

## Women Empowerment and Opposition Political Parties in Africa: Efforts Towards Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (Sdgs)

Celestina Ekene CHUKWUDI<sup>1</sup>, Augustine Nduka ENEANYA<sup>2</sup>, Temidayo David OLADIPO<sup>3</sup>, Goddy Uwa Osimen<sup>4</sup>

### Abstract

*This study is to explore different ways that opposition political parties have adopted towards the political empowerment of women in African society to ensure their well-being which is part of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number three (3) of United Nations Agenda 2030. The study is also out to explore the challenges facing the empowerment of women thereby disrupting their supposed contributions to the development of politics in general and political parties in particular within Africa. This study adopts qualitative research methods in the source for information which is secondary data. The sourced information is obtained from textbooks, Journals and conference publications, Newspapers, Magazines, and reliable internet materials. The theoretical framework adopted in this study is Liberal Feminism. The finding reveals opposition political parties do not have more political, economic, and social strength than the ruling political party in empowering the women, but they adopt different strategies that can help them to mobilize the women population. They do these by creating an acceptable quota system for women in their party leadership, creating women's wings, and economic development, reducing the cost of tickets for women, and raising funds for training and sponsoring women in political positions. The study concludes that opposition political parties have less of the needed political and economic strength to fully empower women and achieve their expected well-being as they lack control over the nation's policies and adequate resources.*

**Keywords:** *Marginalization, Opposition Party, Political Party, Women Empowerment, Wellbeing, Sustainable Development Goals.*

### Introduction

In African party politics and globally, opposition political parties always worked towards gaining more power that can enable them to contest, win, and control the machinery of government. In the practice of politics, the well-being of the people is of utmost importance. Goal three (3) of the UN 2030 SDGs agenda specified the well-being of the people. In this position, gaining the support of a larger population of women becomes very vital for the success of every opposition party. Most of the women have generally suffered marginalization in public participation within their different societies since they hardly occupy leadership positions in their party. This became possible since party politics in African society is an age-long activity from the inception of political activity that is dominated by male rather than their female counterpart. This discontent experienced by women has made them look out for organizations or groups that offer them the opportunity of empowerment that can make them participate politically and live meaningfully in their various societies.

EASSI (2012) revealed the case of how Ugandan women were continually excluded from the major development arrangements put in place by the government and international development agencies at the end of the war with persistent sexual violence, inequality, and other levels of suffering.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Political Science and International Relations, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria, Email: celestina.chukwudi@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

<sup>2</sup> Department of Political Science and International Relations, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria, Email: Augustine.eneanya@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

<sup>3</sup> Department of political science, college of social and management sciences, Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria, Email: Temmiedee@abuad.edu.ng

<sup>4</sup> Department of French, Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, Nigeria, Email: goddy.osimen@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

In Burundi, EASSI (2012) also revealed that the implementation of quotas did not coincide with a reorganization of the institutional and political structures that continue to exclude women and keep them from rising to senior positions within political parties.

Recently, some countries have tried to make amends in the better empowerment and representation of women as witnessed in Nigeria's manifestos which includes the notion of gender empowerment, although it has been suggested that their real commitment to enhancing women's representation is limited (Orji et al, 2018, pp. 34-36). As of 2015, there were no legislative restrictions for parties to appoint a specific percentage of women. Furthermore, most political parties have not carried out their gender policies, and there are no gender policies and no punishments for the members for this failure (NCWD, 2016).

Political parties also act as a bridge and provide doors for increased social and political mobility, as well as the building of strong political interest coalitions to support the government. Each of these roles has a significant impact on politics, and how parties perform them can reveal whether a certain democratic system is entrenched or insecure (Salih et al, 2007). Similarly, party politics in Africa has become a mark of division between the ruling and opposition parties. This division act is visible in their areas of party structure, ideology, and activities.

In the play of party politics, women's empowerment in African society has not been better promoted by the opposition parties more than the ruling parties but they use empowerment strategies in the contest for power. Achieving the support of a larger number of women populations remains a target for the opposition party in the contest.

Despite the efforts of opposition political parties towards women's empowerment and well-being as contained in the SDGs agenda of 2030, the political culture status, cultural disposition, identity politics, and economic restrictions associated with gender performance in society all play a significant role in determining the extent to which women can become politically empowered. It is also worthy of note that fixing all these societal key areas is developmental and can better be handled with legal policies by the government in power led by a ruling party.

The opposition party's empowerment strategies for the well-being of women have become an opportunity to show the world the failure of the ruling party. Women have been faced with a lot of challenges in getting empowered ranging from cultural practices, economic limitations, and social segregation that have made women sidelined in African society even with their contributory roles towards national development;

Nigerian women, particularly in the second and fourth republics, have significantly contributed to national political life in the post-independence era (1979-1983 and 1999 to date). In the second republic of Nigeria, Mrs. Francis Afeghua became the country's first female senator. In the final four years of the Fourth Republic, three (3) women were elected to the Senate and fifteen (15) to the House of Representatives. (Christopher et al, 2020, p. 28).

It is pertinent to note that in the present development of democracy, there is a great need to create an atmosphere that is embracing and amenable to political undertakings that advocate women's empowerment.

### *Conceptual Framework*

#### *Political Party / Opposition Political Party*

Political parties are associations of men and women with similar political ideologies that have come together to contest and win elections. Political parties have the major aim of contesting and winning elections and controlling the affairs of the state.

The most important institutions of contemporary democratic government are political parties. Political parties are widely acknowledged to have a crucial role in deepening and fostering democracy in both existing

and emerging democratic polity, according to comparative political theory and decision-makers (Maiyo, 2008, p.13).

Party politics in every society is an embodiment of a power struggle which mostly ends with an outcome of winners and losers. The proper use of technology in the conduct of the election is very vital for the practice of democracy (Duruji, Olanrewaju, Olu-Owolabi, Duruji-Moses & Chukwudi, 2019).

The political party that emerges as a winner in a political contest becomes the ruling party while the party or parties that lost in that election remain the opposition power. In this light, the opposition remains resolute to keep their flag flying in terms of their relevance to their society.

Salih et al (2007) have argued that political parties naturally contain representative structures that lend legitimacy to regimes, ideologies that address social, economic, and political concerns, and leaders who, through democratic elections, establish the institutions of government (from the legislative to the executive branches), opportunities for political participation, or some combination of all three.

*Political parties are typically the main and most effective mechanism used by women to engage in politics and win office. On women's political engagement and representation, political parties' practices, policies, and ideals can have a significant impact.*

Political parties are the main power brokers and gatekeepers for equitable representation of women and racialized or ethnic minorities. Women's and minorities' political representation and issues can either be advanced or obstructed by their policies and practices. Even while official structures permit and enable women's participation, gender studies have shown that political parties operate based on gendered norms and conventions that impede women's political careers. (cited in Kantola, 2018, p. 14).

*Political parties nominate candidates for local and national elections, finance campaigns, mobilize supporters, establish priorities for policy and governance, and establish governments (Ballington et al, 2011)*

*The positive impacts of political parties in a system cannot be overemphasized. They made great contributions in many aspects of policies which the report of Commonwealth confirmed;*

By adopting strong gender policies that bind them to minimum thresholds for women, political parties are the instruments for transformation that are urged to make institutions more amenable to women's political involvement. Along with legislative change, it is also important to promote party reform. Election management bodies (EMBs) should be given more power to uphold party and constitutional pledges to increase compliance (Commonwealth, 2018, p.7).

Opposition political parties have always acted as a watchdog for the party in power. They look out for all strategies to take over political power from the ruling party. Women population in political parties are beneficial to political parties regarding the special roles they play and their positive contributions to the development of the party.

In Ballington's (2011) affirmation, Parties that value the participation of women benefit from stronger electoral positions, access to new groups of voters, maintain stronger relationships with their constituents, and influence the electoral and governing processes in society. In this light, the outcome of the United Kingdom election in 1997 shows the values of political parties at any time that change becomes imminent.

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party reform. Election management bodies (EMBs) should be given more power to uphold party and constitutional pledges to increase compliance (Ballington, 2011, p. 116).

The mistakes of a ruling party always sum up the success of the opposition parties. This practice can also be more successful, and the party gets developed, stronger, encompassing, and more democratic if there is more than one political party that has come together to form coalitions, the parties' unity and strength can equally add to the success of the opposition parties.

Salih et al (2007) in their summary, asserted that political parties are essentially voluntary and informal organizations of society in democratic nations because they allow people to express shared values, traditions, and political opinions.

### *Women Empowerment*

Women empowerment is the act of improving the lives of women in society. This empowerment can be in the areas of economy, education, and political participation. Scholars have stressed that education is the bedrock on which women's empowerment lays (Anigwe, 2014, Daniel, 2015, Ichino et al, 2017).

The empowerment of women is not just about their human rights but is needed for the possible achievement of an all-encompassing, egalitarian society and lasting development.

The participation of women in politics remains basic to the achievement of empowerment objectives in African society;

Political parties are among the most crucial institutions for encouraging and cultivating women's political engagement, which is essential to achieving these goals. Political parties need to do more and should get support in their efforts to support women's political empowerment because less than 20% of parliamentary seats worldwide are held by women. (Ballington et al, 2011, p. 55).

Women in different parts of Africa have gained power in traditional/modern political settings, economic. It is not the empowerment offered to women by political parties that will endow them in life but it will just add as a supplement to their already hard-earned position. Shayo (2005) has collaborated on this assertion;

African cultures had kings or queens. Warrior queen Yaa Asante wa of Ghana (1840–18921), who stood out among Asante queen mothers by leading her people in combat against British colonizers in the Angola Asanti War<sup>7</sup>, was one of the female leaders of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Africa. Similar to Queen Ranavalone III of Madagascar, who ruled between 1883 to 1910, she successfully dealt with both home unrest and external threats. Empress Taitu (1883–1910) of Ethiopia is another who significantly influenced national and international policies. She was referred to be the most dominant woman on the African continent at the time. Other notable female leaders include Hatsheput, a female pharaoh of Egypt, Chief Martha Yoto of Kpa Mende in Sierra Leone, Queen Amina of Zazzau, who rose to fame in Nigeria, and Hoda Sherawi, who founded a feminist organization in 1922 to fight for girls' rights to marriage at 16 and 18, as well as the wearing of veils (Gouws et al, n.d).

### *Women and Development*

From the pre-colonial era to post-independence Nigeria, women have made vital contributions to national progress. Scholars and political leaders, however, believe that the current time is a time of rebirth for women's engagement in national life." Women contribute in a variety of ways to national development. Despite assuming the job of home managers, they actively participate in community management and significantly improve societal well-being. They take care of the family's needs at home (Christopher et al, 2020, p. 25).

United Nations as an international organisation understood generally the plight of women globally and in Africa especially. The organisation recognised the potential of women and created a space to accommodate all forms of development for the gender. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specially created goal five (5) and other goals to support women's empowerment and development (UN Women, 2023). UN has charged stakeholders in global development to empower women (United Nations -UN, 2023) and the step of opposition political parties though have political interests at the same time contribute to women's development.

Modern Nigeria has seen a relative increase in the contributions made by women to national development. Women have been nominated to critical policy-making posts like deputy governors, chairmanships of corporate organisations, chief executives of public institutions, and heads of ministerial departments as a matter of purposeful government policy (Chukwudi & Ojo, 2023; Okwuosa, in Omoruyi 2008, p. 26).

### *Theoretical Framework*

This study adopts Liberal feminism in its analysis. Liberal feminism is a political theory that is also called egalitarian feminism which came into existence during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The French and American Revolutions, the change from a feudal society to an industrial society, the shift from a monarchical State to a democratic State founded on the rule of law, and the emergence of capitalism were all significant social developments during this period (Cottais, n.d).

The liberal feminist idea, which was developed at the same time as the social contract theories of Rousseau and Locke and the nineteenth-century European liberalism promoted by thinkers like John Stuart Mill, focuses on the autonomy and rights of the individual (Egan, 1999, p. 9). This is also in compliance with the respect for fundamental human rights of both sexes

Liberal feminism has laid emphasis on the equality of both males and females regardless of sex differences. They emphasize the similarities between men and women disregarding differences among them, which has contributed to much-seen personality disparities between the sexes.

It is impossible to overstate the significance of liberalism to the early feminist movement. The second wave of the women's movement in the 1950s and 1960s was inspired by liberal feminism as women started to express themselves in words that their political males could understand. (Egan, 1999, p. 12).

In application, the assumptions of Liberal feminism have spurred the understanding of the political parties in Africa to engage in the empowerment of women in their party. This is with utmost belief that their contributions will be beneficial to the success of the party. This theory of liberal feminism has also inspired the generality of women as it formed the basis of the movements. According to Egan (1999, p. 12), Liberal feminism was the source of the second wave of the women's movement in the 1950s and 60s.

Political parties in general desire the support of the women for the progress of their party. To achieve success, they adhere to the directives given by the liberal theorists by creating quotas for women, raising funds for the training of women in politics, and creating women's wings that will help sensation, other women, join and support their political party.

Liberal feminism has been criticized for the way it has generalized women with the belief that the experiences of whites will apply to all other women (Butt, 2011 & Humm, 1995 in Trench et al, p. 9). In addition, radical feminists also criticised liberal feminists for differentiating men from women and considering patriarchy as methodically fixed (Tench et al, 2017, p. 9).

Despite the criticism, Liberal feminism remains the best theory in this study as it opens the door for women's emancipation in all sectors, such as political, economic, and social life. Butt (2011) in his confirmation Liberal feminism is driven by an emancipatory vision; it aims to highlight inequalities faced by women and address these through legal and political reform. When political parties empower women, the benefits of assured support and development will also be achieved.



## Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative method with the use of secondary materials, such as books, newspapers, magazines, journals, conferences, etc. Internet sources such as Facebook, and WhatsApp were also used since they are reliable for academic purposes. The work commenced with the introduction to the work followed by a conceptual framework where keywords of the work are fully explained and linked to areas of this study.

## Results and Discussion

### *Strategies of Opposition Parties in Women's Empowerment*

It is noteworthy that opposition parties are already faced with a problem of lack of power and can strive to gain power, and supporters from the population of both males and females. It has been obvious in African society that women are in a disadvantaged position when it comes to political empowerment and well-being. The support for the well-being of women by the opposition party that seeks political seeking for power contributes hugely to the UN SDGs of Agenda 2030. The opposition party to win the women population to their side uses different strategies that are also part of women's empowerment.

**Creating a quota system** within a political system is about providing the womenfolk the opportunities to attain several leadership positions as agreed by the party. This practice ensures that women are not just mere party members but hold good leadership positions and represent other great numbers of women. This quota system helps to give women a great sense of belonging and allay their fears of age-long marginalization suffered at the hands of their male counterparts. The quota system has been described by Dahlerup and Freidenvall (2005) as a 'fast track' towards women representation.

Through the creation of a quota system and joining it to the electoral system, women will be well represented, and the number that participates in politics will increase with a decline in political apathy.

Opposition parties have embraced the quota system and use it as bait in attracting women attracting women to their side. The quota system being a form of political contest, has been applied by the opposition party. The existence of a vibrant ruling party in an effective government may leave the opposition party at a disadvantage since their efforts on women empowerment are limited by their low resources, and inability to turn their deliberations into policies coupled with other incapacitation resulting from not being in government.

Salih et al (2007) stressed that African opposition parties' weakness and their leaders' inability to unite interests with the ruling political parties have placed them in a disadvantageous position. African political parties were born into the non-democratic environment of colonial rule, which was neither democratic nor legitimate.

The opposition political parties are not close to the government like their counterparts in Western countries like the United Kingdom and the USA where opposition parties are constitutionally engaged as Shadow Cabinet; a group of members of the major political party in opposition that are taken in as counterparts of members of the government who have a place in the cabinet.

These quotas can be adopted by political parties and made a part of their party's policies, requiring them to include women on party lists and/or in other party structures. 4 For instance, the Southwest African People's Organization (SWAPO) in Namibia also adopted and uses a 50% female quota in municipal elections, while the African National Congress (ANC) adopted and uses a 50% gender quota using a "zebra" method. However, these quotas have a drawback in that they are primarily voluntary and totally at the political party's choice (Gouws et al

**Training of women in politics** is carried out to improve the capacity of women aspirants if elected to leadership positions. The style of leadership greatly determines the level of achievement (Abasilim, Gberevbie, Osibanjo, 2019). Other women non-aspirants are also enlightened on laws guiding the processes of elections, gender support and contributions, party development, personality development, and commitment to party success. Ajagba, Gberevbie, & Agbu (2020) have maintained rebranding in every electoral process. All these aspects of training became vital especially for opposition parties as they struggled to come out successfully in the election.

**Empowerment programs** are fashioned out by the opposition political parties. This is to impress and attract the generality of women who already feel discontented with the ruling party. This empowerment can take the form of skills acquisition for women, scholarships for girls, or promotion of girl child education. The opposition parties can also raise funds to economically empower women in trading. All are done to show their level of humanitarian commitment if they are eventually voted into power.

**Opposition parties engage in better electoral monitoring** during the electoral period. They commit to this practice as part of the efforts towards achieving each vote count, attracting new members to their party, and maintaining their original function of watchdog in the political system.

**Lowering the cost of tickets for women** of the party is another strategy used by the opposition party. This is done considering the disparity in economic strength between the female and their male counterparts.

Opposition political parties ensure that **Women Wings** are created at all levels; local, regional/state, and national. The wings are platforms that help in the easy mobilization of women. Through these wings information on mouthwatering quota system is released, monetary incentives are offered, and training is also organized the wings. Commonwealth (2018) confirmed the use of women's wing by opposition political parties in Ghana:

Women are represented at every level of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), the opposition party in Ghana, by a member of the women's wing. There is a woman organizer at the branch level who is in charge of organizing women at the branch level (the ward, constituency, district, regional, and national levels) to participate in party activities (p. 23).

Opposition parties are not ignorant of the population of the youth and the power of the population in the play of politics. In this light, **Women Youths** are engaged to reach out to all the youths, mobilize them, and inform them of the reasons why their best is the best they should belong to and also vote for in the next election.

**Opposition political parties raise funds** towards funds for training of women in politics. It was originally believed by men in our African patriarchal society that politics is for men. It is now necessary that women are well equipped educationally and emotionally to get them stronger for the eventualities of politics.

Economically, the women are assisted with loans to upgrade their businesses. This is also done to upgrade the economic status of women members. Funds must be managed by the government to ensure proper development (Gberevbie, Oyeyemi, & Nchekwube, 2014). When women join hands in fund management, it will in different ways add to their well-being. The well-being of the women will also speak volumes of the party if assessed by intending members.

In their manifestos, opposition parties roll out a lot of **promises of policies that reflect the interest** of women, such as reproductive policies, and infant and maternal care policies. All issues that border the womenfolk will be raised by the parties as areas with possible solutions. The application of technology in administration is also a strategy for gathering the needed information of women and harnessing contributions towards their well-being in society (Chukwudi, Bello & Adesemowo, (2023)

### *Opposition Party and Women Empowerment*

The relationship between the opposition party and the women has been generally observed as a political exercise of the opposition to win the support of the women as vulnerable folk who have been abandoned by their leaders. The opposition parties in summation may not be able to empower women more than the ruling party.

In support of the opposition party's capacity towards women, Lindberg (2004) revealed that opposition parties have no more positive effect on women's representation than incumbent parties. The presence of old authoritarian rulers and patronage networks in democratic systems does not prevent an increase in women's legislative representation.

The opposition and the ruling party in power have used the quota system to ensure women's empowerment in their different countries;

In Tanzania, here are examples of quotas that have been made available for women and legally backed by institutions of the country. Before the existence of the multiparty era, the party in power, the Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) established a quota system that offered 15 percent of the parliamentary positions to be kept for women. In 1992, after the re-introduction of multiparty politics, the Election Law raised the number of positions made available for women to 30% (Shayo, 2005, p. 11).

Undoubtedly, the use of the quota system by the political parties in power has impacted ensuring sensitivity in policies that emphasize the socio-economic desires of the women gender. These efforts have resulted in values of political participation enjoyed under the institution of a quota system. Myeni (2014, p. 65) gave an account of the ruling party (ANC) and the women in South Africa; The ANC adopted a quota system to ensure that at least 30% of candidates (in the elections from 1994 to 2004) in its lists were women. This quota was extended to 50% in the general elections in April 2009 and May 2014, which significantly expanded the representation of women in South Africa.

In some African countries like Nigeria, the creation of a quota system for women empowerment ends as lip service and is never executed;

*All political parties in Nigeria publicly state their support for gender equality. They ignore the fact that women occupy no other positions in their leadership systems outside the well-known "woman leader" when they do this. What people claim to believe is very different. None of the main parties adhere to the 2008 Electoral Reform Committee's recommendation that 20% of political party boards be made up of women (E-Discussion, 2019, p.1).*

### *Women Empowerment and National Development*

Women's role in African society has always been foundational because of their impacts on national development kick-starts from the home front as home Managers. Historically, in African society, the existence of male and female genders has permanently put one group (women) at a disadvantage (Bozzoli, 1983 & Anigwe, 2014). Women have contributed greatly to National Development through their numerous roles. Despite performing their roles as home managers, they contribute also to the development of the community as well as meaningfully adding value to National Life (Christopher et al, 2020, p. 22).

Shayo (2005) has discussed women's empowerment and their space in the political parties of Tanzania and submitted that Tanzanian women and most African women do not rely on party politics to live a meaningful life.

In the same way, whether under patriarchal or matriarchal rule, women in regions where agriculture was the main industry earned their political position from the important production responsibilities they played. Typically, women held political sway over tasks like farming, marketing, running the home, and taking care of family matters. In addition, women had their political organizations called



Councils of Women where they made choices on how to run their own lives or affect the lives of males. It is well known that most African women create solidarity groups based on kinship, age, culture, and economic output axes. These social networks were very helpful for Tanzanian women and African women in general since they supported them not just during stressful times but also gave them a psychological sense of self-worth (p. 6).

Education should not be neglected in the vital role it plays in human development. In Women's empowerment, education has been seen as vital; in the submission of Daniel (2015) Education continues to be the cornerstone for fully improving the status of women by raising their standard of living, the beginning of women's advancement in various human endeavors, and the supporting instrument that women need to fulfill their roles as legitimate members of their society.

Education catalyzes to acceleration of the nation's economic and political growth by enhancing the effects of other investments in health, nutrition, family planning, agriculture, industry, and infrastructure (World Bank, 1997 cited in Daniel, 2020).

The role of education in women's empowerment has made it pertinent for opposition parties, all political parties and the government to place the education of women as the foundation for women empowerment. It will make the empowerment successful and hitch-free.

When it comes to empowering women, the opposing political parties are not working alone. Although there are differences in the foundation and history of women's empowerment, both parties support the practice of it. With increased efforts to seize power from the ruling party, the opposition is monitoring the party closely. They look for resources, more population, and support that will strengthen their party. All they do is strategize the growth of their party and hope to win an election to seize power inside the government apparatus. The stability of society may not have concerned them at the time (Daudu, Osimen, & Ameh, 2024).

It is the responsibility of the ruling party to ensure stability in society (Chukwudi, Gberevbie, Abasilim, & Imhonopi, 2019). The ruling party on the other hand is already in control of government and possesses all needed political and economic strength to empower and attract women to their party. The ruling parties in South Africa and Zimbabwe have worked to lift the political status of women in their countries.

The women's wing of the party is run through national women's groups like the African National Congress in South Africa or the ZANU (PF) in Zimbabwe. The nationalist party is a legitimate vehicle for political expression because it is predicated on the idea that the country is a single, homogenous entity with a single legitimate representative party. The women's movement, which is allied with the dominant party and has strengthened its power, earned support for gender quotas in several African countries. Recently, opposition parties have started creating internal women's wings, which could alter the political landscape (Gouws et al, n.d).

Ugandan ruling party is not an exception putting opposition party at its low level when it comes to gaining the women and empowering them.

Ugandan feminists have determined that Museveni's acceptance of reserved seats for women in parliament was also an effort to build a strong and trustworthy block of female NRM (National Resistance Movement) supporters in government (Gouws et al, n.d).

The Ugandan government's constant reorganization of the system—from a Ministry of Women and Development to one that combined with the Departments of Culture and Youth to a Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development—indicates that it is not something that is given much consideration (Wangusa, 2000).

Maendeleo ya Wanawake (MYW), a sizable women's organization, was co-opted by Kenya's ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU) to increase its support for grassroots initiatives and gain access to MYW funds (p. 28)

Better Life for Rural Women, The National Commission for Women, and the National Council for Women's Societies in Nigeria are non-governmental organizations that work to support women in their mothering responsibilities. (Tripp et al, 2008:52).

Similar to this, the government of Namibia established the Gender Desk in the Office of the President under the leadership of its ruling party. This office was tasked with coordinating efforts related to women and coordinating with pertinent ministries to include women's concerns in the mandates of the various ministers. Later, the position was promoted to the Department of Women's Affairs (DWA), which created nine committees with members of key ministries in charge of programs as their chairpersons. (Gouws et al, n.d)

When political parties in power are determined to work, they operate with all instruments of power available to them in embracing gender-friendly policies towards empowering women. In this light, the opposition parties will strive to win the women population with incentives and opportunities where the party in power has derailed.

Most ruling parties do have problems of unfulfilled promises rolled out during political campaigns such as the quota system in party leadership and other political positions. The dissatisfaction of women with the ruling party can immediately turn into an opportunity for the opposition parties to empower actions and promises.

### *Challenges of Women's Empowerment*

The empowerment of women in African politics has faced some challenges that are responsible for the side-lining of women in many sectors, such challenges range from cultural practices, economic limitations, social discrimination, family responsibilities, and natural strength.

The primary role of women at the home front has robbed them of full commitment to political participation. A high level of discrimination between men and their female counterparts in a male-dominated society. The low economic power strength has not given women the opportunity to be readily available even in the chance of empowerment (Ichino et al, 2017). As part of the protection and promotion of the well-being of women, sanctions need to be applied to cases of dehumanization against women in the society (Aluko, Apeloko, Chukwudi, Paimo, (2023; Chukwudi, Okoya, Adebajo, & Adekunle, 2023).

The placement of Women in second-class role categories such as assistants, caretakers, and monitoring groups has not encouraged full political participation of women participation in politics (Daudu, Osimen, & Shuaibu,2023).

Okediran et al. (2006) revealed that This type of patriarchal dominance causes enormous injustice to women by undervaluing their knowledge, limiting their opportunities for advancement in politics, academics, and other fields, and treating them as second-class or lower-class members of society.

In most areas of the public sphere and all geographical areas, women continue to face severe discrimination because of their involvement in public and political life. For instance, the European Commission has stated that "in positions of importance across the EU, women are still largely outnumbered by males in all disciplines (Dernsah, n.d).

Women's rights and independence are restricted compared to those of men, which fosters and supports a culture in which women are primarily responsible for household duties (Anigwe, 2014). This single limitation has affected women's progress in education, social and economic empowerment, and any aspect of power that needs to be exercised outside the home.

*In addition to being the breadwinners and heads of households, women are also the guardians of society's essential social, cultural, and moral values. It is impossible to fully develop a community without the participation of women. In all well-known and significant parties, the Chairman, Vice Chairman, and other top positions are exclusively held by men, leaving women with degrading jobs like organizing rallies, distributing supplies like food, clothing, entertainment, and sourcing for funds (E-Discussion, 2019).*

Women in Timor-Leste are restricted from accessing opportunities outside of the home by the prevalent patriarchal system, which assigns different roles to men and women and excludes them from many decision-making processes, particularly in politics, or women in Cambodia, known as Chba'p, which limits their ability to access opportunities outside of the home (cited in Dernsah, n.d, p. 7).

*The lack of strong women's organizations has limited women in their empowerment success. Several capacity building that have been witnessed by women at different levels have not received solidification since they were done at a period of passing a phase and interest and are not sustainable. It has also been clear that women in political parties are empowered and used for mere marking of events such as Party Convention, Women's Day, Children's Day, and birthday of party bigwigs.*

*The women undoubtedly have contributed in different ways to the support of parties, and local and national government with impact on continental levels. This support is visible in such areas as political and socio-economic development, and they are inestimable. Christopher et al (2020) in his work confirmed that women in Nigeria have not taken their supposed position in the national arena.*

## Conclusions

This work has concluded that the opposition political parties have contributed to women's empowerment and their well-being towards UN Agenda 2030 SDGs in different African societies, but their contributions cannot be compared to the greater impact played by the party in power on women's empowerment. Women despite all efforts of empowerment still face some challenges that are embedded in socio-cultural practices and economic disadvantage. These challenges have stunted the strive for the empowerment and well-being of women in African society.

An inclusive political structure should be developed globally to involve women in political positions where they will be able to contribute massively to the growth of their political parties and their well-being with fewer obstructions. This should also have some legal backing comprising of reformation in electoral acts that are anti-feminist. A review of the plans for the electoral system of different countries in relationship with political parties and women's participation will ensure sensitivity to women's empowerment.

The government of different African societies should throw away all existing laws that militate against women's political empowerment and immediate implementation of such women-friendly laws as national in addition to other laws of international human rights.

Countries globally should embrace the UN Agenda 2030 and contribute towards SDGs to make life more meaningful.

Public enlightenment should be embarked on for general information of males and females on the recognition of women and the quota offered for women.

This move can also spark interest in the women folk towards participation and feeling represented in their society.

Different Women's Wings and women's organizations should be made to collaborate both locally, nationally, and internationally to experience more sensitization towards their empowerment in society and breakaways from those challenges that hinder their political progress, such as cultural factors, economic limitations, and social discrimination in the society.

African Union (AU) should endeavor to monitor the activities of political parties and ensure that there is discharge of government towards achieving their set goals. This achievement is necessary considering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number five.

The government should endeavor to prioritize the education of the female and male gender without discrimination from their male counterparts. This education will equip the male gender to understand the need for women and empowerment and allow its achievement in society without any form of uprising or sabotage.

The government, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and individuals should champion the economic empowerment of women to ensure the eradication of poverty among them and their new state will motivate them to be participatory, request, and utilize opportunities when they are made available to them.

Promoting women's full and equal political involvement is crucial in party politics, and it is important to make sure that the parties' funding, constitution, structures, and processes are gender-responsive and welcoming of all women. To ensure that there is a diversity of viewpoints and that no one is left behind, political parties must promote women's participation and incorporate gender equality problems into their policies and programs.

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- Fiemotongha Christopher Department of Political Science, Isaac Jasper Boro College of Education Sagbama, Bayelsa State. E-Mail: [christofiems@gmail.com](mailto:christofiems@gmail.com) Phone: 08067918993 Dr. Isaac E. Uki Department of Political Science, Isaac Jasper Boro College
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