



EVALUATING GENDER INEQUALITIES AND INCLUSION IN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

BY

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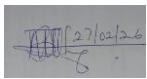
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CERTIFICATION

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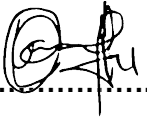
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Dedication

This work is dedicated to God Almighty, who has been a source of strength, support, and motivation to us throughout this entire experience. We also dedicate the work to all the women out there, who are lending their voices to ensure inclusion and fairness of women in civic leadership roles. Women, your voice matter and your struggle are seen together we achieve greatness.

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With so much joy in our hearts, we really appreciate Aid for African Women and Girls for their support throughout this journey of the Cohort research. We acknowledge the Executive Director and the various moderators who guided us during this process.

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We appreciate every member of the Women Leading Change Cohort 1. The journey was not easy, but we celebrated our courage and dedication throughout the cohort. I pray that God will bless everyone and continue to impact more to but our community both locally and internationally.

A big shout-out to all members of Group C. The voice makers have been an inspiring journey of growth, learning, patience, tolerance, endurance, and relearning. We are confident that we have been impacted deeply impacted and we believe our journey here has just begun for the greater good.

Lastly, to you, our esteemed reader, we express our sincere appreciation for deeming this research worthy of your time, for your patience, and for the time we are grateful. We hope this work serves its purpose and proves to be helpful even to society at large

Thank you, and God bless you

Abstract

This study evaluated gender inequalities and the level of inclusion in political participation across North-East Nigeria. The research examined the extent of political awareness among citizens, the socio-cultural and economic barriers affecting women's engagement, and the strategies that support inclusive political processes. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and data were collected from 234 respondents across the six states in the region using a structured questionnaire administered through Google Forms. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that political awareness in the region is relatively high, with most respondents demonstrating knowledge of voting rights and interest in political discussions. However, active involvement in political activities such as party membership and participation in rallies remains low. The study further found strong evidence of gender inequality, as women continue to face significant barriers, including discrimination within political parties, restrictive cultural norms, limited financial resources, domestic responsibilities, and exposure to gender-based violence. Although civil society organizations, media campaigns, and selected government programs contribute to enhancing women's inclusion, the implementation of gender policies within political parties remains weak and inconsistent. The study concludes that improving women's political participation requires a multi-dimensional approach that addresses socio-cultural norms, economic constraints, institutional discrimination, and security challenges. It recommends strengthened gender policies in political parties, increased civic education, expanded mentorship programs, improved economic empowerment initiatives, and active support from traditional and religious leaders.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Political participation is a vital component of democratic governance, as it enables citizens to influence public decisions, elect leaders, and contribute to policy formulation. Inclusive political participation promotes equality, legitimacy, and accountability within a democratic system (Adeleke, 2020). Yet, across the world, women continue to face systematic exclusion from political spaces despite constituting half of the population. Their underrepresentation poses serious challenges to sustainable development, effective governance, and the realization of gender justice (Makama, 2013).

In Nigeria, gender disparities in political participation remain profound. Despite national and global commitments, including the Beijing Platform for Action, the Sustainable Development Goals (especially SDG 5 on gender equality), the National Gender Policy of 2006, and the 35% Affirmative Action target, women remain significantly marginalized in political leadership (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, 2006). Although Nigerian women have played critical roles in political mobilization and national development, their visibility in elective and appointive positions remains low due to cultural norms, economic constraints, and institutional barriers (Alao, 2021).

These challenges are more pronounced in Northern Nigeria, particularly the North-East. The region is characterized by deeply rooted patriarchal norms, conservative cultural expectations, restricted access to education, and low levels of economic empowerment for women (Adeleke, 2020). Furthermore, religious interpretations in some communities often limit women's public roles, reinforcing the perception that politics is a male domain (Abdullahi & Ibrahim, 2018). This socio-cultural environment significantly reduces the acceptance of women in leadership and discourages them from seeking political positions.

Additionally, the prolonged Boko Haram insurgency has severely undermined women's political participation in the North-East. The conflict has displaced millions, restricted mobility, increased insecurity, and disrupted community structures that ordinarily support civic and political engagement (Pate & Dauda, 2021). Women living in insurgency-affected areas experience heightened vulnerability, trauma, and economic hardship, leaving little room for political activism or leadership involvement. As a result, the region continues to record some of the lowest levels of women's representation in Nigeria's political landscape.

Political parties, key vehicles for political participation, also contribute to women's exclusion. Empirical studies show that political parties in Nigeria operate through male-dominated networks that prioritize financial influence, internal godfatherism, and elite bargaining, which disadvantage women (Ibeanu & Ekekwe, 2019). Positions allocated to women are often symbolic, limiting their influence in key decision-making processes (Ogundiran, 2020).

Addressing gender inequality in political participation is essential not only for securing women's rights but also for strengthening democratic governance. Evidence shows that increased women's participation enhances transparency, promotes social welfare policies, and supports peacebuilding an especially critical need in the conflict-affected North-East (Akiyode-Afolabi & Arogundade, 2019). Empowering women politically contributes to inclusive governance and fosters sustainable development.

Although scholars have examined gender and politics in Nigeria, many studies remain generalized and fail to address the unique intersection of cultural norms, insecurity, and institutional barriers affecting women in the North-East. This gap in empirical research limits the development of targeted interventions designed for the contextual realities of the region.

This study, therefore, seeks to evaluate the nature, extent, and determinants of gender inequality and political inclusion among women in North-East Nigeria. By examining cultural, economic, institutional, and security-related factors shaping their participation, the study aims to provide deeper insights into the challenges and pathways toward improving women's involvement in political governance in the region.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite constitutional guarantees of equality and political rights, women in North-East Nigeria remain largely underrepresented in political processes. While they constitute almost half of the population, women occupy only a very small fraction of elected and appointed political positions. This gender gap is reinforced by multiple structural and cultural barriers.

The Boko Haram insurgency has dramatically worsened existing inequalities. Women in the region face displacement, economic hardship, insecurity, restricted mobility, and reduced access to education factors that significantly undermine their political agency. Political parties in the region rarely prioritise female candidates, and internal party dynamics continue to marginalise women during primaries and nomination processes. Fear of political violence, harassment, and societal backlash further discourages women from participation.

Despite numerous interventions by government and non-governmental organisations, there is still inadequate empirical research assessing the extent of gender inequalities in political participation in the North-East and identifying the most effective strategies for promoting inclusion. Without such evidence, gender-responsive reforms, supportive policies, and targeted programs are difficult to design and implement.

This study addresses the knowledge gap by evaluating the major barriers, patterns, and possible solutions to gender inequalities in political participation in the North-East region of Nigeria.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

To evaluate gender inequalities and assess the level of inclusion in political participation in North-East Nigeria.

The study specifically aims to:

1. Examine the extent of women's participation in political activities (voting, contesting elections, leadership roles) in North-East Nigeria.
2. Identify the social, cultural, economic, and political factors contributing to gender inequalities in political participation.
3. Assess the impact of insecurity and the Boko Haram insurgency on women's political engagement in the region.
4. Evaluate the role of political parties and electoral institutions in promoting or hindering gender inclusion.
5. Propose strategies and policy recommendations for enhancing women's political participation and representation in the North-East.

1.4 Research Questions

To guide the study, the following research questions are proposed:

- i. What is the current level of women's participation in political processes in North-East Nigeria?
- ii. What factors contribute to gender inequalities in political participation in the region?
- iii. How has insecurity and armed conflict affected women's political involvement?
- iv. How do political parties and electoral bodies influence women's access to political roles?
- v. What strategies can effectively improve gender inclusion in political participation in the North-East?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The study will test the following hypotheses:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between socio-cultural factors and women's political participation in North-East Nigeria.

H₀₂: Insecurity does not significantly affect women's political participation in the region.

H₀₃: Political party structures do not significantly influence gender inclusion in political participation.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant in multiple ways:

- i. It provides empirical evidence on gender and political participation in conflict-affected settings, contributing to literature on governance, gender studies, and political science.
- ii. Findings will support policymakers, INEC, state governments, and ministries of women affairs in designing gender-responsive laws and electoral reforms.
- iii. Results will guide CSOs, NGOs, and development agencies in developing targeted interventions for women's empowerment, civic education, and political inclusion.
- iv. Women's groups and activists can use the findings to advocate for quotas, reserved seats, and safer political environments.
- v. Enhancing women's participation strengthens democracy, improves representation, promotes inclusive development, and fosters peace in the North-East.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on evaluating gender inequalities in political participation within the North-East geopolitical zone, with emphasis on the BAY states Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe. It covers:

- i. Women's participation in elections, party activities, political appointments, and community leadership.
- ii. Barriers such as cultural norms, insecurity, party dynamics, education, and economic conditions.
- iii. The role of institutions (INEC, political parties, CSOs).
- iv. The timeframe primarily focuses on political participation trends from 2011 to 2023, covering periods of heightened insurgency and recent elections.

The study does not cover other regions of Nigeria except for comparative context where necessary.

1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

Gender Inequality: Differences in rights, responsibilities, opportunities, and power between men and women that disadvantage one gender usually women.

Political Participation: Activities through which individuals influence political processes, including voting, campaigning, contesting elections, joining parties, and engaging in political decision-making.

Inclusion: The equitable involvement of both men and women in political activities, representation, and leadership roles.

North-East Nigeria: The geopolitical region comprising Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, Bauchi, Gombe, and Taraba; this study focuses mainly on the three conflict-affected BAY states.

Boko Haram Insurgency: Violent extremist conflict that has affected the North-East since 2009, disrupting social, economic, and political structures.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews existing literature relevant to gender inequalities and political inclusion, with specific focus on North-East Nigeria. It clarifies core concepts, presents theoretical perspectives, examines global, national, and regional studies, and highlights empirical findings. It also identifies the gaps that justify the study. The reviewed works deepen the understanding of the structural, cultural, economic, and institutional factors shaping women's political participation and the challenges underlying gender disparities across political processes.

2.2 Conceptual review

2.2.1 Dimensions of Gender Inequality

Gender inequality constitutes a widespread global challenge that cuts across both developed and developing nations, manifesting as a persistent social, economic, and political barrier. It shapes individuals' access to resources, opportunities, and rights based on gender. Importantly, it is not solely a women's issue but rather a systemic imbalance deeply rooted in societal norms, institutional arrangements, and cultural structures. According to Ferreira, Vega, Paes de Barros, and Chanduvi (2009), inequality can be understood as a condition characterized by the unjust distribution of resources or differential treatment among individuals, often arising from distinctions such as race, gender, or social class. Inequality, whether based on color, gender, culture, or other social markers, fundamentally reflects a condition of unequal rights, status, and opportunities, often resulting in systemic discrimination. It can thus be defined as a state of unequal treatment entrenched within social, economic, and political structures.

Evidence from global studies highlights the persistence of gender inequality despite decades of advocacy and policy interventions. For instance, Oxfam (2019) reported that nearly two-thirds of the world's 781 million illiterate adults are women, a figure that has remained relatively unchanged over the past twenty years. Similarly, legal discrimination continues to impede women's economic participation in many parts of the world, with 153 national legal systems maintaining provisions that disadvantage women, including 18 countries where husbands retain the legal authority to prevent their wives from working. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these disparities, as women were found to be 24% more likely than men to have experienced permanent job losses (Dang, 2021).

According to the World Economic Forum (2022), gender parity remains a distant goal, with current trends suggesting it will take approximately 132 years to achieve full equality between men and women. The global recognition of this persistent gap is reflected in high-level policy discussions, such as the 2021 G20 summit, where addressing gender inequalities and protecting women's rights were identified as central priorities on the international agenda.

Scholars and institutions define gender inequality in various but interconnected ways, often emphasizing disparities in rights, resources, and representation. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 2020) defines gender inequality as "the disparity between males and females in terms of access to resources, participation in decision-making, and opportunities in life, while the World Bank (2012) views it as differences in outcomes, opportunities, and treatment that are systematically linked to gender, regardless of merit or ability. From a sociological perspective, Lorber (1994) conceptualizes gender inequality as a socially

constructed hierarchy where men are positioned above women in terms of value, authority, and access to resources. Similarly, Mama (1997) argued that gender inequality is rooted in both colonial legacies and traditional patriarchal systems, shaping legal, economic, and political structures. From these perspectives, gender inequality is not just in an African context. Mama (1997) stresses that gender inequality is rooted in both colonial legacies and traditional patriarchal systems, shaping legal, economic, and political structures. From these perspectives, gender inequality is not just a numerical gap; it reflects deeper systemic patterns of exclusion and marginalization.

Gender inequality manifests in multiple dimensions, which are often interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Key dimensions include the Economic Dimension, the Educational Dimension, the Political Dimension, the Health Dimension, the Social and Cultural Dimension, and the Violence and Security Dimension. Economic inequality manifests through wage disparities, occupational segregation, unequal access to credit, and discriminatory property rights. Kabeer (2015) views economic inequality as women are disproportionately concentrated in low-paying, informal, or precarious employment, which limits their economic security and upward mobility. Education is both a driver of empowerment and an area where gender disparities are pronounced. In many contexts, girls have reduced access to quality education due to socio-cultural norms, early marriage, and inadequate learning facilities (UNESCO, 2021).

These disparities perpetuate cycles of limited economic and political participation. Women remain significantly underrepresented in political offices, decision-making bodies, and governance structures. Barriers include discriminatory electoral systems, patriarchal political cultures, and gendered patterns of political socialization (Inglehart & Norris, 2003). Gender inequality in health includes disparities in access to medical care, reproductive rights, maternal health services, and control over reproductive decisions (World Health Organization [WHO], 2019). Women in marginalized communities often face compounded disadvantages due to poverty and cultural restrictions. Cultural norms, traditions, and gendered social roles influence expectations of behavior and limit women's agency. This dimension includes practices such as restrictive inheritance laws, mobility constraints, and the undervaluation of unpaid care work (Connell, 2009). Gender-based violence including domestic abuse, sexual harassment, and harmful traditional practices constitutes a significant barrier to equality. Such violence limits women's participation in public life and undermines their physical and psychological well-being (UN Women, 2022).

2.2.2 Limited Representation in Elective and Appointive Positions

Women occupy less than 10% of elected positions in Nigeria, making the country one of the lowest in Africa in terms of female representation (Alao, 2021). In the North-East, representation is even lower due to socio-cultural restrictions and security challenges. Limited representation denies women visibility, influence, and the ability to shape public policy.

2.2.3 Weak Participation in Political Parties

Political parties play a critical role in political recruitment, yet they are dominated by male elites. Women are rarely nominated for winnable positions due to internal party politics, patronage systems, and gender bias (Ibeanu & Ekekwe, 2019). Party positions such as "Women Leader" are largely ceremonial and do not guarantee influence within party decision-making structures (Ogundiran, 2020).

2.2.4 Financial Barriers and Monetization of Politics

Nigeria's political environment is heavily monetized, requiring significant resources for nomination forms, mobilization, logistics, and political bargaining. Since women generally have lower economic empowerment and access to resources, they struggle to compete financially with male aspirants (Akiyode-Afolabi & Arogundade, 2019). Economic inequality directly reduces women's political aspirations.

2.2.5 Cultural and Religious Constraints

Cultural and religious norms in Northern Nigeria limit women's political mobility and public engagement. Communities often view politics as inappropriate for women, associating leadership with masculinity (Adeleke, 2020). Some interpretations of religion reinforce restrictions on women's visibility in public affairs, limiting their political aspiration and participation (Yusuf, 2020).

2.2.6 Electoral Violence and Insecurity

Women face heightened risks from political violence, including harassment, intimidation, sexual violence, and threats (Oloyede, 2016). The insecurity in the North-East caused by insurgency further discourages women from attending rallies, participating in elections, or contesting political offices (Pate & Dauda, 2021). Violence reduces political competition and reinforces gender exclusion.

2.2.7 Weak Implementation of Gender Policies

Although Nigeria has policies such as the National Gender Policy (NGP) advocating 35% Affirmative Action, implementation remains weak due to lack of political will and institutional enforcement (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, 2006). Many political actors treat gender policies as optional, resulting in persistent inequalities (Ibrahim & Salihu, 2019).

2.2.8 Inclusion Strategies

Inclusion refers to deliberate efforts to ensure fair access, representation, and participation of marginalized groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities in socioeconomic and political processes. Political inclusion enables citizens to vote, contest elections, participate in governance, influence policy, and hold public offices regardless of gender (Ibrahim & Salihu, 2019). Inclusive governance enhances legitimacy, equity, and responsiveness.

Scholars and practitioners commonly group inclusion strategies into three interlocking categories: (1) institutional measures (notably gender quotas and reserved seats), (2) legal reforms (constitutional or statutory guarantees, electoral-law amendments, anti-discrimination legislation), and (3) civic education and capacity-building interventions (candidate training, mentoring, voter education, and targeted finance). The empirical literature evaluates these strategies both singly and in combination, asking whether they raise women's descriptive representation (numbers), foster substantive representation (policy attention to women's issues), and stimulate mass political participation among women. Evidence indicates that no single strategy is sufficient by itself: durable inclusion most often follows when institutional reforms are backed by enforceable laws and by programs that prepare and protect women candidates and voters (Dahlerup, 2006; Krook, 2009; Hughes, Paxton, & Krook, 2017).

A comparative and quasi-experimental study showed that gender quotas are the most reliable instrument for increasing the share of women in legislatures when they are legally binding and accompanied by placement/ordering rules (e.g., "zipper" rules on party lists) and enforcement mechanisms (Dahlerup, 2006; Krook, 2009). Cross-national analyses (Tripp & Kang, 2008;

Hughes et al., 2017) find that proportional representation systems amplify quota effects, whereas single-member plurality systems reduce them. Causal evidence from exposure and reservation experiments (e.g., India's Panchayati Raj reservations) demonstrates two mechanisms by which quotas can produce broader change: (a) policy redirection female officeholders prioritize issues such as water, health, and education (Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2004); and (b) role-model/exposure effects visible women leaders reduce voter bias and raise girls' and women's political aspirations over time (Beaman et al., 2009, 2012). Meta-analyses caution, however, that quotas without party compliance, training for nominees, and resource support may yield tokenistic representation without substantive empowerment (Krook, 2009; Clayton, 2016).

2.2.9 Legal reforms

Create the formal framework that makes inclusion strategies workable. Constitutional gender provisions, parity laws, and electoral-law amendments can institutionalize women's rights to equal participation and set enforceable standards for representation (Hughes et al., 2017). Countries that pair constitutional commitments with electoral regulations (e.g., placement mandates) tend to show larger and faster gains in women's seats. Yet legal change alone is insufficient where courts, electoral management bodies, and parties lack the will or capacity to enforce rules a point confirmed in both global reviews and national case studies (Krook & Norris, 2014).

Thus, legal reforms are necessary enabling conditions but require parallel institutional capacity and political backing to be effective, such as capacity-building programs (candidate training, mentoring, civic education) consistently increase women's knowledge, confidence, and willingness to run for office; the evidence for strong effects on electoral success is more mixed and context-dependent (Baer, 2014; IWPR reports). Program evaluations show improvements in campaign skills and local mobilization, especially when programs include seed grants, networking opportunities, and media training. Campaign finance reforms and targeted subsidies (public funding, bursaries for female candidates) are repeatedly identified in comparative work as essential complements: they reduce entry costs and make quotas more meaningful in practice (Hughes et al., 2017). Finally, civic education that targets voters and gatekeepers' helps shift norms over time, making institutional reforms more politically sustainable (Beaman et al., 2012).

For example, Rwanda is often cited as a quota success story: constitutional and legal mechanisms combined with party strategies produced one of the world's highest shares of women in parliament, and researchers link this to both institutional design and post-conflict political settlement dynamics (Hughes et al., 2017; Tripp & Kang, 2008). India's randomized reservations in local governance provide causal proof that reserved seats can change policy priorities and alter perceptions of female leadership (Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2004; Beaman et al., 2009). Conversely, many upper-middle and lower-income countries that have adopted voluntary party quotas or weakly enforced measures show only modest numerical gains and little evidence of substantive empowerment, demonstrating the conditionality of quota effectiveness (Krook, 2009; Clayton, 2016).

In Nigeria, studies reflect the global insights but emphasize contextually specific constraints. Research shows that Nigerian women are politically active as voters and mobilizers but are underrepresented as candidates and officeholders because of party gatekeeping, campaign finance asymmetries, patriarchal norms, electoral insecurity, and weak policy

enforcement (Agbalajobi, 2010; Ette & Akpan-Obong, 2022; Umeh, Ujunwa, & Eze, 2023). The National Gender Policy's aspirational 35% target has not been realized in the absence of legally binding quotas or strong enforcement (Umeh et al., 2023). Mixed-methods analyses (Oladapo, 2021; Solomon Likinyo & Arum, 2025) document regional variation with educational, economic, and security conditions shaping differently the supply of female candidates in Northern and Southern states. Civil society interventions (e.g., Nigerian Women's Trust Fund, targeted NGO programs) have improved candidate readiness and local mobilization but have not overcome systemic party biases or eliminated financial barriers that often determine electoral success (Atim, Olofu-Adeoye, & Nkanta, 2023; Nwagwu, Iwuala, & Ebeh, 2024).

2.2.10 Political Participation

Political participation involves activities citizens engage in to influence political decisions, leadership selection, and policy outcomes. It includes voting, contesting elections, political party membership, activism, community mobilization, public debates, and civic engagement (Adeniyi, 2018). Political participation has formal aspects (elections, party activities, public offices) and informal aspects (civil discussions, advocacy, social movements). Women's participation is crucial for democratic consolidation, yet they remain underrepresented in Nigerian politics due to structural and cultural barriers (Pate & Dauda, 2021).

2.2.11 Forms and Measures

Over the years, there has been a decline in the rate of political participation among African women, reflected in the widening gender gaps in civic and political participation. Various scholars have noted the integral role political institutions and context play in women's political participation, but only a handful of studies have examined how the political context informs different forms of conventional and unconventional political participation. Political participation is a central element of democratic governance, as it reflects the extent to which citizens are actively involved in the political process. It is broadly defined as the set of activities by private citizens aimed at influencing the selection of political leaders and/or the actions they take in governance (Verba, Scholzman, & Brady, 1995). It encompasses both conventional activities, such as voting and contesting elections, and unconventional actions, such as protests, petitions, and advocacy campaigns. According to Norris (2002), political participation is not only an indicator of democratic consolidation but also a mechanism through which citizens express preferences, hold leaders accountable, and influence policy outcomes.

Through the process of political participation, the political system acquires the requisite legitimacy it needs to implement and execute its policies (Dobratz, Waldner, & Buzzell, 2016). When individuals in society actively engage with their polity, policy decisions and outcomes are more likely to achieve consensus in governance (Dobratz, Waldner, & Buzzell, 2016; O'Neill, 2013). Political participation is defined as "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" (Verba et al., 1995, p. 38).

Political participation covers a wide range of strategies and activities individuals employ to make claims on their polity and engage with or challenge the state. The literature on political participation recognizes the difference between conventional and non-conventional forms of political participation (Barnes & Kaase, 1979; Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002). Some conventional

forms of political participation include voting, electoral campaigning, party membership, working for political candidates, and persuading people to vote. Nonconventional forms of political participation involve activities like protesting, boycotts, signing petitions, and refusing to pay dues, among others. Recent studies have shown a decline in the rate of political participation among women over the past 20 years (Amoateng, Heaton, & Kalule–Sabiti, 2014; Barnes & Burchard, 2012). Due to this decline, women's issues have been left behind and ignored in the political decision-making process, especially given the many socio-economic challenges facing women in Nigeria, especially in Jere Local Government, Borno State.

Political participation is measured in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Scholars used different approaches to capture its scope and intensity. (Blais, 2000) explain that quantitative indicators include Voter Turnout, which refers to the Percentage of eligible voters who cast ballots.

The second one is Party Membership and Affiliation, which is the degree of citizens' attachment to political parties. The third indicator is candidature Levels, which is the Number of individuals, especially marginalized groups like women, contesting elections. However, non-electoral Measures include Protest Participation that has to do with the Frequency and scale of demonstrations and civic actions, followed by Civic Engagement, which refers to the involvement in voluntary associations, NGOs, or advocacy networks, while the third one is policy Influence Indicators.

This is the Extent to which citizens' voices shape political debates and decision-making. According to Inglehart and Norris (2003), qualitative Indicators measure the depth and inclusiveness of participation. These include: Diversity of Participants: Representation of women, youth, and minorities, which is perceived as Political Efficacy: Citizens' belief in their ability to influence political outcomes. Sustainability of Engagement: Long-term commitment to political involvement beyond episodic activities.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Liberal Feminist Theory. The theory was developed during the Enlightenment period, with its roots traced to Mary Wollstonecraft's (1792) work. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, which argued for women's right to education and participation in public life. It was further popularized in the 20th century by scholars such as Betty Friedan (1963), who challenged the structural and social constraints that limited women's public engagement. Liberal feminism views gender inequality as a result of unfair legal, social, and political barriers, rather than biological differences, and advocates reforms that provide women equal access to opportunities in society.

The theory explains the Core Assumptions of gender inequalities, unfair legal, social, and political barriers. Liberal feminism assumes that Women and men are fundamentally equal in capabilities and potential. Exclusion of women from politics stems from systemic discrimination rather than inherent incapacity. Legal, institutional, and policy reforms are necessary to create an enabling environment for women's inclusion in governance. Once barriers are removed, women can participate fully and equally in political life. In the context of political participation, liberal feminism highlights how discriminatory practices such as biased party nomination processes, unequal access to campaign financing, restrictive cultural norms, and weak enforcement of gender quota laws hinder women's involvement in politics. The theory, therefore, calls for

strategies such as affirmative action policies, gender-sensitive legal frameworks, civic education, and equal representation mechanisms to ensure women's meaningful inclusion.

When applying to study, such as evaluating gender inequalities and inclusion in political participation in the Northeast, Nigeria. Liberal Feminist Theory provides a strong explanatory framework for evaluating gender inequalities and inclusion in political participation. In Nigeria, women continue to be underrepresented not because of a lack of competence but due to entrenched legal, institutional, and socio-cultural barriers. By applying liberal feminist principles, this study will critically assess whether existing reforms, such as constitutional guarantees, gender quota systems, or party-level inclusion policies, are effective in addressing these barriers. Furthermore, it provides a lens to recommend practical reforms that align with democratic ideals of equality, justice, and representation, thereby advancing both gender equality and inclusive governance.

Similarly, Dahlerup (2006) utilizes an emphasized liberal feminist theory to support a study on how quota systems can improve women's access to political institutions, while Krook (2009) analyzed how institutional reforms rooted in liberal feminist thought contribute to increasing female representation across various political systems. While Paxton, Hughes, and Painter (2010) applied liberal feminist insights to explain global variations in women's parliamentary representation, highlighting the role of structural reforms in bridging gender gaps. In the Nigerian context, Okeke-Ihejirika and Franceschet (2002) explored how liberal feminist ideas inform struggles for women's representation in politics, stressing the role of democracy and policy reforms in enhancing inclusion. Likewise, Akinola (2019) employed a liberal feminist lens to evaluate women's underrepresentation in Nigerian politics, highlighting the persistent impact of patriarchal structures and the need for institutional reforms to actualize women's full participation. These works demonstrate that the liberal feminist framework is not only globally recognized but also directly applicable to the Nigerian context.

2.3.1 Political Economy Theory

Political economy theory emphasizes the role of economic structures in shaping political participation. Women limited economic empowerment reduces their ability to fund campaigns, join political networks, and influence political decisions (Ukoha, 2020). This theory helps explain how poverty and economic dependence limit women's inclusion in politics.

2.3.2 Global Perspectives on Women's Political Participation

Globally, women's political participation has improved significantly in countries such as Rwanda, Sweden, New Zealand, and South Africa due to affirmative action, gender quotas, and inclusive political systems (Alao, 2021). Studies reveal that political will, education, economic empowerment, and strong civil society advocacy enhance women's political visibility and representation (Adeleke, 2020). However, countries with deep-rooted patriarchal norms experience slower progress.

2.3.3 Women's Political Participation in Nigeria

Numerous studies demonstrate that Nigerian women continue to face obstacles including patriarchy, party bias, electoral violence, and financial exclusion (Adeniyi, 2018; Oloyede, 2016). The 35% affirmative action policy has not been fully implemented. In several elections, women's political representation has declined sharply. Structural factors such as lack of education, political

monetization, and weak institutional support continue to undermine women's political inclusion (Akiyode-Afolabi & Arogundade, 2019).

2.3.4 Literature on North-East Nigeria

The North-East zone records the lowest female political representation in the country. Studies identify cultural norms, religious conservatism, low female education, insurgency, poverty, and displacement as major factors affecting women's participation (Abdullahi & Ibrahim, 2018; Yusuf, 2020).

In many communities, women require male permission to engage in public activities, further limiting their mobility. Insecurity resulting from Boko Haram insurgency disproportionately affects women's ability to contest or participate in elections (Pate & Dauda, 2021).

2.4 Empirical Review

Empirical studies across Nigeria and specifically in the North-East have documented a variety of factors influencing women's political participation. These studies highlight structural, economic, educational, and security-related determinants that either promote or hinder the involvement of women in politics.

Comparative studies have shown persistent gender gaps in political participation, especially in expressive and elite forms of engagement, even as gaps in basic acts like voting have narrowed in many democracies. Classic cross-national work links women's lower participation to cultural norms and opportunity structures that historically limit women's political resources and networks (see Inglehart & Norris, 2003). Building on this, cross-national analyses and regional studies consistently find that institutional designs that expand women's descriptive representation (e.g., gender quotas) are associated with smaller gender gaps in citizen participation and greater political efficacy among women (Barnes & Burchard, 2013; Tripp & Kang, 2008; Clayton, 2015).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, an analysis of Afrobarometer data from 20 countries finds that as the share of women in the national legislature increases, the gender gap in political engagement declines across multiple indicators, including interest, discussion, and contacting officials (Barnes & Burchard, 2013). Causal evidence complements these associations. A randomized reservation (quota) policy in India that assigned one-third of village council chair positions to women shifted local policy priorities toward goods preferred by women, demonstrating that female leadership can substantively alter governance outcomes changes that in turn can feed back into citizens' motivation to participate (Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2004).

Beyond policy outputs, experimental and observational work in Africa shows that quota-mandated female representation can increase women's political engagement and reshape attitudes: a national-level study reports higher political interest and participation among women when quotas are implemented and visible (Clayton, 2015). At the elite level, content analysis of Ugandan parliamentary debates indicates that women whether elected via quotas or open seats are significantly more likely to raise women's issues, underscoring that descriptive gains correlate with agenda changes (Clayton, Josefsson, & Wang, 2017).

Macro-studies show that quotas accelerate women's entry into legislatures even under adverse socioeconomic conditions, but the extent to which these filters down to mass participation depends on party gatekeeping, local norms, and whether quota rules are effectively implemented (Tripp & Kang, 2008; see also reviews in Clayton, 2016; Hughes et al., 2017). Recent work

continues to refine these relationships, noting that institutional context conditions gender gaps in participation across Africa and that long-term exposure to women in office matters for durable attitudinal change (e.g., Beaugregard, 2018; Ehrhart, 2024).

Women participate actively as voters and mobilizers but remain underrepresented as candidates and officeholders due to party-level barriers, resource constraints, patriarchal norms, and clientelistic practices. A widely cited study documents persistent obstacles to women's entry and success in Nigerian electoral politics, including exclusionary party primaries, violence, and socio-economic barriers (Agbalajobi, 2010). Working with recent electoral cycles, an IDS working paper quantifies extremely low success rates for women candidates in the 2019 general elections around 1.6% in Northern states and 2.3% in Southern states illustrating the supply-and-selection bottlenecks that precede general voting (Oladapo, 2021). A qualitative micro-study of the 2023 elections in Ikere LGA (Ekiti State) shows women's intensive roles in mobilization and party work, yet limited opportunities to emerge as candidates; it also documents how poverty and clientelism shape engagement, with material inducements channeled through women leaders (Adebayo & Olutayo, 2024). Pan-African monitoring underscores these Nigerian dynamics within a broader continental picture, highlighting slow progress and calling attention to party rules and financing as levers to translate mobilization into representation (International IDEA, 2021).

Studies have indicated cultural and resource constraints help explain persistent gender gaps, institutional reforms that expand women's descriptive representation especially effective, well-designed quotas are associated with higher women's mass engagement and more attention to women's policy priorities and in Nigeria, party-system gatekeeping and socio-economic constraints remain binding, so reforms must address candidate recruitment, financing, and internal democracy to convert women's evident mobilization into competitive candidacies and office holding (Agbalajobi, 2010; Oladapo, 2021; Adebayo & Olutayo, 2024). Studies converge on similar patterns: women participate actively as voters and mobilizers but remain underrepresented as candidates and officeholders due to party-level barriers, resource constraints, and patriarchal norms.

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2.4.1 Review of past studies (local and international) on gender and political participation:

Effectiveness of inclusion strategies globally and in Nigeria Globally, gender quotas have been widely recognized as the most effective tool for promoting women's inclusion in politics. Dahlerup (2006) notes that quotas provide women with guaranteed representation in political

structures, breaking long-standing barriers to entry. Krook (2009) confirms this in her global study, where over 100 countries that adopted quotas witnessed significant increases in women's representation, though success varied depending on enforcement and political will. Similarly, Hughes, Paxton, and Krook (2017) argue that quotas work best when combined with proportional representation systems, which allocate seats more equitably than majoritarian systems. In Nigeria, however, the experience with quotas has been less successful.

The National Gender Policy (2006) recommended 35% affirmative action in elective and appointive positions, yet this target has never been met. Instead, women's representation has stagnated below 10% since the return to democracy in 1999 (Umeh, Ujunwa, & Eze, 2023). Political parties have occasionally introduced internal quota-like mechanisms, such as free nomination forms for women aspirants, but studies show these measures are tokenistic and fail to translate into meaningful representation (Solomon Likinyo & Arum, 2025). This highlights the gap between formal commitments and substantive outcomes in Nigeria's political system.

Political parties serve as the primary gatekeepers to political participation, and their structures often determine the extent of women's inclusion. Globally, parties that actively recruit, train, and support female candidates have been instrumental in increasing women's political presence (Tripp & Kang, 2008). Party-level reforms such as gender-balanced candidate lists and leadership quotas in Europe and Latin America have boosted women's visibility and influence in political processes. In Nigeria, however, party-level strategies remain weak and highly exclusionary. Ette and Akpan-Obong (2022) observe that women are often relegated to symbolic roles such as "woman leader," which have little decision-making influence. Party nomination processes are expensive and biased in favor of wealthy male aspirants with patronage networks, effectively sidelining women. Financial barriers further exacerbate this exclusion, as women often lack access to the resources required to run competitive campaigns.

These findings suggest that unless political parties adopt enforceable and inclusive reforms, women's political participation will remain marginal. Civil society organizations (CSOs) and advocacy movements play a crucial role in supporting women's political inclusion globally. Tripp and Kang (2008) highlight how women's organizations across Africa mobilized for gender-sensitive reforms, fostering leadership capacity and political ambition among women. International donor agencies and NGOs have also provided technical support, training, and financial assistance to aspiring female politicians, helping them overcome systemic barriers. In Nigeria, civil society has been equally pivotal. The Nigerian Women's Trust Fund (NWTF), established in 2011, provides mentorship, training, and financial support to women seeking political office. According to Atim, Olofu-Adeoye, and Nkanta (2023), such interventions have improved women's visibility and capacity to contest elections. Nwagwu, Iwuala, and Ebeh (2024) further note that advocacy campaigns have gradually shifted public perceptions, increasing acceptance of women as political leaders. However, while these initiatives have created enabling conditions, they have not fully dismantled entrenched patriarchal barriers, suggesting that CSO efforts must complement, rather than substitute for, institutional reforms.

Despite institutional and civil society interventions, cultural and structural barriers remain powerful determinants of women's exclusion from politics. Globally, entrenched gender stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes often frame politics as a masculine domain, discouraging women's participation (Hughes et al., 2017). Even in countries with strong quota systems,

resistance persists in the form of political violence, media bias, and gendered scrutiny of women leaders. In Nigeria, socio-cultural barriers are particularly pronounced. Ojo (2024) highlights how gender-based violence, religious conservatism, and economic disadvantage systematically undermine women's political ambitions. Atim et al. (2023) add that electoral insecurity and intimidation further discourage female candidates. Public perceptions, though slowly shifting, continue to reflect cultural reservations about women in leadership (Nwagwu et al., 2024). These findings indicate that inclusion strategies cannot succeed without addressing deeply embedded socio-cultural norms and ensuring electoral processes free of gender-based violence.

Empirical evidence demonstrates that while inclusion strategies such as quotas, affirmative action, and civil society interventions have been effective globally, their success in Nigeria has been limited by weak institutional enforcement, patriarchal party structures, financial barriers, and socio-cultural constraints. Quotas have transformed representation in other contexts, but in Nigeria, tokenistic implementation has hindered progress. Party-level reforms remain superficial, with women marginalized in decision-making. Civil society interventions have empowered women to some extent, but without systemic change, their impact remains constrained. Cultural barriers, reinforced by electoral violence and patriarchal norms, remain the most stubborn obstacles. Thus, for Nigeria, effective inclusion requires a multi-pronged approach: robust enforcement of quota laws, reforms within political parties, sustained support from civil society, and targeted efforts to dismantle cultural and structural barriers.

2.4.2 Economic Empowerment and Women's Political Aspirations

The role of economic empowerment in determining women's political participation has also been well documented. Ukoha (2020) established that economic stability and financial independence greatly increase women's likelihood of contesting elections and seeking political leadership. According to the study, political campaigns in Nigeria are capital-intensive, involving costs related to mobilization, party nomination forms, publicity, and negotiations within party structures.

Women with access to income-generating opportunities, employment, or entrepreneurship are better positioned to fund political ambitions compared to economically dependent women. In contrast, financially disadvantaged women face challenges in promoting their candidacy or gaining visibility within political parties. In the North-East, where poverty levels are relatively high and women's economic empowerment remains low, this financial barrier significantly restricts their political engagement.

2.4.3 Civic Education and Political Engagement

Civic education has been shown to boost political awareness, knowledge, and participatory attitudes among women. Ogundiran (2020) found that women who receive civic education through NGOs, government initiatives, or community-based programs demonstrate higher levels of political involvement. These programs often provide information on voting rights, political processes, constitutional provisions for gender inclusion, and the importance of citizen participation.

Ogundiran's study indicated that civic education enhances women's confidence, reduces political apathy, and encourages active engagement in political dialogues and community decision-making. However, in the North-East, widespread insecurity and displacement have disrupted civic awareness programs, limiting women's exposure to essential political knowledge.

2.4.4 Electoral Violence, Harassment, and Gendered Insecurity

Gender-based electoral violence remains one of the most significant barriers to women's political participation. Oloyede (2016) documented that Nigerian women face disproportionate levels of intimidation, harassment, and violence during election periods. These forms of violence include verbal abuse, physical assault, sexual harassment, threats of rape, property destruction, and psychological intimidation.

Oloyede's study found that such violent environments discourage women from attending political rallies, contesting for office, or openly supporting candidates. The fear of victimization creates a climate of insecurity, reducing their visibility and participation in political processes. In conflict-prone states of the North-East such as Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa the risks are amplified, further limiting women's political engagement.

2.4.5 Insurgency and Women's Political Participation in North-East Nigeria

Empirical research has highlighted the severe effects of insurgency on women's civic and political life. Pate and Dauda (2021) observed that the Boko Haram insurgency has drastically limited women's mobility, access to public spaces, and engagement in political activities. Many women have been displaced, widowed, or forced into internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, reducing their capacity for political activism.

The study revealed that insurgency not only physically restricts movement but also causes psychological trauma, fear, and social dislocation all of which create barriers to political participation. Furthermore, the destruction of community structures, schools, markets, and political institutions disrupts traditional avenues through which women gain political knowledge and experience. As a result, political participation levels among women in the North-East remain significantly low compared to other regions of Nigeria.

2.4.6 Summary of Empirical review

Collectively, these empirical studies show that women's political participation is influenced by educational attainment, economic empowerment, civic education, exposure to electoral violence, and the prevailing security situation. The North-East region, due to its peculiar challenges of insurgency, cultural restrictions, and economic deprivation, experiences even more pronounced limitations. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to enhance women's political inclusion.

2.5 Gaps in the Literature

This study adopts Liberal Feminist Theory, which originated with the pioneering work of Mary Wollstonecraft (1792) and was later advanced by scholars such as Betty Friedan (1963). The theory posits that men and women are fundamentally equal in capability, and that women's underrepresentation in politics is not due to biological inferiority but to systemic discrimination, exclusionary laws, and cultural barriers. Liberal feminism, therefore, advocates legal and institutional reforms such as quotas, affirmative action, and equal access to opportunities as the pathway to achieving inclusion and gender equality in governance (Krook, 2009; Dahlerup, 2006). Within the context of political participation, the theory provides a lens for examining how discriminatory party structures, unequal access to campaign financing, and weak enforcement of gender-sensitive policies continue to hinder women's political involvement, while also offering a framework for reform-oriented solutions.

Empirically, studies on gender and political participation reveal both successes and challenges in advancing women's inclusion globally and in Nigeria. International evidence shows that gender quotas and affirmative action policies have been the most effective strategies in increasing women's representation, particularly when combined with proportional representation systems and strong institutional enforcement (Hughes, Paxton, & Krook, 2017; Tripp & Kang, 2008). Civil society advocacy and civic education have further contributed by enhancing women's political ambition and leadership capacities. However, persistent socio-cultural stereotypes and structural inequalities limit the full effectiveness of these measures even in advanced democracies.

In Nigeria, however, empirical studies highlight a striking gap between policy commitments and outcomes. Despite the adoption of the National Gender Policy (2006), which recommended 35% affirmative action, women's representation has remained below 10% since 1999 (Umeh, Ujunwa, & Eze, 2023). Scholars attribute this failure to patriarchal party structures, financial exclusion, electoral violence, and entrenched cultural norms that suppress women's political agency (Ette & Akpan-Obong, 2022; Ojo, 2024). Civil society organizations, such as the Nigerian Women's Trust Fund, have made important contributions through mentorship, funding, and advocacy, but their efforts remain insufficient without systemic institutional reforms (Atim, Olofudeoye, & Nkanta, 2023; Nwagwu, Iwuala, & Ebeh, 2024). Thus, the Nigerian experience demonstrates that formal policies and tokenistic party-level gestures do not automatically translate into meaningful political inclusion.

The uniqueness of this study lies in its integrated approach. While previous research has either focused on barriers to women's participation (Ette & Akpan-Obong, 2022) or advocated quotas (Umeh et al., 2023), this study combines theoretical insights from liberal feminism with empirical evidence to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of gender inequalities and inclusion strategies in political participation. By situating Nigeria's challenges within a broader global framework, it highlights the gap between international best practices and Nigeria's persistent underperformance. This comparative lens not only deepens scholarly understanding of gender and political participation but also offers context-sensitive recommendations for strengthening institutional enforcement, reforming party structures, empowering civil society, and dismantling cultural barriers. In doing so, the study makes both an academic and practical contribution to advancing inclusive governance in Nigeria and beyond.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which allows the researcher to gather quantitative data from a large population without manipulating variables. The design is suitable for exploring people's perceptions, experiences, and the factors influencing gender inequalities and political participation in North-East Nigeria. It also enables the researcher to systematically collect information from respondents across multiple states to generalize findings to the larger population.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of all registered voters aged 18 years and above across the six states of North-East Nigeria, namely: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe. According to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC, 2023), the total registered voter population in the region is approximately 12.5 million people. This population is appropriate for examining patterns of political awareness, gender relations, and inclusion in political processes.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 600 respondents was selected for the study. This size is adequate for survey research and allows for meaningful statistical analysis. A multistage sampling technique was used to ensure fair representation across the region. First, the six states were stratified as separate clusters. Second, selected Local Government Areas (LGAs) were identified within each state using probability proportional to size. Third, wards were randomly selected from each LGA. Finally, respondents within each ward were invited to participate through digital distribution of the Google Form questionnaire.

The use of Google Forms made it possible to reach diverse categories of respondents across multiple locations while maintaining the integrity of the sampling procedure. The digital link was circulated through WhatsApp groups, email lists, community social networks, and SMS broadcasts to ensure widespread coverage.

3.4 Research Instrument

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled *Evaluating Gender Inequalities and Inclusion in Political Participation Questionnaire (EGIIPPQ)*, administered via Google Forms. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher based on the study objectives, theoretical framework, and reviewed literature. It consists of five major sections: Section A captures demographic information such as state, LGA, ward, sex, age, marital status, educational level, occupation, religion, and voter registration status.

Section B examines the level of political awareness and participation, measured using a 4-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree).

Section C assesses gender inequalities and socio-cultural barriers to women's political participation.

Section D explores inclusion strategies, support mechanisms, political party practices, government efforts, civil society activities, and media interventions.

Section E presents respondents' perceptions of women in politics and includes open-ended questions on barriers and possible solutions.

The digital format of the questionnaire allowed for easy navigation, automatic saving of responses, and improved completion rates. A complete copy of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix I.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by experts in Political Science, Gender Studies, and Research Methodology. Their comments helped refine the wording, structure, and clarity of items. Content validity was achieved through the alignment of each questionnaire item with the research objectives.

For reliability, a pilot test was conducted using 20 respondents from Nasarawa State (outside the study area but with similar demographic characteristics). The responses were subjected to reliability analysis using Cronbach Alpha, which produced coefficients above the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency.

3.6 Method of Data Collection

Data for the study were collected using Google Forms, an online data collection tool that allows quick, efficient, and large-scale distribution of surveys. Google Forms was adopted due to its accessibility, real-time data capture, ease of use, and compatibility with smartphones, laptops, and tablets, which made it convenient for respondents across the North-East.

The questionnaire link was disseminated digitally through WhatsApp groups, email, SMS, and social media platforms. Community leaders, youth groups, and civil society networks also assisted in circulating the link to eligible participants in selected wards and LGAs.

Before accessing the questionnaire, respondents were provided with an introductory page explaining the purpose of the study, confidentiality measures, anonymity of responses, and voluntary participation. Only respondents who clicked the consent button were allowed to proceed with the survey.

At the end of the collection period, all responses were downloaded automatically from Google Forms in Excel format, cleaned, coded, and exported into SPSS for statistical analysis.

3.6.1 Multiple Regression Analysis

To further examine the determinants of women's political participation in North-East Nigeria, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. This analysis was used to determine the combined and individual effects of socio-cultural factors, insecurity, and political party structures on women's political participation.

The regression model helps to test the study hypotheses:

- i. **H₀₁**: there is no significant relationship between socio-cultural factors and women's political participation.
- ii. **H₀₂**: insecurity does not significantly affect women's political participation.
- iii. **H₀₃**: political party structures do not significantly influence gender inclusion in political participation.

a. Model Specification

The multiple regression model is specified as follows:

$$WPP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SCF + \beta_2 INS + \beta_3 PPS + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

Where, WPP indicates Women's Political Participation (Dependent Variable), SCF represents Socio-Cultural Factors, INS represents Insecurity (Boko Haram insurgency effects), PPS indicates Political Party Structures, β_0 is the regression model Intercept/constant, β_1 , β_2 , and β_3 are the regression model slopes (coefficients) for each independent variables, and ε_i is the error term which is independently, identically, and distributed normally with zero mean and constant variance.

b. Variables Description

Dependent Variable:

Women's Political Participation (measured through voting behavior, contesting elections, party membership, civic engagement)

Independent Variables:

1. Socio-cultural barriers (patriarchy, religious norms, gender stereotypes)
2. Insecurity (violence, displacement, fear of harassment)
3. Political party structures (nomination processes, internal democracy, gender policy implementation)

These variables were derived directly from the conceptual and empirical framework of the study.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

3.7.1 Descriptive Statistics: Are statistical techniques used to **summarize, organize, and present data** in a meaningful way. In a research paper, descriptive statistics help the researcher describe the characteristics of the dataset before moving to inferential analysis.

3.7.2: Inferential Statistics: Inferential statistics, specifically multiple regression analysis, is employed to test the hypotheses and determine the influence of socio-cultural, economic, institutional, and security factors on women's political participation. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

4.6 Multiple Regression:

To further examine the determinants of women's political participation in North-East Nigeria, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. This analysis was used to determine the combined and individual effects of socio-cultural factors, insecurity, and political party structures on women's political participation.

The regression model helps to test the study hypotheses:

- iv. **H₀₁**: there is no significant relationship between socio-cultural factors and women's political participation.
- v. **H₀₂**: insecurity does not significantly affect women's political participation.
- vi. **H₀₃**: political party structures do not significantly influence gender inclusion in political participation.

4.6.1 Model Specification

The multiple regression model is specified as follows:

$$WPP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SCF + \beta_2 INS + \beta_3 PPS + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

Where, WPP indicates Women's Political Participation (Dependent Variable), SCF represents Socio-Cultural Factors, INS represents Insecurity (Boko Haram insurgency effects), PPS indicates Political Party Structures, β_0 is the regression model Intercept/constant, β_1 , β_2 , and β_3 are the regression model slopes (coefficients) for each independent variables, and ε_i is the error term which is independently, identically, and distributed normally with zero mean and constant variance.

4.6.2 Variables Description

Dependent Variable:

Women's Political Participation (measured through voting behavior, contesting elections, party membership, civic engagement)

Independent Variables:

- 4. Socio-cultural barriers (patriarchy, religious norms, gender stereotypes)
- 5. Insecurity (violence, displacement, fear of harassment)
- 6. Political party structures (nomination processes, internal democracy, gender policy implementation)

These variables were derived directly from the conceptual and empirical framework of the study.

The data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means and percentages were used to answer the research questions. Inferential statistics, specifically multiple regression analysis, is employed to test the hypotheses and determine the influence of socio-cultural, economic, institutional, and security factors on women's political participation. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were strictly observed. Respondents were informed that participation was voluntary, and they were free to withdraw at any time. The introductory page on the Google Form clearly stated the purpose of the study, confidentiality assurances, and

anonymity of responses. No personal identifiers such as phone numbers or email addresses were collected. All data were used solely for academic purposes and stored securely.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULT

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data collected from 234 respondents across the six states in North-East Nigeria. It contains the demographic characteristics, responses to research questions, and interpretations of the findings. Data were analyzed using descriptive Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) such as frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	144	61.5
Female	90	38.5
Total	234	100

Source: field survey, 2025

Interpretation:

The sample is male-dominated, reflecting the general gender imbalance in political participation in the North-East.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–25 years	48	20.5
26–35 years	110	47.0
36–45 years	56	23.9
46–55 years	15	6.4
56+ years	5	2.2
Total	234	100

Source: field survey, 2025

Interpretation:

Most respondents fall within economically active age ranges (26–45 years), which are more engaged in political processes.

Table 4.3: Educational Level of Respondents

Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No formal education	10	4.3
Primary	18	7.7
Secondary	54	23.1
Tertiary	132	56.4
Postgraduate	20	8.5

Total	234	100
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Source: field survey, 2025

Interpretation:

More than half of the respondents possessed tertiary education, supporting good understanding of political issues.

Table 4.4: Respondents by Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	84	35.9
Married	130	55.6
Divorced	8	3.4
Widowed	12	5.1
Total	234	100

Source: field survey, 2025

Table 4.5: Occupation of Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Student	60	25.6
Civil Servant	72	30.8
Business	50	21.4
Farmer	32	13.7
Others	20	8.5
Total	234	100

Source: field survey, 2025

4.3 Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One:

What is the level of political awareness and participation among residents in North-East Nigeria?

Table 4.6: Political Awareness and Participation (n=234)

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
I am aware of my voting rights	120	90	16	8	3.38
I have participated in an election in the last 5 years	98	84	34	18	3.12
I follow political news/discussions	110	92	20	12	3.28
I have attended a political rally	70	66	58	40	2.65
I am a member of a political party	54	42	70	68	2.33

Source: field survey, 2025

Interpretation:

While political awareness is high, active participation especially party membership and rally attendance is moderate to low.

Research Question Two:

What gender inequalities affect political participation in North-East Nigeria?

Table 4.7: Gender Inequality in Political Participation (n=234)

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
Women face discrimination in political parties	118	78	24	14	3.28
Cultural beliefs discourage women from contesting	130	72	20	12	3.36
Men dominate political discussions	140	64	20	10	3.42
Women lack financial resources to run for office	122	80	20	12	3.33
Domestic roles limit women's participation	98	94	26	16	3.17
Gender-based violence discourages participation	104	88	26	16	3.19

Source: field survey, 2025

Interpretation:

All indicators show strong agreement that gender inequality remains a major barrier to women's political involvement.

Research Question Three:

What inclusion strategies are available to promote women's political participation?

Table 4.8: Inclusion Strategies and Support Mechanisms (n=234)

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
Political parties implement gender quotas	66	70	60	38	2.62
Civil society groups create political awareness	88	102	28	16	3.12
Government programs encourage women's participation	70	88	46	30	2.87
Media campaigns challenge stereotypes	82	100	36	16	3.06
Community leaders support women leadership	60	72	62	40	2.56
Training/mentorship programs empower women	90	94	30	20	3.08

Source: field survey, 2025

Interpretation:

Civil society and media are the strongest drivers of inclusion, Political parties and community leadership show weak inclusion efforts.

4.4 Summary of Findings

1. High political awareness, but low active political engagement (especially for women).
2. Strong evidence of gender inequality, including cultural restrictions, party discrimination, lack of resources, and exposure to violence.
3. Civil society organizations are the most active promoters of women's political inclusion.
4. Government and political parties have inconsistent implementation of gender policies.

5. Community attitudes remain a major barrier to women's political participation.

4.5 Discussion of Findings

Research Question One:

What is the level of political awareness and participation among residents in North-East Nigeria?

The findings indicate that political awareness among respondents is relatively high. A majority of respondents strongly agreed that they are aware of their voting rights, regularly follow political discussions, and have participated in elections within the last five years. This suggests that civic consciousness in the region is gradually improving.

This outcome aligns with Adeniyi (2018), who argues that increased access to media platforms and digital communication has enhanced political awareness across Nigeria. Similarly, Ogundiran (2020) notes that civic education programs and voter sensitization campaigns have contributed significantly to public political knowledge.

However, while awareness levels are high, active and sustained political participation remains moderate to low. Membership in political parties and attendance at political rallies recorded lower mean scores compared to voting behavior. This suggests that participation is largely limited to periodic electoral engagement rather than continuous political involvement.

This gap between awareness and active engagement is supported by Verba, Scholzman, and Brady (1995), who distinguish between political interest and participatory action. According to their Civic Voluntarism Model, resources (time, money, civic skills), psychological engagement, and mobilization networks determine actual participation. In the North-East, economic hardship, insecurity, and distrust in political institutions likely discourage deeper political involvement beyond voting.

Furthermore, insecurity caused by insurgency may discourage physical participation in rallies or party meetings. Pate and Dauda (2021) argue that conflict environments reduce public political gatherings and limit civic engagement, particularly among women.

Thus, while awareness exists, structural constraints reduce meaningful political participation.

Research Question Two:

What gender inequalities affect political participation in North-East Nigeria?

The findings reveal overwhelming agreement that gender inequalities significantly limit women's political participation. Respondents strongly agreed that women face discrimination within political parties, experience financial disadvantages, are constrained by domestic responsibilities, and are discouraged by cultural norms.

(a) Socio-Cultural Barriers

Cultural beliefs discouraging women from contesting political office recorded one of the highest mean scores. This reflects the persistence of patriarchal norms that define politics as a male domain. In Northern Nigeria, traditional gender roles prioritize domestic responsibilities over public leadership for women.

This finding aligns with Oloyede (2016), who observed that patriarchal value systems restrict women's mobility and public engagement. Similarly, Inglehart and Norris (2003) argue that cultural attitudes significantly shape women's access to political opportunities across societies.

The dominance of men in political discussions and decision-making further reinforces women's marginalization. Liberal Feminist Theory, which underpins this study, explains that such

exclusion is socially constructed and sustained by discriminatory institutional and cultural practices.

(b) Economic Barriers

Women's lack of financial resources emerged as a major obstacle. Nigerian politics is highly monetized, requiring significant funds for nomination forms, campaign logistics, mobilization, and party negotiations. Since women generally have lower access to economic resources, their ability to compete is restricted.

This finding supports Ukoha (2020), who found that economic empowerment is one of the strongest predictors of women's political ambition in Nigeria. Without financial independence, women remain disadvantaged within party structures.

(c) Domestic Responsibilities

Respondents agreed that household responsibilities limit women's political engagement. Traditional expectations assign caregiving and domestic management roles primarily to women, leaving them less time and flexibility for political activities.

Connell (2009) explains that gender-role socialization reinforces unequal division of labor, which indirectly reduces women's participation in public life.

(d) Insecurity and Violence

Gender-based violence and insecurity were also identified as major barriers. Women face harassment, intimidation, and threats during election periods. In conflict-prone areas such as Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa, insecurity further discourages political involvement.

This supports Pate and Dauda (2021), who documented how insurgency disrupts women's civic life, restricts movement, and reduces participation in political processes.

Overall, the findings confirm that gender inequality in political participation is multi-dimensional encompassing cultural, economic, institutional, and security-related factors.

Research Question Three:

What inclusion strategies are available to promote women's political participation?

The findings show mixed effectiveness of inclusion strategies.

(a) Role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

Civil society groups received strong positive responses for creating political awareness and empowering women. Respondents acknowledged that NGOs and advocacy groups organize training programs, mentorship initiatives, and awareness campaigns.

This aligns with Tripp and Kang (2008), who highlight the critical role of women's movements and civil society in advancing political inclusion across Africa. Atim, Olofu-Adeoye, and Nkanta (2023) also note that the Nigerian Women's Trust Fund has improved women's visibility in electoral processes.

(b) Political Party Reforms

Political parties recorded weak implementation of gender quotas. Although some parties claim to promote women's participation, enforcement remains inconsistent.

Krook (2009) argues that quotas are only effective when legally binding and strictly enforced. In Nigeria, the National Gender Policy's 35% affirmative action target lacks strong institutional enforcement, leading to poor implementation.

The study's findings confirm that party structures remain male-dominated and resistant to internal reform.

(c) Government Programs

Government programs received moderate support. While policies exist, their impact appears limited. This reflects a gap between policy formulation and implementation.

Hughes, Paxton, and Krook (2017) emphasize that institutional reforms must be accompanied by political will and accountability mechanisms to produce measurable change.

(d) Media and Mentorship

Media campaigns and mentorship programs were positively acknowledged. Media plays a role in challenging stereotypes and increasing visibility of women leaders. Training and mentorship improve women's political confidence and skills.

Beaman et al. (2009) show that exposure to female leaders changes perceptions and increases women's political ambition over time.

However, deeply entrenched cultural norms continue to weaken the full impact of these interventions.

Overall Theoretical Implication

The findings strongly support Liberal Feminist Theory, which argues that women's underrepresentation is not due to incapacity but to systemic discrimination embedded in laws, institutions, and socio-cultural practices. The persistence of party discrimination, economic inequality, and cultural resistance confirms that structural barriers remain deeply rooted in North-East Nigeria.

The results also reflect insights from Political Economy Theory, demonstrating that economic dependence reduces women's ability to compete politically.

Overall Synthesis

In summary:

- i. Political awareness is high but active engagement remains limited.
- ii. Gender inequality in political participation is driven by socio-cultural norms, economic constraints, institutional discrimination, domestic burdens, and insecurity.
- iii. Civil society interventions are relatively effective, but political parties and government programs remain weak in enforcing gender inclusion.
- iv. Sustainable inclusion requires multi-dimensional reforms including economic empowerment, party restructuring, cultural reorientation, improved security, and strict enforcement of gender policies.

4.6.3 Regression Results

In this subsection, the fitted regression model results are presented and interpreted. First the model adequacy results, that is, multiple correlation coefficient (R), coefficient of determination (R^2), adjusted R^2 , and standard error of the fitted regression model are presented. Secondly, the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test result is presented to see if there is a significant combined effect of SCF, INS, and PPS, on WPP. Thirdly, the individual independent variables coefficient estimates and their significance at 5% is presented to determine the magnitude and direction of SCF, INS, and PPS contribution to WPP based on t -test analysis.

Table 4.9: Model Adequacy Results

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error
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1	0.721	0.520	0.513	0.482
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Source: field survey, 2025.

Interpretation: The R value of 0.721 indicates a strong positive association between the independent variables and women's political participation. This suggests that there is a possibility of a strong relationship between WPP and SCF, INS, and PPS. The R^2 value of 0.520 and Adjusted- R^2 value of 0.513 implies that above 50% of the total variation in WPP is explained by SCF, INS, and PPS. Also, it indicates that the fitted regression model to the data is fairly adequate because the total variation explained by the model is average.

Table 4.10: Fitted Regression ANOVA F-test Result

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Regression	48.612	3	16.204	69.781	0.000
Residual	44.219	230	0.192		
Total	92.831	233			

Source: field survey, 2025

Interpretation: Table 4.10 presents the ANOVA test results for the regression and it can be seen that the F-value of 69.781 indicates the regression model fitted to the data is significant at 5% because the p-value of 0.0001 produced is less than 5%. Therefore, it can be concluded that at least one of the independent variables, that is, SCF, INS, and PPS, has a significant contribution to WPP.

Table 4.11: Parameter Estimates Results

Variable	Beta (β)	Std. Error	t-value	P-value
Constant	2.134	0.211	10.113	0.0001
Socio-Cultural Factors	-0.382	0.065	-5.877	0.0001
Insecurity	-0.291	0.071	-4.098	0.0001
Political Party Structures	0.418	0.059	7.084	0.0001

Source: field survey, 2025

Interpretation: Table 4.11 presents the independent variables coefficients estimates. The result clearly shows that the mean constant is significantly greater than zero and it is positive because the β_0 value of 2.134 is positive and its p-value of 0.0001 for the absolute t -test value of 10.113 is significant at 5%. Also, it can be observed that there is a significant effect between SCF and WPP but the impact direction is negative because its coefficient value is -0.382 and its p-value of 0.0001 for the absolute t -test value of 5.877 is significant at 5%. Therefore, this research first null hypothesis (H_{01}) is not accepted meaning there is a significant relationship between SCF and WPP. This result implies that an increase in SCF will significantly reduce WPP by 38.2%. Likewise, INS played a significant role in affecting WPP negatively because INS coefficient value of -0.291 which is significant at 5% with a p-value of 0.0001 based on its absolute t -test value of 4.098. Therefore, this research second null hypothesis (H_{02}) is not accepted meaning there is a significant relationship between INS and WPP and this result indicates that an increase INS reduces WPP by 29.1%. However, PPS produced a positive coefficient value of 0.418 with a p-value of 0.0001 based on the t -test value of 7.084 and this indicates a significant contribution of PPS to WPP at 5% significant level. Therefore, this research third null hypothesis (H_{03}) is not

accepted meaning there is a significant relationship between PPS and WPP. This shows that an increase in PPS leads to an increase in WPP by 41.8%.

Table 4.12: Decision on Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Decision
H ₀₁	Rejected
H ₀₂	Rejected
H ₀₃	Rejected

Table 4.12 presents a summary of the decision made based on the results from Table 4.11. It clearly shows that SCF, INS, and PPS have significant relationship with WPP. However, the direction of their respective relationship with WPP differs. SCF and INS has negative impact of WPP but PPS impact is positive.

4.6.4 Regression Equation

$$WPP = 2.134 - 0.382SCF - 0.291INS + 0.418PPS \quad (2)$$

This means:

- A one-unit increase in socio-cultural barriers reduces women's political participation by 0.382 units.
- A one-unit increase in insecurity reduces participation by 0.291 units.
- A one-unit improvement in political party inclusiveness increases participation by 0.418 units.

4.6.5 Discussion of Findings on regression analysis

The regression findings confirm the theoretical assumptions of Liberal Feminist Theory presented in the study, which argues that structural and institutional barriers limit women's participation rather than biological differences.

The findings also support prior empirical studies cited in the literature review, which identified:

- Cultural and religious norms as major barriers.
- Insurgency as a limiting factor in North-East Nigeria.
- Party-level exclusion as a structural determinant.

The results demonstrate that political reform and institutional restructuring are necessary to enhance inclusion.

4.6.6 Conclusion from Regression Analysis

The multiple regression analysis reveals that:

- Socio-cultural barriers significantly reduce women's political participation.
- Insecurity significantly undermines women's engagement.
- Political party structures significantly influence inclusion.

The model explains a substantial proportion (52%) of the variation in participation, confirming that structural and institutional factors are key determinants of gender inequality in political participation in North-East Nigeria.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the Study

This study examined gender inequalities and inclusion in political participation in North-East Nigeria. The major objective was to explore the extent of political awareness, the gender-based barriers influencing women's participation, and the strategies that promote inclusion across the six states in the region. The research adopted a descriptive survey design, and data were collected from 234 respondents through a structured questionnaire administered using Google Forms. Descriptive statistical tools were used to analyze the data, including frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores.

The demographic analysis revealed that respondents were predominantly young and middle-aged individuals with substantial levels of education, suggesting a population likely to understand political issues. The findings demonstrated high political awareness but relatively lower levels of active engagement, such as political party membership and rally attendance. The results also showed strong evidence of gender inequality manifested in cultural norms, financial barriers, discrimination within political parties, and exposure to gender-based violence. The study further identified several strategies that could enhance women's political inclusion, with civil society organizations playing a significant role, along with media campaigns and training initiatives.

5.2 Summary Major Findings

From the analysis, the key findings are summarized as follows:

1. Respondents displayed high political awareness, with most being knowledgeable about voting rights and political events. However, active political participation remained low, especially in aspects such as party membership and attendance at political rallies.
2. Gender inequality remains a significant barrier to women's political participation. Cultural beliefs, patriarchal norms, financial limitations, domestic responsibilities, and gender-based violence were strongly identified as factors limiting women's engagement in politics.
3. Political parties showed weak implementation of gender inclusion strategies, such as gender quotas or reserved seats. Many respondents perceived party structures to be male-dominated and exclusionary.
4. Civil society organizations were found to play a substantial role in promoting women's political awareness and engagement through advocacy and training.
5. Government programs and media campaigns have a positive but inconsistent effect on women's political inclusion. Their impact varies across communities.
6. Training and mentorship programs were widely acknowledged as effective strategies for empowering women to contest political offices and participate actively in political processes.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that while political awareness is considerably high among populations in the North-East, women's active political participation remains

significantly constrained. Cultural expectations, economic barriers, gender-based discrimination, and insecurity collectively create a challenging environment for women in political spaces.

The study affirms that meaningful political inclusion for women requires a holistic approach that targets cultural, structural, institutional, and economic factors simultaneously. Until these multidimensional barriers are addressed, women in the region will continue to face challenges in attaining equitable representation in political leadership and decision-making structures.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

Political parties should enforce gender quotas and implement internal reforms that create level playing fields for women during primaries and internal elections.

1 Community sensitization campaigns should be intensified to challenge deeply rooted patriarchal norms that restrict women's involvement in leadership roles.

2 Government and NGOs should create targeted economic programs for women, including grants, campaign funds, loans, and skills training, to reduce financial barriers associated with political participation.

3 Security agencies should work to reduce political violence and intimidation, ensuring safe participation for women during rallies, meetings, and elections.

4 Leaders at community and religious levels should be engaged to champion women's political rights, as their endorsement holds significant influence.

5 Continuous civic education, especially in rural and underserved communities, is necessary to strengthen political understanding and encourage active engagement, particularly among women.

6 More capacity-building initiatives should be implemented to equip aspiring female politicians with leadership skills, political knowledge, and campaign strategies.

7 CSOs should continue to advocate for gender equality, monitor electoral processes, and push for accountability in implementing gender policies.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

The study recommends that future researchers explore the following areas:

1. Comparative analysis of gender political participation between northern and southern regions of Nigeria.
2. The impact of insurgency and displacement on women's political participation in North-East Nigeria.
3. A qualitative study that examines personal experiences of female political aspirants in the region.
4. The role of social media in shaping women's political participation and leadership visibility.

5. The effectiveness of mentorship and capacity-building programs for young female politicians.

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APPENDIX I

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Evaluating Gender Inequalities and Inclusion in Political Participation in North-East Nigeria

Instructions: Please tick (✓) or fill in as appropriate.

This questionnaire is designed to gather information for academic research purposes. All responses will be treated with confidentiality and used strictly for research.

SECTION A: Socio-Demographic Information

Please tick (✓) or fill in as appropriate.

1. State: Adamawa () Borno () Yobe () Taraba () Bauchi () Gombe ()
2. Local Government Area (LGA): _____
3. Ward: _____
4. Sex: Male () Female ()
5. Age: 18–25 () 26–35 () 36–45 () 46–55 () 56 and above ()
6. Marital Status: Single () Married () Divorced () Widowed ()
7. Educational Level: No formal education () Primary () Secondary () Tertiary () Postgraduate ()
8. Occupation: Student () Business () Civil Servant () Farmer () Others: _____
9. Religion: Islam () Christianity () Traditionalist () Others: _____
10. Are you a registered voter? Yes () No ()

SECTION B: Level of Political Awareness and Participation

Scale: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

1. I am aware of my rights to vote and be voted for in Nigeria.
SA () A () D () SD ()
2. I have participated in at least one election in the past five years.
SA () A () D () SD ()
3. I am interested in political discussions or news.
SA () A () D () SD ()
4. I have attended political meetings or rallies.
SA () A () D () SD ()
5. I am a member of a political party or group.
SA () A () D () SD ()
6. Women in my community are aware of their political rights.
SA () A () D () SD ()

SECTION C: Gender Inequality in Political Participation

1. Women face discrimination within political parties.
SA () A () D () SD ()
2. Cultural beliefs discourage women from contesting political offices.
SA () A () D () SD ()
3. Men dominate most political discussions and decision-making.
SA () A () D () SD ()

4. Women lack financial resources to run for political positions.
SA () A () D () SD ()
5. Women's domestic roles limit their involvement in politics.
SA () A () D () SD ()
6. Gender-based violence or intimidation discourages female political participation.
SA () A () D () SD ()

SECTION D: Inclusion Strategies and Support Mechanisms

1. Political parties in my state implement gender quotas or reserved seats.
SA () A () D () SD ()
2. Civil society organizations promote women's political awareness.
SA () A () D () SD ()
3. Government programs exist to encourage women's participation in politics.
SA () A () D () SD ()
4. Media campaigns help to reduce gender stereotypes in politics.
SA () A () D () SD ()
5. Community and religious leaders support women's involvement in leadership.
SA () A () D () SD ()
6. Training and mentorship programs increase women's confidence to run for office.
SA () A () D () SD ()

SECTION E: Perceptions and Suggestions

1. Women are equally capable of holding political offices as men.
SA () A () D () SD ()
2. More women should be encouraged to contest elections.
SA () A () D () SD ()
3. Gender equality in politics will improve governance and development.
SA () A () D () SD ()

Open-Ended Questions

1. What do you think are the main barriers to women's political participation in your community?

2. What strategies can help increase women's inclusion in politics in North-East Nigeria?
