

**MILITARISATION OF THE 2019 ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL PROCESS:
IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN PARTICIPATION AND GENDER EQUALITY
IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The 2019 general elections and electoral process in Nigeria in many ways is akin to war. One major observed issue during the conduct of the general elections is the militarisation of the electoral process. Detachments of security operatives, including military officers were seen interfering with the electoral process before, during and after the elections. Other aspects of the militarisation process were the use of violence, intimidation, threats, vote buying among others to subdue voters. As a result, many women were disenfranchised, short changed, intimidated and even denied their rights as many were either forced out of participation or were too scared to participate. The resultant effect is the seeming denial of women's right to vote and be voted for. This paper examines the implications of militarisation of the electoral process on women participation in politics. To achieve the set objective, the paper relied on secondary data and argues that the militarisation of the process through the use of political thugs, money and others marred the process and this impacted negatively on gender equality and participation in the political process and representative governance and women participation in the political space. Militarisation as a phenomenon in Nigeria's political environment must be done away with for proper and gender inclusive political participation in future elections (2023) and electoral process.

Keywords: Militarisation, Elections, Electoral Process, Gender and Politics

Introduction

Nigeria's return to democracy on May 29, 1999 signaled a new dawn and hope for women and the struggle for participation in Nigerian politics. Democracy, no doubt is about fair representation of all social and interest groups in a society or polity. Basically, Political participation as one of the key elements of democracy provides the justification for the inclusion of women generally considered as one of marginalised social group in electoral competition. However, women in Nigeria's political space have been noted as having low representation. This development is seen as a violation of the principle of democracy and despite efforts put in place, Nigeria is yet to meet the 30% and 35% affirmation as contained in the Beijing Platform for Action and National gender Policy (Amah,

2018:207). In addition, elections and the electoral process have become more and more militarised as violence has become a characteristic feature of Nigeria's political environment. According to Agbalajobi (2010:4) Nigerian politics is based on high political virility – (it is for) those who have all it takes to compete in the turbulent environment; those who possess the wherewith to take it by force when force is required; those that can match violence with violence. The presence of heavy security forces has been noted in the conduct of governorship elections in the country.

Literature indicates that in the governorship elections of Ekiti and Osun States, platoons of security operatives, including military officers were drafted to lock down the states before, during and immediately after the elections with immediate consequences on people's rights and freedom (Okechukwu, Ugwu, and Onu 2016:19). According to Preye and Tubodenyefa (2014) one real and formidable challenge to popular participation in the Nigerian political process is the combative and militaristic nature of the electoral process which is an ugly phenomenon known as electoral violence, is a major hindrance to active participation of citizenry in the process. The victims of this development in Nigerian political environment are women. Some consensus exists on how the Nigerian political environment constricts women participation and representation. From socio-cultural issues such as gender roles to economic factors coupled with the combative nature of elections and electoral processes. With regard to the 2019 elections, Buchi (2019) submit that the Afenifere chieftain decried the alleged militarisation of the 2019 elections and assert that such art is worse than military regime. This paper examined the implications of the combative and militarised 2019 elections and the electoral process on women participation and gender equity in Nigeria. The paper is in several parts namely: introduction; conceptual review and theoretical framework; elections and the electoral process in Nigeria: challenges for women participation in elective positions 1999 to 2019; militarisation of 2019 elections and the electoral process: implications for women participation in elective and decision making in Nigeria; conclusion and recommendations.

Conceptual Review and Theoretical framework

Militarisation of Elections: Militarisation is seen as a process through which a society organise itself for military conflict and violence, and is related to militarism an ideology that shows or reflects the level of militarisation of a state. Militarising election is a mediocre approach to election rigging. It is the use of state security apparatus to subvert the will of the people in a democracy. It is a system that scares eligible voters and disenfranchises the people. It also empowers Independent National Election Commission (INEC) to violate continuous accreditation and voting system (CAVS) of the land. Militarisation of election is absurd and unacceptable in a democratic system. Militarisation is akin to war or violence. Militarisation of election and electoral process is violence against democratic principles. Violence is the illegitimate and unauthorized use of force to effect decisions against the will or desires of others (Wolfe, 1969:606 cited in Preye and Ibodenyefa 2014). The show of force to intimidate means that militarisation or violence is disruptive and when such disruptive phenomenon is tied to the understanding of elections and electoral processes, we can empathically state that it is aggressive and unjust means of influencing the outcome of elections. Scholars have argued that electoral violence (that is militarisation is any

random or organized act that seeks to determine, delay, or otherwise influence an electoral process through threat, verbal intimidation, hate, disinformation, physical assault, blackmail, destruction of property, assassination and so forth (Aluko ,2019; and Fischer, 2002). Militarisation is equally considered as acts of violence in the course of political activities including pre, during and post- election periods, and may include any of the following acts: use of force, thuggery, disruption of political meetings or violence at polling stations, or the use of dangerous weapons to intimidate voters and other electoral process or to cause bodily harm or injury to any person connected with electoral processes. The political environment is seen as combative and militaristic and its disruption of formal electoral processes inhibits participation particularly the vulnerable groups of the electorate. The most vulnerable section of the electorate has been noted as women who make up half of the electorate and this development contradict the very essence of legitimacy and popular consent. Nigeria, having ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (popularly known as the Maputo Protocol) and the convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) has committed itself to promoting affirmative action and related measures to ensure that women equality in electoral processes as well as ensuring that the electoral process is open, accommodative gender friendly to the women. In addition is her national gender policy but empirical situation indicating that the militarisation and use of masculinity in the elections and electoral process marginalises and create discrimination for women and their participation. There have been reported cases of unresolved political killings especially political aspirants and opponents even when actual voting is still far in the horizon. This highly volatile and militarized environment have subsequently scare off several high quality and good intentioned Nigerians especially the women from taking part in the electoral politics of the nation.

Literature indicates that in Nigeria's political environment most, male politicians prepare for elections as if they are military generals preparing for hot warfare deploying money and related resources (James and Akintola, 2019). It is basically for this reason that political competition in Nigeria is regarded as a highly militaristic affair. Invariably, any woman coming into this highly masculine and militaristic activity will be operating from a disadvantaged position and as the history of election has shown there are very few women who will dare to go into the murky waters of Nigerian elective politics. Women generally are not as strong as men and as such so many of them cannot engage in political intimidation, thuggery, killing and so on in an attempt to achieve their political objectives. And very few women would want to be linked or associated with thug or perceived as a sponsor of violence(Preye and Tuboneyefa, 2014; Lawal, 2010).The Yoruba female politicians have been observed as self-complacent under environment of intense political crisis and violence. And when the political environment is replicated with violence, women tend to display complacency by preferring to move away from the source of violence instead of being engulfed in it (Lawal,2010) .

Elections: Elections is simply conceptualised as a process/procedure for choosing a person or individual to occupy established and designated public position through voting. Election is however is not limited to voting alone and from and intellectual platform elections perform other roles. As such it has technical and social significance. On the technical

platform, election is seen as a process through which a specific post is assigned to someone by an act of volition which requires the simultaneous expression of several people's opinion. While social platform entails the process through which a person is linked to a post due to participation of people who bear the weight of his or her authority. This social dimension of election gives rise to the whole idea of governing a society with the consent of the governed that is the electorate, thus the imperative of democracy. The purpose of election or the essence is to produce a government invested with legitimacy. However, when election process is subverted through the use of force violence, intimidation, militarisation, rigging, vote buying and others the peoples consent is rendered invalid. Also the potential candidate of choice for a legitimate government is excluded from the process of decision making (Nwolise, 2018)

Gender: is a social construct used to distinguished between individual on the basis of their sex and associate roles that ie male and female of men and women and so foth. It is seen as the basis for inequality in organised societies or polity. Culturally male role or activities are are assigned more valves while the role performed by women on the basis of their gender is undervalued and rated

Theoretical framework

The paper adopted the conflict perspective from a feminist postulation as the theoretical framework for its interrogation of the implication for women the militarisation of the 2019 elections and electoral process in Nigeria and their participation in decision making. Generally social interaction among human groups in all organised social systems and their structure are stratified on the basis of gender. Gender as a concept in social interaction in human societies is seen as a social construct used to differentiate between men and women. The basis of gender stratification from the conflict perspective is power. The gender division of social life and particularly labour in families, workplace and other fields of social endeavour which grants expressive and instrumental roles to males and females the proponents of this theory argued is the result of control and dominance over women and resources in the society. In valuing our social activities and engagements in society, activities or functions performed by men or men's instrumental skills are highly valued and rated, while that of women are underrated and grossly undervalued or devalued. Conflict perspective is of the view that gender stratification is the product of private ownership of the means of production and exchange. This enable some men to not only gain ownership and control of property but also the control and dominance over women. Political participation of women in democratic governance with invariably reduce diminish such control and dominance power of men over women (Emeka, 2018 and Kendal,2003). Strategically and systematically, women are excluded from active participation in political affairs of the state and its institutions through the elections process. And election rigging, vote buying, intimidation and general militarisation of the electoral process are means used to demonstrated dominance, and male attributes. According to George (2018) mobilised participation is not cognisant of establish rules and procedures of political engagement. Its manifestations are riots protests, strikes, violence and other forms of civil disorder. Thus women are generally known to avoid these forms of illicit political engagement by fostering a political morality that promotes peace and understanding. A virtue which no

doubt is often misconstrued by men as a form of weakness since politics is viewed through the Machiavellian and Hobbesian lenses. Violent behaviour and related activities are mainly masculine and is not gender neutral. The perpetrators of violent acts during election and electoral processes such as intimidation, thuggery and violence are mainly male politicians and their allies. The killings and destructions reported from the different political dispensations results from men's quest for power. The Nigerian male plan and finance political violence. All elections conducted in Nigeria from historical perspective have been characterised by pre, during and post-election violence.

Keeping women out of the political process through intimidations or militarisation of the process no doubt explains the quest for political dominance and women relegation in decision making. The feminist drawing from the argument of the conflict perspective argue that the reinforcement of gender roles results in the domination and oppression of women. Institutional norms, values, internalised expectations limit women's behaviour and is the basis for women lack of power. Liberal feminist attribute male dominance and oppression of women on lack of equal rights and educational opportunities. These are issues limiting / militating against women and their active participation in political process. For instance, despite the ratification of international and regional protocol on eradicating all form discrimination and exclusion from public sphere (affirmative action and gender policy), the implementation process has remained an issue in Nigeria's polity. It could be stressed therefore from the radical feminist view that male dominance is the basis of all forms of exclusion and relegation of women in political participations. For instance, as wives' women have to take permission from husbands to participate in public life or register as political aspirant, men decide for women the political parties they should belong too or vote for.

Elections and the electoral Process in Nigeria: Overview of Issues and challenges for Women Participation 1999-2019

Elections and the electoral process is an imperative exercise in a democratic system of governance. And periodically elections are organised and conducted so that citizens could go to the polls to elect those they consider fit to represent them into elective leadership positions and the decision- making process. Nigeria since the return to democracy in May 1999 has organised and conducted five general elections (2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019). Women have participated in these elections but their participation has been dismal and has failed to achieve the critical mass of 30% women's representation in the country's Parliament. For instance in the 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015 general elections out of the 109 available senate position or seats contested the number of women elected are 3 that is 2.27%; 9 making 8.25%; 7 constituting 6.42% and 8 making 7.34% respectively (Mohammed,2018; Amah, 2018; Preye and Tuboenyefa, 2014). Similar developments in terms of women in elective position in House of Representatives have been observed in the years under focus. It shows that out of the 360 available seats or positions only 21 (5.83%); 25(6.98%); 25(6.9) and 19 (5.2%) respectively (Mohammed,2018;). In the governorship elections women scored 0% as no woman was elected as governor in any of the 36 states of the federation.

Generally, the terms of the competition for electoral offices in Nigeria have been established and dominated by the men. Agbalajobi(2010:2) maintained: men are the major determinants of political actions and inactions generally concerned with the perpetuation of power of the state... when women compete with men for access to political power, they do so on the terms already established by men for competing among themselves. In addition, the political parties and their structures have been hijacked by men. The exhibition of masculinity and power using financial endowment has become an established norm in Nigeria's political space and male politicians use these to solicit support among party delegates during primaries at all levels as well as during general elections. This has succeeded in making the political environment in Nigeria unappealing for women participation. Furthermore, elections and the electoral process have progressively become more and more militarised. Scholars like Adeniyi (2003) and the 2010 Report of the Centre for Women Global Leadership opine that most of the male orchestrated election related intimidation, harassment, killings and other forms of violence are deliberately tactic to frighten women from electoral competition thereby confining them to their docile and sedentary domains. This strategy has worked well over the years for the "do-or-die" Nigerian male politicians as evidenced in the reluctance of most qualified Nigerian women to participate in elections as a result of fear that they or their families could become targets of male orchestrated violence.

Literature and analysis indicated that the 2011 elections just like the previous elections in Nigeria were bedeviled with an unprecedented electoral violence. For instance, Sunday Trust in a cover story entitled "bloody cost of violent power struggle" published on 13 March 2011, provided frightening statistics of the magnitude of electoral violence or militarisation. This newspaper reported that at least 90 persons were killed while 209 sustained injuries weeks to the election. This situation of insecurity in the country even got worse after the announcement of the results of the presidential elections, as most parts of Northern Nigeria experienced an unprecedented scale of post-election violence characterized by wanton destruction of lives and properties (Onwidiwe & Berwind – Dart, 2010). The insecurity which has trailed the elections and electoral process in Nigeria are challenges that tend to limit and constraint women from effective participation and representation in Nigerian politics. Some of the germane issues that tend to limit women participation in politics in Nigeria include: Insecurity as a general phenomenon in Nigeria's political environment; Inadequate and proper implementation of the affirmative action plan and gender policy in Nigeria; Lack of access to financial resources for campaign and related political party requirements ; Militarisation of the electoral process/ militarised rigging system; Vote buying, rigging and use of thugs during campaign and elections; Late night political party meetings; Lack or inadequate voter education and mobilisation of women; Relegation of women to subordinate positions in political parties as women leaders for the mobilisation of women and their children the youth in support of male candidate; Lack of encouragement from political party system as these have done little to encourage women's participation, with women only making up a small percentage of nominees for governors and deputies and both legislative houses; Threat of violence against women politicians and their family members; Unfavourable mass media coverage; Lack of clear-cut budget or office space for female leaders across political parties in Nigeria.

Militarisation of 2019 Elections and the Electoral Process: Implications for Women Participation in Elective and Decision -Making Positions in Nigeria

The conduct of the 2019 elections and the electoral process in Nigeria from different scholarly analysis fail to meet the expectations of Nigerians and election observers. For instance, IRI/NDI observation mission concluded that the 2019 elections did not meet the expectations of many Nigerians, and that even though INEC distributed materials and opened polls in a more timely fashion for the March 9 gubernatorial and State Assembly elections, many serious irregularities occurred, including vote buying, intimidation of voters and election officials, and election-related violence. IRI/NDI observation mission maintained further that political parties remain the weakest link among Nigeria's nascent democratic institutions. In additions is inefficient candidate nomination processes that led to violence in some states and many pre-election lawsuits. The paucity of women and youth nominated to run on the tickets of the two major parties, the APC and PDP, demonstrated Nigerian political elites' lack of commitment to opening space for new faces and new voices (International Republican Institute (IRI) and National Democratic Institute (NDI) 2019:6)

Another view on general elections in Nigeria strongly suggest that most Nigerian male politicians prepare for elections as if they are military generals preparing for hot warfare and is on this basis that political competition in Nigeria is regarded as a highly militaristic affair (Preye and Iboneyefa, 2014). It is a generally accepted fact that women are imbued masculinity that men are endowed with and as such they cannot struggle in an atmosphere of rancor and violence. The safety and wellbeing of their societies is paramount and women cannot risk anybody's life for electoral victory which most male politicians in Nigerian politics care less about (Olugbemi, 2004). In this regard, any woman coming into the Nigerian political environment which is a highly masculine and militaristic activity will be operating from a disadvantaged position. This development no doubt explains why few women in the history of election dare to go into the murky waters of Nigerian elective politics.

Women from all indications and on the basis of their biological (or physiological), social and cultural make up are not constituted as medium of violence. Women are naturally referred to as weaker sex, and are not as strong as men. As such so many of them cannot engage in political intimidation, thuggery, killing and other forms of violence in attempt to achieve their political objectives (Michael, 2020; Lawal, 2010). Preye and Tubodenyefa (2014) note that most women by nature fear and loathe thuggery and violence and few women want to be seen or associated with thugs or be perceived as a sponsor of violent behaviour. With emphasis that women will prefer to preserve their dignity anywhere they found themselves. As such, since the Nigerian political terrain is highly combative and violence infested, it becomes difficult for women to compete favourably with men in such masculine environment. In addition to the forgoing observations on the activities of male politicians is the role played by security operatives. For emphasis, INEC expressed concerns about the role of some policemen during the February 23 presidential and National Assembly elections as well as on the conduct of soldiers during the elections in

Rivers. INEC, in a statement signed by its National Commissioner and Chairman, Information and Voter Education Committee, Festus Okoye, observed “that collation centres were invaded by some soldiers and armed gangs resulting in the intimidation and unlawful arrest of election officials thereby disrupting the collation process. Sunday Vanguard (2019) report that based on, but not even limited to the seeming indifference of security agencies while thugs and militant groups went on the rampage during the governorship and state House of Assembly elections in some states, some observers, in their report, pointed to the role of security agencies as rendering the elections as being conducted below the threshold of acceptable global practices

This development no doubt subverted the people choice and a free and fair elections process. Furthermore, report shows that on February 26 2019 a Nigerian police SWAT personnel member sits alert with a machine gun on a vehicle stationed at the entrance of Rivers State collation centre in Port Harcourt, Southern Nigeria. Report also indicated that, the Nigerian Army was not deployed by the INEC to provide security in any of the collation centres in Rivers State during the Governorship election on March 9, 2019 (Onyema, Hakeem, Alakunle, Johnson, Attahiru and Kola (2019)) Neither were they deployed by the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces to usurp police powers at the collation centres. The Federal Government was called upon to investigate the illegal deployment of the armed personnel in Rivers State and other states during the 2019 general elections with a view to sanctioning the military personnel and their civilian collaborators who engaged in the intimidation and brutal killing of voters who trooped out to exercise their franchise on March 9, 2019. Kano state had her share of militarisation and intimidation during the rerun election as report from social media and elections monitoring groups indicated that armed groups and thugs intimidated and even chased away voters.

Generally, an estimated 626 person were killed across Nigeria under six months between the start of the election campaign and the commencement of the general and supplementary elections (Kunle, 2019). 58 were reported to have been killed during the 2019, and 28 victims out of the 58 were from Rivers state making 40% of those killed (Friday, 2019). An election which was supposed to be like a football match turned out to be a war in which opposing groups engaged each other in gun battles (Punch, 2019). Violent behaviour and activities are mainly masculine phenomenon and violence is not gender neutral. That is the main perpetrators of violent behaviour especially election related intimidation, thuggery and violence are of the men folks. Male youth and men are at the centre of violent political behaviour. The killings and destructions reported from the different political dispensations results from men’s quest for power. The Nigerian male plan and finance political violence. While the women and children are the major victims of every violent ridden environment. This means that the attainment of political power in Nigeria is through violent struggle.

The presence of military and thugs have become common features during electioneering process in Nigeria in recent times. This ugly and unhealthy phenomenon acts as a disincentive to active and massive participation of the Nigerian woman in the electoral politics of the nation. It is an established and widely accepted fact that election – related

violence has the widest ramification for political exclusion in the country. Voter's intimidation, violent attacks at the voting centres and ballot snatching are election day hazards which discourage citizens from participation at the polls. This highly volatile and militarized environment have subsequently scare off several high quality and good intentioned Nigerians especially the women folks from taking part in the electoral process. Several women indicated interest they are: Oby Ezekwesili (Allied Congress Party of Nigeria) Oluremi Comfort Sonaiya of KOWA party, Elishema Rosemary Ideh (Alliance for New Nigeria-ANN), Adeline Iwuagwu-Emihe (PDP-Peoples Democratic Party), Eunice Atuejide (National Interest Party-NIP), and Funmilayo Adesanya-Davis (No Party). For instance Oby Ezekwesili (Allied Congress Party of Nigeria) the Nigeria's leading female presidential candidate in 2019 elections withdrew from crowded field of candidates and the race less than a month to the elections (VOA,2019). We are of the view that bio-socio factors do not permit women to be involved in violent behaviour and conduct. Lawal (2010) established this fact in his study of the behaviour of Yoruba female politicians in some Western Nigeria states and he pointed out that women generally become self-complacent under environment of intense political crisis and violence. When the political environment becomes saturated with violence, women tend to display complacency by preferring to move away from the source of violence instead of being engulfed with crisis and violence in the process of making a change. We could state here that Oby Ezekwesili's withdrawal from the 2019 presidential race is a reflection on how women react to a highly militarised political environment and political process.

A militarised political environment certainly cannot ensure adequate participation of women in electoral politics in Nigeria. Another crude manifestation of violence that has militated against women's full and active participation in Nigeria elections is the ugly phenomenon of violent godfatherism and forceful membership of dangerous cult or occult groups. One cannot talk about godfatherism in Nigerian politics without talking about the issue of these political godfathers forcing their godsons into membership of occult groups for protection as well as oath taking rituals to ensure that their political clients do their bidding once they get into office. Furthermore, most of the election related violence in Nigerias' politics are planned and financed selfish political godfathers. And the patron-client relationship is a very unstable, volatile and evidently violent in nature. These have been manifested in Nigeria's political history in the bloody political violence orchestrated by inglorious godfathers – Adedebu and Uba with their estranged godsons in Oyo and Anambra states respectively that led to wanton destruction of lives and properties (Preye and Ibodenyefa, 2014; Ikuomola and Okumola, 2011; Arowolo and Aluko, 2010).

From the above scholarly observations, we could argue that militarisation of elections and electoral process through election related violence such as intimidation, thuggery, lawlessness, godfatherism, rigging, vote buying, harassment, assassinations and killings are very strong factors that constraint women from active participation and full involvement in the electoral politics in Nigeria's political environment. The 2019 election was reported to have been highly monetised by the ruling party in the state, and that the ruling APC conspired with the officials of the INEC and security agencies to engage in open purchase of votes across all the polling units in the constituency. In addition, APC deployed between N300,000 and N500,000 to each polling unit on the eve of the election.

In many of the units, the vote-buying was effectively supervised by security agents and in some, security agents participated in the distribution of the money (Sunday Vanguard 2019). The general perception is the seemingly strange helplessness of arms-bearing security agents in the face of rampaging hoodlums who hijacked the process, unleashing mayhem and making it impossible to have free and fair elections.

Women, no doubt constitutes half of the Nigeria's population and a violent political environment deprive the Nigerian state of a truly representative democracy. It is imperative that the political environment be inclusive, gender sensitive and friendly enough to enable women participate actively and meaningfully in the political process. There is no denying the fact that women are grossly underrepresented in elective offices and are made miserable when they venture into the murky and turbulent waters of elective politics. For instance statistics on number of those elected in the 2019 elections show that the position of president is preserved for one male and the incumbent kept that position; the senate with 109 positions or available seat and only 8 women were elected making 7.35%; House of Representatives available seat was 360 and 11 women got themselves elected constituting 3.1% of the elected; no woman was elected as governor in 2019 and only 4 women made it as deputy governors that is 11.5%; and out of the 990 State House of Assembly Seats, only 40 women got themselves elected that is 4.04% of the elected. Militarisation of the elections and electoral process has therefore deprived women to actively engage their male counterpart in free and fair competitive election and contest for representation in politics and decision-making process. This fact has been established in literature and discussions in this paper.

Conclusion

The paper interrogated militarisation of the 2019 elections and electoral process in Nigeria by focusing on the implications for women participation in elective position and policy making process. Literatures indicate that the militarisation of elections and the electoral process in Nigeria disenfranchise women. The conclusion is that as a social group, women are disadvantaged as a result of the monetisation of the electoral process. Hence, the inability to register and participate during primary rallies due to financial intimidation, delegates sponsorship and vote buying. These limits women participation in the decision-making process and as such their general empowerment. Women are only considered relevant in subordinate position to their men counterparts and in particular as deputy governors since women are mobilisers. A strategy employed by male candidates to solicit women support as voters at the state governorship elections. The use of thug and militarisation of the elections and the electoral process in Nigeria as witnessed in the 2019 elections means that women will continue to remain outside the decision-making process. For election related violence attacks the very tenant of a representative democracy which is the unrestricted, active and full participation of all the citizens of a nation in the decision-making. This paper established and conclude that women as a result of their socio-biological and traditional make-up are the worse victims of militarization and related acts of election and electoral violence.

Recommendations

This paper examined the implication of militarization of elections and the electoral process on women participation and have established from literature that this development disenfranchised women. It is on this basis that the paper recommends that militarisation of election is a worm that is destroying women effective participation in Nigeria's political process and is a societal problem that must be eradicated urgently through reforms. An urgent and genuine constitutional reform is imperative because women's political exclusion does not occur in isolation; it is connected to other forms of legal and social exclusions. Furthermore, women movements and social groups like "Women Initiative for Change" should focus more on championing the need for the amendment of relevant laws to create a favourable political environment for more women involvement in the elective and representative politics instead of begging their male counterpart for palliative in the form of appointive positions.

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