a medical doctor and Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly aspirant, was murdered near St. Luke's General Hospital at Anua Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

(23) January 29, 2011- Modu Fannami Gubio, a Governorship candidate, and Goni Sheriff, were shot dead by unknown gunmen along with Ali Modu Sheriff and 5 others injured on their way home after performing the Jumat Service at the palace of the Shehu of Borno.

(24) In Ikot Ekpene and Uyo in Akwa Ibom State, over 800 vehicles belonging to the State Government were burnt (Akeem and Soyinka, 2011).

### **CAUSES OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA (PARTICULARLY IN EKITI STATE)**

Political violence is an endemic feature of most of the world political systems. This is particularly true of the developing countries, including Nigeria, where political violence has become an essential characteristic of the political process, particularly after (political) independence (Tamuno, 1972). It was Nigeria's pride that she achieved her independence with minimum disturbances; but, it is rather unfortunate that after independence Nigeria has been gravitating in a spiral of violence. However, several factors are responsible for political violence, with the most prominent being election-rigging. Election-rigging is a political stigma that has ruined political practice in Nigeria. Generally, it is a characteristic of the bread and butter type of politics associated with the Third World and especially African countries (Olukorede, 2002). Whereby electioneering is largely devoid of ideological rigour but generally fuelled by primordial sentiments such as ethnicity, religion, etc.

The most important reason why elections are rigged is that people who want to remain in power or get into power by all means, employ violence like assassination, intimidation, and corrupt practices in their desire to win or retain political power (Okoigun, 2000).

Election-rigging, resulting into violence, was the fatal crisis that engulfed the then Ondo State in 1983. The political crisis led to the death of prominent people such as Senator Lawrence Agunbiade, Chief Agbayewa, Olaiya Fagbamigbe etc and many properties were also lost in the process (Okoroma, 2005).

Furthermore, according to Sowore (2006) former Governor of Ekiti State, Ayodele Fayose, made use of his personal aids, trained thugs, hawkish politicians, and 'long-throat' police officers to murder, maim and intimidate those who stood in his way, which led to the murder

of notable people in Ekiti e.g. Taye Fasuba, Tunde Omolaja, Chief Daramola of Ijan-PDP chapter etc.

The recent saga between Kayode Fayemi and Segun Oni in Ekiti State is a typical example that calls for the conduct of a study like this. In 2007, Ekiti State Governorship election brought Segun Oni, candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), to office as Governor. The result of the election was however, challenged by the Action Congress of Nigeria's (ACN's) candidate, Kayode Fayemi, who argued that Oni failed to comply with election laws in 10 specific areas of the State; that is, the election was rigged by Segun Oni and the PDP (Jimoh and Ogunmola, 2010).

In February, 2009, the Election Tribunal, sitting at Ado-Ekiti, agreed with Fayemi and ordered Segun Oni to vacate the office of Governor, while Olatunji Odeyemi (the then speaker of the House of Assembly) became the Acting Governor. Also, the Court ordered the Independent National Election Commission (INEC) to conduct a re-run election within 90 days. And, April 25 2009, was declared by INEC as the Election re-run day for the areas affected by the Court's ruling.

While the people of Ekiti State prepared for the re-run election, on the scheduled day, Ekiti State became a battle ground, such that violence was everywhere. In the long run, the declared election-result was 109,000 votes cast for Oni and 106,000 for Fayemi. Fayemi and the ACN rejected the results. Fayemi commenced the next turn of legal 'protest' against the election results which the Tribunal declared Oni won. Fayemi and the ACN headed to the Court of Appeal, sitting in Ilorin, and, finally, the Court declared Kayode Fayemi the winner on October 15, 2010, with the majority lawful votes- 105,631 as against 95,176 (Jimoh and Ogunmola, 2010).

In the course of the 'battle' over winners in Ekiti State, which led to several cases of re-run elections, a lot of people were maimed, and killed while properties were destroyed especially in Ido-Osi and Oye Local Government Area. Before the election-results were declared in favour of Fayemi, a lot of political violence was perpetrated.

## **WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

In any democratic polity, control is achieved by persons and groups, irrespective of gender, through a recognized legitimate process to the pinnacle of power (Ifamose, 2000). Women do not generally participate in politics because of extant inequality in human society. There is wide acceptance that women constitute a significant percentage of the total world population and have been making tremendous contributions in all facets of social life (Afolabi et al., 2003, cited in Agbalajobi, 2010). But, when it comes to political participation, women are seen merely as "shuttle", to be seen and not to be heard. Every human being has every right to participate in decisions

that define his/her life, while the right is the foundation of the ideal of equal participation in decision-making among women and men. In the context of human rights, it is argued that-since women know their situation best, they should participate equally with men to have their perspective effectively incorporated at all levels of decision-making, from the private to the public spheres of their lives and also, from the local to the global (Miranda, 2005).

The participation of women in every aspect of national life, most especially in politics, is effectively contributing to national development. The equal representation of women is, therefore considered very important for the proper development of any nation. The seriousness accorded to this is reflected in the Declaration of Affirmative Action by the United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing, 1995, where it was decided that 30% of all positions in government-owned agencies should be given to women. But, for Nigeria, appropriate legislation related to the Beijing declaration is yet to be put in place (Adedokun, 2000) even when Nigeria is a signatory to this protocol of action.

A retrospective glance at the political and development history of Nigeria suggests that adequate mechanism to promote women's involvement in the current democratic exercise has not been properly practiced for example the alterations in Nigeria's electoral act which appear to thwart women's participation in politics.

To amend or alter section 82(3)(b) of the principal act by deleting the words 'independent candidate' in line 2 of the above in the Electoral Act"

"To amend or alter section 87(4) of the Electoral Act's Principal Act, which is to be amended by inserting immediately after the subsection (4)(11) the following new subsections:

(12)(A) Every Political Party in Nigeria shall establish in its constitution a National Executive Committee (NEC), which shall be the highest decision making body of a political party

(B) The membership of the NEC of a political party shall be as follows:

(i) The president and the former presidents who are members of the party

(ii) The vice president and former vice presidents who are members of the party

(iii) Governors, who are members of the party

(iv) Members of the National Assembly who are members of the party

(v) Former presiding officers of the National Assembly who are members of the party

(vi) Chairman and secretary of the Board of Trustees, where applicable

(vii) Former National Chairmen

(viii) Former national chairmen BOT

**Table 1.** Age distribution of the respondents.

Age	Frequency	Percentage
30-39	60	30
40-49	50	25
50-59	50	25
60-69	30	15
70	10	5
Total number	200	100

- (ix) State Chairmen of the party
- (x) National officers of the party
- (C) The quorum for meeting of the NEC of a political party shall be one half ( $A\frac{1}{2}$ ) of its total membership.
- (D) All National Executive Committee (NEC) decisions on electoral matters require two-third ( $2/3$ ) of its quorum.

This makes the role of women in Nigerian politics minimal. This is what prompted the organization of the National Summit on Women Participation in Politics by the Minister of Women Affairs, Mrs. Josephine Anenih, which was held in Lagos on August 23, 2010.

## METHODOLOGY

### Study area

Ekiti State was carved out of Ondo State on 1st October, 1996, with Ado-Ekiti as the capital city. Ekiti State is situated entirely within the Tropics. It is located between Longitudes  $40^{\circ} 51'$  and  $50^{\circ} 45'1''$  East of the Greenwich meridian and latitudes  $70^{\circ} 15'1''$  and  $80^{\circ} 51'$  north of the Equator. It lies south of Kwara and Kogi States, east of Osun State and bounded by Ondo State in the east and in the south. Ekiti State has 16 Local Government Councils. By the 2006 Census, the population of Ekiti State was 2,384,212, with male at 1,215,487 and female 1,183,470. Mainly an upland zone rising over 250 m above the sea level, Ekiti State has a rhythmically undulating surface. The landscape consists of ancient plains broken by steep-sided outcropping dome rocks. These rocks occur singularly or in groups or ridges and the most notable of these are to be found in Efon-Alaaye, Ikere-Ekiti, and Okemesi-Ekiti. The State enjoys a tropical climate with two distinct seasons, the rainy season (April to October) and the dry season (November to March). Temperature ranges between  $210$  and  $280^{\circ}\text{C}$ , with high humidity. The south-westerly winds and the north east trade winds blow in the rainy and dry (Harmattan) seasons, respectively. Tropical forest exists in the south, while guinea savanna predominates in the northern peripheries. Geo-politically, the State is divided into three senatorial districts: Ekiti Central senatorial district, Ekiti North senatorial district and Ekiti South senatorial district.

### Data collection methods

As result of the sensitivity of this research, data for the study were collected through both the quantitative and the qualitative methods; the quantitative data-collection method involved the use of structured questionnaire, while the qualitative method involved the use of both the in-depth interview and content analysis (of news-

paper publications). The in-depth interview was used to complementary the quantitative approach so as to enable the researcher to elicit intrinsic responses through face-to-face interaction with the respondents. Content analysis was also used to complement the respondents' responses. The study was limited to only women within the age-frame of 30 to 70 years.

Since the population is quite large, in order to achieve a closely matched sample size, a pilot survey was carried out to identify the sample population and 200 women were purposively selected from the three senatorial districts, 65 respondents each from the North and South senatorial districts respectively while 70 respondents were from the Central senatorial district being the largest. A Senatorial District is made up of 5 Local Government Areas and Central 6 LGAs. It was a short-term/tropical study when the - election fever was still high. North and South Senatorial District-mostly rural area ( $65+65$ ), Central District more urbanized area 70.

Structured questionnaires were administered on the 200 respondents which involved the following social categories of people, teachers, artisans, public servants, owners of business enterprises, and farmers.

Although, 200 respondents may not be a representative sample but the comparison of opinions from these various social categories was still able to provide specificities, individual experiences, and general perceptions of women political participation and political violence. With the assistance of other four trained researchers, 200 questionnaires were administered, and the data generated were coded and analyzed through simple percentage and presented as shown in Tables 1 to 10. In-depth interviews were also conducted with 50 respondents. From the 50 respondents, 15 respondents each were chosen from the North and South senatorial districts and 20 respondents from the central Senatorial district. The questions were structured to enable the respondents answer the same type of questions, the responses were tape recorded and later transcribed.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section is divided into two: Section A discusses the data generated through the quantitative method, while Section B discusses the data collected from the in-depth interview.

### Section A

From Table 1, 30%(60) respondents were within the age (30 to 39), 25%(50) respondents were within the age (40 to 49), 25%(50) respondent fell within the age (50 to 59), 15%(30) respondents fell within age range of (60 to 69) and only 5%(10) respondents were age 70.

From Table 2, 32%(64) respondents were civil servants, 22%(44) respondents were traders, 20%(40) respondents were farmers, 16%(32) were artisans, while 10%(20) respondents did not mentioned their occupation.

Also, Table 3 shows that respondents with B.sc, were 27%( 54), the respondents who are HND holders were 22% (44), OND holders were just 13%(26), NCE holder were 16%(32) and 22%(44) respondents had no formal education.

As shown in Table 4, 58.5%(117) respondents agreed that political violence is endemic and affects diverse facets of life, both political, social and economic.

**Table 2.** Occupational distribution of the respondents.

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Civil Servant	64	32
Trader	44	22
Farmer	40	20
Artisan	32	16
Others	20	10
Total number	200	100

**Table 3.** Educational status of respondents.

Educational status	Frequency	Percentage
B.Sc	54	27
HND	44	22
OND	26	13
NCE	32	16
Non formal education	44	22
Total number	200	100

25.5%(51) respondents disagreed to this opinion, while 16%(32) respondents were not sure if political violence is endemic or it affects diverse facets of life.

From Table 5, one can see that 28.5%(57) respondents agreed that imposition of unworthy candidates is the cause of political violence in Ekiti state, a good number of the respondents 42%(84) population agreed that election rigging is the major cause of political violence, 22.5%(45) of the respondents chose poverty as the major cause of political violence while 7%(14) respondents identified other cause of political violence, for instance, corruption on the part of the politicians.

From Table 6, it is obvious that 65%(130) explained that the level of women political participation in the state is minimal, only 21%(42) respondents accepted that the level of women's participation in politics is maximal. While 14%(28) respondents, said they do not know the level of women's participation in politics, this is due to the fact that most of them are politically apathetic, that is, they are not aware of political happenings. From Table 6 it can be concluded that the level of women political participation in Ekiti state is still low.

We can infer from Table 7, that greater percentage of respondents 54%(118) strongly agree that women participation in politics has positive impacts on lives of people in the society, while 5%(10) of the respondents strongly disagree that women participation in politics has any positive effects on lives of people. Moreover, 28.5%(57) of the respondents agreed that women participation in politics has positive impacts on the lives of the people and 12.5%(25) of the respondents disagreed.

The analysis on Table 8, indicates that 18.5%(37) respondents viewed illiteracy as a major constraints to

**Table 4.** Respondent's opinion on the endemic nature of political violence and how it affects diverse facets of life.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	117	58.5
No	51	25.5
Not sure	32	16
Total number	200	100

**Table 5.** View of the respondents on the causes of political violence.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Imposition of unworthy candidates	57	28.5
Election rigging	84	42
Poverty	45	22.5
Others	14	7
Total number	200	100

women's political participation, 17.5%(35) respondents believed that poverty among women will hinder them from participating in politics, 15%(30) respondents identified gender inequality as the major constraints to women political participation, majority of the respondents 40%(80) identified political violence as the major constraint to women political participation, while 9%(18) respondents disagreed with these constraints identified but created some other constraints to women political participation.

From the Table 9 70%(140) respondents identified low participation of women in politics as a noticeable effect of political violence against women. 25%(50) respondents chose low self-worth as the effects of political violence on women, while 5%(10) respondents identified other effects of political violence against women. Conclusion can however be drawn from these facts that the higher the level of political violence in Ekiti state, the lower the level of women's participation in politics.

From Table 10, 22%(44) respondents identified new governmental policy as solutions to prevalence political violence, 24.5%(49) respondents suggested value re-orientation programmes for the masses, 23.5%(47) respondents felt that government should create poverty alleviation programmes, 18.5%(37) respondents were of the view that women should have educational orientation, while 11.5%(23) of the respondents gave other solutions.

## Section B: Discussion of the in-depth interview

On the question of women's view of violence in politics and the reason for the low participation/ representation of women in politics, from the 50 respondents interviewed,

**Table 6.** Respondents view on the level of women participation in politics.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Minimally	130	65
Maximally	42	21
Don't know	28	14
Total number	200	100

**Table 7.** Respondents view on the level of women participation in politics.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Minimally	130	65
Maximally	42	21
Don't know	28	14
Total number	200	100

90% (45) of the respondents believed that political violence in all its varying forms make politics an uninteresting endeavour for women because women find it uneasy to survive in a violent environment. Another reason is that politics in Nigeria is reputed to be 'dirty'; this is made true by the sheer reason that most often politicians betray the electorate's trust by reneging on their electioneering-promises. It is also believed that the methods employed by most male politicians in winning elections are unethical and, even, out-right illegal, and that the violent aspect is dangerous, intimidating, and threatening. This makes politics quite unattractive and reckless.

Furthermore, 80%(40) of the respondents interviewed stated that women are generally more welfare-oriented than men to give priority to social concerns in relation to the relatively disadvantaged population-groups. Women have stronger sense of fairness and justice, and, they are less prone to corruption because they play greater roles in child-rearing and in inculcating moral values of the society. Hence, women desire to be the models of morality themselves.

Mrs. 'Akin', aged 45, an official in one of the first generation banks in Ado-Ekiti, avows: "since the nature of women is not violence-prone, it is better for us to withdraw until something drastic is done to the pervasive nature of political violence in the country". Although, in the course of the interview, majority of the women agreed that there are several other factors discouraging women from participating in politics apart from political violence, such as socio-economic, cultural, and spousal problems, etc.

### Socio-economic factors

Apart from political violence, some other socio-economic

**Table 8.** The constraints to women political participation.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Illiteracy	37	18.5
Poverty	35	17.5
Gender Inequality	30	15
Political Violence	80	40
Others	18	9
Total number	200	100

constraints were raised by the women as factors responsible for their low participation in politics. Poverty appears to be the 'deadly plague' that affects about 70% of women in the State as confirmed in the interviews. According to some of the respondents, lack of access to viable economic opportunities and productive resources has been largely responsible for the growing incidence of poverty among women. For example, 'Mrs. Isi', aged 50, a business woman lamented that the over-whelming obstacle against women participation in politics is lack of financial resources. Since most women do not have money of their own, it has been quite difficult for them to pay their nomination-fess (in political parties when this is required) and, even, more difficult to run an effective campaign, if they tried. Apart from financial constraints, the women also stated that illiteracy, ill health, and high level of discrimination in the labour force are also hindrances to the active participation of women in politics.

Apart from political violence, 60%(30) of the women interviewed felt that the self-complacent attitude of women is also working against them in politics. They believe that women are uncompromising and unwilling to change. Since, most often, it is men that finance and make use of political violence and the attainment of political power in Nigeria is usually through violent struggles, such endeavour cannot be undertaken by a person with a 'large heart', as women. Women are thus assumed to be too timid for politics. The women summed up that the violent-laden political terrain in Ekiti State has seriously reduced the willingness of the women to participate fully in politics. Although the wife of Ekiti State governor, Erelu Bunmi Fayemi has been campaigning for women involvement in politics, through her projects African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) and Ekiti Development Foundation (EDF) as she strongly supports; women's and human right, political participation, peace building, health and reproductive right and economic empowerment ([www.synergos.org/bios/badeleye.htm](http://www.synergos.org/bios/badeleye.htm)). But 'Mrs. Fal', aged 40, a teacher, still concluded: "rather than be seriously involved in politics, I will rather get involved in mothering my children."

Another problem identified by 70% (35) of the respondents is restricted social participation as result of religious-cum-cultural factors. Religion has been adjudged as one of the universal factors in the develop-

**Table 9.** The noticeable effects of political violence against women.

Effects	Frequency	Percentage
Low participation of Women in Politics	140	70
Low self-worth	50	25
Others	10	5
Total number	200	100

**Table 10.** Solution to the prevalence political violence in Ekiti State which hinders the participation of women in politics.

Solution	Frequency	Percentage
New Governmental Policy	44	22
Value Re-orientation Programmes	49	24.5
Poverty Alleviation Programmes	47	23.5
Women Education Orientation	37	18.5
Others	23	11.5
Total number	200	100

ment of the individual and, by extension, nations. The misinterpretation of religious doctrines has negatively militated against women's participation in politics, power-sharing, and the decision-making process. For instance, 'Mrs. Asi', aged 35, a civil servant, lamented the inability of quite a number Muslim women especially, of not being able to actively participate in political activities. Also, how some religious leaders consider women who are involved in politics as loose or wayward. The patriarchal nature of Nigerian society, built on male domination, implies that women as wives must be under the control of men as husbands. This form of subjugation of women to men, particularly in decision-making, has also hindered women involvement in politics.

Another problem observed by 50%(25) respondents is that of the patent lack of cooperation among women themselves. This failure to stick together has resulted in women pulling down their fellow women who are contesting elections rather than support them which have, in various ways, resulted in women's lack of confidence in themselves.

Finally, as summarized by the respondents, it is believed that the political environment in Nigeria is unfriendly and anarchical in nature because it is characterized by a 'do-or-die' political principle among the contending groups who are desperate for power. This has in many ways driven apathy into women and, thereby, discouraged them from participating actively in politics. For instance, violent attacks on women -contestants in the just-concluded elections have scared more women off active participation in politics. In both Delta and Plateau States, Florence Ajiduwah and Pauline Tallen, senatorial and governorship candidate, respectively, were violently attacked by the political thugs of their opponents for them

to seriously chide men of incivility and desperation for power.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This paper concludes that the 'employment' of violence in the struggle for political power negatively affects the realization of the collective well-being of individuals in the country and true democracy. Although, according to both local and international observers, the elections of 2011 were claimed to be the most free and fair, with several security measures and commendable awareness programmes put in place, the level of violence was merely reduced in some parts of the country. This singular occurrence of minimum violence in elections is not a sufficient platform for postulating elections-without-violence in Nigeria in order for women to participate in politics on a level play-ground with men. Accordingly, to ensure more women in politics, the Nigerian State and the political environment should be more democratically secured and peaceful by making sure that proper legislation, with a robust sanction-system, is put in place for the sponsors and perpetrators of political violence. In addition, there should be a sustained awareness and value re-orientation campaign on the importance of 'politics without bitterness' whereby more women can confidently participate in politics and, thereby, contribute their own quota to national development.

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