

Political Parties, Elections, and Gender Representation: A Comparative Study of Women's Performance in the 2019 Elections in India and Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examines women's performance in the 2019 elections in India and Nigeria, within the context of political parties' values, election dynamics, and gender representation in the two world's male-dominated democracies. Using mixed-methods with SPSS version 2.0 to analyse data from 100 participants, this study analyses the institutional, political, economic, and socio-cultural factors that influence or hinder women's electoral success, despite shared colonial histories and Westminster-style political systems. The results, however, highlight the similarities and differences in representation between the two countries. Both had similar shares of female candidates, 8.9% in India and 8.0% in Nigeria. However, success rates varied: female MP candidates comprised 14.4% of India's House of Representatives but only 3.1% in Nigeria. Voter turnout was similar, with 67.2% of women and 67.0% of men participating in India. Nigeria had lower overall participation, at 36% of the total voters. Also, Indian and Nigerian party inclusion strategies differ; Nigeria relies on patronage and is restricted by religious influence, gender violence, and high nomination fees. India's constitution supports women's participation amidst male dominance, unlike Nigeria, where the uncertainty about women in politics is higher than in India. Nonetheless, the UN, African Union, ECOWAS, and IDEA found that party elites' control over candidate selection, violence, vote-buying, and logistical issues compromised electoral credibility and inclusivity. Participants recommend legislative or party quotas, along with funding, as essential to improving women's political representation and promoting gender equality.

Keywords: Election, Gender, Male Dominance and Comparative Politics, Representation, Participation, Political Parties, Women.

Introduction

The World Bank Demography Survey 2025 [1] states that women constitute 49.4% of Nigeria's population of 237.5 million and 48.44% of India's population of 1.44 billion. Besides, Nigeria, with 2.9% of the global population, is the sixth most populous, while India, with 8.17%, is the most populous. Despite being the largest democracies in Africa and Asia, women face underrepresentation and gender inequality in both nations. Feminist scholar Brule (2022) [2] notes that political processes remain male-dominated despite decades of independence. Therefore, the study compares women's performance in the 2019

Indian and Nigerian elections, which have held seven and eighteen elections since 1999 and 1947, respectively, and is evidently a key to addressing gender disparities.

Pry's 2012 study [3] traced elections from ancient Athens and Rome, evolving through European democratic traditions before being adopted by colonial and post-colonial societies, thereby shaping modern governance. Pry recalled Aristotle's concept of representation, which explored "Oligarchy" rule by a few, as women struggled with universal suffrage achieved in Britain (1928), the US (1920), India (1950), Nigeria (1954), Nigeria's Northern

region (1979), and Saudi Arabia (2015) inter alia.

This study highlights that, despite increased voting rights for women, representation remains low. Nigerian women, who constitute 37% of registered voters in the 2019 INEC voter registration [4], are underrepresented. In India, female voter turnout was 67.2% in 2019, slightly higher than men's at 67.0%. Nigeria elected only three female senators out of 109 in 2023, with no female governors or major-party female presidential candidates. India has had one female Prime Minister and two female Senate Presidents, but overall female political representation remains below global averages and the UN's 35% target.

The global perspective on gender in politics reveals disparities: Nigeria is ranked 184th and India 144th in terms of women's parliamentary representation, according to the IPU [5]. In Nigeria's 2019 elections, eight women (2.3%) were elected to the 109-seat Senate, and 11 women (3.1%) were elected to the 360-seat House of Representatives. India elected 78 women (14.4%) to the 543-seat Lok Sabha and 33 women (13.9%) to the 237-seat Rajya Sabha. These numbers highlight ongoing gender gaps in both countries.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union also reports that countries like Rwanda (61.3%), Bolivia (53.1%), Cuba (48.9%), Mexico (48.5%), and Costa Rica (47.5%) have high female parliamentary representation. This demonstrates that gender parity is achievable across diverse systems through methods such as quotas, mandates, cultural shifts, and changes in gender norms. In the US, there are institutional arrangements that perpetuate gender gaps. In recent elections, featuring Mrs Clinton in 2016 and Harris in 2024, both candidates lost partly due to the Electoral College system, which requires 270 of the 538 votes based on popular support [6]. Feminist scholar Brule argued that women have less influence in electoral decisions, which impedes systemic change, and felt overwhelmed by the

barriers and social inequalities they faced during the 2019 election [7]. Carnegie's research [8] on the 2019 Nigerian election [8] found that 807 petitions were filed, of which 582 were dismissed, 12 were withdrawn, and 30 resulted in court-ordered reruns, highlighting electoral challenges that limit equal participation.

The research employs multidimensional theories, including Marxian Weber Class Representation Theory, Majoritarian Pluralism Theory, Liberal Feminist Theory, Institutional Theory, Critical Mass Theory, Intersectionality, Consociationalism Theory of power sharing, [9] and the Conservative Force of 'Machismo' Theory, to examine the factors that perpetuate gender inequalities in politics. It also applies the UN-TACT framework (Think, Assess, Consider, and Take Action), developed to analyse how women can navigate systemic barriers of institutional exclusions and socio-cultural forces that support male dominance.

Purpose of Study

The research highlights the ongoing underrepresentation of women in electoral politics, despite commitments to gender equality. Political parties often prefer male-focused nominations and lack enough gender-sensitive policies. Awe [10] notes that poor policy implementation and socio-biological perceptions hinder women's participation. Economic and cultural barriers based on patriarchal values worsen these issues. The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres (2022), [11] noted that achieving gender equality will take 300 years, and reaching 50% representation by 2030 may no longer be feasible, underscoring the importance of the study. To address this, the study examines the underrepresentation in the 2019 elections in Nigeria and India with the following specific objectives.

1. To analyse women's performance in the 2019 general elections in Nigeria and India.

2. To examine institutional, Economic, Political, and Socio-cultural perceptions, including electoral regulations, campaign funding, and Political parties' challenges regarding the 2019 elections, if any, that have promoted or marginalised women.
3. Investigate the variables contributing to women's electoral performance in the face of male dominance in the political parties.
4. Investigate areas of commonalities and differences between India's and Nigeria's

general elections, political parties' mechanisms, and gender representation in 2019.

5. Propose country-specific measures to enhance women's future performance in elections.

Descriptive Analysis Framework

The study discussed the following descriptive framework.

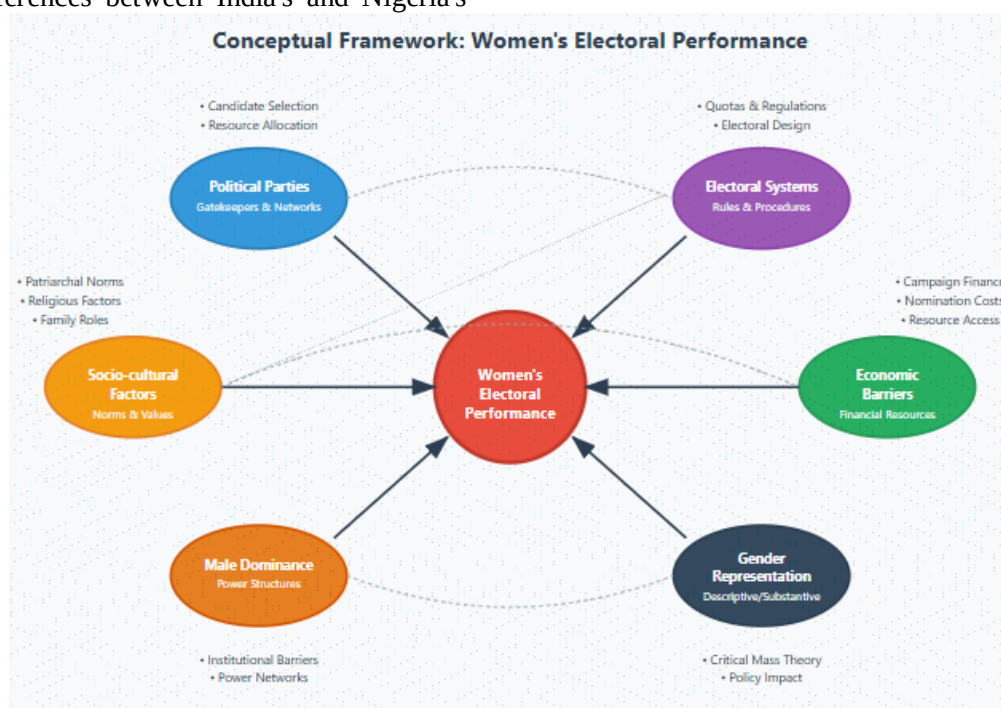


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework on Women's Electoral Performance.

Source: Author's Designed Framework

Electoral System: Constitutional and Legal Framework

A 2024 Indian Constitutional Observation Forum Research study [12] on Indian legal frameworks highlights global strategies for achieving gender equality in politics. India's constitution, primarily through the 73rd and 74th Amendments of 1993, allocates one-third of local government seats for women. Thirty years later, approximately 1.4 million women have been elected to local offices, establishing a strong foundation for political participation that extends beyond symbolism. Similar quotas are absent at the state and national levels; the

2022 Women's Reservation Bill, passed by the BJP, remains unimplemented. In contrast, Nigeria's 1999 Constitution [13] lacks amendments like India's, which makes gender representation more difficult. It maintains rules that promote men's political agenda, despite promising to treat everyone equally. For example, Section 42(3) prohibits discrimination in public employment. Aina noted that Section 26 restricts citizenship by registration to women married to Nigerian men, thereby creating obstacles for women to participate in politics. Also, she described the nature of gender rights in the constitution, which uses patriarchal language, with 'he' appearing 235 times and

'woman' only twice [14]. Significantly, shows both countries' electoral systems are gender-blind, ignoring the barriers women face and the lack of enforcement measures.

Political Party Dynamics and Institutional Barriers

Political parties have a crucial influence on women's electoral access through their structures, cultures, and nomination processes. Bassey [15] notes that parties often prefer wealthy or elite candidates for financial backing, overlooking merit, which puts women with limited means at a disadvantage. Besides, observers' reports in the 2019 elections highlighted that patriarchal values were seen as demeaning across Zimbabwe, Africa, and parts of Asia due to women's political roles being seen as threats to traditional norms, which coexist with informal networks supporting men [16].

Malhotra pointed out that India's caste system adds complexity, with caste factors influencing whether gender hierarchies are reinforced in regional or party contexts [17]. Awe described Nigerian parties as personalised, patronage-based, and nomination-based, with "godfathers" controlling candidate selection. This system creates disadvantages for women, while Indian parties have more institutionalised, gender-sensitive nomination processes [18].

Socio-Cultural Factors and Gender Norms Barrier

Research shows that socio-cultural factors shape women's political participation in both countries. Sule, Adamu, and Sambo [19] note that cultural views of women as mothers and caregivers often conflict with political roles that require travel, irregular hours, and public exposure. These expectations are reinforced by religious teachings, traditions, and societal norms that depict politics as a "masculine domain". Sambo distinguished the religious role as an evidential factor in Nigerian politics

compared to India, due to the conservative interpretations of religious texts that are often used to justify the exclusion of women from political leadership.

The intersection of education and economic factors creates additional barriers; even educated women may lack the financial resources needed for campaigns.

Economic Barriers and Campaign Financing

The UNIFEM 2019 Annual Gender Donor Roundtable (GDRT) highlights that economic barriers are immediate and significant obstacles to women's political participation in both countries. Women's underrepresentation and challenges in campaign financing affect all candidates, but they impact women more significantly, given their limited access to personal wealth, networks, and informal funding. The high costs of nomination forms, campaign materials, and electoral activities are significant hurdles, especially in Nigeria, where nomination fees are often prohibitively expensive and formal banking systems or family resources may be insufficient for competitive campaigns. The 2019 Carnegie study highlights differences between India and Nigeria in campaign finance and support. Indian parties tend to offer better support for female candidates, whereas Nigerian parties often expect candidates to self-fund, regardless of gender. This shows broader differences in party institutionalisation and resource use.

Salimi's study highlights factors affecting women's political rise. Indira Gandhi, India's Prime Minister (1966-1977, 1980-1984), exemplifies effective female leadership, which, apart from her 1984 assassination, owed much to her family legacy as Nehru's daughter [22], illustrating how dynasties help women's advancement but may restrict others. Nigeria, by contrast, has not had a female president or prime minister since its independence, Onuoha and Ojo [23]. Nigeria's first election was held in 1959, with local rulers managing governance

under colonial rule until a military takeover in the 1970s, which led to their continued rule until 1999.

Women's Political Leadership and Performance

INEC Nigeria's 2018 record [24] noted Patricia Etteh as Nigeria's highest-ranking woman, serving briefly as House Speaker in 2007. The contrast highlights cultural attitudes, institutional support or barriers, and the impact of political violence on women's political ambitions. The analysis reveals the underrepresentation of women in legislative positions in both countries, with notable differences. Data from IPU 2018 [25] indicate that India's women's representation increased from 9.5% in 1999 to 14.3% in 2019, while Nigeria's remained stagnant or declined.

Comparative Electoral Systems and Outcomes

According to IDEA [26], electoral system comparisons demonstrate how institutional arrangements shape gender representation. India and Nigeria use first-past-the-post systems in single-member constituencies, which are less effective for women than proportional systems. However, implementation and cultural context create different opportunities and constraints. IDEA's federal structure and regional parties in India

support women's political progress, with some states and parties doing better. According to ECI [27], women's representation in local governance has created a pipeline of female politicians for higher elections. Nigeria's political system has been marred by leaders who manipulate power, resulting in widespread corruption and calls for reform. The 2019 election choice of godfatherism saw APC's President Buhari's 'Kabals' influence politics through bias, fueling violence and insurgency, challenging gender equity policies. Thus, women's representation hinges on competitive elections; however, Nigeria's history shows that those in control often disregard public opinion, and Nigerian women must therefore forge their own path to power.

Method

This research employs a comprehensive mixed-methods approach designed to provide insights into women's electoral performance and a qualitative understanding of the complex factors influencing gender representation in electoral politics. The methodological framework combines comparative analysis techniques with multiple data collection methods to ensure a thorough examination of political parties, elections, and gender representation in the 2019 general elections in India and Nigeria through 100 participants, as described in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Overview of The Mixed Method Design Adopted

Overview of the Mixed Methods Research Adopted		
	Qualitative Research	Quantitative Research
The Subject-Matter	Explored the concepts of political parties' Elections and gender representation in India and Nigerian politics through investigation, utilising data gathered from both primary and secondary sources, rather than relying solely on literature.	Interpreted the data and statistics received to confirm objectives and assumptions.
Methodologies	Inclusive of ethnography, such as getting detailed insights into the complexities of women's low performance in the political culture of male dominance through the methodology of research design, such as data collection methods, ie, tools and procedures, data analysis,	Observational investigational

	techniques (statistical tests or qualitative analysis), sampling techniques, and ethical consideration.	
Approach	Explored 100 participants through the inductive approach of bottom-up, with the use of tools and data cited below:	Deductive: scientific study of the 100 participants knowledgeable about political parties and elections to obtain conclusions on gender performance.
Sampling Methods	Inclusive of purposive, convenience, and snowball sampling to select participants.	convenience, purposeful
Tools used for Data collection	• Structured interviews, • Focus-group-interviews • Participants/non-participants' • Observation, lived experience • Open-ended diaries, • Review of testimonies, • archival Information • website algorithms, documents, and notes.	Prospective or reflective (ex post facto) data, Questionnaires, and Focus Group discussions (FGD) were used to ascertain the assumptions.
Data Analysis	Transcription verbatim, coding, to support the discourse, content, thematic, or descriptive analysis	Data was analysed using SPSS software for coding.
Presentation of Findings Limitations Conclusions	Numerous interactive interpretations, Verbatim quotes, categorising, themes, a conceptual framework, and research objectives were utilised to aid understanding. Limitations were identified through the use of inclusive and exclusive criteria in selecting participants and procedures, which adhered to the rules. Ethical conditions were followed.	There were descriptive, inferential, and reflective numerical forms, accompanied by tables and graphs to support analyses of variance, frequency distributions, position, correlation, cross-tabulation, and regression.

Source: Adopted from Kothari, C. R. (2004). Research methodology: Methods and techniques (2nd Ed). New Age International, Limited, Publishers. New Delhi: India

Ethical principles include ensuring participant safety, data integrity, informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity are strictly adhered to. Participants are informed, and their identities are protected using anonymised identifiers. Data collection was done through a specialised website, www.gender-tda.org, to enhance data privacy and anonymity. The research respects Nigeria and India's cultural diversity, tailoring questionnaires and interviews to gain a deeper understanding of participants' perspectives.

Results Presentation and Analysis

Overview

This chapter presents the findings from the research conducted on political parties, elections, and gender representation in India

and Nigeria, with a specific focus on women's performance in the 2019 general elections. Throughout the chapter, comparative analyses are provided between India and Nigeria to highlight similarities and differences in gender representation patterns and their determinants. The findings are presented using tables, charts, and thematic analyses of qualitative responses, offering a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay of factors affecting women's political participation and performance in these two significant democracies.

Demographic Profile of Participants

The research involved 100 participants, equally divided between India and Nigeria, classified into four categories. The

demographic characteristics of the participants are summarised in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Distribution of Participants by Category and Country

Participants Category	India	Nigeria	Total
Political Party Members and Electoral Management Body Stakeholders	20	20	40
Members of the Public	10	10	20
Female Politicians and Candidates	15	15	30
Male Elected Candidates	5	25	10
Total	50	50	100

Source: Field Work Findings

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Characteristic	India (n=50)		Nigeria (n=50)		Total (N=100)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Gender						
Male	20	40.0%	20	40.0%	40	40.0%
Female	30	60.0%	30	60.0%	60	60.0%
Age Group						
18-30 years	7	14.0%	6	12.0%	13	13.0%
31-40 years	15	30.0%	18	36.0%	33	33.0%
41-50 years	18	36.0%	16	32.0%	34	34.0%
51-60 years	7	14.0%	8	16.0%	15	15.0%
Above 60 years	3	6.0%	2	4.0%	5	5.0%
Educational Level						
Secondary	5	10.0%	7	14.0%	12	12.0%
Tertiary	28	56.0%	25	50.0%	53	53.0%
Postgraduate	17	34.0%	18	36.0%	35	35.0%
Political Affiliation						
Major Parties*	28	56.0%	26	52.0%	54	54.0%
Minor Parties	12	24.0%	14	28.0%	26	26.0%
No Affiliation	10	20.0%	10	20.0%	20	20.0%

**Major Parties: In India - BJP and INC; In Nigeria: APC and PDP*

Source: Field Work Findings.

The demographic data show a balanced gender distribution among participants, with 60% female and 40% male respondents in both countries, reflecting the study's focus on gender representation. The age distribution indicates that most participants (67%) were between 31 and 50 years old, with similar patterns across both countries. Educational levels were relatively high, with 88% of participants having

tertiary or postgraduate education. Regarding political affiliation, slightly more than half of the participants (54%) were affiliated with major political parties, 26% with minor parties, and 20% had no political affiliation.

Objective 1 - To Analyse Women's Electoral Performance in The 2019 General Elections in Nigeria and India.

Representation of Women as Candidates and Elected Officials

The 2019 general elections in both India and Nigeria witnessed varying levels of women's

participation as candidates and elected officials. Table 4 presents the comparative data on women's candidature and electoral success in both countries.

Table 4. Comparative Data of Women's Representation in the 2019 General Elections

Parameter	India	Nigeria
Candidature		
Total Number of Candidates	8,049	4,680
Number of Female Candidates	719 (8.9%)	374 (8.0%)
Electoral Success		
Total Elected Representatives (Lower House)	543	360
Number of Elected Female Representatives	78 (14.4%)	11 (3.1%)
Voter Participation		
Male Voter Turnout	67.0%	35.6%
Female Voter Turnout	67.2%	34.8%

Sources: Field Work Findings. Election Commission of India (ECI) (2019), and Independent National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (INEC) (2019).

The data reveals significant disparities in women's representation between the two countries. While the percentage of female candidates was similar in both India (8.9%) and Nigeria (8.0%), there was a stark difference in electoral success rates. In India, 14.4% of the elected representatives in the Lok Sabha (the House of Representatives) were women, compared to only 3.1% in Nigeria's House of Representatives. This indicates that female candidates in India had a higher success rate than their candidature percentage would suggest. In contrast, in Nigeria, women's already low candidature translated into even lower representation in elected positions.

Regarding voter participation, India demonstrated gender parity, with female voter turnout (67.2%) marginally exceeding male turnout (67.0%). In contrast, Nigeria showed lower overall voter participation and a small gender gap, with male turnout (35.6%) slightly higher than female turnout (34.8%).

Perceptions of Women's Political Participation

Participants were asked to rate women's political participation in the 2019 elections on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 indicating "very poor" and 10 indicating "excellent." The responses are summarised in Figure 2.

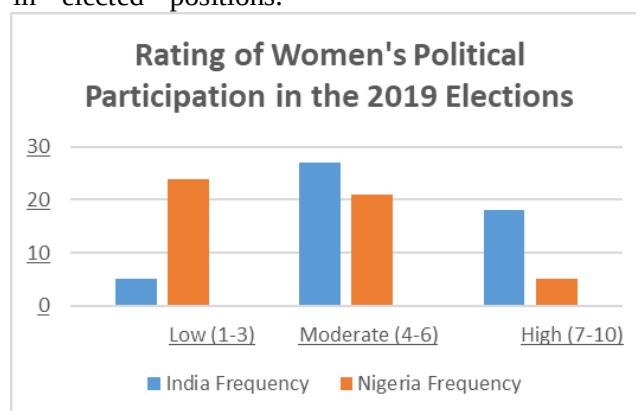


Figure 2. Rating of Women's Political Participation in the 2019 Elections

Source: Fieldwork findings

When asked to defend their ratings, participants provided various reasons reflecting the complexities of gender representation in politics. These qualitative responses were analysed thematically, and the key themes are presented in Table 5 and Figure 3 below.

Objective 2. To examine Institutional, economic, Political, and Socio-cultural factors or perceptions, including electoral regulations and the challenges faced by women in the political parties regarding the 2019 elections, if any, that have promoted or marginalised women.

Table 5. Thematic Analysis of Women's Political Participation

Theme	India	Nigeria	Combined
Institutional barriers	22%	28%	25%
Socio-cultural factors	26%	32%	29%
Economic constraints	15%	18%	16.5%
Political party dynamics	24%	16%	20%
Personal/Individual factors	13%	6%	9.5%

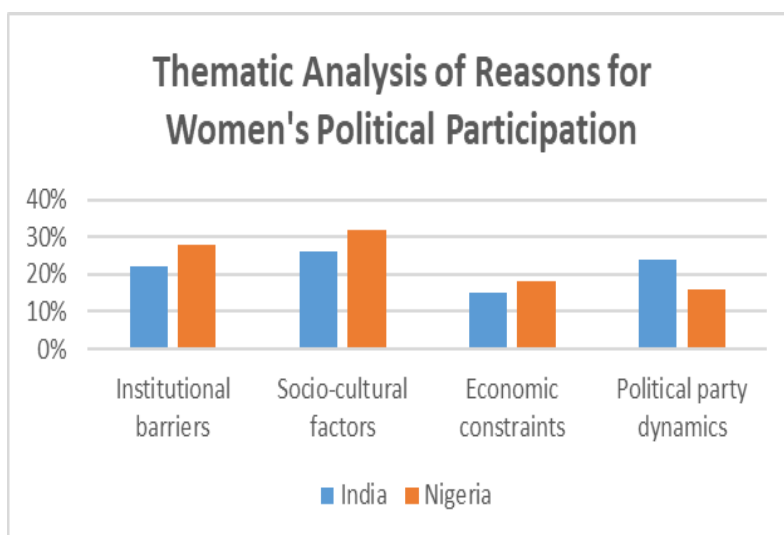


Figure 3. Field Work Findings

In both countries, socio-cultural factors emerged as the most significant theme, accounting for 29% of responses overall (26% in India and 32% in Nigeria). Institutional barriers were cited more frequently by Nigerian respondents (28%) compared to Indian respondents (22%). Political party dynamics were acknowledged more often by Indian participants (24%) than Nigerian participants (16%), suggesting different perceptions of how

party structures influence gender representation in the two countries.

Knowledge and Awareness of Electoral Regulations and Gender Representation

Awareness of Electoral Regulations: Participants' knowledge of electoral regulations related to gender representation was assessed through several questions. The responses are summarised in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Knowledge of Electoral Regulations (% of Respondents Who Answered "Yes")

Knowledge Item	India	Nigeria	Chi-Square	p-value
Aware of constitutional provisions regarding equal political rights	84%	76%	1.05	0.306
Aware of electoral regulations regarding gender representation	78%	70%	0.87	0.351
Aware of gender neutrality principles in electoral laws	72%	64%	0.76	0.383
Aware of special provisions/quotas for women in politics	86%	52%	13.52	0.000*
A higher awareness of electoral regulations than	68%	58%	1.09	0.296

*Statistically significant at $p < 0.05$

Source: Field Work Findings

The results indicate that Indian respondents generally have higher awareness of electoral regulations than Nigerian respondents across all knowledge items. However, the chi-square tests reveal that most of these differences were not statistically significant, except for awareness of special provisions/quotas for women in politics. The significant difference ($p < 0.001$) in this item reflects India's more extended history with gender quotas at the local government level,

which have been in place since 1993 through the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments.

Perception of Electoral Management Bodies' Implementation of Gender-Neutral Principles: Participants were asked to rate the extent to which electoral management bodies (the Election Commission of India and the Independent National Electoral Commission in Nigeria) implemented gender-neutral principles in the 2019 elections, as presented in Figure 4.

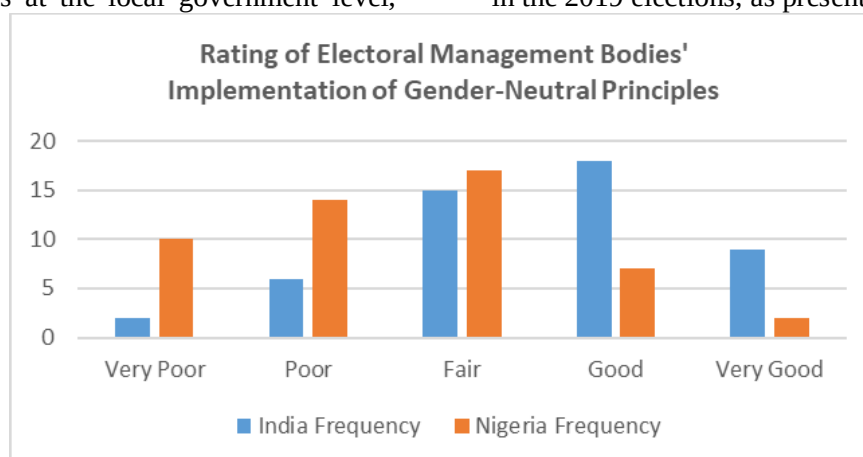


Figure 4. Rating of Electoral Management Bodies' Implementation of Gender-Neutral Principles

Source: Field Work Findings

The data reveals more positive perceptions of electoral management bodies in India, with 54% of respondents rating the Election Commission of India's implementation of gender-neutral principles as "Good" or "Very Good," compared to only 18% for Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission.

Conversely, nearly half of Nigerian respondents (48%) rated their electoral commission's performance as "Poor" or "Very Poor," compared to just 16% in India.

Factors Influencing Women's Performance in the 2019 Elections

Political Party Dynamics

Political party dynamics were explored through questions about party rules, candidate

selection processes, and support for female candidates. Figure 5 summarises the findings regarding the representation of women in party executive positions.

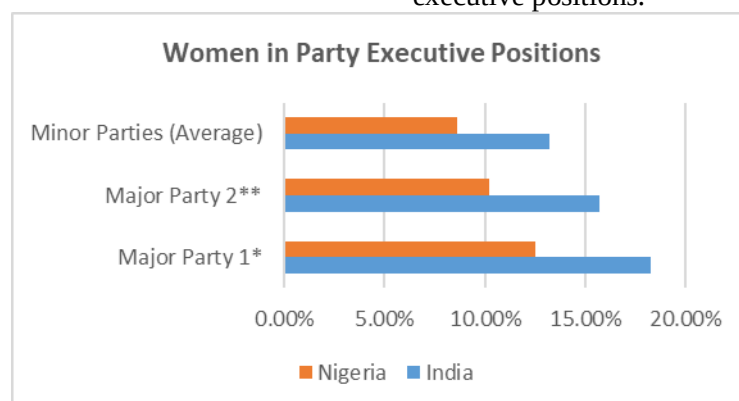


Figure-5. Representation of Women in Party Executive Positions

Source: Field Work Findings

The data indicate a higher representation of women in party executive positions in India (16.1%) compared to Nigeria (10.7%). In both countries, major parties had better representation than minor parties, with the first

major party showing the highest percentage in each country. Participants were also asked about factors within political parties that influenced women's candidature, as shown in Figure 6.

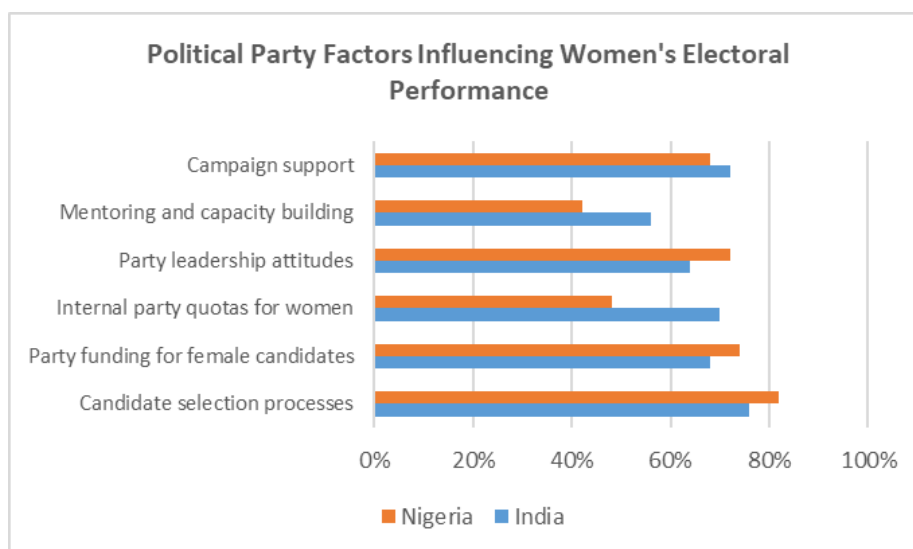


Figure 6. Political Party Factors Influencing Women's Performance.

Source: Field Work Findings

Candidate selection processes emerged as the most frequently mentioned factor in both countries (76% in India and 82% in Nigeria), followed by party funding for female candidates (68% in India and 74% in Nigeria). Notable differences include the emphasis on internal party quotas in India (70%) compared

to Nigeria (48%), and the greater emphasis on party leadership attitudes in Nigeria (72%) compared to India (64%). The focus group discussions with political party members revealed additional insights into party dynamics, as shown in the key themes analysis presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Key Themes from Focused Group Discussions with Party Members

Theme	Key Findings
Intra-party Democracy	- More structured nomination processes in Indian parties - More personalised and patronage-based selection in Nigerian parties - Limited transparency in both countries, but more formal procedures in India
Financial Support	- Better financial support mechanisms for female candidates in Indian parties - Higher financial barriers for women in Nigerian politics - Informal funding networks are more accessible to men in both countries
Party Ideology	- Greater ideological commitment to gender equality in some Indian parties - More conservative gender norms in Nigerian party structures - Instrumental approach to women's representation in both countries
Organizational Culture	- Male-dominated party cultures in both countries - More formalised women's wings in Indian parties - Greater intimidation and harassment reported by Nigerian female politicians

Source: Field work findings

Socio-cultural Factors

Socio-cultural factors affecting women's political participation were assessed through multiple questions across all participants. The

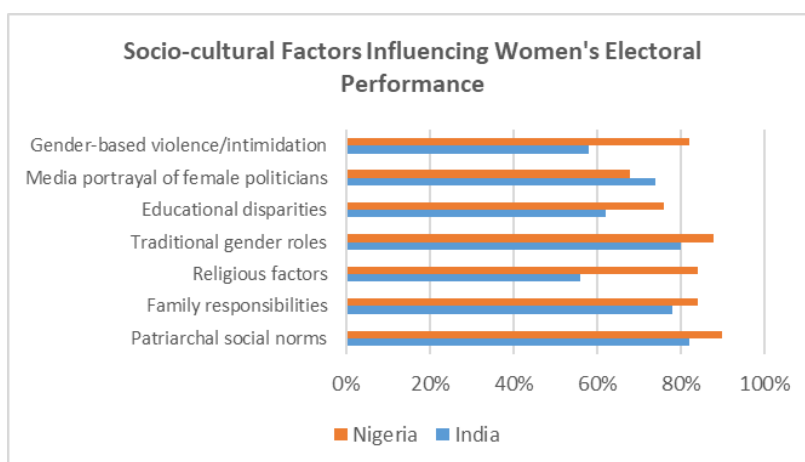
percentage of respondents who agreed that specific socio-cultural factors influenced women's performance in the 2019 elections is cited in Table 8 and Figure 7.

Table 8. Socio-cultural Factors Influencing Women's Electoral Performance (% Agreeing)

Factor	India	Nigeria	Chi-Square	p-value
Patriarchal social norms	82%	90%	1.47	0.225
Family responsibilities	78%	84%	0.64	0.424
Religious factors	56%	84%	9.60	0.002*
Traditional gender roles	80%	88%	1.33	0.249
Educational disparities	62%	76%	2.38	0.123
Media portrayal of female politicians	74%	68%	0.48	0.488
Gender-based violence/intimidation	58%	82%	7.14	0.008*

Source: Field Work Findings

*Statistically significant at $p < 0.05$

**Figure 7.** Socio-Cultural Factors Influencing Women's Electoral Performance

Source: Field Work Findings

The results indicate that patriarchal social norms and traditional gender roles were perceived as highly influential in both countries, with no statistically significant differences between India and Nigeria. However, significant differences were observed in the perceived influence of religious factors ($p = 0.002$) and gender-based violence/intimidation ($p = 0.008$), with higher percentages of Nigerian respondents

identifying these factors as important influences on women's electoral performance.

Economic Factors

Economic barriers to women's political participation were explored through questions about campaign financing, economic independence, and resource allocation. The findings are in Table 9 and Figure 8.

Table 9. Economic Factors Influencing Women's Electoral Performance (% Agreeing)

Factor	India	Nigeria	Chi-Square	p-value
Campaign financing difficulties	86%	92%	1.05	0.306
Limited access to economic resources	78%	84%	0.64	0.424
Cost of nomination forms	62%	88%	9.60	0.002*
Dependency on male sponsors	70%	84%	2.92	0.087
Lower economic status of women	76%	82%	0.59	0.442
Insufficient party funding	68%	74%	0.48	0.488

Source: Field Work Findings

*Statistically significant at $p < 0.05$

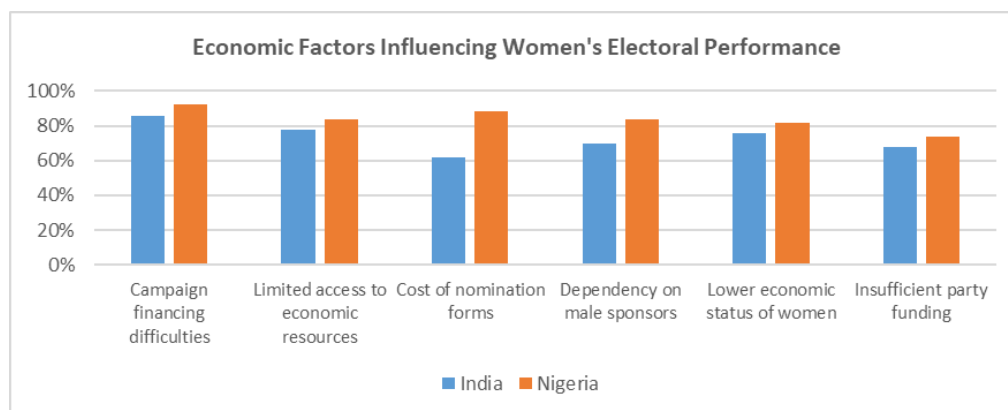


Figure 8. Economic Factors Influencing Women's Electoral Performance

Source: Field Work Findings

Campaign financing difficulties and limited access to economic resources were identified as major barriers in both countries, with no statistically significant differences between them. However, a significant difference was observed in the perceived influence of the cost of nomination forms ($p = 0.002$), with a higher percentage of Nigerian respondents (88%)

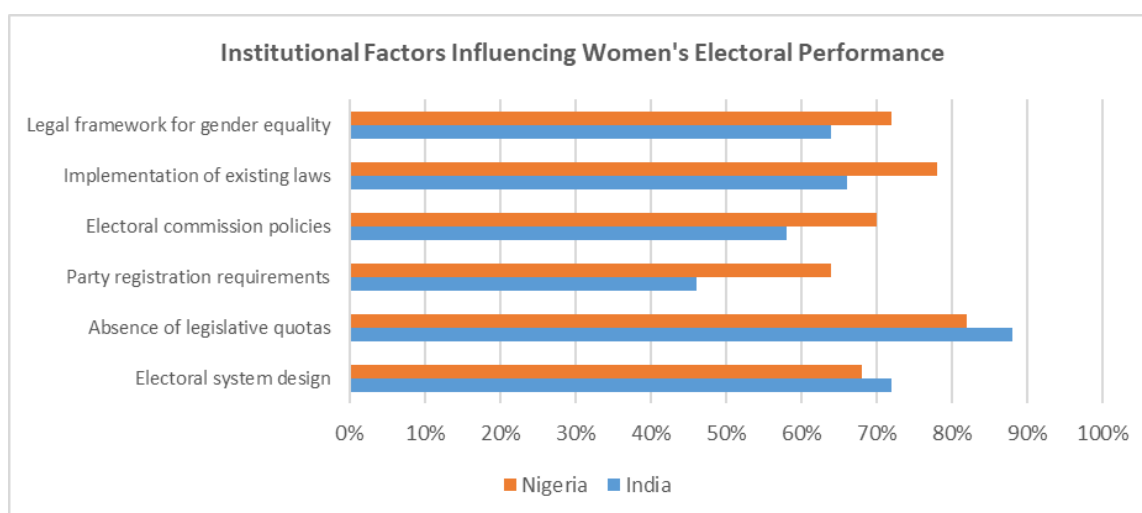
identifying it as a barrier than Indian respondents (62%).

Institutional Factors

Institutional factors affecting women's political participation were assessed through questions about electoral systems, quotas, and legislative frameworks—table 10 and Figure 9 present the findings.

Table 10. Institutional Factors Influencing Women's Electoral Performance (% Agreeing)

Factor	India	Nigeria	Chi-Square	p-value
Electoral system design	72%	68%	0.20	0.655
Absence of legislative quotas	88%	82%	0.76	0.383
Party registration requirements	46%	64%	3.31	0.069
Electoral commission policies	58%	70%	1.65	0.199
Implementation of existing laws	66%	78%	1.88	0.170
Legal framework for gender equality	64%	72%	0.78	0.377

**Figure 9.** Institutional Factors Influencing Women's Electoral Performance.

Source: Field Work Findings

While no statistically significant differences were observed in the perceived influence of institutional factors between the two countries, respondents in both India (88%) and Nigeria (82%) identified the absence of legislative quotas as a significant factor. Party registration requirements were perceived as more influential in Nigeria (64%) compared to India (46%), though this difference approached but did not reach statistical significance ($p = 0.069$).

Challenges Faced by Women in the 2019 Elections

Challenges Reported by Female Politicians and Candidates

Female politicians and candidates who participated in the study (15 from each country) were explicitly asked about the challenges they faced during the 2019 elections. The findings in Table 11 and Figure 10.

Table 11. Challenges Faced by Female Politicians in the 2019 Elections (% Reporting)

Challenge	India (n=15)	Nigeria (n=15)	Combined (N=30)
Gender-based discrimination	80.0%	93.3%	86.7%
Financial constraints	86.7%	93.3%	90.0%
Balancing family responsibilities	73.3%	80.0%	76.7%
Political violence/intimidation	53.3%	86.7%	70.0%
Limited party support	66.7%	73.3%	70.0%
Media bias	60.0%	66.7%	63.3%
Lack of networking opportunities	53.3%	60.0%	56.7%
Voter prejudice	66.7%	80.0%	73.3%

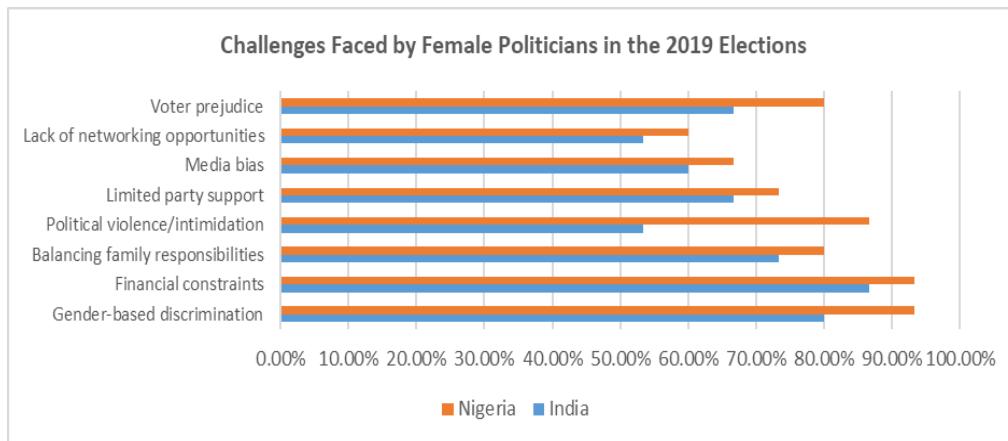


Figure 10. Challenges Faced by Female Politicians in the 2019 Elections

Source: Field Work findings

Financial constraints emerged as the most significant challenge for female politicians in both countries, reported by 86.7% of Indian and 93.3% of Nigerian respondents. Gender-based discrimination was also widely reported, especially in Nigeria (93.3%). Notable differences include the substantially higher reporting of political violence/intimidation in Nigeria (86.7%) compared to India (53.3%),

and higher reports of voter prejudice in Nigeria (80.0%) compared to India (66.7%).

Perceptions of Challenges from Different Stakeholder Groups

Perceptions of the challenges women face in politics varied across participant categories. Table 12 presents a comparison of these perceptions.

Table 12. Perceptions of Challenges Faced by Women in Politics (Mean Scores on a Scale of 1-5)

Challenge	Female Politicians	Male Politicians	Party Members	Public	F-Value	p-value
Gender discrimination	4.37	3.20	3.78	3.95	5.63	0.001*
Financial barriers	4.53	3.90	4.25	4.10	2.31	0.082
Family responsibilities	4.10	3.50	3.88	4.15	2.42	0.071
Political violence	3.87	2.60	3.43	3.75	6.18	0.001*
Party support	3.93	3.10	3.48	3.65	3.15	0.029*
Media bias	3.63	2.70	3.05	3.55	4.48	0.006*
Networking limitations	3.43	2.90	3.23	3.25	1.72	0.168
Voter prejudice	3.90	2.80	3.58	3.85	4.94	0.003*

*Statistically significant at $p < 0.05$

Source: Field Work Findings

The analysis reveals significant differences in perceptions of challenges across different stakeholder groups for gender discrimination, political violence, party support, media bias, and voter prejudice. Female politicians reported higher mean scores than male politicians,

indicating a greater perceived severity of these challenges. The perceptions of party members and the public generally fell between these two groups, with the public often aligning more closely with the views of the female politicians.

Variables Contributing to Women's Electoral Performance

Objective 3: To identify the variables contributing to women's electoral performance in the face of male dominance in the political parties.

To assess the relative influence of different factors on women's electoral performance, participants were asked to rank a set of variables in order of importance. The results, presented as mean rankings (lower numbers indicating greater importance), are shown in Table 13 and Figure 11.

Table 13. Ranking of Variables Contributing to Women's Electoral Performance (Mean Rank)

Variable	India	Nigeria	Combined	t-value	p-value
Political party support	2.4	2.7	2.55	-1.06	0.292
Financial resources	2.6	2.3	2.45	1.13	0.261
Educational qualifications	4.5	5.2	4.85	-1.78	0.078
Prior political experience	3.7	4.1	3.90	-1.24	0.218
Family political background	3.3	3.0	3.15	1.05	0.296
Media coverage	4.2	4.6	4.40	-1.33	0.187
Socio-cultural environment	3.1	2.5	2.80	2.02	0.046*
Personal qualities/charisma	4.2	3.6	3.90	1.94	0.055

Source: Field Work Findings

*Statistically significant at $p < 0.05$

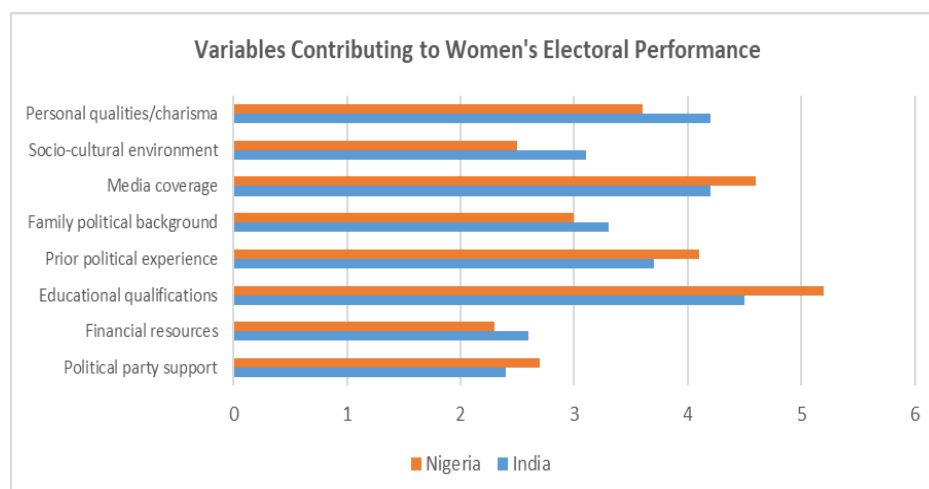


Figure 11. Variables Contributing to Women's Electoral Performance

Source: Field Work Findings

Objective 4: Identify similarities and differences between India's and Nigeria's general elections, political parties' mechanisms, and gender representation in 2019.

In both countries, the FGDs revealed that the type of political party support and financial resources were the most important variables contributing to women's electoral performance,

with mean ranks of 2.55 and 2.45, respectively, across the combined sample. The socio-cultural environment was the only variable that showed a statistically significant difference between the two countries ($p = 0.046$), with Nigerian respondents ranking it as more important (mean rank 2.5) than Indian respondents (mean rank 3.1).

Qualitative Analysis of Focused Group Discussions

The focus group discussions (FGDs) with political party members and stakeholders provided rich qualitative data that complemented the quantitative findings. Following the methodology outlined in Chapter Three, content analysis was employed to identify recurring themes, patterns, and insights from these discussions. The analysis was structured around the key dimensions of knowledge, perceptions, rules, and the challenges women face in politics.

Party Decision-Making Processes and Gender Representation

A prominent theme that emerged from the FGDs was the nature of party decision-making processes and their impact on gender representation. Participants highlighted various formal and informal mechanisms that influenced candidate selection and women's participation in party structures. (FGD Participants, India).

In India, participants noted more formalised decision-making processes, with established committees for candidate selection. However, several female politicians noted that even within these formal structures, informal networks often influenced decision-making. As one female politician from India stated:

"The candidate selection committee exists on paper, but the real decisions are made in closed-door meetings dominated by senior male leaders. Women are included in the committee, but our voices are often sidelined."

In contrast, Nigerian participants described more personalised decision-making processes centred around influential individuals within parties. A female politician from Nigeria observed:

"Party decisions are controlled by 'godfathers' who determine who gets nominated. As women, we often lack access to these powerful networks, making it difficult to

secure nominations regardless of our qualifications or popularity."

Both countries' participants identified the concentration of financial resources as a critical factor in party decision-making, with those controlling party finances having disproportionate influence over candidate selection. This was seen as particularly disadvantageous to women, who typically had less access to financial resources.

Implementation of Party Rules and Policies

The implementation of party rules and policies regarding gender representation was another key theme from the FGDs. Participants discussed the gap between formal policies and actual practices within political parties. In India, several participants noted that while major parties had adopted voluntary quotas or targets for women's representation, implementation was inconsistent. A party executive from India explained:

"Our party constitution stipulates that women should comprise at least 33% of candidates, but this is treated more as an aspiration than a requirement. When electoral calculations come into play, these commitments are often the first to be sacrificed."

Nigerian participants highlighted similar discrepancies between policy and practice, with the additional observation that party rules were often selectively applied. A female candidate from Nigeria shared:

"The party has rules that should create opportunities for women, but these rules are flexibly interpreted depending on who is involved. Male aspirants often get waivers from requirements that are strictly enforced for women."

Electoral management body stakeholders in both countries acknowledged challenges in enforcing gender-related provisions in party constitutions, given their limited regulatory powers over internal party affairs.

Perceived Effectiveness of Existing Measures

Participants discussed the effectiveness of existing measures to promote women's political participation, revealing varying perspectives across different stakeholder groups.

Participants were asked to rate the potential effectiveness of various measures to enhance

women's political representation on a scale of 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating greater perceived effectiveness. The results are presented in Table 13 and Figure 12.

Objective 5: Propose country-specific measures to enhance women's future performance in general elections and recommend areas of future research.

Table 14. Perceived Effectiveness of Measures to Enhance Women's Political Representation (Mean Scores)

Measure	India	Nigeria	Combined	t-value	p-value
Legislative quotas	4.26	4.42	4.34	-0.96	0.339
Reduced nomination fees for women	3.86	4.38	4.12	-3.14	0.002*
Campaign finance reforms	4.04	4.22	4.13	-1.15	0.253
Party quotas	4.18	4.08	4.13	0.66	0.511
Mentoring programs	3.92	3.68	3.80	1.51	0.134
Capacity building for women	4.06	4.00	4.03	0.39	0.697
Media sensitization	3.72	3.84	3.78	-0.78	0.437
Electoral system reforms	3.90	4.12	4.01	-1.44	0.153
Gender-sensitive civic education	3.98	3.96	3.97	0.13	0.897

Source: Field Work Findings

*Statistically significant at $p < 0.05$

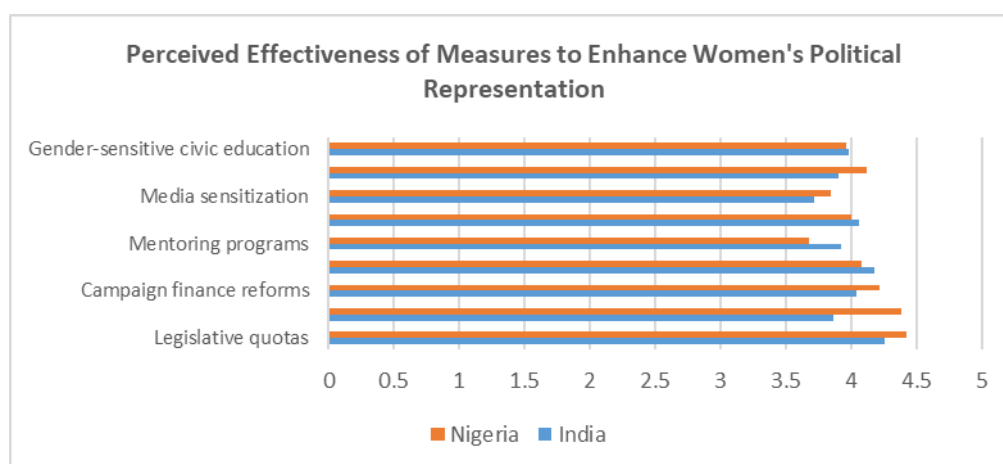


Figure 12. Perceived Effectiveness of Measures to Enhance Women's Political Representation

Source: Field Work Findings

Legislative quotas were perceived as the most effective measure in both countries, with a combined mean score of 4.34. Reduced nomination fees for women showed a statistically significant difference between the two countries ($p = 0.002$), with Nigerian

respondents rating this measure as more effective (mean 4.38) compared to Indian respondents (mean 3.86). This aligns with the earlier finding regarding the cost of nomination forms being perceived as a more significant barrier in Nigeria.

Suggested Changes to the Electoral System and Legislation

Participants were asked to suggest specific changes to electoral systems and legislation that

could enhance gender representation. The responses were analysed thematically, and the frequency of different themes is presented in Table 15 and Figure 13.

Table 15. Suggested Changes to Electoral System and Legislation (% of Respondents Mentioning)

Suggested Change	India	Nigeria	Combined
Mandatory legislative quotas	84%	78%	81%
Proportional representation elements	42%	36%	39%
Financial incentives for parties	58%	72%	65%
Penalties for non-compliance with gender requirements	46%	64%	55%
Reform of electoral commission practices	38%	52%	45%
Campaign finance regulations	62%	68%	65%
Reform of party registration requirements	28%	44%	36%
Enhanced monitoring and enforcement	52%	60%	56%

Source: Field Work Findings

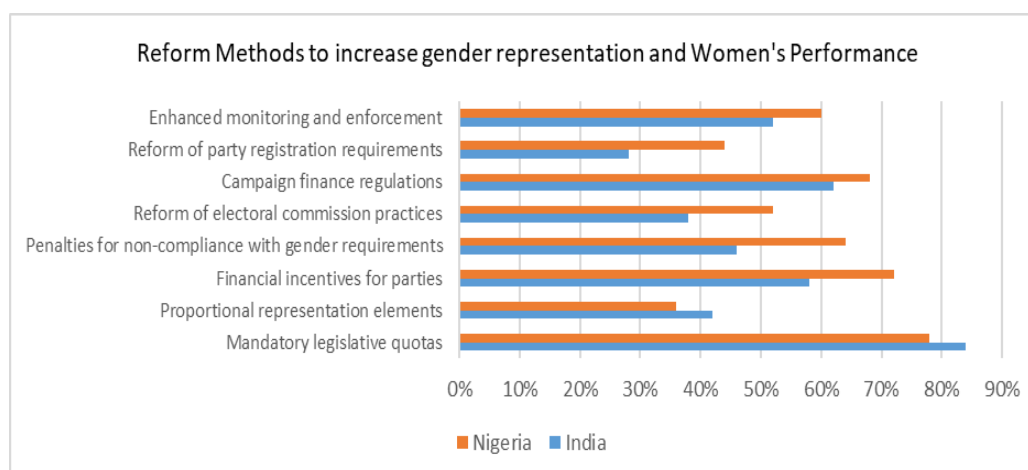


Figure 13. Reform Methods to increase gender representation and performance

Source: Field Work Findings

Mandatory legislative quotas were the most frequently suggested change in both countries (84% in India and 78% in Nigeria). Financial incentives for parties and campaign finance regulations were also commonly suggested in both countries. Notable differences include higher support for penalties for non-compliance with gender requirements in Nigeria (64%) than in India (46%), as well as a greater emphasis on reforming party registration requirements in Nigeria (44%) than in India (28%).

Comparative Analysis of Women's Political Participation in India and Nigeria

Drawing on the findings presented in the previous sections, this section provides a comprehensive comparative analysis of women's political participation in India and Nigeria, focusing on the 2019 general elections. The comparison is structured around key dimensions of gender representation in electoral politics.

Electoral Performance and Representation

The comparative analysis of electoral performance reveals both similarities and notable differences between India and Nigeria. While both countries had similar percentages of female candidates (8.9% in India and 8.0% in Nigeria), the success rates differed significantly. In India, women comprised 14.4% of elected representatives in the lower house, indicating that female candidates were relatively more successful than their male counterparts in securing nominations. In contrast, Nigerian women's representation in the House of Representatives was only 3.1%, suggesting that female candidates faced greater obstacles in translating candidature into electoral success.

This disparity can be attributed to several interconnected factors. First, the more extended history of women's political participation in India, including the experience of a female Prime Minister (Indira Gandhi) and numerous female Chief Ministers, has created more favourable conditions for women's electoral success. Second, as indicated by the data on party support and institutional measures, Indian political parties appeared to provide more substantive backing to female candidates after they were nominated. Third, the reservation system for women in local governance in India has created a pipeline of experienced female politicians, some of whom have successfully contested national elections.

Institutional and Structural Factors

The institutional and structural landscape for women's political participation varied significantly between the two countries. India's constitutional framework, which includes reserved seats for women in local governance (33% in Panchayati Raj Institutions), has created a foundation for women's political engagement that is absent in Nigeria. This institutional difference was reflected in participants' awareness of special provisions for women in politics, which was significantly

higher in India (86%) compared to Nigeria (52%).

Electoral systems in both countries, characterised by first-past-the-post in single-member constituencies, were identified as disadvantageous to women's representation. However, the implementation of these systems within different socio-political contexts has led to varying outcomes. The stronger institutional capacity of India's Election Commission, reflected in the higher ratings of its implementation of gender-neutral principles, has contributed to a more level playing field compared to Nigeria.

Party structures and nomination processes also revealed significant differences. While both countries' political parties remained male-dominated, Indian parties demonstrated more formalised mechanisms for women's inclusion, including women's wings with substantial organisational presence and, in some cases, voluntary quotas. Nigerian parties, by contrast, showed more personalised, patronage-based nomination processes, which were identified as particularly disadvantageous to women with less access to influential networks.

Socio-cultural Context

The socio-cultural context influencing women's political participation showed both everyday challenges and country-specific variations. Patriarchal social norms and traditional gender roles were identified as significant barriers in both countries, with no statistically significant differences in their perceived influence. However, religious factors were perceived as significantly more influential in Nigeria (84%) than in India (56%), reflecting a stronger role of religious considerations in Nigerian politics, particularly in the northern regions.

Gender-based violence and intimidation also showed significant differences, with higher reporting in Nigeria (82%) compared to India (58%). This aligns with the experiences shared by female politicians during the focus group

discussions, where Nigerian women reported more severe forms of harassment and intimidation during their campaigns.

The media portrayal of female politicians was identified as a challenge in both countries, though with slightly different manifestations. In India, participants noted stereotypical portrayals focused on women's appearance and family connections rather than their policies or capabilities. In Nigeria, participants highlighted both stereotypical portrayals and insufficient coverage of female candidates, rendering them less visible to voters.

Economic Factors

Economic barriers to women's political participation showed similar patterns in both countries, with campaign financing difficulties and limited access to economic resources identified as significant challenges. However, the specific manifestations of these barriers varied. In Nigeria, the high cost of nomination form fees was identified as a significant barrier (88%), compared with India (62%), reflecting differences in party practices regarding nomination fees. An example from the All Progressives Party (APC) in Nigeria is highlighted in Table 16.

Table 16. The Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) 2019 Expression of Interest and Nomination Fees.

	Position	Expression of Interest Fee (\$)	Nomination Fee (\$)
1	President	1,300	13,403
2	Governor	670	6,700
3	Senate	268	2,680
4	House of Representatives	268	1,340
5	State House of Assembly	134	670

Using exchange rate \$1 = ₦1490

Source: Field Work Findings INEC, Nigeria

N.B.: Though the female nomination form was free, they, however, paid for the Expression of Interest form as shown in Tables 17 and 18

Table 17. All Progressive Congress (APC) 2019 Expression of Interest and Nomination Form Fees

	Position	Nomination Form for Incumbent (\$)	Nomination Form for Fresh Aspirants (\$)
1	President	26,806	13,500
2	Governor	7,037	3,686
3	Senate	3,552	2,211
4	House of Representatives	2,144	1,474
5	State House of Assembly	536	368

Table 18. All Progressives Congress APC 2019 Expression of Interest and Nomination Fees

	Position	Expression of Interest Fee (\$)	Nomination Form Fee (\$)
1	President	N/A	N/A
2	Governor	1,340	6,701
3	Senate	335	2,010
4	House of Representatives	335	1,340
5	State House of Assembly	134	670

Using exchange rate \$1 = ₦149

Source: Field Work Findings INEC, Nigeria

N.B. Female Aspirants were made to Pay only 50 per Cent of the fees for the Nomination Forms

Maximum Limits in Campaign Spending in Nigeria are as follows:

1. A Presidential Candidate can spend \$670,500.
2. A Senatorial Candidate can spend \$26,800.
3. A House of Representatives candidate can spend \$13,400.
4. Candidates for the State House of Assembly can spend \$6,700.
5. Chairmanship election to an Area Council, \$6,700.
6. A councillorship candidate can spend a maximum amount of \$670.

Dependency on male sponsors was reported at higher levels in Nigeria (84%) than in India (70%), indicating greater financial autonomy among female politicians in India. This may be linked to broader economic factors, including higher female labour force participation in India and more established financial support mechanisms within Indian political parties.

Discussion of Key Findings

This chapter has presented a comprehensive analysis of political parties, elections, and gender representation in India and Nigeria, with a specific focus on women's performance in the 2019 general elections. The key findings can be summarised as follows:

1. Electoral Performance: While both countries had similar percentages of female candidates (approximately 8-9%), their electoral success varied significantly, with women constituting 14.4% of elected representatives in India's Lok Sabha compared to just 3.1% in Nigeria's House of Representatives.
2. Voter Participation: India demonstrated gender parity in voter turnout, with female turnout (67.2%) slightly exceeding male turnout (67.0%) in 2019. Nigeria exhibited lower overall voter participation, with a small gender gap: male turnout (35.6%) was slightly higher than female turnout (34.8%).
3. Perceptions of Women's Participation: Participants' perceptions of women's political participation varied significantly between the two countries, with India receiving a mean rating of 6.2 out of 10 compared to Nigeria's 3.7 out of 10.
4. Political Party Dynamics: Women's representation in party executive positions was higher in India (16.1%) compared to Nigeria (10.7%). Candidate selection processes were identified as the most significant party-related factor influencing women's electoral performance in both countries.
5. Socio-cultural Factors: Patriarchal social norms and traditional gender roles were perceived as highly influential in both

- countries. Religious factors and gender-based violence/intimidation were perceived as significantly more influential in Nigeria compared to India.
6. **Economic Barriers:** Campaign financing difficulties and limited access to economic resources were identified as significant barriers in both countries. The cost of nomination forms was perceived as a significantly greater barrier in Nigeria compared to India.
 7. **Institutional Factors:** The absence of legislative quotas at the national level was identified as a significant institutional barrier in both countries. India's reservation system for women in local governance provided a foundation for women's political engagement that was absent in Nigeria.
 8. **Challenges Faced by Female Politicians:** Financial constraints were the most significant challenge reported by female politicians in both countries. Nigerian female politicians reported higher levels of gender-based discrimination, political violence/intimidation, and voter prejudice compared to their Indian counterparts.
 9. **Effectiveness of Measures:** Legislative quotas were perceived as the most effective measure to enhance women's political representation in both countries. Reduced nomination fees for women were rated as significantly more effective by Nigerian respondents compared to those in India.
 10. **Suggested Changes:** Mandatory legislative quotas and FGD participants suggested literacy programs on elections were the most frequently mentioned to enhance women's political representation in both countries. Nigerian respondents placed greater emphasis on penalties for non-compliance with quota requirements and on reforming party registration requirements than Indian respondents.
 11. **Efforts to achieve universal literacy must be intensified.** This was emphasised during the Focus Group Discussion (FGD); the only way to do so is to narrow the variation in literacy levels across genders, social groups, and regions. In recent years, India has adopted a broader understanding of literacy.
 12. **Dropout rates among female learners at all levels of schooling, particularly at the secondary level, are a concerning trend.** A 2018 World Bank report states that globally, nine out of ten girls complete their primary education (up to class 5). However, the numbers dwindle at subsequent stages in a girl's educational trajectory, as shown in Figure 14 below.

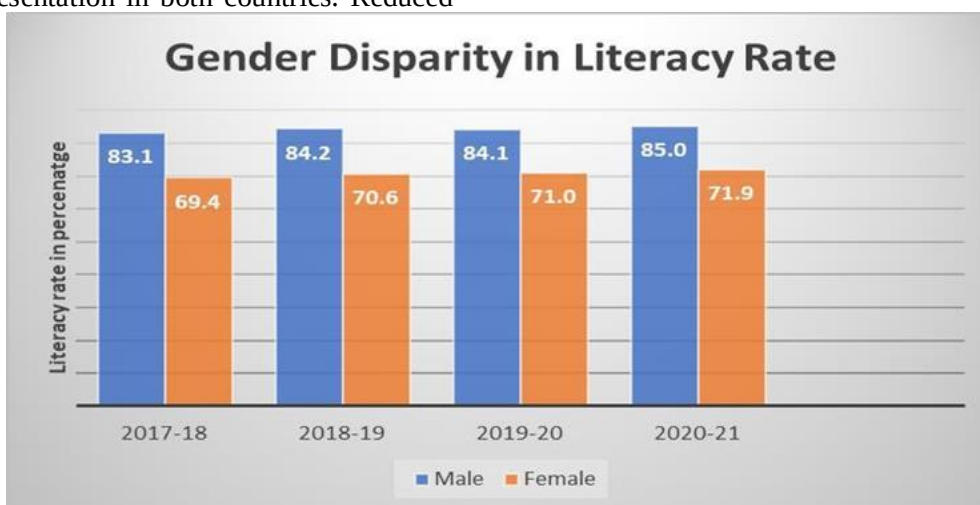


Figure 14. Gender Disparity in Literacy Rate.

Source: Field Work Findings from the IEC office, India

Summary of Findings and Contribution to Knowledge

This research highlights key factors influencing women's political roles in India and Nigeria. Legislative quotas are viewed as most effective, with a mean score of 4.34 out of 5. Nigerian respondents see reduced nomination fees as more impactful than Indian respondents, reflecting cost barriers. Campaign finance reforms and party quotas are also valued, indicating the need for diverse strategies to address gender disparities. These insights help inform targeted efforts to boost women's political participation and representation in both countries.

Conclusion

This study compares women's performance in the 2019 elections in India and Nigeria, revealing how political, institutional, socio-cultural, and economic factors influence gender representation in these contexts. It highlights similarities and differences in perceptions and their impact on women's political participation, offering insights into the challenges and opportunities for achieving gender equality in democratic systems.

Electoral performance indicates that women are underrepresented in India and Nigeria, with India making more progress due to its distinct political context. However, this research is akin to Acemoglu and Robinson's [28] research on "Why Nations Fail," which suggests that electoral patterns alone do not benefit marginalised groups without strong institutions and is recommended for further research. Secondly, this study complements the various assumptions highlighted. For example, it suggests that women's experiences vary by life stage and are influenced by biological, social, and economic factors, such as the gender wealth gap, the political elites gap among women, and the caregiving role. Harold Laswell, in the book *Politics: "Who Gets What and When"*, discussed the types of negotiation and building resources, structures such as political parties,

which are difficult to establish. While deep-rooted bias, policy neglect, and economic disparities hinder progress for women. Improving women's status in India requires a multifaceted approach. Closing the gender gap also needs bold, comprehensive actions [29].

Since 2017, the UN Human Development Index has reported that nations such as Bulgaria, France, Slovenia, and Sweden have achieved fully gender-balanced governments. Countries where women hold over one-third of ministerial roles include Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, and the UK. Croatia, Greece, Hungary, and Latvia ranked below the US in parliamentary representation, having taken fewer bold steps. These lessons from the Atlantic region can inspire global progress, but data gaps in Asia and Africa require further research. Limitations caused by patriarchal norms of male superiority in governance have led to a cartel of male political elites restricting women's participation in these regions. Promoting gender equality through government initiatives is essential. The study identified new limitations for further research, including the overgeneralization of women's family roles, patriarchal influence in governance, a lack of partnership and effective networking with relevant parties to promote female candidacies or manifestos, the absence of media pressure, and a lack of awareness of pathways beyond quotas. Arent Liphart found that proportional representation encourages more women's participation and stimulates further debate, requiring more data to improve women's representation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance women's political representation in India and Nigeria:

For Legislative Bodies and Governments

1. **Implement Legislative Quotas and Reform Electoral Systems:** Consider modifications to the first-past-the-post electoral system, such as introducing proportional representation through quota elements that have been shown to increase women's representation globally.
2. **Reduce Financial Barriers:** Establish campaign finance regulations that limit expenditure and provide public funding for campaigns, with specific allocations for female candidates. In Nigeria, particularly, consider reducing nomination fees for women candidates or providing fee waivers. Others include the following:
3. **Strengthen Enforcement of Existing Policies** to address Political Violence.

For Electoral Management Bodies

Implement gender-responsive policies across all electoral processes, from voter registration to polling. Enhance data collection by publishing gender-disaggregated electoral data to support evidence-based policies and monitor progress. Conduct gender compliance training for electoral officials to ensure fair treatment of female candidates and voters.

For Political Parties

1. **Internal Party Quotas:** Implement voluntary party quotas for women candidates, aiming for a minimum of 33% female representation in candidate lists for all elections.
2. **Transparent Nomination Processes:** Establish clear, transparent, and merit-based nomination processes that minimise the influence of informal networks and patronage systems that disadvantage women.
3. **Financial Support Mechanisms:** Create dedicated funds to support female

candidates' campaigns and reduce their dependency on male sponsors or personal finances.

4. **Capacity Building Programs:** Develop comprehensive mentoring and capacity-building programs for female party members, focusing on developing both political skills and financial literacy for campaign management.
5. **Reform Party Structures:** Review and reform party constitutions and structures to ensure women's meaningful participation in decision-making processes, including representation in executive committees and leadership positions.

For Civil Society Organisations

Advocacy Campaigns: Engage Male Allies and media from the bottom up to conduct public advocacy campaigns to challenge stereotypes about women's leadership capabilities, to promote the importance of gender-balanced political representation, with support measures at the regional and federal levels to address mentoring, psychological support, and gender-based discrimination and violence.

Implications for Future Research

This study has provided valuable insights into women's political representation in India and Nigeria, while also highlighting several areas that warrant further investigation. Further research is needed on the impact of quotas across government levels, voter attitudes, policy implementation, media representation, and the influence of international gender equality norms. These studies, if conducted, would help understand the global and local factors that shape and enhance women's political performance, as suggested by the prerequisite training highlighted in Figure 15 below.

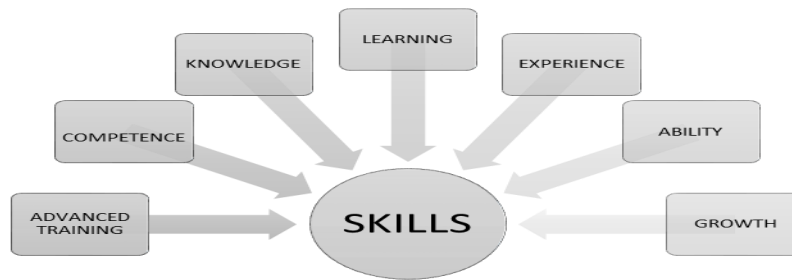


Figure 15. Women's Training Panacea

Source: Author's Designed Framework.

The skills listed above are vital for adapting to social norms and economic changes. Arent Lijphart's interpretation of "Consociational" power-sharing theory is in the context of capability theory, which was adopted by the "cartel of elites" to guide the stages of the political process for development. The UN defined four stages of women's empowerment, which include equal access to all types of resources for women as for men. Conscientisation means women becoming aware of their inequalities and opportunities. Action involves women enhancing their participation through various development tasks, including achieving equity for fair access to resources, control over those resources, and full participation in decision-making and agenda-setting processes that meet their needs [33].

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Data Availability

1. I can confirm that the data of the participants has been kept secure, as agreed, and will not be shared due to the enhancement of data privacy and security for individuals, and this was agreed with the participants.
2. I have the list of participants from the two countries, which can be shared in anonymity if required.

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Conflict of Interest

The researcher affirms the absence of any conflicts of interest in the investigation, examination, and dissemination of this article, as a Ph.D. student in the political science department at Texila University, this article is part of the requirements to obtain a Ph.D. degree; thus, the study has been performed with complete objectivity and ethical standards, and no monetary or non-monetary motives have

impacted the outcomes, evaluations, or deductions discussed in this manuscript.

My dedication is exclusively towards attaining academic excellence and scientific

accuracy while investigating the legitimacy of electoral processes and gender representation within the mentioned nations, as part of my academic requirements.

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