Original Article

An Overview of Nigeria and Malaysia Women's Participation in Politics: An Assessment of the Gender Gap

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Abstract: This paper studied and explained women's participation in politics in Nigeria and Malaysia with an emphasis on the gender gap. Certainly, the two countries are patriarchal in nature, where men have dominated 80% of the policy and decision-making processes. This makes them less vigorous and understated in the politics of the two nations under investigation. The materials used for this study include books, journals, magazines, archives, reports, and newspapers. These documents were systematically reviewed to develop this article. This paper is qualitative in nature, where related literature was systematically reviewed. In explaining the topic under study, the researcher adopted Liberal Feminist theory. The advocates of this theory are Gergen, 1985; Sha, 2007; Walby, 1990; Igube, 2004; Rose, 2005. The assumption of this theory is that both men and women are born equal and need equal handling in all scopes of power. The theory is positioned on gender fairness among genders. This study found that women are underrepresented in politics in the two countries under study, i.e. Nigeria and Malaysia. The researcher further found that most of the political positions are being dominated by male counterparts. Again, the study unveiled that women are underrepresented and at the drawback not because they cannot execute but rather because they are seen as the weak gender. As a result, the study suggests that when women apply for political roles, the various political parties should treat them differently and offer them the same possibilities as men. For women to be very active in politics, spouses should admire and give women and wives the chance to take part and seek political power to display their capacity and skill for national economic and political progress.

Keywords: Assessment; Gender Gap; Nigeria; Malaysia; Overview; Politics; Women.

I. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of the gender gap is a global phenomenon that affects all societies. Indeed, the necessity for equal opportunities for both genders in all societies across the globe in order to achieve human growth has grown into a universal concern. The issue of gender disparity between men and women is a global one that requires serious attention. (Tunde and Zakuan, 2017). It is observed that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been concentrating on accomplishing goals that can improve human development, and it is against this background that the yearly index was established. The current 2015 Human Development Report displays the gender disparity in work, with men controlling the world's paid work and women succeeding in the world's unpaid work (Selim, 2015).

However, the susceptibility of gender disparity is widespread in Africa and Asian continents, which consistently Nigeria and Malaysia consistently fit into. However, gender disparity is a universal problem that affects many countries of diverse continents, and it is exceedingly noticeable in Africa and Asia. Nonetheless, a person's daily activities in the state are greatly influenced by a variety of elements, including community norms and laws, customs and traditions, physical prowess, economic might, and educational attainment. Competition for society's insufficient resources is a prevalent trait at both the intra-and intersex levels of the gender equation. (Ishaku & Ali, 2018).

Moreover, the composition of Nigeria and Malaysia's population is made up of males and females, and the degree of gender disparity is marked in Nigeria. For instance, the political environment in Malaysia limits the percentage of women serving in the state legislature and parliament to 11% (Tunde and Zakuan, 2017), whilst in Nigeria, the 2015 election resulted in less than 30% of women holding elected office. (Akpan, 2016; Akpan, 2015).

Globally, God, in His wisdom, created men and women for a purpose, determined their gender and provided everyone in the gender group for possible development and improvement in all difficulties (Ishaku & Ali, 2018). But the state and all of its institutions are man's creations for the survival of both sexes in addition to all other animals, as they provide the conditions required for every living thing to pursue its objectives in a peaceful and better-prepared manner (Ishaku & Ali, 2018).

According to Mama (1995:37) and Ragins, Townsend, & Mattis (1998), the statutory and legal status of women and women's involvement in policy and decision-making have long been taken as key indicators of the general level of democracy, generally on the basis that, since women institute a historically burdened and relegated set, and at least half of most national inhabitants, their level of political participation and representation is very important. This is as true of African countries as it has been in Western Europe, North America, and Asia.

A) Problem Statement

It is argued that the diagnosis of the issue—how the issue of women's underrepresentation is viewed and understood, as well as the approaches taken to solve it—is closely related to Nigeria's sluggish progress toward increasing the representation of women in politics. This study demonstrates how attempts to remedy women's inadequate political representation in Nigeria have traditionally concentrated on giving them more political clout, with the result that these efforts have only yielded patchy improvements. (Orji, 2018). Women in the Malaysian parliament are underrepresented (Zakuan, 2010). She also revealed that a small percentage of female lawmakers are more sensitive to the needs of women than those of their male counterparts, establishing distinct agendas and concerns as well as taking the lead in crafting laws that support women. More so, a study by Zakuan (2014) claimed that because alegislator's gender matters, it is crucial that there be more women represented in legislative bodies. This is because the life experiences, roles, and socialization that have created the interests, tastes, and opinions regarding men and women differ. Women's underrepresentation in the politics of the two nations under examination has created a wide gap in the political structure. The central argument is that women's representation in the two countries is very minimal. Conversely, it is noted that one very important thing is the God-given ability that women are good and better at multitasking than their male counterparts (Yesufu, 2018). It is observed that politics is seen as the right of men not because the law has made it but because of cultural and religious factors that marginalized women in domestic affairs (Fapohuda, 2004). He equally observed that women need adequate representation in all spheres of life. The present level of female in political positions in the two nations does not correspond to their number in the workforce. The little involvement of women in politics in these countries compounded a problem which created a big vacuum that needs to be filled since women formed a significant and increasing part of the workforce and wage service (Fapohuda, 2004). Without adequate women representation, the rights and interests of women in the workforce cannot be efficiently handled by men alone. Given this, the paper merits examining women's participation in politics and the gender gap in Nigeria and Malaysia.

B) Objectives of the Study
1. To compare the level of women's participation in politics in Nigeria and Malaysia.
2. To find out why women are under-represented in politics in Nigeria and Malaysia.
3. To identify the factors responsible for women's underrepresentation in politics in Nigeria and Malaysia.

C) Methodology

This study is subjective in nature, and the data were gathered from secondary sources, i.e. past documents, such as articles, books, magazines, newspapers, archives, and published and unpublished articles. These documents were systematically reviewed to support the arguments (Braun and Clarke, 2013; Creswell, 2013).

D) Research Design

Ethnography is one of the qualitative research approaches that help in describing and interpreting a societal culture-shared among the group. In addition to this, it also helps in illustrating and interpreting the common patterns of the culture of a group of people living in a certain place. Ethnography helps the researcher in explaining and demonstrating the total way of life of people living in a specific location (Zaleha, 2018). She further added that ethnography assists the researcher in studying a group that shares the same culture through descriptions of culture-sharing groups, themes, and sub-themes about a particular group of people.

E) Liberal Feminist Theory

The researcher adopted Liberal Feminist theory in explaining the context of the study. The Champions of this theory are (Walby, 1990;Igube, 2004; Rose, 2005) they all beliefs that all genders are born equal therefore they need equal treatment; thus Equal possibilities ought to be provided to both genders (Sha, 2007). In addition to this, it is noted that women underrepresentation in politics is because of the non-recognitions and implementation of the principles of this theory. Advocates of this ideology contended that if half of asociety's resources—women—are segregated, no civilization can prosper. The main contention of this theory is gender inequality, or the fact that men and women have different and unequal social positions. As all genders are equal by nature, liberal feminism therefore advocates for gender equality. (Gergen, 1985; Sha, 2007).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A) Gender Gap in Various Sectors

In short Global Gender Gap Index was first made known by the World Economic Forum in 2006; this is to capture the magnitude of gender differences and understand their development over a period. It is found and reported that a wide gender gap persists in Health and Survival, Educational Attainment, Economic Participation and Opportunity, and Political Empowerment and provides country rankings that permit effective assessments in the regions and income groups. This ranking was planned to bring global consciousness to the challenges posed by gender gaps (Insight Report, 2017; Ragins, Townsend, & Mattis, 1998).

The 2017*Report*'s key findings are: Weighted by population, in 2017, *"The normal development on closing the global gender gap stands at 68.0% meaning an average gap of 32.0% remains to be closed worldwide across the four Index dimensions in order to achieve universal gender parity, compared to an average gap of 31.7% last year. On a normal basis, 144 nations examined and reported having closed 96% of the gender gap in the health sector between the genders, and unchanged since last year, and more than 95% of the gap in educational attainment, a slight decrease compared to previous years* (Insight Report, 2017)*"*.

Though, *"the gaps between women and men on political empowerment and economic participation continue widening: only 58% of the economic participation gap has been closed a second successive year of reversed progress and the lowest value measured by the Index since 2008 and about 23% of the political gap, unchanged since last year against a long-term trend of slow but steady improvement"* (Insight Report, 2017).

In spite of all gender differences at the global level, the problem is more pronounced at regional and state level. However, it is noted that out of 142 nations examined by the index these years, the study further understood that 82 countries have increased their overall gender gap score compared to previous years, while 60 have seen it as decrease. By contrast, last year's *Report* found negative results in more than half of the nations measured. In addition, several of the regions and countries have reached significant benchmarks toward gender parity this year for the very first time, as the report details.

There are no new entries in the top 10 of the Global Gender Gap Index this year, but there are some significant adjustments in ranking. Smaller Western European nations continue to occupy the top spots; the Nordic nations take up the top three spots, followed by two nations from East Asia and the Pacific, one nation from Sub-Saharan Africa, one nation from Latin America and the Caribbean, and one nation from Eastern Europe and Central Asia. From five both last year and in 2015, all but three of the top ten nations in the index have since closed over eighty percent of their total gender gap.

> *"At a global level, in 2017 some regions which include Western Europe, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, have a gender gap of less than 30 percent two of which are crossing this verge for the first time in 2017. Western Europe records a remaining gender gap of 25%, placing it ahead of North America, with a gap of 28%, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, with a gap of 29%, and Latin America and the Caribbean, with a gap of 29.8%. East Asia and the Pacific region rank ahead of Sub-Saharan Africa, with a remaining gender gap of 31.7% and 32.4%, respectively, and South Asia, with a gap of 34%. The Middle East and North Africa region, for the first time this year, crosses the threshold of having a remaining gender gap of slightly less than 40% (Insight Report, 2017)".*

On present trends, the general global gender gap can be fastened in precisely 100 years across the 106 nations. Compared to 83 years last year. The study found and reported that the greatest stimulating gender gaps remain in the health and economic sectors. The Insight Report (2017) disclosed that the gender gap is widening in the economic. This wide gap cannot be overcome in the next 217 years. However, it is understood that the gender gap still exists in the education sector, and it is observed that the gap will be minimized in the next coming 13 years. The Insight Report (2017) reveals that the gender gap is extensively wide in political spheres, and presently, it holds the broadest gender gap and is showing the most progress, even with the slowdown in progress this year. It could be shut in the coming 99 years. The gender gap in the health sector is larger than it stood in 2006.*"It is reported that the world regions record a thinner gender gap than they did 11 years ago. It further disclosed that the general global gender gap could be closed in the next 61 years in Western Europe, 79 years in Latin America and the Caribbean, 62 years in South Asia, 102 years in Sub-Saharan Africa, 128 years in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 157 years in the Middle East and North Africa, 161 years in East Asia and the Pacific, and 168 years in North America* (Insight Report, 2017)*"*.

B) Women in Politics in Malaysia

Since 1945, the involvement of women in Malaysian politics has become increasingly evident. Previously, women's roles were limited to voting and canvassing. Nonetheless, it is believed that less than 5% of women run for state and

parliamentary assembly seats and have an official role in politics. In 1995, women's participation was comparatively inspiring, as 61 women from different political parties contested as contestants. Although the figures still remain quite minimal, women constitute only 4.64% of the total number of aspirants contesting for the total number of 586 seats at both parliamentary (192) and state assembly (394) positions. However, out of the 60 women contenders, 10 were non-bumiputra women (Mahfudzah Mustafa, 1999).

Women's position in Malaysia has been found to be significantly influenced by their involvement in politics; these women have left their mark in the Cabinet, the Dewan Rakyat, and the Dewan Negara (Nation, 2019). According to two women in politics, the trend of women seeking and holding office is growing, and their achievements and effects will be most noticeable in two to three years. (Nation, 2019).

In a related development a study by (Nyuk Yan Chee, (2007) showcased that Malaysia is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural country. Information obtained from the statistics department Malaysia there are around 65% Malays and aborigines, 26% Chinese, 7.7% Indians and 1.2 % others. According to the survey, Muslims make up the majority ethnic group in Malaysia, the Malay people. In 1957, Malaysia won its freedom from British colonial rule. Up until now, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) has dominated Malaysian politics, and Islam has been recognized as the national religion. In the early years of independence, Islam had only a ceremonial role in this secular nation, and the majority of the population belonged to either a patrilineal, matrilineal, or bilateral kinship structure. However, Islam has emerged as a key influence in the transformation of Malay populations since the heyday of Islamic missionary and educational endeavors during the 1970s, known as the"Dakwah movement" (Nyuk Yan Chee, 2007).Malaysia's legislative and executivebranches' representation of women falls woefully short of the 30% target set by the government since 2004 for women in public sector decision-making, a goal that has been emphasized in subsequent national development plans.It's clear that men still control Malaysian society, which is patriarchal, and they feel particularly frightened by women holding political authority. (Yeong, 2018).

Britain also colonized Nigeria. The British adopted the indirect rule strategy, in which they exercised authority via the regional leaders. In areas where there were numerous traditional rulers, they acknowledged them and chose certain individuals to occupy these roles. They employed local authorities to oversee the regions. They instituted the use of British currency as a tool of economic control and the use of the English language as a form of interaction control. (Toluwalope, 2016).

C) Women's Under-Representation in Malaysian Politics

According to (Yeong, 2018), women are under-represented in Malaysian policymaking. However, it is understood that only 14.4% of the newly elected federal lawmakers are women, placing Malaysia 134th out of 193 countries in the appropriate ranking. The average percentage of women in national legislatures across the globe is 23.4% in the lower house and single chamber, 22.8% in the upper house and senate, and 23.3% in the combined houses. Women made up an even smaller percentage (12.3%) of the 12 state assemblies that concurrently walked to the polls. But even so, the numbers are currently the highest in the nation's history, as the most recent election in 2013 produced only 10.8 and 11.5% of female legislators at the federal and state levels, correspondingly (Interpaliamentary Union, 2017).

Mogherini (2019) noted that A critical minority in the governing branch, legislature, or any other position of authority or decision-making is assisted by roughly half of the nations in the globe. She named Sweden among the nations that, in terms of political inclusivity, have treated women fairly. *"It's suicidal for any political party in Sweden not to subscribe to the principle of gender equality and women's political empowerment.* (Mogherini, 2019:2)

> *She urged Nigeria to take a cue from countries like Rwanda, Bolivia, Mexico, South Africa, Senegal, Namibia, Uganda, Angola, and Zimbabwe, which have some forms of legislative quotas. "We need to understand that every gender quotas, like, for instance, the provision in Kenya, which is also reflected in the electoral law, which is also being reflected in the political parties' law, cascades in the political processes where the different political actors interact (Mogherini, 2019:2)."*

D) Women in Politics in Nigeria

Nigeria is one of the largest countries in Africa blessed with human and material resources. Presently, it has a population of 196,651,048. Out of this, the male population is 99,579,686, which is (50.6%) and the female population is 97,071,362, which is 49.4% respectively (UNDESA, 2018). In the Nigerian context, it has been noted that women's numerical strength is highly significant, as it is essential for the country's economy to flourish and for effective governance to support social and political progress. As a result, it is anticipated to elevate the country's standing. Therefore, over many years, scholars have emphasized the importance of women's empowerment for National development. However, one vigorous element (women's education) for accomplishing this is absent (Ali, Zakuan & Mohammad, 2018a).

Nevertheless, reasons for the poor participation of women in the 2019 elections were generally attributed to the country's political arrangement. The two main political parties were blamed for not allowing women 'enough space'.

> *We failed because there were very few female candidates in the two major parties," explained Abiodun Essiet, who contested in the primary of the APC aimed at nominating its councillorship candidate for Orozo Ward of Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) (Ebuka, 2019)".*

For instance, Mrs Essiet, a nurse and gender activist, had hopes of becoming the first woman elected councillor in the ward. But she did not make it out of the primary, which was pronounced to be oppressed with misdeeds (Ebuka, 2019)".

Despite being the biggest democracy in Africa, Nigeria has one of the poorest rates of female political representation and involvement. However, the International Parliamentary Union notes that women comprise just over six percent of the nation's legislature and that no Nigerian woman ever got voted to the office of governor, vice president, or president. (Essiet, 2019). These findings are measured by Liberal Feminist theory, which maintains that women need to be treated with fairness in the political movements of all countries.

In view of the above statement, Yesufu (2018) disclosed that:

> *We must not forget one very important thing, which is that God-given ability that women are good and better at multitasking than their male counterparts. It is no doubt that women are 50% of the nation's population, 50% of every solution, 50% of every action, and 50% of everything.*

Similarly, (Chadwick, 2018) revealed that even though women make up over half of Nigeria's population, they only hold 6% of the country's parliamentary posts. On the parliamentary gender equality index, Nigeria is now ranked 183rd; only 10 non-African nations are ranked lower.

Nigeria is one of the nations in Africa with the lowest percentage of women in politics, according to Mrs. Comfort Lamptey, the country's UN ambassador. She made this statement over the weekend in Abuja during the task team's initiation to track the involvement of women in politics (Yesufu, 2018).

Only 62 of the 2,970 women who ran for political offices were elected, according to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), which was disclosed during the Nigerian League of Women Voters' annual national conference. In addition to four becoming deputy governors, six women were elected to the senate, eleven to the House of Representatives, and forty to state houses of parliament.

The most significant indicator of their presence in Nigerian democracy is the number of women elected to the National Assembly, even if no woman has been elected governor since 1999, and the presidential seat seems a very long way off. Compared to 5.65 percent in the general elections of 2015, the performance in 2019 accounts for 4.17 percent of all elected politicians. The picture becomes more evident when one considers that there were 26 women lawmakers in 2011, 19 in 2015, and 11 newly elected in 2011. (OANDA, 2019).

The UN claims that Nigeria has one of the poorest rates of female parliamentary participation. Despite making up nearly half of the electorate, women only control 5.29% of the seats in Nigeria's state assembly. Experts contend that a culture of patriarchy and an absence of openness in the process of choosing candidates may discourage women from pursuing careers in politics. (Mayeni, 2019).

A study (Mogherini, 2019) unveiled that Nigerian women have leadership qualities desired to drive the nation into success. But Ambassador Ketil Karlsen, the head of the EU delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, says people need to be given the chance to join these. At a seminar on women's participation in Nigeria's political process held in Abuja on March 23, Ambassador Karlsen said: "It was an irony that the Nigerian women noted for their courage and honesty are demoted to the background in the politics of their country (Mogherini, 2019:1)".

According to Ibeanu (2009) and Orji (2018), there are four major socioeconomic and cultural changes with possibilities to certainly change women's political representation in the Nigerian and Malaysian context. He believes that in order to transform women's political representation, there is a need for the growing "voice" and rising profile of women in the economy, community work and various spheres of professional and public engagements; in short, there is a need for women empowerment. Finally, there is the growing possibility of women taking up economic responsibilities in the household, which was reserved for men, and question the myth of the "male as breadwinner" in many middle and low-income families (Ibeanu, 2009:5; Orji, 2018).

Table 1.1 Women in Nigerian Lower and Upper House

House of Representatives				Senates			
Elections	Seats	Women	%	Elections	Seats	Women	%
1999	360	12	3.4	1999	109	3	2.8
2003	360	17	4.9	2003	109	3	2.8
2007	360	25	7	2007	109	9	8.3
2011	360	24	6.8	2011	109	7	6.4
2015	360	20	5.6	2015	109	7	6.5
2019	360	11	5.5	2019	109	6	5.8

Sources: Orji (2018; Ayomo, 2019; OANDA, 2019)

From Table 1 above, it is understood that women in Nigeria are underrepresented in politics. This is because of the patriarchal nature of the nation. Similarly, in the Malaysian context, women are also underrepresented in politics; this is due to the stereotyped nature of the nation that gave much power to men over women.

E) Women's Strength in Nigeria and Malaysia

It is understood that a lack of improvement in women's political representation in Nigeria's context is astonishing, bearing in mind the role of women in the country's socioeconomic and cultural scene seems to be growing, and it is projected that the growing role of women in the society would explain a better attachment of women in political development (Orji, 2018).

In a related development, Yesufu (2018) argued that Increased female participation in politics and the electoral process benefits democracy and, in turn, the development agenda. In Nigeria, women who want to be politicians frequently find that their traditional, patriarchal society does not accept them. Some have even felt the intensity and annoyance of gender-based elections. (Essiet, 2019).

For instance, in preparation for the 2019 general election, President Muhammadu Buhari signed into law, the Not- too – Young- to- Rule policy which importantly reduced the attainment age that people need before vying for any political posts and also gave greater chances and inclusion for youth and women. This was done to get enough votes from the youth and women. However, the general election of 2019 has shown the opposite. The place of women and young people in the political system, however, is one of the most perplexing issues in Nigerian politics. Politics in Nigeria was widely believed to be under control until 2019, but the results of the most recent general election point to a different picture. (Ayomo, 2019).

According to (Devadason, 2017), then-prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi stated that women were marginalized in Malaysia at the beginning of the new millennium. Ahmad Badawi gave the women assurances in 2006 that government officials would keep easing the entry of more women into the labor field and would reexamine any existing laws and rules that discriminated against them.

He further added that in 2011, the current Prime Minister, Najib Tun Razak, supported the schema of women under the 10th Malaysian Strategy. "Measures will be undertaken to boost the female workforce participation rate from 46 percent in 2010 to 59 percent in 2020," stated the prime minister. Despite being very near to the intended goal, the current rate of female labor force participation (54%) is substantially below the rate of male labor force participation (80%). (Devadason, 2017).

A study by Yeong (2018) showcased that Malaysia graded a lowly 104th among 144 countries in the 2017 Global Gender Gap Report in overall gender equality covering economic, educational, health and political aspects; its ranking was even more dismal on political empowerment alone: 133rd.

In line with this study, a study by Thornton (2013) explained that despite the growing female labour force participation rates in Malaysia, the country records the lowest senior roles employed by women in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), at 26 percent, and the third lowest internationally to have women on board-level positions (Chairman, Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Executive Director, and Non-Executive Director). However, from the available information retrieved from the Malaysian Annual Report (2014), it was reported that the number of women in companies in Malaysia was a mere 8 percent in 2013. In view of the above argument, it was reported in The Star (2014) that the number of women is 33 percent in the highest positions in the government sector. In addition to this, Women's Aids Organisation WAO (2012) reported that women's representation at the international level, for example, as Malaysian ambassadors and high commissioners, remains low.

Although, Kamal (2012) disclosed that:

> *Article 8 of the 2001 amended Federal Constitution of Malaysia (see Laws of Malaysia, 2009) prohibits discrimination based on gender, there have been cases of employers dismissing women who are pregnant or on maternity leave. This has raised questions on how 'discrimination' is defined (only applicable to gender discrimination in employment in public services in the constitution and to what extent the CEDAW is incorporated into national law.*

F) Factors Limiting Women's Participation in Politics

The paper found that there are several barriers to women in politics in Nigeria and Malaysia. A study by Chadwick (2018) unveiled that Because women are more likely to experience harsh, unjust, and insufficient criticism for their failures, the vicious cycle of not daring to rise above the protective shield is complete. Individuals who venture to defy social norms are challenging established gender roles, which could potentially escalate or result in overt acts of violence. Liberal Feminist theory kicks against the gender differences that led to women's domination and subjugation to domestic activities. This is because of the belief that both genders are born equal in society and deserve equal treatment.

The study found that another barrier to women in politics in Nigeria is financial difficulties. This is because, as is well known, campaigns are costly, fundraising calls for expertise that certain women may lack, and they are financially unable to hire because of intersecting forms of inequality, including social, economic, and structural inequality (Ali, Zakuan & Ahmad). It's possible that women are less likely to seek help directly and may not have developed the social capital necessary for a campaign to succeed.

Women 's participation in decision-making is significant for a nation's development and progress. However, in Malaysia, there are plans, established and global pledges which have been employed to improve women's opportunities to be incorporated in the public sphere, particularly as policy and decision makers. Despite numerous initiatives, women in Malaysia are still confronting several challenges because of gender disparity in work and cultural issues as well as religious understanding that categorizes women's roles (Hussein & Mara 2016).

Similarly, it is observed that women's participation in policy and decision-making is very low in the Nigerian context; this is because of gender inequality in the workplace and all social activities. It is understood that women in Nigeria were marginalized in domestic assignment this is because of the stereotype that subjugated women to the motherly position to take care of their husbands and children at home (Ali, Zakuan, & Mohammad, 2018b). In line with this, a study by Mustapha and Hamidu (2016) disclosed that women are facing a lot of challenges in Nigerian politics; this is because women are not adequately empowered as such, they are not financially sound.

G) Financial Implication/Election Deposits

As noted in the first Malaysian NGO CEDAW Shadow Report, election deposits in Malaysia are high. Candidates must pay RM15,000 to become a candidate for the federal-level Dewan Rakyat (House of Representatives) and RM8,000 for the state Legislative Assemblies (Women's Aids Organisation WAO, 2012). The same problem with Nigerian politics, where most women cannot compete with men in politics because of the high cost of the election and election process. It is found that to contest for any post in both countries of the study it requires a huge amount of money. Because of these obstacles, only a few women were involved and were able to take part in politics in both nations under investigation.

So also, in Nigeria, to context for any political post, you have to be financially buoyant or you must have a political godfather that would stand for you financially or else you cannot context. It is observed that women are not adequately empowered, and because of this, they are not financially sound. This is what makes them not actively participate in politics (Mustapha and Hamidu 2018). In a related development, a study by Agbalajobi (2010) disclosed that lack of financial power is a major factor in women's participation in politics. He further showcased that for any person to take part actively in politics, he or she must be financially influential.

In the recent 2019 general election, the two strong political parties, the All Progressive Congress APC and the People's Democratic Party PDP have their pricing of the nomination forms for the various aspirants. However, the expression of interest form is priced: N12million for the post of president, N6m for Governors, N3.5 million for Senators, N2.5m for the House of Reps (HOR) and N600,000 for state House of Assembly, respectively. Nonetheless, APC who is clomouring for "change" in the nation, the prices of the nomination forms are significantly higher: N45m for the president, N22m for Governors, N7m for Sanators, N3.85m for House of Reps (HOR) and N850,000 for State House of Assembly (HOA). However, inquisitively also the opposition party (PDP) reduced the price of the nomination forms compared to 2015 polls when it was in power. However, the ruling party (APC) increased the cost of the nomination forms for the various posts for its aspirants (Okogba, 2018).

Looking at the above cost implication for polls, it is very difficult for women to contest for a political post because of the huge amount of impost on the nomination forms and other election expenses. In line with this, a study by Mustapha Ummu and Ahmad (2018) noted that most of the women in the nation are not well-empowered because of the patriarchal nature of the country, where men have dominated and subjugated women to domestic chores. In addition to that women are mostly occupying a lower position in all the elective posts.

For instance, in 2016, President Muhammadu Buhari, who was running for reelection, stirred much controversy when, while standing behind German Chancellor Angela Merkel, he said the following in response to a query concerning his wife's political beliefs: "She belongs to my kitchen and my living room and the other room''(Tope Alake, 2019).

H) Constitution Provision (Free Seat to Women)
The ruling coalition's party do not offer free seats or quotas to women in an effort to boost the proportion of women in parliament who are represented and participate. There is only one political party, an opposition party, whose constitution stipulates that women must hold thirty percent of the positions that include making decisions. Parti Keadilan Rakyat made this pledge in June 2009 (Women's Aids Organisation WAO, 2012). In line with this, a report by (Women's Aids Organisation WAO, 2012:102) reported that:

> *"Women political leader was incarcerated for a month without trial under the draconian Emergency (Public Order and Prevention of Crime) Ordinance (EO) for her purported role in an electoral reform campaign. Sarasvathy Muthu, who is the Vice-President of Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM, Socialist Party of Malaysia), was not involved in the electoral reform campaign yet was detained with others for a month."*

Contrary to Nigerian politics, there is no party that reserved a seat for women in either the upper or lower state house (Okogba, 2018). The above findings dispute the postulation of the Liberal Feminist theory, which centered on gender equality among both genders.

III. MAJOR FINDINGS
- In Malaysia, women's representation at both the legislative and executive levels cut down painfully short of women in politics as well as the public sector decision-makers.
- Islam is the official religion in Malaysia, and it is a secular state. The study found that, since the flowering of Islamic educational and missionary activities in the so-called 'Dakwah movement' in the 1970s in Malaysia, Islam has become the major cause of change in the lives of Malay people.
- The study found that women are underrepresented in politics in Malaysia because of religion and the patriarchal nature of the country.
- They found that before women's roles in Malaysia, It is estimated that less than 5% of women officially participated in politics and ran for state assembly and parliamentary seats. If they were restricted to campaigning and voting, that number would be far lower.
- The study found that the reasons for women's underrepresentation and participation in politics were normally attributed to the country's political arrangement. The two main political parties were responsible for not supporting and encouraging women.
- In the 2019 general election, President Muhammadu Buhari signed into law the Not- too –Young- to- Rule policy, which essentially abridged the accomplishment age that people need before contesting for any political posts and also gave better chances of the inclusion of women and youth.
- Women in the Northern part of Nigeria are underrepresentation in politics because of religion and the patriarchal arrangement of the region.
- Women are not actively participating in politics in both nations under study because of the high cost of election deposits as well as the price of nominating forms for all posts.
- In the Nigerian context, none of the political parties allocates a free seat to women to take part in politics.

IV. WAY FORWARD
It is understood women contribute to the success of everything. To encourage growth and rapid development, it is essential to support women to take part in policy and decision-making, politics, economic, social and political systems. These are the important elements to curb poverty, increasing the well-being of women as well as men and creating a fair, safe and secure nation (Yesufu, 2018). In addition, this study suggested gender mainstreaming in politics. Still, the move from gender self-centeredness to gender mainstreaming in politics in two nations is under examination. This suggestion is in line with the assumptions of the Liberal Feminist theory, which emphasized gender equality in all spheres of life.

More so, there has been a need for gradual but steady contemptuous of cultural limitations on the awareness of women in public affairs for the last three years. In addition, there is are need for speedy development in work to advance women's establishments backing and amplifying women's representation and participation in politics and a subsequent increase in the number of women participating in politics and contesting for a post in elections.

A) Recommendations

Considering the nature of the topic and the patriarchal nature of the countries under examination that are characterized by religious, cultural and educational differences, the study developed the following suggestions.

➢ The document suggests that when women apply for political positions, they should receive special consideration and the same opportunity as their male counterparts.
➢ To encourage women to take part in politics, spouses should admire and give women and wife(s) the opportunities to take part and seek political positions to display their ability for state and national progress.
➢ Nigerian and Malaysian are patriarchal and male-dominated, with men's sensitivity specifically endangered by women in power allocation. Because of this, the study recommended equal treatment among both genders in the countries under investigation.
➢ Women should boost themselves, overlook their gender differences to display/showcase their potential skills and strive to excel in their careers without deserting their marital responsibilities.
➢ In light of their generosity as moms, community organizers, home builders, political activists, and caretakers in the state for equitable development, all educators and clergy should support and encourage women to seek political positions.
➢ There is a need for women's enlightenment on the importance of women's representation and participation in politics as well as the decision-making process in both countries of the study.
➢ Both nations should give special consideration to women by encouraging and supporting them economically and otherwise to take part in social and political activities.

V. CONCLUSION

The paper concludes that Nigeria and Malaysia are patriarchal in nature and are guided by culture, religion, traditions, norms, and values that give much power to men over women. This makes the women's representation and participation in politics law compared to the men's counterparts. Considering the characteristics of the patriarchal and gendered society that dates back to colonial times of both nations, it is noted that they have limited recognition of the women's representation and participation in the politics of the two nations under examination. Despite labour laws and regulations have largely been gender sensitive. It is understood and concluded that women in the two nations under investigation are underrepresented in politics. More crucially, despite the growing contribution of women to the economic development of both countries, the Constitutions have not changed to appropriately incorporate the gender component in the laws. Therefore, this paper suggested the critical need for gender equality among both genders in the politics of the two nations under examination.

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