

# Political Participation and Women in Public Offices

Ishaku Bitrus Lere <sup>a</sup>, Dantong Rahila Timothy <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a,b</sup> Department of political Science, Faculty of Social Science Plateau State University Bokokos, Nigeria.

<sup>a</sup> Corresponding author: bitruslere@yahoo.com

<sup>b</sup> Corresponding author: rahilatimothydantong@gmail.com

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**Abstract:** The contributions of women in societal development cannot be overemphasized, women in the society constitute about fifty percent of the world's population. The level of participation of these women folk in public life has been grossly inadequate; it means that we are neglecting about fifty percent development. Thus women supposed to be occupying equal positions with their men counterpart in the public offices but the case is not like that all over the world. Since women are seen as vanguard for societal transformation, they are supposed to be given a pride of place in public offices so that they can also make their own contributions to the realization of the aims and objectives of setting up a state. The enormous role that women perform in the society supposed to be extended to public life. This calls for the involvement of women in political activities since they are seen as partners in progress for the transformation of the society in general. Afterword's, women participation in political activities has been impeded by some factors which needs to be radically address in order to have equal representation in governance. Most often, women are relegated to the background when it comes to political participation. This is obvious because of some socio-cultural and religious factors which hinder their active participation in politics and other public offices. In the area of political party membership across the globe, women usually constitute a small percentage; this is because of the social, cultural and religious attitudes of different societies against women which most often tend to relegate them to the background. As a consequence, in some of the countries, only few educated men allowed their wives to come out and participate in politics and occupy public offices. A cogent example is found in the northern part of Nigeria ``purdah system`` i.e. house seclusion of women is one of the major obstacle to women participation in politics. This is applicable in many other countries of the world. Therefore, this paper intends to look at the extent to which women have participated in politics and public offices. It will traced the historical involvement of women in politics and public offices from pre-colonial, colonial and post colonial era, whether they are making break through or they are retrogressing in terms of political participation and involvement in public offices. The paper will preview the various international, national, regional and local conventions in support of women participation in politics and public offices will be x-rayed to ascertain the extend of the conformity of the various member states to the agreements. The factors impeding women participation in politics and public life will be discussed and the way forward in order to have a society whereby there will be equity, justice and fairness will prevail. The key words are: political participation, women in politics and women in public offices.

**Keywords:** Politics, Participation, Women, Public office, Development

## Introduction

The inequality between men and women in the society is universal, according to Encarta (2008), throughout most of Western history; women were confined to the domestic sphere, while public life was reserved for men. In medieval Europe, women were denied the right to own property, education or to participate in public offices. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in France they were still compelled to cover their heads in public, and in part of Germany, a husband still had the right to sell his wife. Even as late as the 20<sup>th</sup> century women in the United States, as in Europe could neither vote nor hold elective offices (Encyclopedia Britannica 2008).

In the case of Nigeria, prior to 1976, women in the northern part of the country were not allowed to participate in political activities, this was because of their religious believe until 1976 local government reform that made them to

take part in politics. In plateau state, there are some cultures that don't allowed women to eat chicken gizzard, this is because it is exclusively reserved for the men counterpart.

This gross inequality continue unabated, disparity in leadership positions and in politics, women are given the roles of mobilizers for their male counterparts and even while holding offices, they are assigned portfolios such as women leaders, youth mobilizers, they are not given sensitive and critical positions such as chairman, secretary, president etc. this is a manifestation of inability of member nations to comply with the international conventions and agreements as signed by member nations.. The women folk comprising over 50 percent of the world's population, women continue to be under-represented as voters, political leaders and elected officials. Democracy cannot truly deliver for all of its citizens if half of the population remains underrepresented in the political arena. (National Democratic Institute). In other words, we are neglecting 50% social, economic and political development. Since most of the countries have failed and most of them are rated as failed states there is an alternative to put into test in order to see the outcome.

### **Conceptualization of political participation and public offices/theoretical framework.**

The concept `` political participation `` has been defined by different scholars; commonsensical, it is seen as the involvement of people in the political activities of their country through voting, contesting for leadership positions, debate and discussion about government activities, being a member of a political party, occupying government offices etc. thus concurring with the definition given by Verba (1995: 38): "By political participation we refer simply to activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action – either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies." Therefore he People identified three ways by which citizens in a democratic setting may participate in political activities:

- Can get involved in a public arena to advertise and communicate demands to anyone willing to listen. Example: joining a demonstration.
- People may target policy-makers in legislatures or the executive branch as addressees of their communications. Example: signing a petition.
- People may get involved in the selection process of those who aspire to legislative or executive office. Examples: voting for a party or running for office.

Political participation encompasses the many activities used by citizens to influence the selection of political leaders or the policies they pursue. That is to say, that, political participation is beyond ordinary voting, it includes taken active part in influencing decision and policy makers of the society. That is why according to Special WEB Packages (2014:1), Political participation derives from the freedom to speak out, assemble and associate; the ability to take part in the conduct of public affairs; and the opportunity to register as a candidate, to campaign, to be elected and to hold office at all levels of government. Political participation extends beyond parties, however. Individuals can also become involved in certain aspects of the electoral process through independent action—particularly at the local level—and by joining civil society organizations. Professional networks, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, and the media can all provide avenues for political participation.

At this juncture, political participation is an activity by individuals or groups intended to influence those who govern or how they do so. As a state matures through political freedom and economic uplift, political consciousness is bound to grow. (Chaturvedi 2006:239). McCloskey (1968) sees political participation as those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly in the formation of public policies. It is a civic duty of every citizen and an indication of being politically, healthy, and the best means of ensuring that one's interests are protected. Political participation is an essential part of governing and democratizing or democracy, hence all citizens, including women, should be encouraged to participate in one way or the other in politics. This is important because citizen capacity and wiliness to participate in political life of their nation produces tangible benefits by meeting the concern not only for citizens ``voice`` but also for citizen agency and influence (Comerwall and Gavaenta, 2001).

In summary, political participation is seen as the way by which an individual actively engaged in political activities, as a member of a trade union, as a member of a civil society organizations, as a spectator, through voting, aspiring for a position, membership of a political party, holding public office, engaging in a debate on the performance of government, discussion about the government, constructive criticism about the work of government.

The concept of ``women in public offices`` is concerned with the positions that women occupies in public offices. Women's participation in public life and decision-making depends on several factors, including:

- an awareness of their rights and how to claim them

- access to information about laws, policies and the institutions and structures which govern their lives
- confidence, self-esteem and the skills to challenge and confront existing power structures

### **Support networks and positive role models**

An enabling environment, meaning a political, legal, economic and cultural climate that allows women to engage in decision-making processes in an effective way. (Charles 2014:1).

According to National Democratic Institute; Women around the world often face daunting social, economic and political challenges. For democratic governments to deliver to their constituents, they must be truly representative, and that women are equal partners in the process of democratic development. As activists, elected officials and constituents, their contributions are crucial to building a strong and vibrant society. It is therefore essential to

### **Support women around the world because**

- Women are highly committed to promoting national and local policies that address the socio-economic and political challenges facing women, children and disadvantaged groups.
- Women are particularly effective in promoting honest government. Countries where women are supported as leaders and at the ballot box have a correspondingly low level of corruption.
- Women are strongly committed to peace building, as they often disproportionately suffer the consequences of armed conflict. Reconstruction and reconciliation efforts take root more quickly and are more sustainable when women are involved. By helping women become participating members of a democracy, one can look to mitigate conflicts or stop conflicts before they begin.
- Women are strongly linked to positive developments in education, infrastructure and health standards at the local level. Where rates of gender development and empowerment are higher, human rates of development and standards of living are also higher.

Therefore, the level of participation of women in public offices is very low and it is a universal problem, it has been empirically confirmed that more women participate in political campaigns as asserted by Simbine (2003); wearing a badge/ carrying a sticker, and voting or encouraging others to vote (i.e. spectator activities); than in attending political meetings or rallies, or making a monetary contributions etc (i.e. transitional activities); worse still, in contesting and/or holding public or party office, soliciting public funds or attending caucus or strategy meetings etc. (i.e. gladiatorial activities). In other words, women's political participation in politics is mostly at the lower rungs of political participation.

Thus, the theory of feminist political economy is fundamental in the analysis of inequality between men and women in the society which is linked to the Marxist theory which argues that, the individual is heavily influenced by the structure of society which in all Western societies means a class structure that is peoples opportunities, wants and interest are seen to be shaped by the mode of production that characterized the society. Therefore, Marxist feminist see contemporary gender inequalities as determined by capitalist mode of production. Thus, gender oppression is class oppression and women subordination is seen as a form of class oppression which is maintained because it serves the interest of the ruling class. Feminist are united by the idea that women's position in society is unequal to that of men, and the society is structured in such a way as to benefit men to the political, social and economic detriment of women. Supporting the above assertion, Kate Millett sees feminist political economy as the interaction of economy and political policies as it affects the believe on the need to secure rights and opportunities for women equal to those of men.

### **Over view of conventions on women participation in public offices**

There are many international, national and regional conventions and agreements on discrimination against women in which many nations of the world are members, these amongst others include; Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Convention on Political Rights of Women (1952), International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (1966), International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict (1974), the Beijing Conference (1994), the affirmative acts established and incorporated into the various policies and programmes of government, the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is often described as an international bills of rights for women.

The summaries of most of the principles of these conventions include;

- To incorporate the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system, abolish all discriminatory laws and adopt appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women.

- To establish tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination, and
- To ensure elimination of all acts of discrimination against women by persons, organizations or enterprise. (CEDAW 2009).

### **Historical development of women in public offices**

Prior to colonialism, Nigeria was made up of empires and kingdoms with organized structure and system of government. It indicated that men were the people that occupied leadership positions of these empires and kingdoms as kings, chiefs, and elders in the name of emirs, obas, obis etc. This showed that among all these positions, women were not part of this formation but in some places there were exceptional cases. According to Unicef (2001:256); historical account indicate that men largely controlled the political sphere with exceptions like Queen Amina of Zazzau, Oba Orompo of Old Oyo and some pockets of Iboland. Women in traditional society were considered too weak and emotional to exercise responsibility of leadership. Thus, inequality between men and women existed during the pre-colonial era, this is manifested in the major kingdoms and empires that existed in Nigeria were occupied by men but women involvement was to deal with issues that concerned women or lesser positions as asserted by Shut (1995:108); they could serve as chief priestesses to certain gods but definitely to the supreme being of those societies, as a matter of fact, women were barred from partaking in certain rituals where the 'secrets of the land' are passed onto succeeding generations of men and in certain festivals particularly the popular 'masquerades'.

The colonial era widen the gap between men and women, the introduction of slave trade in which energetic youths were taken to foreign land to serve the colonial government and only children, women and old men were left in the society and only produced goods and services for subsistence consumption. In the process the colonial government introduced legitimate trade in which these energetic youths were recruited to serve the colonial government as bureaucrats and were trained. Supporting the above assertion, formal western education and training was first provide for the men as they service the colonial machinery, while women's attainment of education was largely ignored in line with the prevalent gender roles that relegated the women's position to the domestic sphere as well as the Victorian mentality of the imperial power from Britain Agina (2006).

At this period, politically women were suppressed in terms of political positions; it was not until in 1954 that the nationalist agitated for the participation of both men and women in the southern part of Nigeria which was granted to them with few representations during colonial rule. According to Unicef (2003); the rising of nationalist agitations for independent led to the granting of the rights to vote for both men and women in Southern Nigeria in 1954 and there was a token of representation of women in post colonial politics (1960-1965) with a few like Mrs Wurada Esan and Mrs Bernice Kerry in parliament while Mrs Mararet Ekpo and Mrs Janet Moukela in the Eastern House of Assemble.

The post colonial state marked the period of decolonization in which the colonial government handed over the mantle of leadership to their collaborators who were men that continued with the administration of the country in order to protect their interest. Inequality continues unabated between men and women in Nigeria.

Therefore, 15<sup>th</sup> January 1966 marked the period of autocratic regimes which suspended the constitution and rule with decrees and paid less attention to advancing the cause of women until 1976 when they were allowed to participate in the Northern part of Nigeria. Concurring with Agina (2003); in the second republic, despite the final entrenchment of all Nigerian women in 1976, their outing in the second republic (1979-1983) was quite limited as there was just a female to 57 senators and 11 female members of the House of Representative out of 445. Thus, women were not elected into any offices at the state and local government levels.

The Ibrahim Babangida regime (1985-1993) was seen as administration that tried to advance the cause of women by establishing the programme for 'Better life programme' by Mrs Mariyam Babangida which was maintained by the subsequent regime tagged 'Family Support Programme' all these couldn't be able to promote and project the interest of women and ended up in enriching the wives of the military officers from the local, state and at the Federal levels.

### **Women participation in public offices from 1999 to date**

The effort that was made under the military regime to implement the Affirmative Action couldn't address the situation. According to Egwu and Nwankwo (2003:164); it is important to note that concerted efforts to address issues of gender inequality and the empowerment of women started, curiously, under the various military regimes, especially in the aftermath of the Beijing conference in 1994, it is curious in the sense that the military as an

institution is male dominated and `masculine` in ethos and orientation as all officers irrespective of gender are supposed to be `gentlemen`. It is on record that for the over thirty years that it dominated the political space no woman was appointed military governor or administrator, nor appointed into the highest decision-making organ, the Supreme Military Council or the Armed Forces Ruling Council. Efforts under successive military regimes to advance the cause of gender inequality, especially in the post Beijing period have been criticized as narrowly focusing on the wives of army generals in political positions through the phenomenon of `first ladyism` (a channel for mobilizing women for the extension of military rule), and the high profile women to the neglect of real rural women.

The returned of democratically elected government in 1999, there was high expectation that, the issue of inequality will be addressed, this revealed itself in the victory of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo in which he declared support for the Affirmative Action in favuor of women the process of his campaign. The future was further brightened by the granting of waiver payment of nomination fees by female aspirants under the People Democratic Party (PDP), was seen as an effort to encourage women political participation in political activities. Thus more than any regime, the civilian administration has created more room for women participation in public offices, for instance the 1999 constitution contains non-discriminatory clauses against women; ministry for women affairs, National Policy for Women, granting of waiver to women by the P.D.P and other political parties. With above effort made by the government, there is absent of political will to execute these policies in favour of women, more is needed to be done in the area of women participation in public offices.

Bellow is the statistic to show that more effort is needed by all parties to achieve this Affirmative Action in order to balance the inequality between men and women.

Table 1.1 Women In Elective And Appointive Positions, 1999-2003

| Office                       | No available | No of women in 1999 | No of women in 2003 | % of women in 2003 |
|------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| President                    | 1            | No woman            | No woman            | 0 %                |
| V.President                  | 1            | No woman            | No woman            | 0 %                |
| Senate                       | 109          | 3 women             | 3 women             | 2.8 %              |
| House of Reps                | 360          | 12 women            | 21 women            | 5.8 %              |
| Governors                    | 36           | No woman            | No woman            | 0 %                |
| Deputy Governors             | 36           | 1 woman             | 2 women             | 5.6 %              |
| House of Assemble( speakers) | 36           | 1 woman             | 2 women             | 5.6 %              |
| State Houses of Assemble     | 990          | 12 women            | 23 women            | 2.3%               |
| Cabinet ministers            | 34           | 4 women             | 6 women             | 17.65 %            |

Source: Habiba M. L awal `` overview of political participation of women in Nigeria: challenges, Triumphs, and the Way Forward, Paper for IRI, 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2004. Page 12.

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Table 1.2 Gender Distributions Of Contestants In The 2007 Elections

| S/N   | STATE        | House of assembly |      |       | House of representative |      |       | Governorship |     |       | Deputy Governor |     |       |
|-------|--------------|-------------------|------|-------|-------------------------|------|-------|--------------|-----|-------|-----------------|-----|-------|
|       |              | F                 | M    | total | F                       | M    | total | f            | M   | total | f               | M   | total |
| 1     | Abia         | 7                 | 152  | 159   | 6                       | 52   | 58    | 0            | 18  | 18    | 2               | 16  | 18    |
| 2     | Adamawa      | 4                 | 146  | 150   | 2                       | 33   | 35    | 0            | 12  | 12    | 0               | 12  | 12    |
| 3     | Akwa Ibom    | 11                | 160  | 171   | 4                       | 51   | 55    | 0            | 12  | 12    | 0               | 12  | 12    |
| 4     | Anambra      | 28                | 218  | 246   | 8                       | 64   | 72    | 1            | 13  | 14    | 4               | 10  | 14    |
| 5     | Bauchi       | 3                 | 95   | 98    | 0                       | 50   | 50    | 0            | 10  | 10    | 1               | 9   | 10    |
| 6     | Bayelsa      | 7                 | 86   | 93    | 3                       | 23   | 26    | 0            | 12  | 12    | 0               | 12  | 12    |
| 7     | Benue        | 5                 | 100  | 105   | 8                       | 65   | 73    | 3            | 10  | 13    | 0               | 13  | 13    |
| 8     | Borno        | 2                 | 116  | 118   | 2                       | 51   | 53    | 0            | 11  | 11    | 0               | 11  | 11    |
| 9     | Cross Rivers | 12                | 100  | 112   | 3                       | 24   | 27    | 1            | 9   | 10    | 2               | 8   | 10    |
| 10    | Delta        | 14                | 108  | 122   | 2                       | 38   | 40    | 1            | 12  | 13    | 1               | 12  | 13    |
| 11    | Ebonyi       | 12                | 116  | 128   | 2                       | 36   | 38    | 1            | 14  | 15    | 1               | 14  | 15    |
| 12    | Edo          | 3                 | 81   | 84    | 7                       | 22   | 29    | 1            | 11  | 12    | 0               | 12  | 12    |
| 13    | Ekiti        | 8                 | 120  | 128   | 6                       | 34   | 40    | 0            | 13  | 13    | 3               | 10  | 13    |
| 14    | Enugu        | 16                | 180  | 196   | 11                      | 69   | 80    | 1            | 16  | 17    | 3               | 14  | 17    |
| 15    | FCT          | Nil               | Nil  | Nil   | 8                       | 19   | 27    | Nil          | Nil | Nil   | Nil             | Nil | Nil   |
| 16    | Gombe        | 4                 | 82   | 86    | 1                       | 28   | 29    | 0            | 8   | 8     | 0               | 8   | 8     |
| 17    | Imo          | 19                | 163  | 182   | 4                       | 51   | 55    | 0            | 16  | 16    | 3               | 13  | 16    |
| 18    | Jigawa       | 1                 | 169  | 170   | 1                       | 68   | 69    | 0            | 9   | 9     | 0               | 9   | 9     |
| 19    | Kaduna       | 5                 | 166  | 171   | 2                       | 114  | 116   | 0            | 17  | 17    | 1               | 16  | 17    |
| 20    | Kano         | 4                 | 269  | 273   | 2                       | 168  | 170   | 0            | 16  | 16    | 1               | 15  | 16    |
| 21    | Katsina      | 1                 | 142  | 143   | 0                       | 96   | 96    | 0            | 11  | 11    | 0               | 11  | 11    |
| 22    | Kebbi        | 0                 | 93   | 93    | 2                       | 35   | 37    | 0            | 8   | 8     | 0               | 8   | 8     |
| 23    | Kogi         | 3                 | 125  | 128   | 2                       | 44   | 46    | 0            | 16  | 16    | 1               | 15  | 16    |
| 24    | Kwara        | 18                | 506  | 524   | 6                       | 51   | 57    | 0            | 19  | 19    | 3               | 16  | 19    |
| 25    | Lagos        | 59                | 384  | 443   | 20                      | 295  | 315   | 2            | 20  | 22    | 4               | 12  | 22    |
| 26    | Nasarawa     | 4                 | 73   | 77    | 2                       | 28   | 30    | 0            | 11  | 11    | 0               | 11  | 11    |
| 27    | Niger        | 3                 | 114  | 117   | 3                       | 84   | 87    | 0            | 12  | 12    | 3               | 9   | 12    |
| 28    | Ogun         | 9                 | 118  | 127   | 4                       | 72   | 76    | 1            | 17  | 18    | 4               | 14  | 18    |
| 29    | Ondo         | 13                | 126  | 139   | 0                       | 59   | 59    | 0            | 13  | 13    | 0               | 13  | 13    |
| 30    | Osun         | 10                | 110  | 120   | 5                       | 46   | 51    | 0            | 15  | 15    | 3               | 12  | 15    |
| 31    | Oyo          | 19                | 204  | 223   | 15                      | 111  | 126   | 0            | 15  | 15    | 3               | 12  | 15    |
| 32    | Plateau      | 12                | 152  | 164   | 4                       | 50   | 54    | 1            | 11  | 12    | 1               | 11  | 12    |
| 33    | Rivers       | Nil               | Nil  | 91    | 4                       | 91   | 95    | 0            | 20  | 20    | 4               | 16  | 20    |
| 34    | Sokoto       | 3                 | 102  | 105   | 0                       | 62   | 62    | 0            | 10  | 10    | 0               | 10  | 10    |
| 35    | Taraba       | 1                 | 99   | 100   | 2                       | 27   | 29    | 1            | 11  | 12    | 0               | 12  | 12    |
| 36    | Yobe         | 0                 | 96   | 96    | 0                       | 33   | 33    | 0            | 10  | 10    | 0               | 10  | 10    |
| 37    | Zamfara      | 0                 | 140  | 140   | 0                       | 44   | 44    | Nil          | Nil | Nil   | Nil             | Nil | Nil   |
| Total |              | 325               | 5211 | 5636  | 151                     | 2288 | 2439  | 14           | 458 | 472   | 48              | 424 | 472   |

Source: Independent National Electoral Commission of Nigeria, 2007 Elections [www.inec.org](http://www.inec.org), retrieved May, 2007.

From the analysis of the table above, it shows that women participation in competing for various positions with their men counterpart is very low. Also in states like Lagos and Anambra, there were more women that competed for seats in the House of Assemble i.e. 59 and 28 respectively. This is not even up to one third of their corresponding male counterpart. Also in states like Yobe , Kebbi and Zamfara there was little or no visibility of women in electoral positions. According to Sha (2008); in terms of representation in parliament, the 2007 global gender gap index reports that Nigeria occupied 108<sup>th</sup> position in the world with only 7% women in parliament with men occupying 90% of ministerial positions. This is an indication that governments of various countries have a lot to do about the

affirmative action and put in place the necessary measures to ensure that the problem of inequality between men and women is squarely addressed.

### **The impediments to women participation in public offices**

There are barriers to women involvement in public offices which can be summarized as follows;

- There is lack of education as women constituted the largest illiterate population who are either misinformed or uninformed.
- Women are faced with the challenge of lack of fund; this is because women are not as buoyant as their male counterpart.
- Another impediment to women participation in public offices includes home activities like child bearing and other domestic work.
- The violent nature of politics together with the attendance of party meetings at nocturnal periods have discouraged women from participating actively in politics even those that will summoned courage to participate will blackmailed as prostitutes or irresponsible women.
- There are religious and cultural norms and values also discouraged women from participation, this is because all the activities are seen as exclusively reserved for the men.

### **Recommendations**

“Every country deserves to have the best possible leader and that means that women have to be given a chance to compete. If they’re never allowed to compete in the electoral process then the countries are really robbing themselves of a great deal of talent.” ( Madeleine K. Albright, NDI Chairman). Concurring with the above assertion, most countries of the world are classified as failed states and are growing worse on daily basis and the majority of these countries are headed by men. Thus there is need for an alternative to see what will happen to all these countries that are facing these challenges. The following is suggested as a way out of these predicaments;

- Civil society organizations are seen as partners in progress and are passionate about the position of women, they should assist in the mobilization of women and to support them financially to contest for various positions in the society.
- On the side of the government, concerted effort should be made to adopt National Gender Policy and set targets and instruments to systematically improve the quality of life and status of women educationally.
- In order to balance the inequality between men and women in the area of education, government should waive the school fees for the female counterpart at all levels.
- The introduction of quota systems by all governments and for all the positions both appointive and elective positions will go a long way to reduced inequality to the barest minimum.
- There should be legislative reform to be adopted by countries which should focus on issues concerning women and children in the society.
- Mass media is a vital tool to mobilize support and sensitize the public about the need for equality in occupying public offices between men and women.

### **Conclusion**

The phenomenon of gender inequality among men and women is a global problem which demands a universal solution among all countries of the world. The essence of signing these agreements by member nations will become a kangaroo agreement which is not healthy for the development and progress of the respective countries. Thus, the countries of the world are neglecting 50% development which needs to be addressed urgently. In this case, a multifaceted approach is needed in order to address the phenomenon; governments, nongovernmental organizations and other concerned individuals should pool their resources together to ensure that the problem is nip to the bud.

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