

## **UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITION: A STUDY OF ANIOMA, DELTA STATE**

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### **Abstract**

*Nigeria has been recording low participation of women in elective, leadership and appointive positions. This is a growing concern to many Nigerians. However, concerted efforts have been made by government and non-governmental organizations to increase the level of participation of women in politics and other levels of leaderships positions in line with the declaration made at the fourth World Conference on women in Beijing, which advocated 30% affirmative action for women leadership roles. In Nigeria, the extant National Gender Policy (NGP) recommended 35% affirmative action instead and sought for a more inclusive representation of women with at least 35% of elective political and appointive public service positions respectively. The under representation of women in political participation gained root due to the patriarchal practice inherent in our society, much of which were obvious from pre-colonial era till date. However, the re-introduction of democratic governance in Nigeria has witnessed once again an increase in women political participation both in elective and appointive offices. Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance. Women participation in leadership roles in Anioma is the focal point of this study. The paper used feminism theory to explain the study deployed personal communication method to gather information from people. Data from INEC offices in Delta state were gathered. It was discovered that some of the factors that affect women underrepresentation in leadership roles include male domination, cultural influence, lack of money or fund, marriage, discrimination, lack of education and violence. Proper sensitization, education, empowerment and legal protective measures are recommended for the solution to the problem*

**Keywords:** Women, Underrepresentation, Leadership Position and Anioma

### **Introduction**

Women are underrepresented in leadership position in Anioma Delta state, just as it is noticed in Nigeria and many other African countries. If Nigeria or Africa wants to move forward with development, sustainable economy and good leadership in the society, Nigerians should know that gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable

development and building good governance. Monica (nd) says true equality means holding everyone accountable in the same way, regardless of race, gender, faith, ethnicity or political ideology. In a situation where only men are the leaders of the society, then men only should be blamed for the bad leadership in the society. Nigeria is a country like a bird with two big wings, and these two big wings (men and women) are to fly Nigeria to suitable development and nation building for peace and progress. Unfortunately Nigeria went into using one wing(men) for long time with other wing(women) not utilized. A bird that has only one wing active cannot fly faster or may not be stable, because the two wings are for stability, therefore there is no way Nigeria leaders can provide good leadership if the two wings are not active at the same time. Leadership is not about a title or a designation. It is about impact, influence and inspiration. Impact involves getting results, influence is about spreading the passion you have for your work, and you have to have inspired team-mates for all round societal inspiration. According to Berkley (2013) leadership is about vision and responsibility, not power. A leadership that has no vision is like a blind man leading blind people. A good leader must be a leader who has principles of creativity and innovation. No one can actualize his destiny without creativity and innovation. Therefore Nigeria leadership should do justice immediately to incorporate women in leadership position for women to attain developmental goals in order to move the society forward. In line with global trend, Nigerian women constitute nearly half of the population of the country. But despite the major roles they play with their population, women roles in the society are yet to be given recognition. This is due to some cultural stereotypes, abuse of religion, traditional practices and patriarchal societal structures.

The reasons this paper is addressing the marginalization of women leadership position in Anioma Delta State is to curb this age long practice with a view to increasing women participation in leadership. Women can only represent women and deliberate well on the issues concerning women. Men cannot deliberate women issues more than women. There is an adage that said, “you don't cry more than the bereaved” Poverty is much among women in Anioma, so by giving women equal representation, women can empower their fellow women the entire Anioma land.

Increasing Anioma women participation in leadership roles is bound to unlock the other potentials inherent in their nature. Being in greater number in Anioma women can be the game changer in leadership functions. Underrepresentation of women in leadership is mostly caused by men who always sideline them. The leadership potentials always seen in widows in the control of their family activities are to be harnessed for wider leadership roles in Anioma.

### **Literature Review**

This paper will be looking at others people's work critically to assess scholars' opinion on the roles of women in leadership in other societies. Theory of feminism will be used to explain the work.

### **The Concept of Women**

The word 'women' is the plural form of woman which covers both young and adult female members of a family. Looking at women from creation, Hubbard (1981) has rightly observed that “full right to personality, identity means, at heart, full right to know and love God. Man and woman - God special creation - share that capacity and that opportunity” (p79 .). The study agrees with the above explanation that God created man and woman in his image according to Gen. 1:26-38. It should be noted that the divine counsel for creating

mankind is to share in the divine personality. The word “Man” here does not exclude woman, for God is thinking of human being in contradiction to lower animals, and trees. The woman possesses God's image just as man does.

According to Stone (1994), Universalist feminism poses that women are biologically and culturally equal to men but are historically denied equality. Equality exists within a mono cultural world. The paper agrees with the statement, that biologically and culturally, men and women are equal. If the two have the same view of things in common, both men and women were created in the same world with the same nature.

In a world where two people were born or created, they are supposed to be equal in everything. One person just took it over as if he is the creator of the world, this is an oppression, injustice and violation of human right especially to women. We need to revisit the history of creation and see that both Adam and Eve (man and woman) are created equally in the image of God.

According to Nweze (2014)

Most people have one pair of sex chromosomes per cell, usually, female have two X chromosome and males have one X and one Y. Both sexes retain one of their mothers X chromosome and females inherit a second X chromosomes from their father. Male inherit their father's Y chromosome instead (p.316).

From the researcher's elementary knowledge of Biology, both sexes, male and female, are determined by the man. Being determined by the man means that man by nature possesses XY chromosomes and woman by nature possesses XX chromosome. Therefore during intercourse it is what the man gives to the woman that determines the gender of the child, either male or female. We can see that birth is not of man's making; it is nature and also by chance or probability, so whatever sex (man or woman) is a gift from God.

The paper can conveniently say that no birth is more important than the other, either female or male. According to Chrysostom (1969), slavery is the fruit of covetousness, of degradation of savagery ... the subordination of women was a consequence of humanity's fall from grace (p.225).

The paper agrees in what the scholar had said because the current condition of human community falls far short of what it was meant to be, many differ as to whether it can reach its potential in the foreseeable future. Since the fall of humanity, women have been a victim. The fall was not only for the women but for both, men and women. Man took advantage of the fall and started in oppressive, exploitative injustice, violence and marginalization of women, that were also created in the image of God. But the Bible said “All have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God” (Romans 3:23). It did not say women had sinned and come short of the glory of God, but all - meaning both man and woman.

Abogunrin (2003) says that

It is an undeniable fact that women play certain irreplaceable roles in society but quite often these unique roles are not given adequate recognitions and sometimes not acknowledged at all. Also when it comes to various opportunities of life, in some cases women are often denied equal right with their male counterparts (p. 1).

What the scholar said above is true in the sense that women in man's world have not been given freedom to exercise their rights. Opinions of scholars differ on what denial of women's right and freedom consist in different society. It takes a different shape in Anioma and no scholarly study has been done on how women in Anioma have been underrepresented in leadership functions, hence the gap in literature that the study seeks to fill

### Theoretical Framework

Feminist theory supports equality for women and men. There are many Feminine strive for gender equality, they include liberal feminist, socialist feminist and radical feminist. According to Ruther (2008)

Feminism is a critical stance that challenges the patriarchal gender paradigm that associates males with human characteristics defined as superior and dominant (irrationality of power) and females with those defined as inferior and auxiliary (in tuition, passivity). Most feminists reconstruct the gender paradigm in order to include women their full and equal humanity (p.3).

This Scholar is not satisfied with the pattern the patriarchal societies do things by giving much power and dominion to males and designating females as inferior.

Both females and males who identify themselves as femininists disagree on many things that being feminists consist but most feminists agree on five basic principles of working to increase equality. Pushing for change toward gender equality and not just talking about it is important. Feminists believe that both men and women should have the freedom to develop their human interests and talents, even if those interests and talents conflict with the status quo for example if a woman wants to be a mechanic, she should have the right and opportunity to do so.

Individuals associated with this school of thought identify the family as the main source of exploitation and feel that patriarchy is so deeply rooted in this society that even a socialist revolution would fail to see the evil. The only way to end this oppression is to create a gender-free society

Throme (1997) argues that

Feminism has contributed to sociological theories of the family in fire broad theories; feminist have challenged the ideology of the monolithic family which has elevated the nuclear family with a bread winner husband. Feminists have challenged traditional dichotomies between what is private and public raising question about family boundaries and showing that isolation is in part illusory, given the close connections between the internal life of families and the organization of paid work, state-organized welfare and legal systems school, child care and other institutions (p.22).

The paper agrees with the above view, because feminists have actually fought against monolithic family in Anioma and challenged traditional dichotomies and discriminations between the males and the females in the society.

According to Pobee (2012), “Feminism originates in the perception that there is something wrong with society's treatment of women; it attempts to analyze the reasons for and dimensions of women oppression and to achieve woman's liberation” (p.24). The paper is in agreement with this scholarly view because in Anioma, something is wrong with the way women are being treated. How can a daughter be oppressed and discriminated against in matters of inheritance.

Boff(1986) says

If by feminism we understand whatever defends the basic quality of women to men, it is certain that women are human persons, and opposes any institutions that seek to reduce them to the status of objects, then Jesus was certainly a feminist. After all, the general teaching of his ethical preaching consist of the liberation of human being from a legalistic, discriminatory, freedom and a communion of sisters and brothers....This ethical revolution launched by Jesus created a space for the liberation of women as person (p.79).

The paper agrees with the above view on the feminism of the New Testament gospel according to Jesus which was liberation to humanity and the women inclusive from every oppression of the Judaic Old Testament ways of life.

Feminism, however, is not a coherent ideology. It is a combination of some major traditions. These are liberal feminism, socialist feminism, and radical feminism, new feminism and post feminism. The first law (Probably and earliest among all such tradition) as the name suggests, was based on the principle of liberalism that advocated for equality of human individuals regardless of their sex and other distinctions. Thus, it argues for women's equal entitlement to all rights and privileges in the society as enjoyed by men on the basis that both are human beings.

The second one, which is “socialist feminism”, emerged as a reaction to the stand taken by the liberal thinkers. They put forward their view that only political and legal rights are all of their disadvantages which could only be done through social revolutions that would give them economic equality or economic freedom vis-à-vis men.

The third tradition went further deeper by advocating equality of women not only in politics and economy but also in all aspects of personal and sexual existence. They started a crusade against patriarchy in all its forms and manifestations.

The next one in this succession of tradition has been a number of schools of thought (examples, post modern, feminism, black feminism, lesbian feminism and so on).

### **Data Source and Method**

This paper will use primary and secondary sources of data collection and data analysis. In the primary sources we will interview some women and men in leadership, those in politics and education and their mode of selecting leaders. Data from INEC would also be obtained and analyzed mathematically using simple results of male and female elected people in the previous elections.

### **Brief History of Anioma, Delta State-Nigeria**

The term Anioma means 'good land'. While the meaning the word Anioma is land plus good, the people and place so called have existed for centuries. Anioma is a community of people who, for ages, inhabit the area between Ubuluku and Ebu in Aniocha North Local Government Area of the present Delta State. A look at the colonial map of the area shows Anioma wedged between Ubuluku and Ebu (Kunirum, 2008).

The Modern Anioma commonly called Delta Igbo, for administrative purpose, is referred to as Delta North, thus, contrasting the Delta Central and Delta South densely inhabited by the Urhobo, the Ijaw, the Itsekiri, the Isokos and the other ethnic groups inhabiting the state. According to Anioma Voice (2013) the Anioma region has a total population of 1,229,371,00. The population figure quoted here does not include those of the Anioma communities located outside Delta State and the population of non Anioma in Anioma area. These include Ukwuani, Enuani, Ika and Aboh. A small Ika population can be found in neighbouring Edo State specifically Igbanke, Oza and Ekpon.

The term “Anioma” is an acronym derived from the four original Local Government Areas that is A for Aniocha, N for Ndokwa, I for Ika, O for Oshimili, M and A are common denominators found in the four original Local Government Areas. The coinage was made by the founding father, Chief Dennis Osadebay, in 1951 and has since remained the preferred indigenous name by which the people are collectively known (Osogbue, 2011). There are also Anioma people in neighbouring states of Anambra that is Onitsha, Ogbaru,

Oba, Akwukwu, Obosi, Ozoubulu, Oraifite; Imo that is Oguta; and River State that is Ndoni and Ogba. Anioma people had one destiny prior to the coming of the Europeans but were balkanized after they lost the Ekumeku war of resistance against the British imperialism in 1914 after 31 years of fighting. The population of the Anioma in neighbouring states is approximately 140,000.

There are twenty five local government areas in Delta State and nine of the local government areas make up the Anioma Area. Anioma Local Government of Delta State constitutes 9 out of 25 Local Government Areas as represented below.

S/N	Local Government Area	Head Quarter
1	Aniocha-North	Issele-Uku
2	Aniocha-South	Ogwashi-Uku
3	Ika-South	Agbor
4	Ika North-East	Owa-Oyibu
5	Ndakwa-East	Aboh
6	Oshimili-North	Akukuigbo
7	Oshimili –South	Asaba
8	Ukwuani	Obiaruku
9	Ndakwa – West	Kwale

The Anioma as a group is located in the west basis of the River Niger in the present South –South, Delta State, Nigeria. Anioma is bound to the east by Anambra State, to the South East by Imo and River States; to the South by Bayelsa State; to the south West by the Isoko ethnic group; to the west by the Urhobo ethnic group, to the North West by Edo State and the North by Kogi State. There are very few Nigeria communities that are as communicable to so many immediate neighbours as Anioma.

In spite of these contacts with so many states and ethnic groups, Anioma people are United by cultural homogeneity and value consensus about their universe of experience. The communities that make up the Anioma have one thing in common about their traditions. They remember the names of their various founders and in many cases also can identify where such founders came from. It is for the historians to interpret and explain what is so remembered or identified. According to Mordi and Opone (2009) four broad groups can be identified in the Anioma areas. The first and largest group claims a definite Benin origin. This is the Ezechuma group, which make up over ten communities east and west of the Niger. Anioma group are Obior, Isseleuku, Onicha – Ugbo, Onicha Olona, Onicha Ukwu, Obomkpa and Ezi, in the Enuni area. The second group claims Origin, from Nri and Nri related communities or the Igbo, Asaba, Ibusa (Igbuzor), and Isheagu, parts of Ubulu-Uku, Issele Uku and Illah, among others. A third group claims origin from neighbouring communities but still strives to link its founders to Benin. Notable in this regard are the Ubulu Clans of Ubulu-Uku, Ubulu Uno and Ubulu –Okiti. Ashama and Adonta. The fourth group claims origins from Yoruba and Igala area of the south west and the Niger - Benue confluence of Nigeria. These are found in Ugbodu, Ukwunzu, Ebu and Illah, Ubulubu, Obomkpa, Okpaman, Okwe and Oko.

People are defined by their culture, history and geography. History notes that Anioma people comprise individuals of diverse origins, who over centuries and due to “culture contact” or cultural pollination, have developed a unique culture quite distinct from those of their immediate neighbours located at the cross roads of every diverse influences..

About thirteen languages (13) are spoken in Anioma. Some of which are Enuani, Bini Olukumi (old and extinct Yoruba language), Igala, Ishan, Ika, Ukwuani and Aboh. Enuani is the dominant language spoken by Asaba, Ibusa, Ogwashi-Uku, Ubuluuku, Ubulu-Unor, Issele-Uku-Mkipitime, Onicha-Olona, Onicha-Ugbo, Onicha-Uku, Ejeme-Unor, Ejime Aniogor, Illah, Ezi, Obomkpa, Oko Anala, Oko-Amakom, Oko-Ogbele, parts of Igbodo, Akwukwu-Igbo, Akwukwu-Ukwu, Okpanan, Idumuje Unor, Idumuje-Ugboko, Anwai, Oraifite, Ogbaru, Onitsha, Obosi and Atani.

Ika is spoken by Agbor, parts of Igbodo, Umunede, Igbanke, Oguta, Ekwuoma, Obior and so on. Ebu speaks Enuani, Ishan and Igala. Aboh and the surrounding communities speak Aboh, Ukwuani is spoken by Ukwuani/Ndokwa, including Asaba-Ubulu-Ashama, Edo-Ogwashi, Azagba and so on. Ebu is a bilingual town. Some speak Ishan, others speak Igala Enuani is comprehensible to all. The Igbodo speak Ika and Enuani, this is due to the influence of its location between Ekwuoma and Onicha-Ugbo. It must be noted that while some parts of Anioma understand and speak a language close to Urhobo and Isoko, a sort of Igbo language is intelligible to all the towns and communities that make up the Anioma region. This is what the writer sees as the uniqueness that people have enjoyed as a result of peaceful coexistence with neighbours.

Afigbo (1982) opines that “in the Pre-colonial Igbo society, agriculture was the most important economic activity with regard to both the number of people engaged in it either on full or part-time basis and to the prestige attached to it (p.124). The importance of agriculture to the sustenance of life and economic development in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. Hence, the efforts of the Federal Government, and several agencies in the development of agricultural policies and programmes, with the aim of increasing food production in the nation. Anioma has vast area of arable land units of fertile soil. The people of Anioma are the main producers of food in the state. They produce Yams, Cassava, Garri, Cocoyams, Plantains, Banana, Citrus fruits and Vegetable. Anioma is one of the largest primary producers of cash crops. These cash crops include palm produce, kola nut latex and timber. The region has contributed to the economic development of the country in terms of mineral resources. Anioma has large endowments of crude oil and natural gas in Ukwuani of Oshimili, Aniocha and Ika areas. The oil and gas resources of Anioma remained largely untapped. Also, some of the untapped mineral resource include; silica, Ammonia, Kaolin, clay and Lignite (Oganihe Anioma, 2012).

Besides the oil and gas and agricultural endowment of the Anioma people, the area offers a wide range of tourist attractions such as extended and roomy rivers and beaches ideal for swimming and other aquatic sports. Other attractions include the Obi Ossai Palace in Aboh, preserved local customs, rich and varied land crafts.

In continuation of the tourist attraction is the residence of Mungo Park in Asaba, this was the first headquarters of the Royal Niger Company allocated to the National Commission for Museum and Monument, the Lander Brothers Anchorage and the Niger Bridge built in 1965. Others include the Olona Ranch, Source of Ethiope River in Umuaja and Otuogwu Beach in Asaba.

Traditionally, the attire of the Anioma man is gifted with the choice which he may wear to any ceremony. However, quite commonly, the "Akwa ochia" is loosely worn on a white native shirt with native beads as adornment. For women, it is readily a wrapper to be worn on a white blouse. Supported by beautiful beads while men wear a red cap, the

women wear “Ichafor” (Head gear). On special occasions, such as funeral ceremonies, “Uya” or “Azuzu” (horsetail) may be held to the hand with decorated hair by women.

Several traditional kinds of dances are in existence in Anioma. The Anioma dance requires so much energy and it is basically unique. Some of the dances include Agube Royal Dance Uloko Dance, Egwu Amala, Okanga, Egwu-Osusu (Ukwuani), Egwu Oshushu (Enuani) and Ute – Okpu dance called Egwu Okpu.

The Ukwuani and Ndokwa people are legendary in the performance of highlife music with songs composed in native tongue.

Organization for advancement of Anioma culture (OFAAC) (2014) is the culture Umbrella body of the Anioma people. It was established on November 2003 with the core focus of preservation, promotion and advancement of the appreciation and development of the rich culture heritage of the Anioma people and Nigeria.

The Anioma along with other African societies are highly religious. The Anioma people are so conscious of the world of the spirit and man's relationship with them.

Fatorkun (2013) said that before the advent of Pentecostalism in twentieth century, Christianity had been firmly rooted in Nigeria. He affirmed that the Portuguese missionaries had come to Nigeria.

The visit of Alfonso de Avairo to Oba Essigie and the subsequent arrival of missionaries in August 1515 met with some success in Benin as some churches were built and some converts, including one of the Princes and a good number of Chiefs were recorded.

However, Bablola (1976) argues that in spite of the above success, Christianity remained confined to the palace of the Oba, while majority of the people continued in their traditional religions. Though there were efforts by the Spanish and Italian capuchins to resuscitate the evangelist work later, it yielded no positive result. This view is supported by Ajayi (1965) when he emphasizes that Christianity in Benin kingdom continued fading away until finally the church disappeared, leaving only shrines called “Altars of God” which were taken into the traditional religion.

In warri, however, Christianity thrived in the 1570s on political grounds and remained there for more than two hundred years.

Nweke (2002), said, Crorick Braile was born around 1882 and 1883 in Obonoma. He got converted to Christianity and attended Sunday school when he was eight. By 1916 his revivalist movement had spread to other parts of the C.M.S. Niger Delta pastorate even to Owerri. He was averted in 1916, being accused of perpetrating actions that could lead to surrections. He was kept in prison till 1918 and died 15<sup>th</sup> November 1918 (p. 52 -60).

Early missionaries were providing schools, hospital, churches. He however affirmed that with time these mainline (established) churches started losing their vision through lukewarmness, forms, ceremonies and religious rituals. He opined that the recent work is done by third generation missionaries. By third generation he refers to Christians missionary who started Evangelical campaigns from 1970 after the Nigeria civil war. He further asserts that Anioma today is largely unreached. He started his gospel effort on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1971 in Adonte in Aniocha South Local Government Area with one Joseph Idogbo from Benin. In January 1972, William Clims Onyenekwue got converted and joined the work. At this time there were no evangelical activities anywhere in Delta North except for little Assemblies of God in Ukwu-Nzu and Ababa.

In 1972, he preached at Agbor motor park during scripture union camp meeting and from there to Ndemili, Oligo, Obeti, Umuaja and Umutu along that stretch of road. By 1985, Ndokwa and Ukwuani have been opened to the gospel. The only resistance had been mainly Aboh area due to bad road network and poor living conditions and non-availability of personnel.



The paper wishes to convey, that there are many gospel ministries flourishing in Anioma land including: Baptists, Anglican, Catholics, Winners church, Redeem Christian church of God, and so on. So the Anioma people have had contact with the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

The gospel of the Lord is a transformative and modeling of characters, cultures and traditions. Therefore, the people of Anioma should be aware of the positive messages of the gospel and the changes being done in gender equality.

The paper strongly believes that since Anioma people believed the Holy Bible and its contents, therefore our research facts finding would be simple for general applications of the holy Bible which speaks of men and women are equal before God.

### **Anioma Leadership Positions since 1999 till Date**

Looking at the historical background of the Anioma people, one will wonder why Anioma people are not moving forward. The Anioma people have nine local government Areas in the state, the writer wants to find out how many women have been elected into leadership positions either in politics or educational sector since 1999 till date.

Offices/Appointments	Slots	Men	Women	Years	% of Reprs. in leadership positions.	Men	Women	Results
President	1	0	0	1999	0	0	0	Nil
V.P	1	0	0	1999	0	0	0	nil
Senate	1	1	0	1999	100	100	0	Unfair
	1	1	0	2003	100	100	0	Unfair
	1	1	0	2007	100	100	0	Unfair
	1	1	0	2011	100	100	0	Unfair
	1	1	0	2015	100	100	0	Unfair
	1	1	0	2019	100	100	0	Unfair
House of Representatives	3	2	1	1999	100	67	33	Unequal
	3	3	0	2003	100	100	0	Unfair
	3	2	1	2007	100	67	33	Unequal
	3	3	0	2011	100	100	0	Unfair
	3	2	1	2015	100	67	33	Unequal
	3	3	0	2019	100	100	0	unfair
Governor	1	0	0	1999	100	0	0	Nil
	1	0	0	2003	100	0	0	Nil
	1	0	0	2007	100	0	0	Nil
	1	0	0	2011	100	0	0	Nil
	1	0	0	2015	100	0	0	Nil
	1	1	0	2019	100	100	0	Unfair
Deputy Governor	1	1	0	1999	100	100	0	Unfair
	1	1	0	2003	100	100	0	Unfair
	1	0	0	2007	100	0	0	Nil
	1	0	0	2011	100	0	0	Nil
	1	0	0	2015	100	0	0	Nil
	1	0	0	2019	100	0	0	Nil

House of Assembly	9	8	1	1999	100	89	11	Unequal
	9	8	1	2003	100	89	11	Unequal
	9	7	2	2007	100	77	23	Unequal
	9	7	2	2011	100	77	23	Unequal
	9	7	2	2015	100	77	23	Unequal
	9		2	2019	100	77	23	Unequal
L.G.A Chairmen	9	9	0	1999	100	100	0	Unfair
	9	9	0	2002	100	100	0	Unfair
	9	9	0	2005	100	100	0	Unfair
	9	9	0	2008	100	100	0	Unfair
	9	9	0	2011	100	100	0	Unfair
	9	8	1	2015	100	89	11	Unequal
Deputy L.G.A	9	9	0	1999	100	100	0	Unfair
	9	9	0	2002	100	100	0	Unfair
	9	9	0	2005	100	100	0	Unfair
	9	9	0	2008	100	100	0	Unfair
	9	9	0	2011	100	100	0	Unfair
	9	9	0	2014	100	100	0	Unfair
	9	9	0	2017	100	100	0	Unfair

#### Analytical Interpretation of the Table Above

In 1999, Nigeria transited from military rule to democratic governance. Despite the return of democracy, however, women are yet to occupy up to 15 per cent of elective and leadership positions in Anioma where the voting population of both men and women are almost equal.

Not only has a woman been elected as president, none has been elected as vice president nor elected as governor, and as a senator in Anioma of Nigeria's 19 years of democracy. According to figures by the National Population Commission (NPC) and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in April, Anioma has a population of about 1,229,371,00 million people with approximately 51 per cent males and 49 per cent females. The population figure has, however, never turned in favour of women in elective and leadership positions.

From the data above one can see that Anioma women have never won elective positions of leadership in House of Senate. Women were underrepresented in the upper house. Again in the lower House of Representatives men have 83% representations since 1999 till date while the women have 17% representations since 1999 till date. The result shows that women are underrepresented in leadership positions. Data for Governorship and deputy show that men have 100% representations and women have 0% representations.

In state of house of Assembly, Anioma has nine (9) slots men have seven (7) of 77% representations in the state house of Assembly while the women two (2) of 23% representations of women in the state house of assembly in Anioma since 1999 till date. This is underrepresentation of women. Nigeria has been recording low participation of women in both elective and appointive positions. This is a growing concern to many Nigerians. However, concerted efforts have been made by government and non-governmental organizations to increase the level of participation of women in politics in line with the declaration made at the fourth World Conference on women in Beijing, which advocated 30% affirmative action for women participation in politics. In Nigeria, the extant National Gender Policy (NGP) recommended 35% affirmative action instead and sought

for a more inclusive representation of women with at least 35% of both elective political and appointive public service positions respectively. The under representation of women in political participation gained root due to the patriarchal practice inherent in our society, much of which were obvious from pre-colonial era till date. However, the re-introduction of democratic governance has witnessed once again an increase in women political participation both in elective and appointive offices. The national average of women's political participation in Nigeria has remained 6.7 percent in elective and appointive positions. With the data above the paper can agree with the NGP that women should increase their elective and appointive offices in Anioma. In most societies, women assume some key roles, which are: mother, producer, home-manager, and community organizer, socio cultural and political activists. Of these many roles mentioned, the last has been engendered by women movement. In line with global trend, Nigerian women constitute nearly half of the population of the country. But despite the major roles they play with their population, women roles in the society are yet to be given recognition. This is due to some cultural stereotypes, abuse of religion, traditional practices and patriarchal societal structures. Since the return of civil rule in the country in 1999, statistics of women's political representation in Nigeria's government as gradually increased though still less than 7 percent.

#### **The Factors that gave Women Low Percentage in Leadership Could be the Following**

The political arena is too male dominated and this serves as a threat to most women and maybe referred to as a form of discrimination. One of the major factors militating against women is cultural factor. The society is primordially oriented and as such the 'African mentality' that a woman functional role is in the kitchen is what majorly restrict the women from politics as most of them do not get the support of their husbands, families and friends. So rather than lose their loved ones, most women would rather let go their political quest. Honorable Olayinke Modupe (personal communication, 24th June 2007) states that one of the challenges against women legislators in politics is fund. Politics is expensive in Nigeria and women by their nature do not have such money to flaunt around, thereby hindering them from participating in politics. More so, the competitive nature of politics in Nigeria makes it difficult for a participant not to spend and most male counterparts are usually willing to spend any amount of money just to be victorious at elections. To Mrs Hajia Mariam Bimbola Ogunlade (personal communication 26th August 2007) the women leader of Labour Party, Ekiti State, she's of the opinion that until when "money is been separated from politics in Nigeria, money will still deprive a lot of people especially women from politics". Very few percentages of them will agree that discrimination has been one of the major causes of low participation of women in politics. It is important to note that all the points above are in agreement that women have challenges they face in Nigerian politics. One can deduce from the above contributions that the challenges of women leadership positions in politics are enormous and differ.

#### **Conclusion**

All that the writer has attempted to show in this paper is that women have been under represented in the leaderships and appointments to offices, in Anioma Delta State, Nigeria since 1999. The study has also shown that although women formed less than 9% in the State Local Council legislature, 9% in the State Assembly and other electives and leadership positions in Anioma Delta State, Nigeria from 1999 to 2019, however, the few

women elected created a significant impact especially with respect to the sponsorship of bills. In qualitative terms, the female representatives sponsored more bills than their male counterparts and these bills showed their mindset as regards the lives of the people. It is therefore the writer's conclusion in this paper that the leadership and appointments positions can only be made more vibrant, responsive and result oriented if more women are elected into the legislature in subsequent elections. Women should be educated in leadership positions of higher levels in the society.

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