Political Parties and Women Participation in Nigeria: A Study of Bauchi State

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Abstract

In today's world, political parties play a vital role in producing leaders and facilitating people's participation in politics, particularly in indirect democracies. For almost thirty years, Nigeria has enjoyed consistent democratic rule since the start of the fourth republic in 1999. Political parties have gradually become a crucial factor in determining who gets what, when, and how. Despite women and youths making up over 75% of the voting population in Nigeria, women's numerical strength has not translated to their inclusion and participation in the democratic space. This study aims to investigate political parties and women's involvement in politics, with a specific focus on Bauchi State. The study is survey research that obtained qualitative data through interviews with key party officials and women leaders across the state's twenty Local Governments. The study chose samples randomly from the two dominant political parties, the All-Progressive Congress (APC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), as they are the only two parties present in all Local Governments in the state. The Participatory Theory served as the theoretical framework. The study discovered that, out of the twenty Local Government Areas, only one woman held an Assistant Treasurer position in Ningi Local Government under PDP, while the Executive Committees in APC and PDP were all men except for women leaders. The State and Senatorial Zonal Executive Committees were also all men except for women leaders. Women were given lower rates of party interest forms compared to men, and political party meetings were often held at night, discouraging women from participating in politics. The study recommends increasing political education among women and encouraging them to engage in political party activities. Moreover, there should be laws that prevent political parties from holding meetings at night, as all government meetings are held during the day. The study concludes that women need to engage in party activities to receive more appointments in political positions and governance in Bauchi State and Nigeria as a whole, as the spoils of war are shared among the generals.

Keywords: Parties, Women, Politics, Participation, Activities

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Introduction

In modern indirect democracies, participation and representation are essential for good governance. Political participation plays a crucial role in delivering democratic benefits to citizens. Women's involvement in politics varies across the globe, and their participation in the democratic process is an integral part of contemporary discussions on development and governance (Aciro and Pete, 2019). The empowerment of women's participation in all aspects of life has become a significant issue in development debates. Thus, socio-economic development cannot be fully achieved without the active participation of women in decision-making processes at all levels of society (Endale 2012). Political parties provide a platform for people to participate in politics. Improving women's political participation is necessary for political development, especially because they make up more than half of the African population and Nigeria in particular. It may help to advance political development and enhance the quality of human life.

At a national level, women are severely underrepresented in politics; following the 2019 elections, the National Bureau of Statistics indicates men's representation is 93.6% across all levels of governance, while women have ached just 6.4%, and as citizens, women face greater challenges in ensuring their priorities are reflected in political decision-making compared to men (Network (SDN), 2019). Whilst Nigeria has made several commitments towards achieving gender equality in politics, these commitments have been systemically undermined by poor implementation of gender-friendly policies, primarily attributed to a lack of political will. For example, Nigeria is a signatory to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPA, 1995) which committed Nigeria to the equal participation of women in power and decision-making. The Federal Government set a 35% national minimum quota of women representation at all levels of governance. As pace setters of elections, political parties in Bauchi State can play a key role in promoting women in political processes.

Statement of the Problem

Globally more than 50% of the world's population is women, in 2023; the total number of registered voters in Nigeria was 93,469,008, while women constitute 47.5% with 44,414,846 registered voters nationally (INEC, 2024). There are a series of policies, programmes and interventions that encourage women's participation in Politics. The policies and laws that have been made to address the low representation of women in elective and appointive positions in Nigeria; among such efforts are the establishment of the Women Political Empowerment office and Nigeria Women Trust Funds, Women Lobby Group. Other efforts include the institution of an INEC gender policy, the national multi-stakeholder dialogue; the initiation of several interventions to actualize affirmative action and the convening of the Nigeria Women Strategy Conference. National Center for Women Development in collaboration with the National Bureau of Statistics is making efforts to have evidence-based data about this issue. Presently the available data are not harmonized (Oluyemi).

In reality, it is often cosmetic. Studies have consistently identified resistance to changes at a local level and local networks which often remained closed to women, especially in leadership and political activities (Maguire, 2016). Demographically, women and youths constitute more than 75% of the voting population. However, the numerical strength of women which ordinarily would have been a key factor in women's inclusion and participation in the democratic space appears to be at a dismal level. Therefore, this study aims to examine political parties and women's participation in politics with specific attention to Bauchi State. How can political parties enhance women's participation in politics especially in leadership and party activities in Bauchi State? The research is designed to examine the role of political parties on women's participation in politics with particular reference to party leadership and party activities in Bauchi State.

Literature Review

Conceptual Issues: Political Parties, Women and Political Participation

Edd (2013:) defined a political party as an "*Organized body of people who stand for certain principles and policies in the political life of the country by whose operation they seek to promote the interest of the country as a whole*". Ganner et al (2009) conceived a political party

as an "*institution that (a) seeks influence in a state, often by attempting to occupy a position in government and (b) usually consists of more than a single interest in the society and so to some degree attempts to aggregate interest*". Political parties are organized bodies of individuals aiming to capture the machinery of government through election; political parties are established not only to influence the activities of government but to occupy political positions in the State. Adigun (2008:192) defined political parties as a

"*group of persons bonded in policy and opinion in support of a general political cause, which is essential, is the pursuit, capture, and retention for as long as democratically feasible, of government and its officers. They seek to elect candidates to public office by supplying them with label-a party identification –by which they are known to the electorate*".

What distinguishes political parties from any group is that political party they have the aim of capturing the machinery of government in the state. Their common interest is to seek and get power to govern constitutionally.

International IDEA (2021) considers Political parties as the major entities through which people can choose their representatives and are conceivably indispensable institutions for democratic politics and representation. The central functions of political parties in modern representative democracies are: to develop consistent policies and government programmes (the interest articulation function); to transmit demands from society and aggregate them (the interest aggregation function); to recruit, select, and position people for positions in government and the legislature and to oversee and control government (Catón 2007, IDEA, 2021).

Some things are very essential for the operation of a political party, the members of a political party must be organized politically, and have branches all over the country. A political party must enforce discipline among its members. They must have the same views on public and national issues. They must work for the national interest, not for any regional, sectorial, or private interest. They must aim to capture power peacefully and through constitutional means and be ready to accept defeat and start working for the next election or opportunity. They should not believe in using force to overthrow or use violent and unconstitutional means to express their

grievance or dissatisfaction. They must have faith in the party and the ballot box not in brute force to achieve their objective. They must be banded and be baptised with the party ideology (Mahajan 2012). Political parties have long been seen as playing an essential role in the functioning of modern representative democracy, as they are among the key institutions for inclusive participation and representation (International IDEA 2013). Generally, people get involved in public life through political parties and the ability of women to participate fully at all levels of decision-making within those political parties (International IDEA 2021). The idea of 'Leave no one behind' (LNOB) is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to International 2021.

Uki, &Christopher, (2020) considered Political participation as "an encompassing social activity, which cuts across political systems and societies. Whether the society is a liberal/democratic society or an autocratic, dictatorial system, someone must make political decisions and citizens must participate in the activities of the state either directly or imply". However, the degree of participation differs from society to society, and factors, such as; education, illiteracy, cultural orientation, gender difference, the government, and a host of others determine political participation in political settings. One of the key ingredients of good governance is political participation which makes provision for incorporating neglected groups like women and youths in the political system.

Political participation as one of the strong ingredients of democracy makes the justification for the inclusion of neglected parties such as women and youth in electoral competition. Participation of women in politics will be imperative only if the process is just, fair, and permissive and level playing ground is sustained for the possible ascension of women politically (Quadr, 2018). Politics has strategic importance for women because the ultimate success of the women's movement will rest heavily on the effective use of the political process (Lynn, 1978).

Women's ability to effectively use the political process to get to political positions may increase their representation in elective positions and affect public policies. However, it is very clear from Nigeria's experience that the political process is male-dominated and men influence the process more than women (Quadri, 2018). Momodu (2003, p.48) categories the issues of women's

political participation in politics and governance from four aspects: access, participation, representation and transformation. Access to political institutions, participation (which includes control of power within such institutions), quantitative and qualitative representation and the result will be a social and political transformation in the polity. Women's political participation can be promoted when these four conditions are fulfilled. There are opinions that women in politics matter maintained by three factors: First, politics is an important arena for decision-making. Individuals who hold official positions in government get to decide how to allocate scarce resources, such as tax revenues. Politicians make political decisions that may help some people at the expense of others. Decisions by politicians often affect people's individual choices by encouraging some behaviours and outlawing others. Second, political power is a valuable good. Politicians hold power over other social institutions, such as the family…, third, holding a political position is to hold a position of authority (Paxton, 2007).

There are arguments for women's representation that can be considered as a platform for women's participation in politics, Dovi (2006) makes at least seven clear arguments for why women's representatives are mandatory. These arguments are; the role model argument; the justice argument, the trust argument, the increase participation argument, the legitimacy argument, the transformative argument, and the overlooked interest argument. Each of these arguments points to a different use that women's participation in politics can have in democracies. Quadr(2018, p.265) further explains this in the form of a quotation

"The *role model argument contends that having female representatives improves female citizens' self-esteem. The role model argument captures how female representatives can "mentor" other females… The justice argument contends that fairness demands that men and women be present in roughly equal numbers in the political arena… The justice argument suggests that the need for female representatives is tied to citizens' sense of fairness. The trust argument focuses on the past betrayals of historically disadvantaged groups by privileged groups. Given the experiences that women have had with men claiming to represent them…The increased participation argument contends that participation rates respond to the number of women in office. Having more women in office will raise the number of women who vote, lobby, and get involved in*

politics… The legitimacy argument contends that the perceived legitimacy of democratic institutions varies with the number of representatives from historically disadvantaged groups…Evaluations of representative institutions are based on who is present… The transformative argument contends that the presence of women allows democratic institutions to live up to their ideals… the overlooked interest's argument. According to the overlooked interest argument, democratic deliberations and political agendas can be improved by having female representatives in public office (Dovi, 2006, pp.16-19).

Abidemi ((2019) identified two types of s of obstacles women encountered in participating in political life. Structural barriers through discriminatory laws and institutions, limit women's options to vote or run for office. And capacity gaps which mean women are less likely than men to have the education, contacts, and resources needed to become effective leaders. As the 2011 UN General Assembly resolution on women's political participation indicates "women in every part of the world continue to be largely marginalized from the political sphere, often as a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender stereotypes as well as low levels of poverty among women". However, some individual women have conquered some of these obstacles with great acclaim and often to the benefit of society as a whole. Notwithstanding, for women generally, these obstacles need to be cleared to give room for equal opportunities for all women. Abidemi ((2019) suggested that to achieve gender equality, efforts should be established to create clearer awareness of the political significance of wome-n that will overturn the male power structure. Though he identified some biological, socioeconomic, political, and behavioural differences between the genders, these divisions are handiwork of the human society and the community has to clear these man-made divisions.

Despite the obstacles confronting women's participation, the question of whether women are capable of performing an active role in national development, democracy, and peace-building still subsist. Is inconsequential on account that they have always done so, and currently contribute at many levels in both the private and public sectors. The complexity lies in uncovering and redressing the entrenched systemic and systematic discrimination and

marginalization of women and girls, to translate women's participation into critical influence and decision-making in development and democracy building (IDEA, 2021).

UNDP (2016) buttressed that several nations in Asia still lack solid democratic structures, comprehensive electoral laws, and other instruments necessary for healthy democratic governance. More so, there are many other bottlenecks to women's political participation in the Asian region (UNDP, 2016). These challenges are what is obtainable even in the African continent, they are:

i.   There is a gender stereotypes problem where women are relegated to household and family duties on account of cultural attitudes and gender bias against women in public life. The implication is that political parties tend to prefer male candidates and women face serious challenges in raising sufficient funds to run electoral campaigns. As a result, when women do run in elections, they rarely face a level playing field.

ii.   Women experience great difficulties in even being nominated as candidates of political parties.

iii.   Lack of education is a severe problem, particularly for women and girls. Despite girl-child policies, the enrolment of girls in education is still low compared to boys, and educationally disadvantaged will make them politically disadvantaged.

iv.   Lack of transforming international agreements on gender equality and women empowerment into policies and programs

However, looking at the African continent Aciro and Peter (2019) identified two factors affecting women's participation in political party leadership in Uganda which is likely what is obtainable in Most African Countries.

I. Institutional Culture plays a very crucial role in influencing women's participation in political party leadership, negative institutional cultural practices mostly place women in a more subordinate state to men than freely taking up leadership positions within the political parties. Negative institutional cultural practices are not only promoted by men but women too, women

act as custodians of these practices due to negative socialization, women are a big barrier to fellow women when it comes to women contesting for top political party leadership, they believe only men deserve such positions but not fellow women and this makes it hard for women to access top leadership positions and also to jointly advocate for women. Women therefore end up mostly confined in the few affirmative positions.

II. Economic power is a critical factor in women's participation in politics and democratic governance. Funding for women is very insufficient and or delays to come on time to facilitate women and yet men have other sources of funding besides the political party basket fund. Women in political parties have some skills and capabilities however, they need frequent capacity enhancement in different spheres like policy influence, resource mobilization and monitoring and evaluation among many other capacity needs. Political parties have great structures that support women's leadership activities like the women's league but these structures are not fully functional to meet the leadership enhancement needs of women because most times they are not fully funded and there is no frequent capacity enhancement for women in leadership positions.

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IV. Lack of transforming international agreement on gender equality and women empowerment into policies and programmes.

UNDP (2016), identify some existing mechanism that can advance women 's political participation such as, International Treaties, Charters, and Declaration for example the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly, is an international bill of rights for women and a legally binding instrument obliging states to promote gender equality. At present, there are 189 state parties, making CEDAW an important tool for national and international advocates of gender equality. Secondly, International Organization such as The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has supported women in politics in all areas of the Globe.

Thirdly, Regional organizations like The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) adopted a Declaration on the Advancement of Women in the ASEAN region in 1988, which promotes the equitable and effective participation of women in all fields and at various levels of political, economic, social, and cultural life. The African Union has adopted the Declaration on the Advancement of Women to promote the equitable and effective participation of women in all fields and at various levels of political, economic, social, and cultural life. Fourthly, Nationally, there are various state policies introduced by Countries that promote gender equality and women's participation.

There are different studies conducted by different scholars that the research will review.
Aciro and Peter (2019), carried out a study on   Factors Affecting Women's Participation in Political Party Leadership in Uganda (Case Study of the National Resistance Movement Political Party, Kampala). The study used a survey and a mixed research design which employed qualitative and quantitative approaches. The research revealed that established that 73.7% of the respondents acknowledged that women actively engage in political party leadership. They

recommend governments, political parties, CSOs, development agencies, and the women's movement should design programs that specifically address the leadership capacity, and economic, and social protection needs of women to promote active participation of women in political party leadership. Kroeber (2022) researched How Parties Led by A Woman Redefine Their Positions: Empirical Evidence for Women's Green, Alternative and Libertarian Agenda according to the studies data for 19 developed democracies around the world between 1995 and 2018, indicates that parties led by a woman tend to reiterate green, alternative and libertarian issues. In particular, anti-growth, environmental protection freedom and human rights become more prominent elements of party manifestos under women's leadership.

Upreti, Bishnu R.; Upreti, Drishti; and Ghale, Yamuna (2020) studied Nepali Women in Politics: Success and Challenges, where they found that despite numerous obstacles that women encounter in political and electoral processes, they have achieved success higher participation in political positions. However, what has been achieved so far is not enough and continued concerted action among all actors is vital.

(Network(SDN), 2019) conducted a study on Women's priorities for increased political participation in Rivers State. The studies highlighted four main challenges such as lack of access to incomes, typically controlled by men in each household, and therefore, an inability to bear the costs associated with running for political office. Poor understanding of political party dynamics and processes and lack of support to develop key skills are some of the factors excluding them from some spheres of decision-making gatherings. Negative practices and attitudes within political parties, and poor implementation of gender-friendly policies—such as the 35% affirmative action also contribute to their non-inclusiveness. And negative public perception of women in politics and patriarchal norms in Nigerian society limit women and girls to caregiving roles rather than pursuing, or aspiring towards, a career in politics.

Abidemi (2019), researched Women's Political Participation and Grassroots Democratic Sustainability in Osun State, Nigeria (2010-2015), both qualitative and quantitative data were

collected, and the studies adopted a survey research design where data were collected through questionnaires and unstructured interviews. The findings revealed that the number of women involved in political participation in Osun state is low compared to their male counterparts yet they are beginning to make great strides. It was found that women's representation at the two levels of involvement in the period under study was 50 women or 20.5% of the group while male representation was 244 or 79.5 %. Further, it was revealed that the underrepresentation of women in political participation in Osun State was due to certain socio-cultural factors like violence, discrimination against women, people's perception of politics as a dirty game and cultural beliefs. The study conclusions suggest that the representation of women in Osun State is low compared to their male counterparts. This indicates that the sustainability of democracy at the grassroots level is yet to be sustained. It is recommended that there needs to develop local policies to end all discrimination against women as well as a platform of action entrenched in the constitution. In addition, the support of organized women's associations not only in training women but also through financial support and with the assistance of the government should be encouraged.

Precisely, research on the role, impact or effect of political parties on women's participation in Politics in Nigeria is scarce with particular reference to political parties, which is why this study is very strategic and important.

Theoretical Framework

The studies adopted the Participatory democracy theory as a theoretical framework that has a long history. Participatory Democracy started in the United Kingdom, later the United States of America (USA), it is associated more recently with the activist movements of the 1960s (Pateman 1970): e.g. civil rights, women's liberation, and more, when people took to the streets seeking higher participation in government decision making. This can enable the public to help decision-makers set an agenda by making their demands clear (Lyn &Stephen, 2019). Rod & Phil (2021) consider Participatory Democracy as the direct involvement of citizens at the center of democratic theory, suggesting that democratic systems structured along these lines can result in both more legitimate and more effective governance. In contrast with the prevailing view of participation in democracy, and particularly Western liberal democracy, as being manifest

primarily through the prism of electoral politics, a wide range of different forms of participation are included in such accounts. Participatory democrats prize citizen engagement in both formal activities such as consultations, committee hearings, and participatory budgeting sessions, as well as less obvious political actions such as spontaneous protests, volunteering, or involvement in decision-making in the workplace.

Furthermore, participatory democracy is viewed as transformation theory, its core normative importance resting on the opinion that taking part in the processes of democracy can work to shape individuals' behaviour, with democratic institutions valued in part for their effects on the 'psychological orientations' of citizens (Pateman, 1970, p. 26). Participatory Democracy in Nigeria has been marred by long military rule in Nigeria. With a return to Democracy in 1999, over 23 years, there is a wake-up call by political activists and development partners for women's inclusion in politics as one of the key ingredients of sustainable democracy. One of the areas of inclusive governance is participation in the leadership and activities of political parties. Women's participation in politics should not be limited only to wearing customer wrappers during political campaigns and forming women groups to mobilize women for election, but in determining what happens at the party level.

Methodology

The study is survey research where two political parties were selected randomly but based on the capacity of the party to have structure across the twenty Local Governments in the State. A sample of People Democratic Party (PDP} and All Progressive Congress {APC] were selected. six women, three from each political party were interviewed, PDP Publicity Secretary and APC Organizing Secretary of the State Executive Committees were interviewed. Four Parties and stakeholders were consulted. Data were presented in the form of table and discussion.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Local Government Parties Executive

LGAs	APC		PDP		Total
	MEN	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN	
ALKALERI	26	1	17	1	45
BAUCHI	26	1	17	1	45
BOGORO	26	1	17	1	45
DAMBAM	26	1	17	1	45
DARAZO	26	1	17	1	45
DASS	26	1	17	1	45
GAMAWA	26	1	17	1	45
GANJUWA	26	1	17	1	45
GIADE	26	1	17	1	45
ITAS/GADAU	26	1	17	1	45
JAMA'ARE	26	1	17	1	45
KATAGUM	26	1	17	1	45
KIRFI	26	1	17	1	45
NINGI	26	11	17	1	45
MISAU	26	1	17	1	45
TAFAWA BALEWA	26	1	17	1	45
TORO	26	1	17	1	45
SHIRA	26	1	17	1	45
WARJI	26	1	16	2	45
ZAKI	26	1	17	1	45
TOTAL	520	20	339	21	900

Source: Research Field

Table 1 revealed that out of 900 party officials, only 41 which is 5% are party officials. The data further indicates that in both PDP and APC only the position of Women Leader is given to women except in Warji Local Government where only the position of Assistant Treasurer was given to women. And some of those party leaders emerged mostly through consensus. The implication is that if women are not among the party official the Programmes and activities of the party will be demotivating to them.

Table 2: Senatorial Zones Executive

PARTY	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
APC	24	3	**27**
PDP	22	3	**25**
TOTAL	**46**	**6**	**52**

Source: Research Field, 2023

Table Two indicates out of 46 Zonal Executives only three are women, and this position a man cannot occupy it had it been men can hold women leaders some women will not occupy the seat.

Table 3: State Executive Committee

PARTY	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
APC	13	1	**14**
PDP	13	1	**14**
TOTAL	**26**	**2**	**28**

Source: Research Field, 2023

Table three shows that only the position of women leaders is given to women at the State level similarly, some of those party leaders at the State level emerged mostly through consensus. The implication is that women who have an interest in contesting in the general election will find it very difficult to win the party primaries because the list of delegates will be dominated by men instead of women. So, the appointment of political office by the Governors is likely going to favour men than women.

Party's activities

The interview revealed most of the political parties' activities such as meetings are done at night rather than evening, especially during the campaign. Most of the committees are dominated by men, political thugs, and political vanguards (youths carrying cutlass, sticks and dead guns to accompany politicians or hold political rallies) which make politics to be mostly very aggressive and volatile these types of activities discourage women from participating in politics in Bauchi State.

Findings

The study revealed that in the twenty Local government areas, the Executive Committee in PDP all are men apart from the party women leaders, only one woman is an Assistant Treasurer in Warji Local Government, while in APC all the party Local Government executive committees are men except women leaders. The State and Senatorial Zonal Executive Committee all are men except women leaders. Even though the party's expression of interest form was given to women at a lower rate compared to men. Most political party meetings were held during night hours which discouraged women from participating in Politics.

Conclusion

The studies concluded that women need to be involved in politics, especially in the leadership of the political parties. Political parties' programmes and activities need to be put in such a way that can encourage more women's participation.

Recommendations

Therefore, the study recommends increased political education among women to contest not only in the general election but even the political parties' leadership so that their interests will be well represented in the political affairs. they need to engage in political party activities. There should be a law that will stop political parties from holding meetings at night since all Government meetings are held during the day not at night in Government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies. The study concluded that since goodies of the war are shared among the generals, women have to be engaged in party activities to give them more appointments in political positions and governance in Bauchi State and Nigeria at large. In addition to this

recommendation, UNDP (2016), made some recommendations that would encourage women's participation in Asia that can be replicated in Nigeria and Africa in general.

i.   Equitable access to social protection, as well as developing and implementing frameworks, guidelines, and mechanisms to eliminate all forms of discrimination. This includes passing legislation, amending constitutions, and repealing all laws that limit women's rights and prevent them from participating in all aspects of society.

ii. Removal of gender-based stereotypes, the erroneous thinking that women are only good at child upbringing should be stopped.

iii. Men in all strata of life for example politicians, religious leaders, security officials, businessmen, and the media – are key to eliminating traditional mindsets towards women and convincing others of the significant role women play in the public domain. While awaiting broader cultural transformation, in the short term, in these patriarchal societies, endorsement of or praise for a woman candidate for office may significantly increase her chance of getting elected.

iv. Political parties must encourage women to participate in politics through their activities.

v.   Re-enforcement of international conventions and treaties would result in a significant increase in the number of women in politics.

vi. There should be temporary special measures like 35% affirmative action in all appointments, elections, and activities of government that will encourage more women participation spread across the region.

vii. Furtherance to this, they made some following recommendations that encourage more women's participation in politics such as equitable media coverage for female candidates for office, and media (both traditional and social) that moves beyond gender stereotypes when it interacts with women MPs. Advocacy campaigning, lobbying, and support from women's organizations and civil society for women running for office. Capacity development programs for women interested in entering politics. Campaign finance support for female

candidates. Monitoring and accountability mechanisms for gender equality, along with legal and policy frameworks that impose penalties for non-compliance.

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