



Political Party Participation and the Question of Alienation of Women and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Nigeria: Implication for the Democratic Process

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Abstract

The study investigated the extent of inclusiveness of women and Persons with disabilities (PWDs) in political party participation in Nigeria. It examined whether women and PWDs have equal opportunities in the political parties to take part in party planning and campaign activities, contest party leadership positions, get nominated for political party primary elections, and the implications to democratic progress. The low level of participation of women and PWDs reported by media and conventions of both local and international bodies necessitated the study. The paper posited that the level of participation of women and PWDs in political party activities in Nigeria is low and that the low level is alienation. The conceptual and theoretical framework of alienation was used in the analysis of the study phenomena, systematically. The study adopted the survey design in the collection of data. The Benin City Metropolis was the study area. Findings from the study show that the degree of opportunities for participation in political parties' activities by women and PWDs is low, that these groups of persons are not encouraged by the various political parties but excluded from participating in sensitive and critical leadership and elective activities by the lack of encouragement and acceptance of these groups by party leaders and members which amount to alienation. The study states that the lack of acceptance and equal opportunities for women and PWDs in political party participation negates international and national laws and the concept of democratic development. Therefore, the government should use the appropriate agencies to monitor the inclusiveness of underrepresented groups in political party activities; members of the political parties are to be sensitized to adhere to the democratic principles to ensure fairness, equity, respect for fundamental rights of persons and unbridled participation of all in the democratic project among others.

Keywords: Political Party Participation, Inclusiveness, Women and PWDs, Alienation, Democracy.

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Introduction

The concept of democracy is about the adequate participation of the citizens in the political and electoral process of the state. The full participation and representation of the citizens in the democratic process ensure equity, fairness, and credibility of the electoral process and



results in an enduring and consolidated democratic system (Igiebor, 2023). In line with these thoughts, Russell (2002), asserts that democracy involves a psychological orientation and active involvement of people in discussions, sharing of common opinion and commitment to the political system. Therefore, the participation of citizens in the process of democracy gives it legitimacy and direction. Political parties are a vital aspect of the democratic process or organization for the production, projection and promotion of candidates to contest various electoral positions in the political system of a state. The activities of political parties in the nurture and projection of candidates for the various elective positions are critical to the development of the electoral process, political system and good governance in a state. The inclusiveness of every section and spectrum of society in the activities of political parties is the foundation for equity, fairness and credibility of the electoral and political system (Igiebor, 2023).

The structure of political parties in terms of the composition of the leadership, opportunities to participate in critical aspects of the political party activities and contesting for elective positions must be inclusive for every member of society who constitutes the membership of the political parties to ensure internal party democracy and thus, the consolidation of democracy. If any part of society is excluded from political party participation, it would negatively affect the democratic process (Igiebor, 2023). The inclusive participation of women and persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the activities of political parties has gained the attention of international and national bodies.

Participation of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in political and public life is a human right and an important factor that promotes socially inclusive development. ...When PWDs participate in political and public life their voice is heard and reflected in policy decisions (WFD, 2010: iv).

According to Hon. Aishatu Dukku, chairman of the House Committee on Electoral and Political Parties Matters:

People with disabilities are willing, able and ready to participate in this country's (Nigeria's) political processes as voters, candidates, and election observers, Voting is not about casting ballots but belonging to the human race ...as dynamic contributors to a robust democracy in Nigeria (USAID, 2018:4).

The World Health Organization 2022 Disability Report estimates 16 per cent of the world population (approximately a 1.3billion people) as having a disability (WHO, 2022). In 2011,



the World Health Organization Disability Report showed that about 25 million or 15 per cent of Nigerians have a disability.

In terms of women participation in politics, advocacy groups such as Action for Justice, Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC), Centre for Democracy and Development (CCD), United State Agency for International Development (USAID), and other bodies, have decried the low level of women participation in political and governmental affairs (Action for Justice, n.d.; USAID, 2018; Nwokoro, 2022; PLAC, 2022). Both international and national laws and conventions provide for the inclusiveness of all members of society in the decision-making process and governance. These laws provide for the inclusion or forbid the discrimination of certain members or groups in society due to their disadvantaged positions or inequalities from playing active roles in the political parties and political system. For instance, Article 29 of the United Nations (UN) Convention and the Prohibition of discrimination against persons with Disabilities Act 2018 (in Nigeria) states that parties and governments should encourage and promote an environment that would ensure the unfettered access and participation of PWDs in the political and governance process (Nwokoro, 2022).

From the discussion, any political party activities that are not inclusive of every member of society negate the principles of democracy, the rule of law and the fundamental rights of citizens. The study thus examines the inclusiveness of women and persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the activities of political parties in Nigeria. The paper posits that there is low-level inclusiveness of women and PWDs in terms of opportunities to take part in planning and campaign activities, contesting party leadership positions and getting nominated for political party primary elections. The paper argues that the low level of participation of women and PWDs in the activities of the various political parties is a factor of alienation. Alienation exists when people feel incapacitated by a lack of opportunity and are therefore constrained to abstain from the process or deliberately excluded by the promotion of certain compelling factors in the system (Igiebor, 2023). The non-inclusiveness of women and PWDs in political party activities is of grave concern because it has a negative implication for free and unfettered access to the decision-making and governance processes of the state.

In a humane society, equal opportunity for everyone to pursue their objectives unfettered is necessary to engender equity. The opportunity for everyone in the society to participate in political activities without discrimination would deepen democracy and ensure its



development. Advocacy and civil society groups such as PLAC, USAID (PLAC, 2022, USAID, 2018), and others have contended that women, PWDs, and other marginalized groups are underrepresented in political participation. Most of these contentions are not empirically based. The implication of the non-inclusiveness of women and PWDs in political participation, especially political party participation, has grave consequences for the political system, democracy and governance. First, the non-inclusive participation of women and PWDs in political party participation negates national and international laws and conventions that prohibits the discrimination and exclusion of these groups of persons. Second, it is breach of the fundamental rights of freedom of association and representation. Third, it negates the principle of democracy that stresses the freedom and right to vote and for. Fourth, it is an act of discrimination that promotes social isolation, inequity and disharmony. Without the full participation of women and PWDs in the political party system, the political process cannot be democratic.

This research is thus germane by seeking to conduct a scientific instigation and generate data empirically to determine the inclusiveness of women and PWDs in the political party system in Nigeria and the factors responsible. This study will provide empirical facts that forms the basis for informed policy suggestions. It will also provide data for the academia and prospects for further research. Very few studies exist on the inclusiveness of women and PWDs in political party participation in Nigeria; however, they did not look at the subject empirically or link it with the concept of alienation. The qualitative study on the subject (to the best of my knowledge) is the survey conducted by the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC, 2022) on the inclusivity of Nigerian elections. However, the study examined the inclusiveness of voter participation generally across marginalized groups. The study did not investigate the inclusiveness of underrepresented groups in political party participation that the study aims to do. Thus, this study is a novel contribution to political party internal democracy and the political system in Nigeria. It investigates the inclusiveness of women and PWDs in political party participation, the factors responsible, and the impact on the democratic process linking the variable of inclusiveness with alienation.

The descriptive analytical approach was adopted to systematically analyze and present the findings to yield adequate comprehension of the study phenomenon for generalization. The survey comprised of the questionnaire in the Likert Scale format was employed for the study.



The investigation was to discover facts about the study phenomenon that would form the basis of the appraisal of political party participation and contribution to the body of knowledge.

Adequate participation and representation of citizens in political party participation are in tandem with the principles of democracy, international political laws and the constitution in a civil society. Democracy requires the unfettered participation and representation of all citizens from all spectrums of society. The concept of democratic inclusion of every member of society in political party participation indicates internal party democracy and consolidation of the democratic system. A system of representation, membership and participation in political party activities that excludes the full inclusion of women and PWDs would negate the principles of adequate representation, participation, freedom of choice, freedom of association, and a breach of fundamental human rights. The research posits that women and PWDs do not have equal opportunities with other members of the political parties in participating actively in planning and campaign activities, contesting for political party leadership positions, and getting the nomination to contest in political party primary elections. This development implies that a democratic system where a section of the public is under represented in political party activities indicates a lack of internal party democracy and a negation of the concept of democracy, democratic consolidation, and a breach of fundamental and political rights. Also, the study argues that the non-inclusiveness of women and PWDs is a factor of alienation. Hence, women and PWDs are constrained to remain mainly inactive in political party activities by some compelling factors within the various political parties that this study seeks to unravel.

The study thus, seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) To what extent are the opportunities for women and PWDs participation in planning and campaign activities in the political parties inclusive?
- 2) To what extent are the opportunities for women and PWDs participation in contesting for party leadership positions in the political parties inclusive?
- 3) To what extent are the opportunities for women and PWDs participation in getting nominated for political party primary election inclusive?
- 4) What factors are responsible for the inclusiveness or non-inclusiveness of women and PWDs in the activities of political parties and the implication for democratic development?



Conceptual and Theoretical Elucidation

The concept of democracy entails the promotion of majority rule and minority rights that should involve the inclusion of all eligible citizens and electorates in the decision-making and electoral process of the country (Igiebor & Tonwe, 2016). The political parties serve as the platform for coordinating activities to nurture and project potential candidates for elective positions in the political system. Political party participation should include all citizens in the political party system. Every member of society should have the opportunity to belong to any political party of their choice, participate in all activities, including planning and campaigning, contesting for party leadership positions, and to get nominated to contest the party's primary elections. The inclusiveness of persons and groups should not only be a matter of making laws, party constitutions or manifestoes; it should be a practical activity where people from all segments of society have equal opportunity to belong to political parties and fully participate in their activities. For instance, Article 29 of the UN Convention on the 'Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)' to take part in political party activities states that:

States Parties shall guarantee to persons with disabilities political rights and the opportunity to enjoy them on an equal basis with others and shall undertake: To ensure that persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others, directly or through freely chosen representatives, including the right and opportunity for persons with disabilities to vote and be elected, inter alia, by (i) Ensuring that voting procedures, facilities and materials are appropriate, accessible and easy to understand and use; (ii) Protecting the right of persons with disabilities to vote by secret ballot in elections and public referendums without intimidation, and to stand for elections, to effectively hold office and perform all public functions at all levels of government, facilitating the use of assistive and new technologies where appropriate (United Nations, n. d.).

The Nigerian government is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of PWDs. According to (Ewang, 2019, p. 2), Nigeria ratified the UN Convention "in 2007 and its Optional Protocol in 2010". In compliance with the UN Convention on PWDs, the Nigerian government enacted the "Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018"; Section 30 of the Act stipulates that "PWDs shall be encouraged to participate in politics and public life; the government shall actively promote an environment in which persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in activities and administration of political parties without discrimination" (Ewang, 2019, p. 2; Nwokoro, 2022, p. 3).



The ‘Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities Act’ prohibits the discrimination of persons based on disability. It imposes sanctions which include payment of fines and imprisonment for defaulters (Ewang, 2019). Although these various regulations provide for the rights of PWDs, the test of these laws is the implementation since the theory is different from practice. In line with this thought, the Executive Director of the Centre for Democracy and Development (CCD), David Anyaele, based on the UN convention for the protection of the rights of PWDs and the Nigerian prohibition of discrimination against PWDs Act, 2018:

...urged political parties to take appropriate measure to create space for equal opportunities by ensuring that PWDs are included in the campaign committees, campaign podiums are accessible to all with the provision of sign language interpreters, access to information, and disability inclusive manifestoes, among others”. “Given the fact that many countries have ratified international conventions and protocols on gender equality and women political participation, the low level of women’s representation in government and political offices may be considered a violation of women’s fundamental democratic rights (Action for Justice, n. d.).

The Beijing World Conference on gender equality advocated 30% affirmative action to encourage and increase the participation of women in politics. In Nigeria, the ‘National Gender Policy (NGP) recommended 35% affirmative action to ensure the inclusiveness of women in both elective and appointive positions in the political system (Oluyemi, 2016). These regulations became necessary due to the perceived marginalization of underrepresented groups in society (Adinoyi, 2022). Advocacy groups and concerned individuals in Nigeria have contended that various political party activities in Nigeria does not adhere to the principles of inclusiveness in the participation of women and PWDs; however, these submissions were not empirical observations or data. For example, the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre conducted a qualitative survey study on the ‘Inclusivity in Nigeria’s Elections’ in 2022 that was generally to ‘Determine to what extent electoral participation varies across marginalized groups ... (and to evolve) strategies to increase the electoral participation of marginalized groups’.



The present study concerns participation in general elections and is thus different from the present research that concentrates on the issue of inclusiveness or alienation of women and PWDs from political party participation. Advocacy groups such as Action for Justice, Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC), Centre for Democracy and Development (CCD), United State Agency for International Development (USAID), National Democratic Institute (NDI), and others have lent their voices and support for the inclusivity of underrepresented groups in political party participation, especially for women and PWD (Action for Justice, n. d.; USAID, 2018; Nwokoro, 2022; PLAC, 2022).

The studies analyzed above did not determine the inclusiveness of women and PWDs in political party participation or the extent of the inclusiveness and implication on democratic development, nor were they linked with alienation. This present study is an empirical one that seeks to determine the degree of the inclusiveness of women and PWDs in political party participation in terms of membership of political parties, participating in planning, campaigns, contesting for party leadership positions, and getting nominated for party primary elections. The study further asserts that the non-inclusiveness of women and PWDs in political party participation is a factor of alienation. Therefore, alienation is responsible for the non-inclusiveness of women and PWDs in political party activities. The concept of alienation connotes the incapacity of people to participate in political system activities because of constraining factors in the structure and activities of the political system (Igiebor, 2021).

Scholars such as Seaman (1959 cited in Igiebor, 2023) and Finifter (1970 in Igiebor, 2023) postulated a theoretical proposition of alienation which suggests that the alienated person desires to participate in the political and electoral process but is discouraged by a feeling of incapacity, powerlessness, and insignificance to the political system. Seaman (1959 cited in Igiebor, 2023) identified five variables of alienation to include powerlessness (erosion of individual freedom and control and perceived inability to affect political events through his effort), meaninglessness (inability to determine and act upon means of influencing political outcomes), normlessness (individual perceived failure to identify with the central and prevailing societal values), isolation (a feeling of exclusion, rejection or segregation from the community), and self-estrangement (when a person feels alienated from other people and the society in general).



The politically alienated do not believe that the system is equitable and responsive to their feelings; this may lead to withdrawal as unresponsiveness of the system may create a sense of frustration; because, even if one wanted to participate, his actions would be futile. Thus, the alienated may turn apathetic (developing indifference towards political and electoral activities). Theoretically, those who do not have a sense of political efficacy are not likely to participate in political activities. The argument here is that when women and PWDs are not allowed equal participation in critical areas of party activities such as planning, contesting for party leadership positions, getting nominated for party primary elections and generally taking part in decision-making, frustration and a feeling of insignificance and incapacity to affect the political party system may set in leading to a withdrawal from the process. The non-inclusiveness of women and PWDs in party activities results in the isolation and alienation of these persons from the entire political system structure. Thus, the hypothesis that women and PWDs are alienated from political party activities is the basic assumption that the study seeks to unravel.

Methodology

The research adopts a survey design that is amenable to eliciting appropriate responses from respondents in a one-on-one interview or administration of questionnaire. Thus, the study is qualitative; the descriptive analytical approach is employed for the analysis of data systematically to yield an adequate understanding of the study. The population of study is the members of the three major political parties (All Peoples Congress-APC, Peoples Democratic Party-PDP, Labour Party-LP) in the Benin City metropolis of Edo State. A sample of two hundred (200) each was drawn from the APC and PDP because of their population is large while a sample of fifty (50) was drawn from the LP because they are less populated. The convenience sampling technique was employed to administer the questionnaire to the concerned political parties at the headquarters and sub-branches. The sampling technique was adopted to ensure that members of the political parties were interviewed. Thus, a total of four hundred and fifty (450) copies of questionnaires were administered to members of the political parties. The questionnaire was structured in line with the Likert scale format to help determine the extent of the inclusiveness of women and PWDs in the activities of political parties. The Likert scale is a qualitative device but was quantified to percentages to enhance the analysis of the qualitative data. The questionnaire is structured into three parts: A, B, and C. Part A comprises the bio-data of the respondents, part B comprises the Likert scale-type



questions for Women, and part C comprises the Likert scale-type questions for PWDs. Thus, the analysis of the data generated through the questionnaire is critically analyzed and linked to the research objectives and research questions to determine corroboration with the study and to enhance the generalizability of findings to the Nigerian political party system.

Four hundred and fifty (450) copies of the questionnaire were administered and retrieved from the subjects. The retrieval of the total number of questionnaires was due to the convenience sampling process employed as the willing respondents present in the study area were made to fill the questionnaire on the spot and the same were retrieved. The composition of the study subjects shows that out of the 450 samples, 67.1% were males while 32.9% were females. The age bracket shows that 45% of the respondents were age 40 and over; 38.2% were between ages 26-40 and 16.8% were between 18-25 years. The marital distribution of the subjects shows that 69.3% were married and 30.7% were single. The respondents' academic background shows that 43.0% hold post-primary certificates; 22.6% hold primary school certificates and 34.4% hold OND/NCE and post-graduate certificates. The respondents distribution also shows that the sample constitute of 60.4% Christians; 31.6% Muslims; 7.07% African Traditional Religion (ATR); and 0.94% “other” religion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Qualitative Research Questions for Women

Table 1 (n = 450)

Keys: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Undecided (UN); Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD)

S/N	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES				
		SA	A	UN	D	SD
1	The process of political party registration is inclusive for women	318	108	-	8	16
		70.7	24	-	1.8	3.5
2	Provisions are made for women inclusivity in the political party constitution	234	102	72	11	31
		52	22.7	16	2.4	6.9
3	Provisions are made for women inclusivity in the political party	216	156	42	8	28
		48	34.7	9.3	1.8	6.2



	manifestoes					
4	Activities that encourages and promotes women participation in political party activities are put in place by the political party	150 33.3	192 42.7	30 6.7	34 7.5	44 9.8
5	Women pay party dues and make donations in the political party	276 61.3	66 14.7	66 14.7	7 1.5	35 7.8
6	Women have equal opportunity to participate in political party planning and campaigning activities	281 62.4	120 26.7	25 5.6	7 1.5	17 3.8
7	Women have equal opportunity to contest for party leadership positions in the political party	222 49.3	180 40	- -	18 4	30 6.7
8	Women have equal opportunity to get nominated for party primary elections in the political party	234 52	162 36	12 2.7	13 2.9	29 6.4
9	Women are alienated from political party leadership positions because of their feminine nature and family responsibilities	233 51.8	163 36.2	10 2.2	14 3.1	30 6.7
10	Women are alienated from political party leadership positions because it is believed that they are not capable of leading political party organizations	120 26.7	282 62.3	7 1.6	17 3.8	25 5.6
11	Women are alienated from political party nomination for primary elections because they may not be available to attend political meetings at add hours and cope with demanding party activities	152 33.8	190 42.2	25 5.6	33 7.3	50 11.1

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Key: Frequency – up; Percentage – down.



Analysis of Results

Item one indicates that a majority of the subjects, that is, 70.7%, strongly agree that the process of party registration is inclusive for women, 24% partially agree, and 1.8% disagrees while 3.5% strongly disagree. The number of respondents who affirm the inclusiveness of the process of party registration for women are in the majority; thus, the process of registration for women in the political party is inclusive. However, the number that partially agree and those that disagree totally still constitute enough concern.

Item two indicates that the majority of the subjects, that is, 52% of the respondents strongly agree that the provisions of the political party constitution are inclusive for women, 22.7% agree, 16% are undecided, 2.4% disagree, while 6.9% strongly disagree. The numbers of respondents who affirm the inclusiveness of women in the provisions of the political party constitution are in the majority. The results mean that the legal provisions in the political party constitution are inclusive for women. However, the number that partially agree and those that disagree totally still constitute enough concern.

Item 3 indicates that majority of the subjects, that is, 48% of the respondents strongly agree that the provisions of the political party manifestoes are inclusive of women, 34.7% agree, 9.3% were undecided, and 1.8% disagrees while 6.2% strongly disagree. From the responses, the majority of the subjects affirm that provisions of the political party manifestoes are inclusive of women. The number that partially agree and those that totally disagree constitutes a majority. This result indicates that even if there are legal provisions for women in the party manifestoes, they are not fully operational.

Item 4 show that 33.3% of the respondents strongly agree that activities that encourages and promotes women participation in political party activities are put in place by the political party, a majority, that is, 42.7% agree, 6.7% are undecided, 7.5% disagree while 9.8% strongly disagree. The results show that the numbers of the respondents who agree partially and those who disagree that activities which encourage women participation in party activities are put in place by the political parties are a majority while those subjects who strongly agree are in the minority. Thus, the result indicates that the activities that encourage and promote women's political party participation are not inclusive and not majorly considered by the political parties.



Item 5 indicates that 61.3% of the respondents strongly agree that women pay party dues and make donations in the political party, 14.7% agree, 14.7% are undecided, 1.5% disagree and 7.8% strongly disagree. From the results, the a majority of the subjects affirm that women pay party dues and make donations in the political party. The subjects that partially agree and totally disagree are a minority. This result indicates that women plays a substantial role in contributing money to the party.

Item 6 indicates that 62.4% of the respondents strongly agree that women have equal opportunity to participate in political party planning and campaigning activities, 26.7% agree, 5.6% are undecided, 1.5% disagree, while 3.8% strongly disagree. From the results, the majority of the respondents are of the opinion that women have equal chance to take part in the planning and campaign activities of political parties. However, the number of the minority who partially agrees and disagrees is worth noting.

Item 7 shows that 49.3% of the respondents strongly agree that women have equal opportunity to contest for party leadership positions in the political party, 40% agree, 4% disagree, while 6.7% strongly disagree. From the results, the numbers of respondents who affirm the equality of opportunity for women to contest for party leadership positions in the political party are a slight majority, the number that partially agree and those that disagree totally are more. This result thus indicates that the opportunity for women to contest for political party leadership positions is not inclusive.

Item 8 indicates that 52% of the respondents strongly agree that women have equal opportunity to get nominated for party primary elections in the political party, 36% agree, 2.7% are undecided, and 2.9% disagree while 6.4% strongly disagree. The results show that a majority of the respondents opine that women have equal opportunity to get nominated for political party primary elections. This majority opinion is slightly above those that partially agree and totally disagree to the assertion. It thus indicates that the chances for women to get nominated for party primary elections are not inclusive.

Item 9 indicates that 51.8% of the respondents strongly agree that women are alienated from political party leadership positions because of their feminine nature and family responsibilities, 36.2% agree, 2.2% are undecided, 3.1% disagree while 6.7% strongly disagree. The results show that a lean majority of the respondents agree that women are alienated from political party leadership positions because of their feminine nature and family



responsibilities. The subjects that agree partially and disagree totally to the assertion are a significant minority. However, the results show that women are alienated from political contest because of their feminine nature.

Item 10 indicates that 26.7% of the respondents strongly agree that women are alienated from political party leadership positions because it is perceived that they are not capable of leading political party organizations, 62.3% agree, 1.6% are undecided, 3.8% disagree while 5.6% strongly disagree. The results show that a minority of the subjects are of the view that women are alienated from contesting party leadership positions while a substantial majority partially agrees to the assertion. A lean minority totally disagree. This result shows that the perceived incapacity of women to lead a political party organization is an alienating factor.

Item 11 indicates that 33.8% of the respondents strongly agree that women are alienated from political party nomination for primary elections because they may not be available to attend political meetings at add hours and cope with demanding party activities, 42.2% agree, 5.6% were indecisive, 7.3% disagree while 11.1% strongly disagree. The results show that a substantial minority of the respondents affirm that women are alienated from political party nomination for primary elections, a majority partially agree while a slim minority disagrees. Thus, the result indicates that women are alienated from elective positions because of perceived inability to cope with party and political office exigencies.

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Qualitative Research Questions for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

Table 2 (n = 450)

Keys: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Undecided (UN); Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD)

S/N	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES				
		SA	A	UN	D	SD
1	The process of political party registration is inclusive for PWDs	138 30.7	96 21.3	60 13.3	79 17.6	77 17.1
2	Provisions are made for PWDs inclusivity in the political party constitution	96 21.3	120 26.7	120 26.7	80 17.8	34 7.5
3	Provisions are made for PWDs inclusivity in	84	102	108	58	98



	the political party manifestoes	18.7	22.7	24	12.8	21.8
4	Activities that encourages and promotes PWDs participation in political party activities are put in place by the political party	78	132	114	58	68
		17.3	29.3	25.3	12.9	15.2
5	PWDs pay party dues and make donations in the political party	54	96	120	75	105
		12	21.3	26.7	16.7	23.3
6	PWDs have equal opportunity to participate in political party planning and campaigning activities	90	150	36	31	143
		20	33.3	8	6.9	31.8
7	PWDs have equal opportunity to contest for party leadership positions in the political party	60	120	18	46	206
		13.3	26.7	4	10.2	45.8
8	PWDs have equal opportunity to get nominated for party primary elections in the political party	42	138	24	39	207
		9.3	30.7	5.3	8.7	46
9	PWDs are alienated from political party participation because they cannot contribute money to the party	142	151	31	35	91
		31.5	33.6	6.9	7.8	20.2
10	PWDs are alienated from political party leadership positions because they are considered liabilities rather than as assets to the political party	124	202	15	48	61
		27.6	44.9	3.3	10.7	13.5
11	PWDs are alienated from political party nomination for primary elections because the political party do not have confidence in their capacity to win elective positions	201	141	22	41	45
		44.7	31.3	4.9	9.1	10

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Key: Frequency – up; Percentage – down.



Analysis of Results

Item one indicates that 30.7% of the respondents strongly agree that the process of political party registration is inclusive for PWDs, 21.3% agree, 13.3% are undecided, 17.6% disagree and 17.1% strongly disagree. The results show that a slight majority of the respondents affirm that the process of party registration for PWDs is inclusive. However, the number of respondents that partially agree with the assertion and those that disagree constitute a majority. It, therefore, means that PWDs are alienated from the process of party registration.

Item two indicates that 21.3% of the respondents strongly agree that provisions made in the political party constitution are inclusive for PWDs, 26.7% agree, 26.7% are undecided, 17.8% disagree, and 7.5% strongly disagree. From the results, the number of respondents who partially agree and those who disagree with the assertion that provisions are made in the political party constitution for PWDs is in the majority. Therefore, the results show that provisions are not made for PWDs in political party constitutions or the provisions are not implemented.

Item 3 indicates that 18.7% of the respondents strongly agree that provisions made in the political party manifestoes are inclusive for PWDs, 22.7% agree, 24% are undecided, 12.8% disagree and 21.8% strongly disagree. From the responses, the numbers of respondents who affirm that provisions made in the party manifestoes are inclusive for PWDs are a minority while those who partially agree and disagree are a majority. Thus, provisions made for PWDs in political party manifestoes are not inclusive.

Item 4 shows that 17.3% of the respondents strongly agree that activities that encourage and promote PWDs' participation in political party activities are put in place by the political party, 29.3% agree, 25.3% are undecided, 12.9% disagree while 15.2% strongly disagree. The results show that the numbers of respondents who affirm that activities that promote PWDs party participation are put in place by the political party are a minority while those who partially agree and disagree are a majority. Thus, activities that promote and encourage PWDs' political party participation are not inclusive.

Item 5 indicates that 12% of the respondents strongly agree that PWDs pay party dues and make donations to the political party, 21.3% agree, 26.7% are undecided, 16.7% disagree and 23.3% strongly disagree. The majority of the respondents constitute those who partially agree



and disagree with the assertion that PWDs pay party dues and thus, PWDs do not majorly pay party dues and make donations to the party.

Item 6 indicates that 20% of the respondents strongly agree that PWDs have equal opportunity to participate in political party planning and campaigning activities, 33.3% agree, 8% are undecided, 6.9% disagree, and 31.8% strongly disagree. From the results, the majority of the respondents who partially agree and disagree with the assertion that PWDs have equal opportunity to participate in party planning and campaign activities are in the majority. Thus, the engagement of PWDs in party planning and campaign activities is not inclusive.

Item 7 shows that 13.3% of the respondents strongly agree that PWDs have equal opportunity to contest for party leadership positions in the political party, 26.7% agree, 4% are undecided, 10.2% disagree, and 45.8% strongly disagree. The majority of the respondents constitute those who partially agree and disagree with the assertion that PWDs have equal opportunity to contest for party leadership positions in the political party. This result means that PWDs are alienated from contesting for party leadership positions in the political party.

Item 8 indicates that 9.3% of the respondents strongly agree that PWDs have equal opportunity to get nominated for party primary elections in the political party, 30.7% agree, 5.3% are undecided, and 8.7% disagree while 46% strongly disagree. From the results, the majority of the respondents who partially agree and disagree with the assertion that PWDs have equal opportunity to get nominated for political party primary elections are in the majority. This result means that PWDs are alienated from nomination and contesting for party primary elections in the political party.

Item 9 indicates that 31.5% of the respondents strongly agree that PWDs are alienated from political party participation because they cannot contribute money to the party, 33.6% agree, 6.9% are undecided, 7.8% disagree and 20.2% strongly disagree. From the results, the numbers of the respondents who strongly agree with the assertion that PWDs are alienated from political party participation because they cannot contribute money to the party constitute a significant minority. The subjects that partially agree and those that disagree with the assertion are the majority. From the results, the engagement of PWDs in political party participation is therefore not inclusive.



Item 10 indicates that 27.6% of the respondents strongly agree that PWDs are alienated from political party leadership positions because they are considered liabilities rather than assets to the political party, 44.9% agree, 3.3% are undecided, 10.7% disagree and 13.5% strongly disagree. The majority of the respondents constitute those who partially agree and disagree with the assertion that PWDs are alienated from political party leadership positions because they are considered liabilities rather than assets. This result shows that PWDs are not majorly alienated from party leadership positions in the political party because they are considered liabilities.

Item 11 indicates that 44.7% of the respondents strongly agree that PWDs are alienated from political party nomination for primary elections because the political party do not have confidence in their capacity to win elective positions, 31.3% agree, 4.9% are undecided, 9.1% disagree while 10% strongly disagree. From the results, the majority of the respondents strongly agree with the assertion that PWDs are alienated from political party nomination for primary elections because the political party does not have confidence in their capacity to win elective positions. Though the number of subjects that partially agree and disagree with the assertion is significant, this result however indicate that PWDs are alienated from getting nomination and contesting for party primary elections in the political party.

Discussion of Findings

Four basic questions were posed at the onset of the study. The questions were **to** determine: the inclusiveness of women and PWDs' participation in planning and campaign activities in the political parties; the inclusiveness of women and PWDs' participation in contesting for party leadership positions in the political parties; the inclusiveness of women and PWDs' participation in getting nominated for political party primary election inclusive; and the inclusiveness or non-inclusiveness of women and PWDs in the activities of political parties and the implication for democratic development.

To address the first research question, item 6 indicates that the majority of the respondents (62.4%) strongly agree that women have equal opportunities to participate in political party planning and campaign activities. The result thus shows that the level of opportunity for women to participate in planning and campaign activities is high but not completely inclusive as the subjects who partially agree and disagree with the assertion constitute a significant minority. A majority of the subjects (33.3%) and a substantial minority (31.8%) partially



agree and strongly disagree that PWDs have equal opportunity to participate in party planning and campaign activities. This result shows that the level of non-inclusiveness or alienation of PWDs from political party participation is high. Conclusively, women and PWDs are alienated from party participation; however, the level of alienation of PWDs is higher than that of women.

To answer the second research question, item 7 shows that the majority of the respondents (49.3%) strongly agree that women have equal opportunity to contest for party leadership positions. The numbers of the subjects who partially agree and disagree with the assertion constitute an overall majority. Thus, the level of the inclusiveness of women in party participation is marginal and less than average. A majority of the respondents (45%) strongly disagree while a substantial minority (36.7%) partially agrees that PWDs have equal opportunity to contest for party leadership positions. The result shows that the level of inclusivity of PWDs in party participation is low as those subjects who partially agree and strongly disagree with the assertion constitute a majority. On the whole, women and PWDs are alienated from party participation but the level of PWDs alienation is higher than that of the women.

To address the third question, item 8 shows that the majority of the respondents (52%) strongly agree that women have equal opportunity to get nominated for party primary elections. A substantial minority (36%) partially agree while a slim minority strongly disagrees. The result thus shows that the level of opportunity for women to get nominated for party primary election is slightly above average but not inclusive. A majority of the subjects (46%) strongly disagree and a substantial minority (30.7%) partially agrees with the assertion that PWDs have equal opportunity to get nominated for party primary elections. The result shows that the level of the non-inclusiveness of PWDS in party participation is high considering the numbers of subjects who strongly disagree and those who partially agree with the assertion. The overall results show that women and PWDs are alienated from party participation; however, PWDs are more alienated.

To answer the fourth research question, items 9, 10 and 11 are useful. Item 9 shows that women are alienated from party leadership positions because of their feminine nature and family responsibilities. The number of subjects who strongly agree and those who partially agree with the assertion are in the majority; however, the level of alienation is slightly above



average. For PWDs, the result shows that the level of alienation from party participation because of their incapacity to make a financial contribution to the party is on average.

Item 10 show that a majority of the respondents (62.3%) partially agree and a substantial minority (26.7%) strongly agrees that women are alienated from party leadership positions because of the perception that they cannot lead political organizations. Thus, the level of alienation of women this wise is high. For PWDs, the result shows that they are highly alienated from party leadership positions because they are considered a liability to the political system. A majority of the subjects (44.9%) and a substantial minority (27.6%) partially and strongly agree with the assertion. Item 11 shows that women are highly alienated from nomination for party primary elections because they may not be available to attend meetings at add hours and cope with demanding party activities. A majority of the subjects (42.2%) and a substantial minority (33.8%) partially and strongly agree with the assertion. In respect of PWDs, the level of alienation is high. A majority of the subjects (44.7%) and a substantial minority (31.3%) strongly and partially agree that PWDs are alienated from nomination for party primary elections because the political party does not have confidence in their ability to win elective positions. Thus, research question four indicates that women and PWDs are alienated from political party participation but the level of alienation is higher for PWDs.

The implications of the non-inclusivity of women and PWDs in the party participation process in Nigeria are far-reaching. First, the alienation of women and PWDs from major political participatory, elective and leadership processes is a negation of the principles of democracy that advocates fairness and equality in representation, freedom of choice, association and the right to vote and be voted for. Thus, the non-inclusivity of women and PWDs in party participation constitutes an impediment to the development and consolidation of the democratic process in Nigeria. Second, the non-inclusivity of women and PWDs in party participation is also a negation of extant laws and conventions both nationally and internationally. It is thus a breach of the fundamental rights of women and PWDS. The implication is that the laws that regulate the political processes are in theory and not practice. Third, a political system that alienates a set of persons from party participation is discriminatory and undemocratic. We cannot talk of democratic development or consolidation when the process of participation is not equitable. Fourth, the non-inclusivity or alienation of women and PWDs from political participation is an indication of the non-democratization of



the internal party processes and participation. A political party system that is selective rather than elective in the participation process lacks internal democracy and creates a foundational problem of the credibility of candidates presented for elective positions. Finally, the non-democratic practices of political parties affect the quality and credibility of elections generally and the quality of governance.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study set out to investigate the inclusivity of women and PWDs in political party participation in terms of playing major roles in leadership and elective positions. The main objective was to determine the extent of the inclusiveness of women and PWDs in party planning, leadership and elective positions. The results show that women and PWDs are alienated from political party participation and the level of alienation is more for PWDs. The implications of these findings are that they pose an impediment to the attainment of a robust and consolidated democratic process. Thus, it is the responsibility of government, political parties, civil groups and members of society to ensure that the processes that produce the leadership and governance are free, fair, transparent and credible through unfettered and non-discriminatory participation.

To this end, suggestions are made towards redressing the anomaly.

First, the various tiers of government in Nigeria should use the relevant agencies such as the INEC to monitor the internal mechanisms of party participation to motivate them to inclusive practices.

Second, political party members especially the leaders should be sensitized by the INEC on the need to adhere to democratic principles and ensure equity in participation. They should be made aware that the inclusivity of all groups in party participation is backed by law and thus should be both theory and practice.

Third, civil society groups should undertake regular investigative or fact-finding activities on the inclusiveness of underrepresented groups in party participation to motivate the parties to imbibe inclusive practices.

Finally, the government through the INEC should ensure that structures that promote women and PWDs participation are in place and implemented. These are activities that include the feminine nature of women such as maternity leave and convenient meeting hours. For PWDs, communication materials and disability friendly environment would facilitate effective participation in political party activities.



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