



IMPACT OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION ON GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NASARAWA STATE (2012-2023)

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Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra15769>

DOI No: 10.36713/epra15769

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of women's political participation on good governance in Nasarawa State using a case study period between 2012 and 2023. The objectives of the study were; to examine the extent of women's representation in Nasarawa State's political institutions, to evaluate the influence and impact of these women in policy making, budgetary allocations, and the implementation of programs that address gender-specific concerns within the state, and to analyze the socio-economic implications of women's political participation. The theoretical framework employed for this study is Kanter's "Glass-Ceiling Theory" (1977). Citing specific literature and empirical studies on women's political participation and governance, and consulting scholarly articles, policy briefs, and reports published in reputable academic journals and accessible databases, the analysis was bolstered with evidence-based findings. Study revealed that in Nasarawa State as in other parts of Nigeria and the world, patriarchy has over the years dominated the political landscape, leading to significant challenges and barriers for women seeking political roles. However, findings suggest that women's political participation in Nasarawa State positively impacts good governance. Increased representation of women in decision-making bodies improved policy-making processes, prioritized gender-sensitive sectors, and enhanced accountability and transparency. The Study therefore advocated for increase in the number of women in political offices in Nasarawa state which could potentially contribute to better governance by reducing corrupt practices and promoting transparency in decision-making processes.

KEYWORDS: Politics, Political participation, Governance, Gender Equality

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Women's political participation holds immense significance in fostering good governance. It not only contributes to gender equality but also brings diverse perspectives and experiences to decision-making processes, leading to better policy outcomes. Women's political participation has gained significant attention globally, recognizing the potential impact it can have on good governance.

As argued by Dahlerup (2018), women's political representation is crucial for addressing gender disparities and promoting equal opportunities. Research has shown that increased female representation in politics positively correlates with the advancement of women's rights and the formulation of inclusive policies. When women occupy decision-making positions, they can advocate for issues of particular concern to women, such as reproductive rights, childcare, and gender-based violence (Maggie Triyasa, Muryani, & Utami, 2019).

Also, women's political participation enhances exclusivity by ensuring that different perspectives and experiences are considered in policy making. Women often have distinct insights and priorities, which can bring new ideas and approaches to governance. By diversifying political leadership, the concerns of marginalized groups are more likely to be addressed, leading to fairer policies (Ballington & Karam, 2019). Including women in decision-making processes also fosters social cohesion and creates a sense of belonging among diverse populations (OECD, 2017).

Furthermore, women's political participation contributes to greater accountability in governance. When women have a seat at the table, they strengthen transparency and reduce corruption (Wängnerud, 2018). Female politicians are more likely to support anti-corruption measures, promote ethical behavior, and push for effective public service delivery (Swamy, Knack, Lee, & Azfar, 2001). The presence of women in politics can build public trust in institutions and improve the overall quality of governance.

Lastly, women's political participation is linked to sustainable development. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals emphasize the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment as key drivers for achieving sustainable development (UN, 2015). Women's involvement in decision-making processes influences policy choices related to education, healthcare, environment, and poverty reduction, leading to more equitable and sustainable outcomes (Kabeer, 2019).



1.1 Statements of the Problem

The impact of women's political participation on good governance in Nasarawa State has been a subject of concern and debate. Despite efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, there is still a significant underrepresentation of women in political leadership position in the state. This lack of female representation raises questions about the potential consequences for good governance and the overall development of Nasarawa State. The problem lies in understanding the extent to which women's political participation affects the quality of governance in Nasarawa State. Are women's perspectives and experience adequately represented in decision-making processes? Does their inclusion in political leadership positions lead to more inclusive policies and better service delivery? Furthermore, are there any barriers or challenges that hinder women's political participation in the state? Addressing these questions is crucial for identifying the gaps in women's political representation and understanding the potential impact on good governance in Nasarawa State. By examining the relationship between women's political participation and good governance, policymakers and stakeholders can develop strategies to enhance women's involvement in politics and ensure their voices are heard in decision-making processes. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to the promotion of gender equality, inclusive governance, and sustainable development in Nasarawa State.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the impact of women political participation on good governance in Nasarawa state. Other specific objectives include:

- i. To assess the impact of women's political participation on good governance from 2012 to 2023.
- ii. To examine the extent of women's political representation in Nassarawa State's political institutions on policy making and specific gender-programme implementation.
- iii. To analyze women's increased involvement in political leadership within Nasarawa State on more equitable distribution of resources, accessibility to quality education, improved healthcare services, and increased economic empowerment opportunities for women in the state.

1.3 Research Questions

- i. How does the impact of women's political participation affect good governance in Nasarawa State from 2012 to 2023?
- ii. How does women's political representation in Nasarawa State's political institutions affect policy making and gender-specific program implementation?
- iii. What are the socio-economic implications of women's increase in political participation in Nasarawa State, specifically in relation to resource allocation for education, healthcare, and economic empowerment programs targeting women?

1.4 Research Hypothesis

1. H_0 : There is no significant relationship between the impact of women's political participation on good governance in Nasarawa State from 2012 to 2023.
 H_1 : There is significant relationship between the impact of women's political participation on good governance in Nasarawa state from 2012 to 2023.
2. H_0 : There is no significant relationship between women's political representation in Nasarawa State's political Institution on policy making and gender-specific programme implementation.
 H_1 : There is a significant relationship between women's political representation in Nasarawa State's political Institution on policy making and gender-specific programme implementation.
3. H_0 : There is no significant relationship between Women's increased involvement in political leadership within Nasarawa State on more equitable distribution of resources, accessibility to quality education, improved healthcare services, and increased economic empowerment opportunities for women in the state.
4. H_1 : There is significant relationship between Women's increased involvement in political leadership within Nasarawa State on more equitable distribution of resources, accessibility to quality education, improved healthcare services, and increased economic empowerment opportunities for women in the state.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Politics

Understanding the concept of politics is key in this review. By way of preamble, politics is a complex concept defined and studied by scholars across various disciplines. At its core, politics involves the distribution and exercise of power within a society or group, and the processes and institutions through which decisions are made and implemented (Heywood, 2013).

Opining classically, David Easton considered politics as "the authoritative allocation of resources and values in society" (Easton, 1957). He argued that politics is the process of legitimizing decisions that affect the distribution of resources and values within a society. For Nnoli (2016), politics is considered as the process by which a group of people, through various institutions make decisions that shape the direction and content of a society. According to him, politics involves power relations, conflicts, and negotiations.



Corroborating, Lord Bismarck, a German statesman saw politics as the art of the possible (Bismarck, 1882). He believed politicians should be realistic, practical, and willing to compromise to achieve their goals. On his part, Harold Laswell defined politics as "who gets what, when and how" (Laswell, 1936). Laswell argued that politics is about the distribution of power and resources and who can make decisions that affect others' lives.

In a more critical term, Karl Marx saw politics as "the struggle for power between different social classes" (Marx, 1852). Marx argued that politics is determined by economic forces and the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. One important aspect of politics portrayed by this definition is the role of government and the state in shaping and regulating social and economic life. In the work of Weber (1919), the state is defined by its monopoly over the legitimate use of force within a given territory, and its authority is derived from the consent of its citizens. This authority is exercised through various institutions and processes, such as elections, bureaucracy, and the judiciary, which are essentially political.

One of the key debates in political theory to point out is the extent to which power can be legitimate or illegitimate and what forms of authority are acceptable in society (Kabeer, 2015). This debate is often framed in terms of the distinction between state power and individual rights and the balance between these two elements in a democratic society (Bäckstrand, 2016). On the one hand, the state could be seen as a necessary source of stability and order, responsible for protecting citizens from external threats and maintaining social cohesion. On the other hand, individual autonomy and freedom could also be seen as essential values that must be protected against potential abuses of state power.

Another key dimension of politics worth stressing is the role of ideology in shaping political discourse and action. Ideology refers to a set of beliefs or values that provide a framework for understanding and addressing social and political issues (Held, 2006). However, politics also extends beyond the formal structures of government and involves the actions and interactions of individuals and groups in a society. This can include social movements, interest groups, and other forms of collective action aimed at influencing policy and decision-making (Tilly, 2004).

Recent scholarship has also explored the role of politics in shaping broader societal trends and phenomena, such as globalization, technological change, environmental sustainability and family forms. This may have made scholars to examine how political actors and institutions have responded to the challenges posed by climate change which has in turn affected family forms (Bäckstrand, 2016), and how political polarization and populism have shaped recent elections and policy debates (Mudde, 2019).

2.2 Concept of Political Participation

Political Participation refers to the active involvement of individuals or groups in the political process. It encourages a wide range of activities, both conventional and unconventional, through which citizens express their preferences, voice their concerns, and influence decision-making in the political sphere. Conventional forms of political participation include voting in elections, joining political parties, and participating in political campaigns. These activities are considered traditional and are often seen as the foundation of democratic governance. Voting is a fundamental right and a key mechanism for citizens to have a say in choosing their representative and shaping public policies. Beyond these conventional methods, political participation also includes other forms of engagement such as attending public meetings, contacting elected officials, signing petitions, and engaging in peaceful protest or demonstrations. These activities allow individuals to express their opinions, advocate for specific causes, and hold elected officials accountable. In recent years, political participation has expanded to online activism, such as sharing political content, participating in online discussions, and organizing virtual campaigns, has become increasingly prevalent. These digital tools have provided avenues for citizens to engage in political discourse, mobile support, and raise awareness about various issues. Political participation is crucial for a functioning democracy as it ensures that citizens have a voice in decision-making processes and can hold their elected representative accountable. It helps to foster a sense of civic responsibility, encourage public debate, and promotes the representation of diverse perspectives and interests.

2.3 The Concept of Good Governance

Good Governance is a multifaceted concept that encompasses several key principles and practices aimed at ensuring effective, transparent, accountable, and participatory governance. It is often associated with the efficient and fair management of public resources, the promotion of the rule of law, and the protection of human rights. The concept of Good Governance also emphasizes the need for strong institutions, effective leadership, and the inclusion of diverse perspectives in decision-making processes.

From a governance perspective, Good Governance embodies several essential components, such as transparency, accountability, responsiveness, consensus-oriented, equity and inclusiveness, and the rule of law. These elements are crucial in promoting sustainable development, reducing corruption, and fostering social and economic progress within a society.



According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Good Governance entails "the exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations, and mediate their differences."

In a scholarly article by Fukuyama (2013), Good Governance is identified as "the rule of law, transparency, and accountability." This underscores the importance of legal frameworks, effective oversight, and mechanisms for holding leaders and institutions responsible for their actions.

Furthermore, a report by the World Bank (1992) highlights the significance of Good Governance in fostering economic development, stating that "good governance is increasingly perceived as a contributing factor to economic growth, poverty alleviation, and social development."

The concept of Good Governance has also been addressed in the academic field by various scholars, including Bhuiyan (2009), who emphasizes the importance of participatory decision-making and the empowerment of marginalized groups in achieving Good Governance.

In conclusion, Good Governance is a fundamental concept that underpins the effective functioning of societies and institutions. Its principles and practices are essential for promoting development, reducing inequality, and enhancing the well-being of citizens. By implementing the core tenets of Good Governance, nations can work towards creating more stable, prosperous, and inclusive societies.

2.4 The Concept of Gender Equality

Gender equality is a complex and multi-faceted concept that refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of all individuals, regardless of their gender. It encompasses a wide range of social, political, economic, and cultural issues, aiming to address and rectify historical and ongoing gender-based disparities and discrimination.

In the context of critical analysis, it's important to consider various perspectives from scholarly sources. One prominent viewpoint is offered by Judith Butler in her influential work "Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity" (1990). Butler's argument revolves around the idea that gender is performative, meaning that it's not an inherent quality but rather a social construct that is continually reinforced through actions and behaviors. This perspective challenges traditional notions of fixed gender identities and roles, highlighting the ways in which they are socially constructed and maintained.

Additionally, sociologist Raewyn Connell's concept of "hegemonic masculinity" in her work "Masculinities" (1995) is crucial in understanding the power dynamics that underpin gender inequality. Connell argues that societal expectations of male behavior and the dominance of certain forms of masculinity can perpetuate unequal power relations between genders, adversely affecting both men and women.

From a legal perspective, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The holistic approach of this international initiative highlights the interconnected nature of gender equality with other societal factors such as education, health, and economic opportunity.

In economics, Amartya Sen's capability approach, as discussed in "Inequality Reexamined" (1992), provides a lens through which to critically assess gender equality. Sen's approach focuses on individuals' capabilities to function in society and emphasizes the importance of agency and freedom in achieving gender equality. This perspective underscores the significance of addressing not just material disparities, but also the social and systemic barriers that limit individuals' full participation and contribution based on their gender.

It is important to note that the concept requires critical analysis from diverse perspectives, including social constructivist theories, power dynamics, legal frameworks, and economic considerations. By engaging with these various perspectives, it becomes possible to more deeply understand the complexities of gender equality and work towards meaningful and sustainable change.

2.5 Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical framework employed for this study is Kanter's "Glass-Ceiling Theory" (1977). This theory focuses on the ways in which the structure of work organizations, especially those with large proportion of white-collar workers, establish women in subordinate positions i.e., they put a 'glass-ceiling' over women's opportunities (Kanter, 1977). The key political positions in the political system of Nigeria especially at the local government level can be related to the organization referred to in Kanter's theory.



He described work organization in terms of three dimensions:

- Opportunity: People who have less opportunity tend to be low in self-esteem and aspiration while people with more opportunity are competitive and have greater self-esteem.
- Power: Kanter defined power as capacity to mobilize resources in support of individual interests. People with low power tend to be authoritarian, subordinating, coercive, critical, territorial and are not well linked. People with high power tend to be non-directive, encouraging to subordinates, helpful and popular.
- Proportions: This is a social mix. The small proportion tends to be highly visible, highly stressed and stereotyped. The large proportions invisibly fit in with the group, find networking and the acquisition of sponsors.

Discussing Kanter's opportunity as one of the three dimensions of work organization, the Nigerian political arena is not different: women are not given the opportunity to exercise their political right such as occupying key political positions ranging from the local government to the federal government level of decision-making. Instead, they are subjected to certain appointed positions where they would only act as figure-heads while men who appointed them indirectly control them too in the position, all within a patriarchal social structure.

In terms of power, Nigerian women are just like as Kanter described those with low power, while men are those with high power, especially at the local government level. For instance, during elections, men mobilize women; enticing them with diverse incentives to vote, and never encourage them as to how to mobilize themselves, to be serious contenders for elective posts.

In similar vein, Nigerian women are the small proportion (in the context of the Kanter's analysis). It is an indisputable fact that Nigerian women are not only limited by patriarchy, but that are also duly and unduly stereotyped and highly stressed with responsibilities.

2.6 The Impact of Women's Political Participation on Good Governance in Nasarawa State (2012 - 2023)

To fully comprehend the impact of women's political participation on good governance in Nasarawa State, it is essential to measure the resultant changes in governance indicators over time. This includes evaluating transparency, accountability, public service delivery, and the overall effectiveness of government institutions in addressing the needs of the population, particularly women and marginalized groups. This analysis aims to investigate the impact of women's political participation on good governance in Nasarawa State from the years 2012 to 2023.

2.6.1 Increased Representation of Women in Decision-Making Bodies

Studies have shown that increased representation of women in decision-making bodies positively impacts good governance (Kunar et al., 2014; Ndiaye & Minteh, 2016). In Nasarawa State, efforts were made to promote gender equality and increase women's representation in political positions during the specified period.

2.6.1.1 State Level Politics

The Nasarawa State Government implemented policies to promote women's political participation, such as the implementation of a women's political empowerment program in 2014 (Nasarawa State Government, 2014). The program included capacity-building initiatives, mentorship, and targeted support for women candidates.

2.6.1.2 Local Government Level Politics

At the local government level, the State Electoral Commission in Nasarawa State adopted a policy of gender inclusivity to ensure the participation of women in local governance (Nasarawa State Electoral Commission, 2015). This policy helped increase women's representation across local government councils.

2.6.2 Impact on Policymaking

The presence of women in decision-making bodies positively influences policy-making processes and outcomes (Kunar et al., 2014). Women's perspectives and experiences bring diversity to policy discussions, leading to the formulation of more comprehensive policies that address the needs and concerns of all citizens.

2.6.2.1 Women's Influence on Health Policies

Women's political participation in Nasarawa State contributed to the prioritization of health issues affecting women and children (Nasarawa State Ministry of Health, 2017). The increased representation of women in decision-making bodies resulted in policies that focused on improving maternal and child health, healthcare access, and reducing gender-based violence.



2.6.2.2 Women's Influence on Education Policies

Women's political participation also impacted education policies in Nasarawa State (Nasarawa State Ministry of Education, 2018). Increased representation of women led to policies that advocated for girl-child education, improved access to quality education, and the reduction of gender disparities in education.

2.6.3 Enhancing Accountability and Transparency

Women's political participation can enhance accountability and transparency in governance (Ndiaye & Minteh, 2016). Nasarawa State witnessed improvements in accountability and transparency due to the inclusion of women in decision-making processes.

2.6.3.1 Budgetary Allocation and Allocation of Resources

The involvement of women in decision-making bodies led to increased budgetary allocations towards gender-sensitive sectors such as education, health, and social welfare (Nasarawa State Ministry of Finance, 2019). Additionally, women advocated for the equitable distribution of resources, ensuring that the needs of marginalized communities were met.

2.7 Factors Affecting Women's Political Participation in Nasarawa State

In Nasarawa State as in other parts of Nigeria and the world, patriarchy has over the years dominated the political landscape, leading to significant challenges and barriers for women seeking political roles. This analysis explored these impacts in terms of participation, representation, and the overall political environment. The findings of Osumah (2018) succinctly revealed that women often face difficulties in accessing campaign funds, party structures and influential networks, thereby limiting their ability to compete with their male counterparts. This is what structural anomie theory calls limited means to attaining a desired goal in society. This discrimination based on gender adversely affects women's chances of succeeding in the political arena.

Furthermore, the study of Umar (2019) sees traditional gender roles and stereotypes as playing a significant role in inhibiting women's political chances in society. To him, women are often confined to domestic roles and face societal expectations that prioritize care giving and family responsibilities over political engagement. These gendered expectations contribute to the perceived lack of experience and credibility of women in politics, making it challenging for them to gain support or be taken seriously by both the electorate and party leaders. Additionally, cultural and societal norms particularly in the Northern part of Nigeria reinforce gender biases, making it difficult for women to be seen as legitimate leaders. Thus, discrimination, sexism, and stereotypes are deeply ingrained in the cultural fabric of a patriarchal society, and such can result in negative attitudes and biases towards women in politics (Ocheja & Okafor, 2019). Such biases often lead to voter reluctance, as well as resistance from traditional and religious leaders, hence hindering women's political chances.

In line with foregoing, it can be said that patriarchy negatively affects women's political participation in Nasarawa State, the 35% affirmative requirement by the government notwithstanding. Women face numerous cultural, social, and economic barriers that hinder their involvement in politics. The structural anomie thesis considers these factors as limitations to individual goal attainment. Research by Sani (2017) highlights that traditional gender roles and expectations limit women's mobility and restrict their ability to engage in political activities. Moreover, the patriarchal norms that seem prevalent in Nasarawa State discourage women from participating in decision-making processes.

Also, the erroneous societal perception that politics is a male dominated activity in the State discourages women from aspiring to political positions. This is supported by the study of Afolayan (2017), who identifies cultural norms as a significant barrier to women's political participation in North Central Nigeria. The author particularly highlighted that patriarchy affects women's representation in political leadership positions in Nasarawa State. Hence the gender gap or discrimination in political representation in Nasarawa State is evident, with women being severely underrepresented in political offices. For instance, the result portal of the 2023 general elections conducted by the Independent National Electoral Commission in Nigeria shows that no woman is a chairman of the 13 Local Government Areas in the state, only a woman was elected out of the 24 members of the Nasarawa State House of Assembly, no woman Federal House of Representative elected out of the four constituencies in the state, no woman Senator elected out of the 3 senatorial districts in the State and so on. This kind of discrimination is rare without a chronically choked patriarchal structure.

According to the Women's Aid Collective (2019), women occupy less than 20% of political positions in Nigeria, reflecting the patriarchal power dynamics that restrict women's access to leadership roles. This patriarchal impact is much more pronounced when considering the political dynamics in Nasarawa State.

Data from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) reveals that women's representation in the Nasarawa State House of Assembly has consistently been less than 10% (INEC, 2019). This is certainly not unconnected from institutional barriers, patriarchal norms, and lack of support from political parties to the underrepresentation of women in politics.



Thus, as revealed above, the patriarchal nature of Nasarawa State is what has created an overall environment that disfavors women's political chances. Sexist attitudes and practices are often reinforced within political parties, inhibiting women's ability to access resources necessary for successful political campaigns.

A study by Isike (2018) highlights how women face discrimination in candidate selection processes, limiting their chances of becoming viable political candidates. Furthermore, patriarchal power structures within political institutions hinder the enactment of gender-sensitive policies and programs. Women's issues, such as education, healthcare, and gender-based violence prevention, often take a backseat in political agendas, perpetuating the marginalization of women in decision-making processes (Iliyasu, 2019).

In that light, it can be said that patriarchy has deep-rooted impacts on women's political chances in Nasarawa State. Women face barriers to political participation, encounter challenges in political representation, and navigate an environment that perpetuates gender-based discrimination.

Addressing and mitigating these impacts requires comprehensive efforts to challenge patriarchal norms, promote gender-sensitive policies, and provide support for women's political aspirations through affirmative actions and inclusive political processes. Implementing quotas, promoting gender mainstreaming and representation, and fostering political empowerment through training and mentoring programs portend useful steps in tackling the impacts of patriarchy on women's political chances in Nasarawa State (Jatau, et al., 2019). These efforts in the opinion of the study can help break down barriers, challenge stereotypes, and create opportunities for women to participate in decision-making processes in Nasarawa State and beyond.

2.7 Women's Political Participation in Nasarawa State

2.7.1 Women as Governors in Nasarawa state

The results of this research showed that all the six Governors of Nasarawa state since 1996, two of which are military administrators are men. As Majeed (2022) reported that Aisha Dahiru Ahmad Binani is the only woman in the history of Adamawa state and Nigeria to have ever won a gubernatorial primary election. A victory which a Federal High court in Yola nullified. Whether she muscled herself and wins, 2023 general election will decide. Patriarchal domination of gubernatorial seats is national and can be traced back to pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras. Even in the just conclude governorship primaries women also picked gubernatorial ticket as Channels TV (2022) reported that the wife of Abdullahi Adamu, the former National APC Chairman and former Governor of Nasarawa State, Fatima Abdullahi got only 3 delegates out of 701, while A. A. Sule who got 698 votes and declared the winner (Channels TV). Had she won she would have been the first Nasarawa state governorship candidate in the upcoming 2023 general election, just like Binani in Adamawa State.

2.7.2 Women in the National of Assembly

Findings of the study revealed that since 1999, Only Nasarawa North Senatorial Zone ever produced female senator and that is only between 2003–2007 and 2007–2011. And it is the same woman who won for the two tenures. In the Federal House of Representatives, only one woman has ever represented Nasarawa state in the lower chamber. The same zone (Nasarawa Eggon/ Akwanga/ Wamba constituency) still produced a female house of representative member. This Zone seems more tolerant when it comes to women political participation. Therefore, there is poor women involvement in the representation in house of reps and the senate. This is worrisome, as even the current 2023 primary election winners for both the Federal Legislative Houses are all men across the political parties. This study also reaffirmed the work of Awodipe (2022) who lamented on the low women participation in the Federal house of assembly and wonder if women matter at all in the activities of Federal House of Assembly.

2.7.3 Women in the Nasarawa State House of Assembly

Out of the six (6) State House of Assembly speakers, none is a woman since 1999. Out of twenty-four (24) members of Nasarawa state House of Assembly members, only one was a female from Akwanga North state political zone. It should be noted that Akwanga north is also located in Nasarawa North senatorial zone that produced the only women Senator. Also, Akwanga North is locate in Akwanga, Nasarawa Eggon/ Wamba Federal Representative zone that produced the only female Federal law maker of the lower house since 1999. This also buttressed this zone as more politically friendly for women. Absence in the governance and especially the law making arm of the state is worrisome as Abel (2022) reported that in Commemoration of the International Women's Day 2022, National Council for Women Societies (NCWS), Nasarawa State Chapter led by its president in Nasarawa state Mrs. Mary Samuel Meshi, staged a peaceful protest at the state house of assembly complex (the law making venue of the state) demanding for more inclusion of women in governance in the state. Women carried several inscriptions seeking for change of political discrimination and stereotype against women. In Nasarawa west senatorial zone Hajara Danyaro emerged as of the house of assembly member, so also from the same zone Imam Suleiman emerged as the first female minister in the whole of Nasarawa state and she has started making significant impact.



3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study used quantitative survey research design. Survey research refers to a particular type of research design where the primary method of data collection is by survey (field work). In this study design, surveys are used as a tool by researchers to gain a greater understanding about individual or group perspectives relative to a particular concept or topic of interest. (Babbie, 2016).

3.1 Historical and Political Context of Nasarawa State

Nasarawa state is in Middle Belt of Nigeria. It was created out of Plateau state on 1st October 1996 by the military administration of General Sani Abacha. Nasarawa state has 13 Local Government Areas (LGAs), Comparing of Lafia (the state capital), Obi, Keana, Awe, Doma, Nasarawa, Toto, Kokona, Karu, Keffi, Akwanga, Wamba, and Nasarawa Eggon. Five Federal representatives are elected to represent Nasarawa state from; Akwanga/ Nasarawa Eggon, Wamba, Awe/ Doma/ Keana, Keffi/ Karu/ Kokona, Lafia/ Obi, and Nasarawa/ Toto. Three senators are elected to represent Nasarawa state at the senate from Nasarawa South, Nasarawa North and Nasarawa West. The People's Democratic Party (PDP) was founded in 1998, Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) created in 2009, and All Progressive Congress (APC) created in 2013 were the only political parties that ever won the governorship seat in Nasarawa state. Nasarawa state shares border with Plateau and Taraba states at the eastern part, north by Kaduna state, south by Benue and Kogi States and at the western axis by Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory. The people of Nasarawa are mainly crop producers with pockets of others engaging in sole or combination of fishing, pottery, knitting and mining etc. It is a home of at least 25 expensive solid minerals. The state has several ethnic groups such as Akye, Alago, Eggon, Mighili (Koro), Tiv, Idoma, Gade, Gbagyi, Mada, Nungu (rindre), Ninzoh, Gwandara, Yeskwa, Agatu, Basa, Mama, and Kanuri etc. Islam, Traditional and Christianity are the main religions found in the state.

3.2 Population of the Study

According to Hanza (2022) the total projected population of Nasarawa state is 216,783,400. The population used for this study covers 10% of the total population, 2,167,834.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The sample size for this research work was four hundred (400) participants drawn from the people of Lafia Local Government area of Nasarawa State.

The sample size was determined using Taro Yamene formula: $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$

Where: n = Required Sample size, N = Population of the Study, 1 = Constant, e = Sampling error estimated at 0.05

Therefore: $n = \frac{2167834}{1+2167834(0.05)^2} = \frac{2167834}{1+2167834(0.0025)} = \frac{2167834}{54198.1} = 399.9 = 400$

In the choice of the population for this study, the researcher used simple random sampling technique. The technique provides each staff member with an equal and independent chance of being selected or included in the sample.

3.4 Method of Data Collection

The researcher makes use of questionnaires as an instrument for collecting its primary data and consulted books, journals, magazines, newspapers and other documents not within the mentioned categories to collect its secondary data.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

The method of data analysis employed in this study was quantitative analysis. All the data collected from primary source through questionnaires were statistically presented and analyzed. Frequency and tabular percentage forms were used for data presentation. The study also employed the Chi-square method (X^2) for testing the postulated hypothesis.

4.0 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Result

400 questionnaires were administered to Lafia local government area, but only 380 were filled in and returned. Therefore, the analysis is based on the 380 returned questionnaires.

Part "A" (Biographic Data)

Table 2: Gender of respondents

Sex	No. of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Male	250	66
Female	130	34
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The above table shows that, 250 respondents representing 66% were Male while 130 respondents representing 34% were Female that participated in this research work. It means that, more Male participated than men in the research work.



Table 3: Age bracket

Age	No. of Respondent	Percentage (%)
18-25	110	29
26-35	120	32
36-45	94	25
45 and Above	56	14
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

From the table above, 110 respondents representing 29% were within the age range of 18-25, 120 respondents representing 32% were within the age of 26-35, 94 respondents representing 25% were within 36-45 years while 56 respondents representing 14% were above 40 years. The above analysis indicates that all the participants were above 18 years old, which makes them conscious of their answers.

Table 4: Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification	No. of Respondent	Percentage (%)
Primary	78	21
Secondary	116	31
Tertiary	178	46
Others	8	2
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

From the table above, 78 respondents representing 21% were primary school graduates, 116 respondents representing 31% were secondary school graduates, 178 respondents representing 46% were tertiary school graduates while 8 respondents representing 2% were had other qualifications.

Part B: Questionnaires

Table 5: How does women's political participation impact on good governance in Nasarawa State from 2012 to 2023?

Responses	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Total
Women's involvement in politics has led to the implementation of policies that contribute to better governance in Nasarawa State	263	12	105	380
Women's political participation has positively impacted the overall governance in Nasarawa State from 2012 to 2023.	298 (78)	27 (7)	55(15)	380
Women's participation in politics has enhanced accountability and transparency in the governance of Nasarawa State.	300 (78)	26(6)	62(16)	380

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The survey results reveal a predominantly positive perception of the impact of women's political participation on governance in Nasarawa State from 2012 to 2023. Notably, a significant majority (78%) of respondents agree that women's involvement in politics has led to the implementation of policies contributing to better governance. Additionally, a similar percentage (78%) acknowledges that women's political participation has positively impacted overall governance, suggesting a consensus among participants regarding the constructive influence of women in political roles. Furthermore, the majority (78%) also believe that women's participation in politics has enhanced accountability and transparency in the state's governance. While there is some variation in the responses, the overall trend reflects a prevailing positive sentiment towards the role of women in politics and their perceived contribution to improved governance in Nasarawa State. These findings emphasize the importance of continued efforts to encourage and support women's participation in political processes to foster positive governance outcomes.



Table 6: How does women's political representation in Nasarawa State's political institutions, affects policy making and gender-specific program implementation?

Responses	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Total
Women are adequately represented in Nasarawa State's political institutions	60 (15%)	15(5%)	305 (80%)	380
The presence of women in political institutions positively influences policy making in Nasarawa State	295 (78%)	19 (7%)	70(15%)	380
Gender-specific programs in Nasarawa State are more effective when women are actively involved in their design and implementation.	300 (78%)	26(6%)	62(16%)	380

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The survey findings reveal that women are not adequately represented in political institution in Nasarawa State's despite their influence on governance-related aspects. An overwhelming 80% of respondents believe that women are not adequately represented in political institutions, indicating a very limited acceptance of their involvement in political activities. Furthermore, a significant 78% of participants agree that the presence of women in political institutions positively influences policy making, emphasizing the perceived impact of women's perspectives on the formulation of effective policies. Additionally, a parallel sentiment is reflected in the belief that gender-specific programs are more effective when women are actively involved in their design and implementation, with 78% expressing agreement. These findings collectively suggest a positive outlook on the significance of women's participation in political processes for enhancing representation, policy making, and the effectiveness of gender-specific programs in Nasarawa State. The minority of respondents who expressed disagreement or uncertainty may indicate areas for further exploration or potential challenges that need attention to ensure more inclusive and impactful participation of women in political decision-making.

Table 7: What are the socio-economic implications of Women's increased involvement in political leadership within Nasarawa State on more equitable distribution of resources, accessibility to quality education, improved healthcare services, and increased economic empowerment opportunities for women in the state.?

Responses	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Total
Women are adequately represented in Nasarawa State's political institutions	270 (78%)	28(7%)	60 (15%)	380
The presence of women in political institutions positively influences policymaking in Nasarawa State	283 (75%)	28 (7%)	69(18%)	380
Gender-specific programs in Nasarawa State are more effective when women are actively involved in their design and implementation.	310 (82%)	11(3%)	59(16%)	380

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The socio-economic implications of women's political participation in Nasarawa State, particularly concerning resource allocation for education, healthcare, and economic empowerment programs targeting women, are multifaceted and hold profound significance for the region. Increased women's political participation is often associated with a more equitable distribution of resources, and the findings from this study suggest positive implications. As women actively engage in political processes, there is an expectation that they advocate for and contribute to policies that prioritize resource allocation for crucial sectors like education and healthcare, which are fundamental to societal development. The data indicating support for women's political involvement suggests a potential positive impact on directing resources towards gender-specific programs aimed at economic empowerment. However, further research and nuanced analysis are needed to explore the specific policies influenced by women, the extent of resource allocation, and the measurable outcomes on education, healthcare, and economic empowerment programs in Nasarawa State. Overall, the results hint at the potential transformative role of women's political participation in shaping socio-economic policies that cater to the specific needs of women and contribute to the overall development of the state.

4.2 Test of Hypothesis

- H_0 : Increased women's political participation negatively correlates with improved indicators of good governance, including transparency, accountability, and effective service delivery within Nasarawa State during the specified period.

H_1 : Increased women's political participation positively correlates with improved indicators of good governance, including transparency, accountability, and effective service delivery within Nasarawa State during the specified period.



In testing the hypothesis, table 5 will be used.

Fo	Fe	Fo-Fe	(Fo-Fe) ²	$\frac{(Fo - Fe)^2}{Fe}$
873	380	493	243049	639.60
67	380	-317	100489	-264.44
188	380	-192	36864	-97.01
Total				278.15

Source: (Table 5) Field Survey, 2023

Note: $Fe = \frac{1140}{3} = 380$

Therefore, Calculated Value = 278.15

D/f = (r-1), 3-1 = 2

The Table value of 3 at 0.05 level of significance = 5.991

Decision Rule

At 0.05 level of significance the table value (5.991) is less than the calculated value (278.15). Therefore, we reject the Ho which state that; Increased women's political participation negatively correlates with improved indicators of good governance, including transparency, accountability, and effective service delivery within Nasarawa State during the specified period and accept the H₁ which state that Increased women's political participation positively correlates with improved indicators of good governance, including transparency, accountability, and effective service delivery within Nasarawa State during the specified period.

5.0 CONCLUSION

No doubt, there has been poor women representation in the Nasarawa state politics in the period between 2012 and 2023. Ranging from elected and appointed positions, stake is still very high for women as the politics has been mainly male affairs. However, the findings suggest that women's political participation in Nasarawa State positively impacts good governance. Increased representation of women in decision-making bodies improved policy-making processes, prioritized gender-sensitive sectors, and enhanced accountability and transparency. The efforts made to promote women's political participation during the specified period have significant implications for sustainable development and inclusive governance.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY INTERVENTIONS TO ENHANCE WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND PROMOTE GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NASARAWA STATE.

The puzzle that gender counteracts women chances politically was confirmed going by some of the analyses made and the conclusions drawn in the study. To correct these anomalies in practical terms, the following recommendations are put forward:

- i. That despite the effort of government the government encouraging women's political participation, government should pay deeper attention to social, economic, cultural and political issues orchestrating women political discrimination in Nasarawa State and Nigeria in general. This it can do by formulating and enforcing gender balancing policies across all the administrative units of the state in giving special consideration to the woman folk in political offices.
- ii. The government and non-governmental organizations should carry out a comprehensive study of this subject matter by deploying questionnaire administration, interviews and focus groups discussions to gather quantitative and qualitative narratives and experiences of women who have faced political discrimination in Nasarawa State and beyond. This will help capture the nuances and contextual complexities of their challenges hence providing a more nuanced understanding.
- iii. Nasarawa State Government should establish Gender Equality Commission in the State. This Commission will be responsible for advancing advocacy on development and implementation of gender-responsive policies and laws that address women's political discrimination and promote their representation in decision-making positions. This can include quotas, affirmative action and measures to increase women's participation in political parties and electoral processes.
- iv. Government and community initiatives can come up with networking platforms and mentorship programs that connect women aspiring to enter politics with established female leaders in Nasarawa State, Nigeria and across the world. Providing mentorship and support can help build confidence, skills, and networks necessary for women to navigate the political arena effectively.
- v. The government should embark on targeted campaigns and programs that aim to educate women about their political rights and opportunities that should be enhanced. This can include awareness campaigns, workshops, training sessions and outreach activities to enhance their political knowledge and participation. Engaging men and community leaders in these initiatives is also crucial to challenge and change patriarchal norms.

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