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## GENDER SECURITY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

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*Good governance is a function of all humans to coalesce for the development of their society. It is not the function of a set of people in the society, more of a group or sex differentiation or the other. Therefore to secure good governance acceptable in the country, the genders must be secure so as to incur optimum performance in the governance processes and politics. Active politics which is the contest for a political office gives an individual the chance to be a core policy maker in a political system. It is observed that there is more concentration of the male gender in active politics which makes them more vocal in government actions and decision making process. In their little contribution to politics, female have made governance more developed to a significant extent in some climes. But female are yet less prominent, but feature as subordinate to their male counterpart in other climes. Therefore this study seeks to know whether it is the 'dangerous' nature of politics in developing democracies makes women to be fewer in political contests or the involvement of women makes politics to be less dangerous or due to the less dangerous effects of politics, women are now involving in it? This study scope is the sub-Saharan Africa-with respect to Nigeria. The methodology of qualitative reflective analysis is utilised. Rational Choice theory is use to justify the assertions of gender security and involvement in politics for good governance.*

**Keyword:** *Decision Making; Democracy; Development; Gender and Politics*

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## INTRODUCTION

Good governance is a function of all human being to coalesce for the development of their society. It is not the function of a single individual, a secluded group of people be it of religious or ethnic combination or a selected few. It is a function of the combination of the government officials and the governed, the in-depth coordination of the policy makers, the implementers and the society at large. It also involves the synergy among the government officials as policy actors, the citizens as the policy implementers and the international community as the observer. It is not the function of a set of people in the society, more of a group or sex differentiation or the other.

Gender differentiation or superiority which is referred to as gender security in this paper has a major role play on good governance in many countries of the world. Therefore, to secure good governance acceptable in the country, the genders must be secure to do their best in the governance processes and politics (Aluko, 2021; Adedeji, 2023). Gender is a combination of both the male and the female groups in the society. It is not just the male alone or the female alone. Gender security does not mean the male is

superior to the female or the male is inferior to the female. It simply connotes the combination of both male and female in a course of action usually governance.

Governance has it different depth and degree of commitment. The person contesting for a public office will have more responsibility to all the citizenry than the person appointed to an office who will have most of his loyalty to the person that appoint him. Therefore, gender security may not play out in the passive politics than the active politics (Duban, Moldosheva and Turakhanova, 2022). Active politics which is the contest for a political office gives an individual the chance to be a core policy maker in the process of good governance. The security of the female gender in active politics is less stable than the male, thus their rate of contribution and commitment to active politics is lower. Though, they may have a larger percentage population in the political sphere yet their frequency of occurrence in active politics is much lower than expected. This low frequency has effect on good governance because the female gender's accountability to political development is not significant from their active politics and governance involvement. It is observed that there is more concentration of the male

gender in active politics which makes them more vocal in government actions and decision making process. In their little contribution to politics, female have made governance more developed to a significant extent in some climes (Aluko, Abdullahi and Balogun, 2016; Scalia, 2023). But female is less prominent, but feature as subordinate to their male counterpart.

Therefore this paper seeks to know whether it is the 'dangerous' nature of active politics that makes women to be fewer than their male counterpart in political contests especially in the developing and some developed countries or the involvement of women makes politics to be less dangerous and boosts good governance or due to the less dangerous effects of politics today, women are now involving in it? This paper is sectioned into the introduction, the conceptual clarification of active politics, gender, gender security and good governance, the theoretical framework of rational choice theory, analysis on gender security and good governance in Nigeria and conclusions.

### **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

This section clarifies the concepts of active politics, gender, gender security and good governance sequentially. Active Politics is a

term derived from the level of involvement in politics. Politics in this case is the medium through which people seeking political office gets it through the element of been voted for in an election from the popular will of the people in a particular country. The person has to contest against other co-contestants and emerge as the sole winner to represent the will and the mandate of the whole country. These offices are public in nature where the person will have to deliver the dividend of good governance to the entire country.

Active politics is different from passive politics in many realms. Active politics is the seeking of political office through a general election and a popular mandate. The candidate needs to seek the electorates down to their various domains so as to present his would be political agenda to them so as to attract them to vote for him. The electorate endorse him through their vote power in exchange for the dividend of good governance which he promised during the elections. The active political officer is directly responsible to the electorates. The electorates can withdraw their mandate from him if he decline from the good governance scheme agreement. Passive politics is the involvement in politics through the appointment scheme of the elected officer.

He is directly responsible to the active political officer who appointed him as an aid to his governmental processes. He is meant to have a direct loyalty to his appointer while an indirect loyalty to the rest of the public. Passive politics in many political climates do not need to be known by the electorates but is expected to be able to perform his required duties because the electorates will hold him accountable through the active political officer that they elected into the office. The gender climate in the active politics medium is largely dominated by the male while the passive politics as a fair mixture of the male and the female.

Gender is simply the classification of human beings into male and female. It is the distribution of role and duties by the physical capabilities and differentiations of male and female in the society. Gender is not just about the male alone or the female alone but the aggregate of all issues that concerns the male and the female. The female is often emphasised when issues of gender are raised as if the only gender available is the female. This is so, because many issues that regards gender, has the female mostly left out of the balance.

Gender is not feminism and it is not masculinity but the combination of feminine

and masculine issues. The emphasis here is that both the male and female in the society makes up gender discourse. However, the male gender usually dominant situations in the society which makes female gender less secure and issues like feminism emanate which is meant to make the struggle for female emancipation and the freedom fight against male domination to be pronounced so as to achieve female gender security.

Gender Security therefore is the issues that compromise the stand of either the male or the female gender on a particular issue in the society. It is the situation which makes a gender be it male or female to be more pronounced in the society and the other less pronounced. It is the process of making either the male or female gender relevance and appreciated in a course of action in the society. Whenever, a gender is given more attention in the society than the other, it implies that gender is more secured in that society while the other is compromised (Schenk, Gökarıksel and Behzadi, 2022). The insecurity factor in gender issues in the society is due to paying little or no emphasis on one of the genders and much more on the other.

If more male are educated than the female, the female gender is not educationally secured. If the female are given less

attention in the political matters in the country, it means that the female gender is suffering from political insecurity. Also if the male are not given the proper attention in either the economic or the social issues in the society, it means that the male gender is not secured socially or economically. It is a natural phenomenon that both male and female genders have their natural strength and areas which they can best operate in the society without much ado or training. Therefore, gender security is not trying to balance gender role play and equating the male as the female. Gender security is making both the female and the male gender relevance for all course of action in the society without emphasizing on one gender than the other so as to ensure peace, development and good governance in the society (Nazneen, 2023).

Good governance in this context means the provision of the basic amenities of life for both male and female in the society as peculiar to them. Good governance is all about equal representatives of all gender in the society in the process of governance so as to ensure a balance view of societal issues from all perspectives be it the male or the female. It is also the fulfilment of the mandates and promises given by government officials voted for during a

general election. Whatever the government promises to do for the people during its life time is expected to be fulfilled so as to make the government inclusive for all the groups in the country.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Rational Choice theory**

Human beings make decision daily based on some information and predispositions. The rational choice theory, is also known as decision making theory. It is a theory for understanding social, political and other individual behaviours. The goal of the rational choice theory is to describe choices so as to understand choice behaviour for human rationality. A prominent scholar that establishes rational choice theory in sociology was George Homans (1961). Becker (1976) as well noted that rational choice theory was early popularized in social sciences by using it to analyse the reason why a decision is taken amidst of many other choices by an individual.

Elster (1989) stated that whenever people are faced with several courses of action, they usually do what they believe is the best for an overall outcome and this constitutes the essence of rational choice theory. Ogu (2013) aligned with Friedman, (1953) opinion that the ‘rationality’ in the rational

choice theory simply means that an individual acts as to justify the costs against the benefits of an action for maximum personal advantage and minimum overall loss. Rational Choice Theory is an approach that is adopted to show that gender reflection and participation in politics is a reflection of the cost and benefits and some perceived information about the political scenario.

The rational choice theorists is premised on a number of assumptions, these include; Individualism, Optimality, Self-Regarding Interest and Rationality. Individualism implies that not considering the influence on the individual by externalities, it is individuals who ultimately take actions. Individuals, as actors in the society and everywhere, behave and act always as rational beings, self-interested, self-maximizing and self-calculating. Such individual social actions are the ultimate source of larger social outcomes. Optimality on the other hand implies that the individual actors or the state choose their actions optimally. Individuals choose the actions that will bring the greatest happiness to him and the best suitable line of actions given their individual preferences as well as the

opportunities or constraints with which the individual faced.

Self-Regarding Interest is another cogent assumption in the rational choice theory. It states that the actions of the individual and state are concerned entirely with his or her own welfare or warfare. Various types of group sentiments could exist, such as cooperation, unselfishness, charity, which initially may seem to be contrary to individual optimality. This implies that gender issues in Nigeria as represented in the electoral matter and processes participation is a self regarding actions that the individuals are fully aware of, in terms of the gain and the pains. This is calculated from their own rational reasoning along the lines of best practices in Nigeria.

Another principle of the rational choice theory is rationality. This is the most predominant assumption. All individuals, according to this assumption act in ways that would benefit them more; every individual and State is most likely to undertake courses of actions that they perceive to be the best possible option and one that would immensely be to their own advantage. It is not a decision which is borne out of unconsciousness and homesickness feelings

but a deliberate, well informed and well calculated action by the individual in the state.

The rational choice theory, therefore assumes that individuals actors of the state best control their actors, intentions, inactions and circumstances. Therefore, there are some certain important steps which the rational choice actor and analyst should follow in making decisions. These include: definition of the problem, identification of decision criteria, weighing the criteria, generation of valid alternatives, rating of each alternative on each criterion and computation of optimal decision. These steps and other assumptions informed the rational choice of people, individual actors and the state toward other states. Good governance is a collective product of all genders of both male and female. Both genders have roles to play in the governance process. This role could be in the active politics or the appointive politics and governance process. The role choice is self determined base on the rationality of the individual and the environmental factors.

Gender security and governance questions are the issues rational choice theory gives answers to. It is a complete self regarding

action for anyone to engage as an active political participant. The rational choice theory is very appropriate for this study because it point out the actors as a rational independent being that has the responsibilities of dispensing justice to all and sundry in utmost good faith. The theory is criticised on the bases that the individual actor can be compromised by other external factors and his actions may jeopardise the popular interests. Also at what point can other people rate the actor's actions as rational and irrational because he have his self regarding purpose and decisions. Nevertheless, rational choice theory presents that the actors must be physically fit to make decision at the optimum level in a political system. A rational actor's decisions regardless of the gender and the factors that condition his actions in a democratic setting are further subjected to further analysis by the purported motives of the action and the expected outcome in the society. Gender security varies and has it effects on the society but to ensure good governance and democratic sustenance, rational choice is required by all political participants.

## **GENDER SECURITY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA**

Politics is a lucrative political game in Nigeria. It is a game of patronage and patronisers. It is actually seen as a means to an end. Therefore, like many other developing countries, it is characterised with gross violation of basic human rights whenever the electioneering period approaches. The money allocated to pay the political office holders in Nigeria politics is so enormous that it can safeguard the more than two generations of an active politician occupying a higher executive or legislative position consecutively for two cycles of political office years (four years each –eight years in total). This lucrative outburst makes most people to aspire for the elective political offices. Although, many politicians will ordinarily say that they are aspiring for the office for the good governance purpose and to ensure the development of the country, but the way and manner of the aspiration in many cases are extremely dangerous (Ani and Uwizeyimana, 2022).

This dangerous characteristic of politics in Nigeria has created a niche for some people and as well makes a demarcation for those who are qualified to be in politics and those who cannot be an active participant. Among the male gender, the patriarchy dominance is

most evident and the female are somewhat kept to the background or given consideration on the account of the global affirmative action. Generally the politics terrain has created a gender security challenges for both male and female participants. The worse affected gender is the female. Females are mostly fewer in active-elective politics unlike the appointive politics. Even at the appointive politics, the male gender is still more domineering.

This does not mean that the female gender are weak politically or not relevant in active politics in developing countries like their counterparts in the developed countries. They are mostly not disposed to a violent political terrain (Aluko, 2021; Adedeji, 2023). They have more caring and tender values for their families than to die on the altar of political assassination because of a political office contests. Few places where women were active political leaders revealed that they are not inferior to their male counterparts or outshines them in good governance and general performance. There are some exceptions to this in Nigeria where female politicians just like their male counterpart gets into corrupt practices and misappropriation of public funds, assets and mandates.



Wherever females dominate in the politics, the political process becomes less dangerous, volatile and anarchy-centric in many cases. Also where the political processes are less volatile or non violent, more women also participate. Nevertheless, the culture of patriarchy, chauvinism, and misogyny continues to pull down the majority of women socio-politically and economically. The problem is, by keeping women down, the Nigerian society is, in fact, preventing itself from rising to the promise of its full potential in every facet of socio-political and economic development.

## **CONCLUSION**

Female gender is mostly secluded in Nigeria socio-political and economic space with variation from the east, west, north and south. The ‘dangerous’ nature of politics in developing democracies makes the female gender to be fewer in political contests. The political terrain in Nigeria like many other developing countries is like a state of nature that is short, nasty, solitary, poor and brutish. Killing of opponents, ballot snatching, monetised politics, hate speech, campaign of calumny, secret cult, fetishism and many inhuman practices are rampant.

The winner takes the entire political landscape and the losers wait till other time. In this case some active political participants among the men are skew off the terrain because they cannot participate favourably with the negative antics that leads to the throne. This mainly makes the female counterparts to be more vulnerable in gender security quest from getting involved in active politics.

Gender needs equity and not equality so that tangible political offices will go round both male and female. Politics and political representation of the gender can be constitutionally reviewed so as to accommodate the weak nature of women in political representation due to the cost of politicking by gender, nature of the nasty and dangerous terrain in Nigerian politics.

A gradual trend to attaining gender security is not out rightly impossible in Nigeria. The gap can be narrowed just as other political climes like the United States of America, Britain, France and Germany among others. Female level of involvement in politics may make politics to be less dangerous in Nigeria or on the other hand whenever the politicking process in Nigeria is less dangerous, more women can now involve actively in it.

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