

Entrenching Sustainable Democratic Participation of Women in Politics: The Option of the All Progressives Congress Gubernatorial Primary in Ondo State, Nigeria

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Doi: 10.19044/elp.v4no2a3 [URL:http://dx.doi.org/10.19044/elp.v4no2a3](http://dx.doi.org/10.19044/elp.v4no2a3)

Abstract

The democratic participation of women in politics and decision-making is largely dismal especially, in party representation to elective positions despite, their population and participation in Franchise .Although, there had been deliberate attempt to empower women to seek elective positions through non- payment of party nomination forms as a concession to boost their participation especially, by the All Progressives Congress Party yet, patriarchy, gender bias and stereotype; religion, ethnicity, the forms of education received by the Nigerian society through colonization has not translated into consciousness raising towards reflection and action for a deliberate change of the status quo which the APC intend to foster. This paper therefore, utilizes Freire's theoretical approach of consciousness raising of the individual in adult learning as a liberating factor to stem the societal anomaly that tend to obstruct the development of the nation. It proposes Lifelong learning as a continuum and Freire's philosophy among the people to articulate and promote competencies to adapt to a knowledge based society, which builds on cultural values but devoid of factors of inequality towards entrenching sustainable democratic participation of women in politics.

Keywords: Democratic women's participation, politics, consciousness raising, lifelong learning and the All Progressives Congress.

1. Introduction

Women remain a small proportion that enjoy the benefits of democracy in real political participation, representation and decision – making. Democracy is about the people irrespective of sex in the real world

of an egalitarian society. Among other things, the quality of democracy is ascertained by the extent of citizen participation in the political process and the participation of different social groups in decision – making bodies including political parties, elections and parliaments.

The world's population statistics put women's population at fifty percent. Fifty – one percent of women are voters in election in Nigeria Ofong (2000) yet women's numerical strength is a paradox of their representation and decision – making in all sphere of life. The level of literacy, the type of literacy received, fund and a non-formal patriarchal system of a male dominated structure, shaped by an ideological stereotype of women's role of domestic ingenuity continue to mar the level of women's political participation and impact in Nigeria and most developing economies. Majorly, women are primarily engaged for mobilising votes whereas the decision – making of picking political representatives are largely made by men.

Nigeria is a federation of thirty – six states and the Federal Capital territory, Abuja. These states are administered by governors. There are two political parties in the fore front in Nigeria. They are the present federal ruling party- the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the opposition, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). In Ondo State, Governor Olusegun Mimiko of the PDP's tenure lapsed in February, 2017. This called for a gubernatorial election in the State and prior to this the conduct of primary election by each contesting party. Each party designed the modality with which it conducted its primary election to select a party candidate for the general election.

Ondo State has two hundred and three political wards with twelve delegates each from the APC. Of these delegates, only four hundred and eight are females while about two thousand seven hundred and fifty-four delegates in all participated in the voting process that was witnessed by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) where Oluwarotimi Odunayo Akeredolu(SAN) a former President of the Nigerian Bar Association emerged as the party's representative in the November, 2016 gubernatorial election in Ondo State.

Nigerians have been exercising franchise since 1999, but gender representation especially in choosing party representatives has been significantly low. The situation is still far from the act of democracy. Historically, the Nigerian society is not complete without the mention of great feats made by some women even at the cost of their lives and family members. Gender stereotype is not only influenced by men but also by fellow women that contributed to an insignificant participation and representation of women in politics and decision – making also, resulting in minimal impact on their part. Democratic system of governance rejects

gender segregation in all forms of political participation. For instance, Gberevbie and Oviasogie (2013) assert that a unique feature of democracy is equality of participation in decision-making of issues affecting all segments of the society. Also, scholars like Fox (2007) and Onyeghalaji (2008) affirm that the act of excluding anybody from the political process is a negation of true values of a democratic society.

Since 1999 under representation, thuggery, violence, god fatherism, monetization of politics, favouritism and a weak society have characterised the Nigerian political scene (Alese, 2013). The election that brought President Muhammadu Buhari's administration into power in 2015 however, was acclaimed better than what it used to be especially, because of the use of card readers to identify voters.

President Buhari had the mandate of changing the status quo by promoting the progressive ideology in providing for the needs of the masses by creating job opportunities for the people, reducing poverty, eradicating corruption, maintaining the rule of law, building a virile civil society, tackling insurgency among others which is believed to be the bane of failures of past administration and the low level of economic growth/ economic repression in which Nigeria finds itself now. At all level of governance, the people expect transparency, including a change in behaviour of the leaders and the people to address misappropriation of public funds and inequality in the distribution of resources and eradication of gender stereotype and the like to provide for a level playing ground and build a virile civil society.

The situation has not changed much with the clamour for change by the APC and Buhari's administration. For instance, Buhari's cabinet has only six female Ministers, seven female Senators and fourteen members of House of Representatives (Premium Times, 2015). Does this translate to thirty-five percent representation of the Beijing Conference and 1999 constitution that domesticated women's representation in public square? However, he is busy fighting corruption and recovering looted funds but yet to give more representation to women in his cabinet. It is commendable here however, that the APC as a party allowed all interested women who want to vie for the position of governor to pick their nomination form free of charge whereas, their male colleagues purchased the same nomination and expression of interest forms for five million and five hundred thousand naira respectively. Their male colleagues also contributed two million naira as party development fee to the State Secretariat of the party.

Despite this high fee and concession, twenty-three males and only one female aspirant emerged. This is an indication of great apathy on the part of women. While commending the concession given to women, one would have expected that the nomination form and similar fees will not be this exorbitant. President Buhari lamented that the expression of interest fee of

five million and nomination form fee of twenty million naira for the presidential ticket of the APC was exorbitant when he contested. In fact, oral information revealed that he was paid for; because of his credibility. The provision of a level playing ground demands moderation as non-moderation might make people holding public offices embezzle public funds. However, women are expected to participate more in political offices.

In order to entrench sustainable democratic participation of all the citizenry which will infuse democratisation in people, education as a right of the citizen need to be given political will. Also, the right education for consciousness raising while building on indigenous moral values and ethics are salient components of education. Illiteracy, the level and the type of education of the people have a big role to play in the participation of the people and women in politics (Alese,2015a). It has also been discovered that majority of women are apathetic to politics, despite their high level of education. Paulo Freire's literacy method of Conscientization is quite adaptable at this juncture. Freire went beyond teaching the skills of reading and writing but that of critical thinking, consciousness raising, reflection and action.

Efforts have been directed at mass literacy of children, the adult and the early school leavers both by the government, national and international Non-Governmental organizations in the past but the fact remains that education need to be given beyond the tenets of schooling to avoid 'crisis' and include Lifelong learning for a knowledge based society. Lifelong learning is a continuum of learning throughout life that seeks to improve knowledge, skills and competence within a personal, civic, social, and/or employment related perspectives.

The functionality in lifelong learning could be coined with Freire's philosophy of education for reflection and positive action to raise the consciousness of the people towards removing passivity and fatalism for a valued society. This paper heightens the argument that the right to education that include consciousness raising elements of reflection and positive action of the citizenry will entrench sustainable democratic participation of women and the Nigerian people at large in politics towards a democratic and valued society.

2.0 The Theory of Conscientization and Dialogue

Freire propounded the theory of conscientization and dialogue through his experience as a Brazilian who had financial challenge during the great depression of his country. His earlier experience and that of public service after his University education brought him in contact with the poor and dispossessed which later developed into his dialogical method for adult education (<http://digital.lib.msu.edu> n.d).

Freire brought literacy programmes to the peasants in Brazil by presenting participation in the political process through reading and writing. He awakened the hope of the poor and they started having a say in the day – to – day decisions that affected their lives. He was imprisoned for making progressive moves which was considered outrageously radical and he began his first major education work – Education as the Practice of Freedom in prison (<http://digital.lib.msu.edu> n.d)

Freire came in contact with a new culture at the United States and found that repression and exclusion of the powerless from economic and political life was not limited to cultures of dependence. He wrote the Pedagogy of the Oppressed as he opined that education should be the path to permanent liberation which is of two stages. The first is that, where people become aware (conscientized) of their oppression and transform that state. The second, a permanent process of liberating cultural action. That is, positive reflection and creative action leads to transformation.

Freire's method of conscientization and dialogue involves teaching adults how to read and write in relation to the awakening of their consciousness about their social reality (<http://digital.lib.msu.edu> n.d). It also rests on the equality of all people, the right to knowledge and culture to criticise their situations and act, having faith in people, whether literate or illiterate and engaging in critical dialogue. Freire's theory relies on active dialogue and critical pedagogy rather than being passive (Freire, 1970).

Freire was criticised by those who are averse to revolution as being demagogic and utopian. He was also accused of idealism in his opinion of popular consciousness and failure to take into account the radical differences between forms of oppression and their complex and contradictory instantiation in subjects (<http://digital.lib.msu.edu> n.d). Despite the criticism, Freire's theory remain indispensable as it sees oppression and repression as irrational and an act of inhuman social order which could be redressed /changed by giving the right knowledge to the people through progressive and liberatory education by educationists who believe in development and stand against real oppression rather than formal rights that are written but never practiced.

2.1 Democracy and Conscientization

The concept and understanding of democracy is mostly pinned on qualities, procedures and institutions. For instance, Britannica (2013) opines that democracy reflects a form of government in which supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly and indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodic election. Also, Moghadam (2008) avers that in a liberal democracy, there is the need for a high degree of political legitimacy, as is an independent judiciary and a

constitution that clearly sets out the relationship between state and society, and citizen's rights and obligations. Corroborating this, Diop (2006) in Ubani (2013) opined that: *A democratic developed state is considered as an 'ideal' form of socio – economic and political governance underpinned by the principle of democracy (participation, equality, protection of human rights etc) and whose objectives are articulated around the development of the country as well as an improvement in the well being of the population.*

Freire's Conscientization teaches consciousness arousal, a positive reflection of the state of issues and creative action towards transformation. The link between democracy and conscientization is the ability of value assumption of equality of all people and the uninhibited right to challenge their situation and act. It draws on the strength of all people to engage in critical dialogue. In this sense, a healthy democratic state is that where the citizens are not afflicted by disease, illiteracy, ignorance, poverty, political apathy and violence.

It is expected that citizens should not be passive to decisions affecting them and their society. In essence, all citizens irrespective of sex should have the critical consciousness to participate in political issues in their society. This in itself is a sense of being liberated. All aspirants believe in changing the present situation- the state of critical consciousness. APC had enjoyed an improved image and goodwill among Ondo people. This is arguably attributable to the failure of the state government to meet the yearnings of the people through unpaid salaries, laying off of workers without genuine reasons, perceived maltreatment of citizens, increased taxation and alleged insensitivity of the PDP sitting government to the sufferings of the people Oluwole (2016) of which women too should be eager and aspire to change.

2.2 Culture, Religion, Ethnicity, Gender Stereotype and bias on Sustainable

Democratic Participation of Women in Politics

The hard stance that colonialism, culture, gender stereotype and bias, ethnicity and religion pose to the realisation of sustainable democratic participation of women in politics cannot be overemphasised. The pre-colonial era was largely traditional which places several demands on the woman. She is a mother, wife and an entrepreneur in her own capacity. Women were actively involved in community development although, these are complementary to the leading of their spouses. Decisions are made and roles were assigned to women in their capacity as it is believed that some functions are the reserve of men/women.

Colonization especially in the form of religion and education also had its great effect on the established rule of governance on the Nigerian society.

The two religion- Christianity and Islam preached the subjugation of women. For instance, The Bible in 1 Timothy 2: 11 and 12 say:

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection

v.11

But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man but to be in silence.

v.12

However, there seems to be a contraction in Proverbs 3: 10 – 12

Who can find a precious woman? For her price is far above rubies

v.10

The heart of her husband doth safety trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil

v.11

She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life

v.12

I am of the opinion that a virtuous woman who must be trusted by the husband must be knowledgeable, ready to take up roles and make decisions at any time. Must a woman who will do her husband good all the days of her life learn in silence and be subjugated?

The Quran emphasises knowledge.

Read ! in the name of your Lord who created, created man from clots

Of congealed blood. Read! Your Lord is the Most Bountiful One, who

Taught by the pen, taught man what he did not know.

Iqra 3 in Oladosu –

Uthman p.252

Prophet Mohamed (Peace Be Unto Him) in Isah (2013) said;

He who has a slave – girl and teaches her good manners and improve her education and then manumits and marries her, will get a double reward. P.249

Both Isah and Oladosu – Uthman (2013) affirmed that the Quran is in support of the education of women but a disconnect is evident between what Islam says and the operation within the muslim societies. The education of the “Girl child” and Women is paramount to the two faiths reviewed though to make them perform as good house wives. But majorly, males hide under the scripture to subjugate women and the tendency of excluding them in decision- making.

Nigerians are highly ethnical. Tribalistic tendencies remain the bane of recognition in the society. For instance, majorly the northerners believe they have strong hold on power and as such when Presidential candidates are to be selected, because of the population of the northerners, it tend to favour them. Similarly, there is always the notion among the Yorubas that any Yoruba picked is their Kinsman. The Igbo of Nigeria are not left out of the scene either.

2.3 Gender /Women, Democracy and Conscientization: The Nexus.

Gender is connected with the attributes and opportunities of being a male or female. It also connotes relationship between males and females. In all cultures, attributes, opportunities and relationships are constructed socially. These are context specific and could be changed. They are not synonymous to women. (Onuk, 2006). Whereas a woman is the biological sex mode of a person.

Globally, women have been under-represented in decision-making. However, without women’s participation in socio-economic and political institutions, nations are unable to develop healthy and sustainable democracies as such, development have continued to elude developing economies. Women have a stake in strong and sustainable democracies, but can be adversely affected by an institutionally weak democracy which is not based on principles of equality and the right of all citizens and a weak civil society. A more expanded understanding of democracy is highly instructive as it has as its correlates civil liberties, participation and inclusion. The recent UNDP’s report in Nigeria reiterated that gender inequality has hampered the nation’s development.

Freire’s conscientization is highly political. It is embedded in democracy. The right of being able to read and write for permanent liberation from an unclear and mystifying world. He believes that social change should come from the masses and not from isolated individuals

(Freire, 1974). Democracy that is devoid of inclusiveness, equality and which does not allow freedom of participation is weak.

2.4 The All Progressives Congress (APC)

The All Progressives Congress is a political party in Nigeria. The formation of the party from Action Congress of Nigeria was completed in year 2013 with Senator Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu largely contributing to its success (Ibrahim, 2016). It is a conglomeration of political parties –The Action Congress of Nigeria, the Congress of Progressive Change [CPC], the All Nigeria Peoples Party [ANPP], and a faction of the All Progressives Grand Alliance [APGA].

The Conglomeration came into being out of the need to put an end to sixteen years continuous rule of the Peoples Democratic Party [PDP]. The APC was tagged the progressives party because of its manifesto which seems to have addressed the multi-faceted problem of under development and corruption in Nigeria. The APC is currently the ruling party in Nigeria. It has the President- Muhammadu Buhari, majority at the National Assembly and seventeen State governors to its credit. In addition to the National Secretariat at Blantyre street Abuja, the party has a Secretariat each in all the thirty-six states of the federation and the federal capital territory, Abuja.

During the formation of the party, it was agreed that the presidential slot should go to northern Nigeria. On that note, President Muhammadu Buhari emerged. The Vice President emerged from the South; the Senate President was zoned to the middle belt. The Chairmanship of the party was zoned to the South-South which made Chief John Odigie- Oyegun to emerge. The party was structured in such a way that each of the geopolitical zones produced a Vice Chairman which was further divided into North and South and each of these zones further produced Deputy Chairman.

2.5 The All Progressives Congress Gubernatorial Primary

The primary election for the APC gubernatorial flag bearer was earlier scheduled to hold in August 27th, 2016 in respect of the gubernatorial election of Ondo State which was scheduled for November 26, 2016 but was postponed till September 3rd, 2016. Altogether, twenty- four aspirants including a female contested for the primary election. At a meeting of the party held on the 20th of August, 2016 at the national party headquarters Abuja, the aspirants were assured of a level playing ground during the exercise although, it was earlier rumoured that one of the aspirants was endorsed by the national leader of the party- Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu upon which the followers of three of the aspirants protested at the State Secretariat Akure and locked up the offices. However, at the Abuja meeting, the aspirants involved were compelled to apologise to the party and

leadership of the party. Below is the result of the primary election and how the candidates fair.

S/N	Name of Aspirants	Sex	Votes in favour of each Aspirant
1	Abayomi Tunji	M	5
2	Abraham Olusegun	M	635 xx Petitioner
3	Adeyemi Foluso Mayowa	M	13
4	Akeredolu Rotimi	M	669 x Winner
5	Akinola Adeyinka	M	1
6	Akinyosola Odunayo	M	1
7	Akinyelure Patrick	M	3
8	Alasoadura Omotayo	M	206
9	Anifowose Jumoke	F	1
10	Niyi Adegomire	M	8
11	Afolabi Jamiu Ekungba	M	44
12	Oyewumi Akinboye Taiwo	M	7
13	Olusola Oke	M	576 xxx Petitioner later defected to AD
14	Awodeji Apata	M	2
15	Ayorinde Bode	M	67
16	Boroffice Robert Ajayi	M	471 xxx Petitioner
17	Moyosola Niran Oladunni	M	3
18	Oyewumi Gboye	M	1
19	Olabimtan Victor	M	18
20	Akintelure Paul	M	1
21	Akingbade Akinwale	M	3
22	Akinrinsola Odunayo	M	2
23	Bukola Adetula	M	8
24	Adegoroye Ademola	M	0
	TOTAL		2754

Source: APCOndoPrimary<http://il.wp.com/an24.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/APC-Ondo-...>

The table above is self explanatory, Oluwarotimi Akeredolu won the primary election with six hundred and sixty-nine votes, Olusegun Abraham came second with six hundred and thirty-five votes, Olusola Oke came third with five hundred and seventy-six votes while Senator Robert Ajayi Boroffice came forth with four hundred and seventy-one votes. The issue confirming a great vacuum in the education of women and the right education for all in this situation is the fact that, the only female contestant scored only one vote. Is it not ridiculous? It is expected that more women would have participated. Where we have four hundred and eight women delegates? This candidate had been empowered earlier by not paying the expression of interest and nomination fee. However, the primary election was controversial.

The crux of the matter in the APC primary was the allegation of being fraudulent and the national Chairman being corrupt. There were allegations that Mr Oluwarotimi Akeredolu connived with the electoral

committee to rig the primary election in his favour .This generated a lot of heat to the extent that three aspirants that came second, third and fourth addressed a press conference in Akure the state capital and petitioned the election Appeal Committee of the party. More so, on Friday, September 2nd, 2016, the aggrieved aspirants alleged that a new copy of compromised delegates list was made available to all the aspirants by the Primary Election Committee of APC around 10:30pm. On receipt of the purported new delegates list, they all wrote a protest letter, including Oluwarotimi Akeredolu (SAN) to the Primary Election Committee Chairman informing him of their rejection of the substituted delegates list but that the Committee went ahead with the list. The press conference reads thus:

...this media chat is to once again bring into the public domain the grim dirtiness that characterised the process which was not captured and shown to the people of Ondo State in the cinema beamed live on 3rd September, 2016. As change agents, we speak against the corruption in the process. As you are aware, we approached the Primary Election Appeal Committee provided for by the APC Primary Election Guidelines.

...as enumerated in our petitions, which we submitted to the Appeal Committee that was duly constituted by the National Executive Council (NEC) with the approval of the National Working Committee of APC and as contained in the Primary Election Guidelines of APC, the following are the planks upon which our appeals are based:

- *Fraudulent injection of three hundred and eighty three (383) names into the delegates list that was used to conduct the primary election.*
- *Issuance of delegate tags to non-delegates and allowing the non-delegates to vote in the primary election.*
- *On investigation, three hundred (300) delegate tags were indiscriminately issued to non-delegates; two designated buses were provided to convey known non-delegates to the voting centre and voted to give undue advantage to one of the aspirants. These, among others were discovered after the charade called credible election.*

Press Conference at the Nigeria Union of Journalist Centre Akure September 23rd, 2016.

It is amazing that the only female candidate did not show any sign of agitation. Does it mean that she is complacent about the situation or kept quite because she came from Owo, the home town of the winner?

Corroborating these, the party's Vice Chairman (South west) Chief Pius Akinyelure speaking on "How Ondo APC primary was rigged", said the party's National Chairman- Chief John Odigie- Oyegun, National Secretary Mai Mala Buni and the National Organising Secretary, Senator Osita Izunaso are behind the act and that it enjoyed the support of six National Working

Committee (NWC) members. The trio were said to have utilised the NWC meetings to unilaterally take decisions above their powers (Balogun, 2016). Izunaso was accused of single handedly removing, adding and substituting names on the initial list that was circulated to the party's aspirants which led to the second list altered in favour of Akeredolu (Balogun, 2016). It was affirmed that he enjoyed the support of the national chairman and Buni despite other NWC's member opposition because it conflicts with the party's rules.

Furthermore, Atiku and Olumilua, big wigs in the party recommended that APC should reconsider upholding Ondo State governorship primary election as the party's decision to jettison the Appeal's Committee recommendation that found reasonable ground for the conduct of a fresh election was a negation of good democratic practice (Atiku and Olumilua, 2016). It added that leadership should be guided by rules, fairness, equity, neutrality and democratic consensus.

Meanwhile, one of the petitioners Barrister Olusola Oke had defected to the Alliance for Democracy's party. He said, his defection was necessitated by an alleged injustice perpetrated by some leaders of the APC during the primary election. He alleged that, the National Chairman Oyegun caused his defection (Oke, 2016). It was alleged that the aggrieved aspirants were not invited for dialogue. Perhaps, if they had been invited for dialogue; so much dust would not have been raised. Despite all these heat, Mrs Hellen Endega; the Chairperson of the appeal committee did not react.

However, the APC national Chairman has explanation for rejecting the Appeal Committee's report and upholding the primary election's result in an interview that he granted in the Razor Express. He said he has strived to ensure a free, fair, transparent and credible process in all primary elections conducted under his watch of which the Ondo State gubernatorial election was not an exception. He reiterated that, nobody has the kind of money that could buy his conscience or make him do injury to an innocent man (Odigie – Oyegun, 2016).

The party's National Working Committee (NWC) rejected the Appeal Committee's report on Tuesday 20 September, 2016 and took the minutes and confirmation of same on Thursday 22,2016 in a four- point resolution on the grounds that the report was fundamentally and fatally flawed. It also contradicts itself when it reported that, in making such recommendations one is not unmindful of the fact that there may have been substantial compliance in the conduct of the exercise (Odigie- Oyegun, 2016). The four- point agenda reads:

- a. "The NWC faulted the failure of the Appeal Committee to invite the National Secretariat as the custodian, to authenticate or otherwise the source of the disputed delegates list".

- b. Also, the Appeal Committee did not invite the Chairman or members of the Ondo State Governorship Primary Election Committee to clarify issues relating to the allegation of manipulation of the accreditation process.
- c. The Appeal Committee rather relied totally on unsubstantiated evidence(s) in the petitions it received to recommend the nullification of the primary. This is against the principle of natural justice and fair hearing.
- d. “The NWC equally observed a serious contradiction in the Appeal Committee’s report in respect of the number of the accredited delegates. Whereas the Primary Election Committee’s report indicated that 2,774 delegates were accredited, the Appeal Committee’s report erroneously recorded it as those who voted in the election, thereby acting under the false impression that there was over-voting in the exercise. The actual total number of votes cast was 2,754, as clearly recorded in the Primary Election Committee’s report. P.4

He stressed that the issue of fresh primaries does not arise as NWC had had a careful and exhaustive deliberation on the Appeal Committee’s report chaired by a lady- Mrs Hellen Endega. More so, any fresh primary was time barred because of INEC’s ultimatum of Thursday 22nd September, 2016. One wonders why the chairperson of the Appeal Committee failed to react to all these. Could it be that she did not have enough training to function as the chairperson of such a Committee? The fact remains that she did not live up to expectation.

2.6 Adapting the Frierean Approach. Conducive or Hostile?

Freire’s Literacy method could be adapted to entrench sustainable democratic participation of women and the people at large in politics. Friere’s literacy method is liberating because of the factor of conscientization. Consciousness raising of the people and the attendant action towards changing the status quo generally holds the ethics of democratisation where norms and values of democracy are upheld beyond individual interests, selfishness and serves as a training ground for the participation of the people including women in politics. This does not rely solely on numbers or quotas in representation, rather the nitty gritty of politics. Inclusiveness in all areas as it could be argued that even the few women in legislation have not actually impacted much on gender concern as there is no correlation between getting women into political offices and these women going after policies of gender equality.

The pertinent question that arises at this juncture is, how did these women get into office? Is it by interest? Were they opportuned to serve

because they are wealthy or through a god father? Do they have political skill? And the atmosphere of operation-conducive or patriarchal? Yes leadership could be both intrinsic and extrinsic. Freire's conscientization could teach democratisation in democracy, political training and a better climate of operation than what obtains presently.

Freire's conscientization and dialogue are embedded in democratic values. The Nigerian society need to appreciate the expanded understanding of democracy through a rights-based model of statesmanship that promotes civil liberties, participation and inclusion in an egalitarian society. Although, it is clearly written that every Nigerian has the right to seek candidature into political offices and not to be disenfranchised in any way, we all know that in practice it is a big task. The right education through Freire's theory recognizes problems, later reflection and positive action to get out of the problem.

Women and the citizens as a whole need to pass through political training where the tenets of democratic politics is learnt through the recognition and articulation of interest in order to reduce apathy, build consensus and cooperation among women and change the orientation of the people at large. Women are their worst enemies, situations had arisen where women who venture into politics are seen as outcasts, and tagged as women who cannot be controlled by their husbands. Emanating from this phenomenon, education to build alliances amongst women is deemed necessary by observers.

Dialogue is a salient characteristic of Freire's theory. Debates and training in the likes of secondary school debates for and against argument are very useful here. This will teach respect and tolerance of other people's opinions and ability to accept successes and failures. All these could be applied to political training and the arts of politics.

Democratic politics should thrive better than the present situation with the growing realization that equality of purpose is salient to a developed society. Awareness is developed and transformation occurs through critical reflection. That is, when a woman operates on the same pedestal with men in socio-economic and political spheres, a better atmosphere of operation is reached. Then the issue of hidden patriarchy in the pretext of equality is removed.

2.7 Adult, Non Formal Education and Conscientization for Effective Democratic Change in Nigeria.

Adult education is recognized as an element of a rights based model of education [UNESCO,2010]. Recently, adult and non-formal education has been viewed to include Lifelong learning which is encompassing. Lifelong learning is a continuum that seeks to assist learners in building upon the

previous experiences to articulate and update abilities, interest and knowledge while promoting competencies in assisting people to adapt to knowledge based society.

Educational institutions and Non-Governmental organizations undertake adult and non-formal education courses and programmes which include basic literacy of teaching the art of reading, writing and numeracy and vocational skills to enable beneficiaries have socio-economic skills to function in the society. There had also been cases of the teaching of voter education by non-governmental organizations especially, when elections are approaching. This is often done by women in market places to mobilize for votes. Adult and non-formal education for conscientization is indispensable at this juncture. Adult education has been seen to solve societal problems. It should be a ready response to abate this anomaly of weak democratic values. Illiteracy and literacy that does not have the core values of conscientization and dialogue have been observed to pervade the Nigerian society.

Conscientization and dialogue is both theory and practice that is, a dark stage→reflection→ and positive action in Freire's illiteracy process which reflects liberation. In conscientization a literate is expected to have passed through the process of critical thinking to discover the state of the matter and then undertake a critique of the situation around her or him which includes the social, economic and political circumstances thus, transforming ugly situation and being empowered towards changing the status quo.

Adult education practitioners are yet to tap and appreciate women's population for civic training and democratic participation. Why should voters' education be given only when elections are near? and only to learn how to vote well. Women need education to build alliance, learn modes of cooperation and consensus building, recognize and articulate interest. Also, to entrench deliberative democracy such that occurs in national assemblies, training that include the debates of secondary school days to sway others in deliberative actions, to mount argument and also to learn to accept failures. Freire's dialectical is practical and inclusive rather than silencing women especially, when installed by god fathers to fill a political position and probably to increase numbers of quotas.

Adult education could be formal, non-formal and informal. This diversity in adult education makes it flexible to address societal imbalance. Education and training to include the type of apprenticeship listed above could be given in market places, mosques, churches, and schools, community learning centres, on radio, television and mobile phones

Conclusion

The paper has been able to establish a hard stance occasioned by culture, tradition, the form of education and training received as that which

engages women as tools for mobilising votes rather than creating a joint responsibility of the decision- making of both sexes which had actually affected the height of democratisation and the positive development of the society.

Freire's philosophy of conscientisation and dialogue in Adult Education as a lifelong learning process has been argued to be the best antidote for ensuring consciousness raising of all towards the political situation of the environment, igniting the necessary positive action in changing, removing apathy largely among women and building the necessary political training that will place the people on the right footing by eliminating gender stereotype and bias among the people for the development of their society.

The participation of the prominent women in this study in politics was a right step. However, this needed to be enhanced by fellow women. Also, the right education and training of the people at large towards effective mobilisation and collaboration for an organised sustainable participation and engagement of women in public square is desirable.

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Appendix



Women participating in political campaign



Researcher and women exercising franchise in the scorching sun