

**ASSESSING THE FACTORS THAT MILITATE AGAINST  
THE SUCCESSFUL PASSAGE OF GENDER BILLS IN  
NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF THE GENDER EQUALITY  
AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES BILL, 2022**

**BY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Women's representation in Nigeria's parliament has been the lowest in the world, and perceived that unequal representation will linger as long as men are the "gatekeepers" of policy formulation. The study sought to identify the factors that played against the Gender Equality Bill during floor debates in the Eighth and Ninth Assembly. The study further sought to identify gender-based bills considered in the Eighth and Ninth National Assembly. The research is crucial in addressing specific challenges faced during the debates on the bill, and its findings can inform the development of targeted interventions and strategies for advocates of the bill to ensure its enactment into law as the 10th National Assembly commences.

The study centred on the Theoretical Framework of Hegemonic Masculinity. A mixed-methods research design was used during the study. Data was sourced from the National Assembly Hansard of the Eight and Ninth Assembly and the status of gender bills in the House of Representatives and the Senate within the same period. Qualitative data derived from Hansard, was analyzed through thematic analysis. Quantitative data was sourced from the status of gender bills within the period under review in the form of tables.

The findings revealed the presence of Hegemonic Masculinities during the debates and strong traditional, cultural, and religious norms, which prevented Members of the National Assembly from effective deliberations on the gender equality bill. Also It was recommended that the Gender Equality Bill be represented as an executive bill with engagements with Legislators at various stages of the bill process. Furthermore, Members of the National Assembly should be sensitized on the bill's general principles in the form of meetings, seminars, and workshops before the debate, during the committee stage, and at other stages in the bill process.

Parliament must prioritize a legal framework for women's equality to combat discrimination and gender bias, fostering a society where women's professional accomplishments are valued and celebrated, free from fashion and harmful stereotypes.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Background to the Study

Gender equality is crucial for women's economic participation and development agenda. Research shows that women's participation in politics, education, economy, commerce, religion, and health contributes to a 26% global GDP by 2025. Countries adopting gender equality can add \$12 trillion annually by 2025 according to experts. Studies have shown that women make up 70% of global health workers since 2000. The participation of women in protest brought out positive socio-economic changes such as the Arab Spring in Egypt. Women played a crucial role in the Arab Spring protests, challenging societal norms and advocating for political and social reforms. Their active involvement not only led to the overthrow of oppressive regimes but also sparked conversations about gender equality and women's rights in the region. The fight for women's equality has been ongoing for years. Although progress is present, the achievement is linear. Gender equality, as integral to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations, stands as a symbol of mutual respect for humanity in terms of women's rights hence the accountability of nations in instances where a woman's right is abused within their territories. As aforementioned, closing the gender gap in all sectors of social life should be achieved at a geometric rate to accelerate development, hence the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015).

The SDGs, adopted by 193 member nations, aim to achieve gender equality for women and girls by 2030. Goal 5 focuses on equal pay, political representation, reproductive health, gender-based budgeting, and violence against women. The

World Economic Forum reports that 144 countries closed 96% of health and educational gaps in 2016, 58% of economic participation, and 23% of political gaps. However, full representation of women in political leadership will take another 40 years. The COVID-19 pandemic widened the gender gap, with 45% of women losing jobs in 2020.

Inequalities persist in political participation and living wages in some countries. The World Bank Report, (2022) indicates that 2.4 billion women of working age in 178 countries are denied equal opportunity to work due to the legal framework that places barriers preventing such opportunity. The report further states that the legal framework of 86 countries contains job restrictions against women, and in 95 countries, there is no guarantee for equal pay.

Gender equality in Africa has made significant progress in legislative quotas, with Rwanda having the highest proportion of women in its parliament. Other African countries with similar quotas include South Africa (46%), Senegal (43.3%), and Eastern Africa (30%). However, reports from studies indicted women still face discrimination in other sectors, such as Northern Ghana, where patriarchal hierarchies and unequal power distributions hinder their rights. Additionally, cultural practices like early marriages, female genital mutilation, and violence against women contribute to gender inequality in the West African region, resulting in a loss of USD 120 billion in income.

### **1.1 Statement of Problem**

Nigeria faces gender inequalities due to patriarchal society, with women comprising 49.9% of the population in 2021. The female labor force is 48% from 15 years old.

Nigerian women actively engage in agriculture and economic activities, but face socio-economic cultural barriers in some commercial sectors.

The Nigerian political scene is predominantly male-dominated, with gender gaps in various sectors. The National Board of Statistics Gender Statistics Quarterly Bulletin (2022) shows that the position of Secretary to the Government of the Federation has not been filled by a woman since the Fourth Republic. Female National Judicial Officers and Ministerial positions had 13.73% women compared to 86.27% men. Female candidates vying for government positions were unfavourably compared to men, with only 6 female presidential candidates vying for the same position.

Men hold most government positions, making women negotiate for cooperation in policy formulation. In March 2022, the National Assembly voted against gender-based constitutional amendment bills, including special seats for women, citizenship registration expansion, affirmative action for women in political party administration, and indigenous rights. The House of Representatives re-committed three bills to the Committee of the Whole, but consideration is yet to begin.

Women representation in Nigeria's parliament is one of the lowest in the world, and it is believed that this unequal representation will linger in as much as men are the "gatekeepers" of policy formulation. Despite several attempts to pass legislations to bridge the gender gap, the men-dominated political arena across all tiers of government have often stand in the way to remedy the problem. For example, the push for the passage of gender bills in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> National Assembly were thwarted by the overwhelming majority of the male-dominated National Assembly. Furthermore, in the 9<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, the lawmakers had an ample opportunity

to address gender gaps in Nigeria as five gender bills were presented and considered. Unfortunately, and for the umpteenth time, the lawmakers overwhelmingly rejected and “killed” the bills. The bills that failed to pass include; (1) a Bill for an Act to Alter the Provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 to Provide for Special seats for women in the National and State Houses of Assembly; and for Related Matters, 2022; (2) a bill for an Act to Alter the Provision of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 to expand the Scope of Citizenship by registration; and for Related Matters, 2022; (3) a Bill for an Act to Alter the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 to provide criteria For qualification to become an indigene of a state in Nigeria; and for Related Matters; (4) a Bill for an Act to Alter the Provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 to Provide for Affirmative Action for Women in Political Party Administration; and for Related Matters, 2022; and (5) a Bill for an Act to Alter the Provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 to Provide a Minimum Percentage for Women in Ministerial or Commissioner Nominees; and for Related Matters, 2022. Despite the laudable objectives of the Bills, it is concerning that the men’s perennially-determined stance to stand in the way of gender bills poses a setback for Nigeria’s socio-economic development. Furthermore, the under-representation of women in parliament will linger unless the root-causes for the rejection of the bills are uncovered. Thus, it is important to understand how institutions such as the National Assembly become gendered and how gender stereotypes are formed. Against these backdrops, the ensuing study seeks to shed light on the factors that militate against the passage of the gender bills in the National Assembly.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

1. What were the factors that affected the non-passage of the Gender Equality Bill in the National Assembly in the Eighth and Ninth Assembly?
2. How many gender-based bills were considered in the Eighth and Ninth Assembly?

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

The broad objective of the study is to examine the factors that militate against the passage of the Gender Equality Bills in the Eighth and Ninth Assembly. The Specific objectives are to;

1. Identify the factors that played against the Gender Equality Bill during floor debates in the Eighth and Ninth Assembly;
2. Identify gender-based bills considered in the Eighth and Ninth National Assembly.

## **1.4 Scope of the Study**

The study covers the deliberations and floor debates affecting the Gender Equality Bill in the Eighth and Ninth National Assembly and the progression of gender-based bills introduced and considered in the Eighth and Ninth Assembly (2015-2022).

## **1.5 Significance of The Study**

The study will be useful to advance the advocacy for gender equality in Nigeria. It will assist to develop strategies for engaging Members of the National Assembly in passing the bill, especially as the 10<sup>th</sup> National Assembly approaches.



## **1.6 Organisation of the Study**

The study contains five chapters. Chapter One introduces the subject matter of the study, while Chapter Two covers all concepts, empirical works and theoretical framework supporting the Study. Chapter Three discusses the methodology and research design supporting the theoretical framework. Chapter four reports an analysis of the data gathered. Chapter Five gives a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter reviews the literature connected with the subject matter. It comprises; Conceptual, Empirical and Theoretical literature reviews.

#### 2.0 Conceptual Literature Review

##### i. Gender:

Historically, gender was considered a biological classification by social anthropologists and structural functionalists in sociology. Women and men were studied according to their biological features. In that analysis, women were considered emotional because of their childbearing function, and men were analyzed as "aggressive" (Tiger & Fox, 1971, cited in Tiger 1994).

George Murdock, an anthropologist, examined some prehistoric societies and assessed gender based on biological function. Gender roles are according to the division of labour, categorised by sex (Murdock, 1954). The era of the 1970s came with the third wave of feminism and technological advancements, precipitating the need for feminist scholars to construct a more elaborate definition based on the social realities of that era (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2016).

Ann Oakley (Oakley 1972) rejecting the biological classification, defined gender as distinct from sex in terms of the roles that women play varying from society, as these roles are socially constructed. This definition is in contrast to the biological roles assigned to women based on sex by previous definitions, which purposely kept women subordinate to men. Oakley's(1972) definition of gender opened up new avenues for understanding the social and cultural aspects of gender, leading to

the emergence of feminist theories that challenged traditional notions of gender roles. Makama (2013) confirms Oakley's (1972) position stating that gender is not determined by biological classification. Kemi (2016) agrees stating sex and gender are closely related but not synonymous 'Sex' refers to physical differences, while 'gender' refers to behaviour and cultural practices. Today, this definition continues to shape discussions around gender and has influenced policies and practices aimed at promoting gender equality.

Butler (2006) affirms the same, defining gender as a social construction not intrinsically based on nature but on what society requires as gender roles. It denotes that attributes and behaviours associated with being male or female are learned and reinforced through socialization. Gender roles can vary across cultures and time periods and be influenced by factors such as religion, politics, and economics.

According to Lindsey (2020), gender is a multifaceted concept that goes beyond the binary division between male and female. These societal expectations vary across cultures and time periods, leading to diverse understandings of gender roles and norms. UNICEF (2022) defines gender as a social construct that distinguishes between men's and women's varied characteristics to the extent that both sexes know and understand their respective roles and responsibilities. The responsibilities vary by culture and change throughout time. It also covers the beliefs people have regarding these qualities in both sexes.

## **ii. Gender Norms: -**

The gender norms of a society set the pace on how young girls, boys, women, and men should behave, look, think, and feel. Hartland, (2018) defines Gender norm as behaviours or characteristics that society assigns a particular sex. These norms

govern clothing choices, career paths, and personality traits. Ene-Obong et al., (2017) argue that gender norms govern land ownership and property rights such in Igboland, South Nigeria where land ownership runs along patriarchal structures. Literature has confirmed that traditional gender norms in government exclude Nigerian women, resulting in limited political participation and decision-making, hindering progress towards gender equality and inclusive governance (Ngara, & Ayabam, 2013; Ahikire, et al., 2015; Okafor, & Akokuwebe, 2015; Uwa, et al., 2018). Gender norms are often reinforced through media and cultural messages, but they can also be challenged and changed through activism and education (Gupta, et.al., 2019; Lindsey, 2020). Ogueji et al., 2020 studies showed that negative gender norms lead to negative outcomes, such as lower self-esteem and increased stress, particularly for women.

Considering Nigerian society, the literature confirms that traditional gender norms legitimize men as breadwinners over women. However, gender norms are subject to social change and evolution. This is evident in the increasing number of women who are breaking gender barriers and excelling in traditionally male-dominated fields such as politics, business, and sports (Staveren, & Odebode, 2007; Akanle & Nwaobiala, 2020; Eboiyehi, et al., 2016) Furthermore, it is a cultural universal for pink to be associated with a woman and blue with a man. Gender norms are created by gender socialization and reinforced in families, communities, schools, workplaces, institutions, and the media (Okafor, 2015; Gupta, et.al., 2019; Adebola, 2021). Gender norms have a powerful influence on attitudes and are society's informal rules of conduct for individuals. (Weber, et al., 2019) Nonconformity leads to sanctions such as outright disapproval, mockery and adverse discrimination (Harper, et al., 2020; Hoominfar, 2019).

Research on gender norms impacts a woman's health as it triggers inequalities which can undermine a woman's health, especially when accessing reproductive medical care, cancer treatments and emergency services (Darmstadt, et. al 2019; Aldosari, 2017). Also, studies have shown the impact of gender norms on the reproductive health of Nigerian women (Ugwu, & De Kok, 2015; B. Oshi, 2016; Okigbo, et. al., 2018).

Primitive norms have prevailed in African societies over time determining the power relations between men and women. These norms account for a woman's subordinate status and reliance on men. Studies have shown how detrimental these norms are to women's political participation in the continent (Mama, 2017; Okoosi-Simbine & Obi, 2021; Okrah, 2017). In some instances, women in politics are perceived by their male counterparts as "sex symbols" (Okrah, 2017).

### iii. Gender Roles

According to Lindsey (2015), Gender roles are expected attitudes and actions that society connects with each sex. These expectations vary from culture. The concept is linked to the social construct of gender because these roles reflect an individual's perception of sex roles and an ideology is created around it (Somech, & Drach-Zahavy, 2016). From infancy, gender roles and obligations permeate nearly every area of society (Saewyc, 2017). Affirming the above scholars (Ajala, 2017), states that Gender roles in Nigeria deny women equal economic and political empowerment, increasing poverty vulnerability. Studies show gender roles affect productivity, as Nigerian women are often relegated to domestic roles and are not given the same opportunities as men to pursue education and careers. This

perpetuates a cycle of inequality that hinders the country's overall development. (Baba, et. al., 2015; Teeken, et.al., 2018)

Gender roles are usually binary. They are classified into male and female categories. Sociologists agree that gender roles emerge during the process of gender socialization. (Press, 2017; Saewyc, 2017; Lindsey, 2015). According to the theory of social learning children acquire gender roles through the positive and negative consequences they experience for engaging in gender-appropriate and gender-inappropriate behaviour (Warton, 2005). Gender roles are not fixed and can change over time and across different cultures. As opined by Akanle (2018), traditional gender roles in African societies are influenced by change, particularly in Nigeria, where globalization, westernization, urbanization, and industrialization are reshaping gender and family roles. Understanding the complexities of gender roles can help us to challenge harmful stereotypes and promote equality.

#### **iv. Gendered Institution**

A gendered institution is an organisation in which gender influences its social structure. As conceptualized by Joan Acker (1990), gender influences spheres of social life, the processes, behaviours, representations, beliefs, and power dynamics in gender relations. Acker (1990) continued by asserting that in analysing the domination of women, it is necessary to understand how gender affects institutions and practices especially when such an organisation is not perceived as gendered outwardly (Bridges & Messerschmidt, 2019). Lowndes (2020) opined that to recognise a gendered political intuition, there is the existence of rules on gender, and written rules and regulations having gendered effects. Examples are policies on gender equality of an institution used formulation of policies on gender, procedural

rules of an institution or informal rules of exclusion keeping women from sensitive political positions in leadership. For instance, the adoption of gender quotas in ministerial and government positions expressly stated through legislation or policy documents by the government is an example of a written rule (Lowndes, 2020). The systematic exclusion of women from key political positions, for instance, the legislature, and the pattern of keeping women from sensitive legislative committees over time is a convention of exclusion. This was the case in the studies of Pansardi, & Vercesi, (2017) which discovered that women were excluded from crucial committee assignments and appointed to feminine legislative committees under a right-wing Italian parliament from 1994-2013. Gender rules are captured in policies and procedures supporting gender equality for women, but have failed severally, hence the gendered nature of Nigerian institutions (Edoho, 2015; Bolaji et al., 2015; Ewoh-Odoyi, 2021). The exclusion of women in Pansardi and Vercesi's (2017) studies was reflected in the studies of Nwankwo (2019) and Akanle et al. (2017) which highlighted the gender bias present in the spatial policies of market demarcation, which resulted in the exclusion of female traders.

#### **v. The Gender System:**

Ridgeway& Smith-Lovin, (1999) defined the gender system as processes through which men and women are characterised as socially distinct and the justifications of inequality based on such disparity. Warton(2005) argued that it is a multilevel phenomenon, interconnected and independent of individuals, encompassing social processes and institutions like work, that influence and reproduce gender inequality. It operates on cultural norms, beliefs, and values, shaping perceptions and expectations, perpetuating inequality and affecting access to resources and opportunities. An example is the gender binary, the two-gender system of male and

female practised in Africa, and patriarchal environments perpetuating inequalities of various types including limited political participation (Adebayo, & Akanle, 2014). Igwesi(2012) affirms that Nigeria's gender system reveals that it is characterized by traditional notions, relegating women to second-class citizens.

**vi. Affirmative Action:** - Affirmative action refers to positive steps taken to increase the representation of women and minorities in areas of employment, education, and culture from which they have been historically excluded. Oyedeji, (2016) avers that Countries pass laws specifying quotas or affirmative action, influenced by history, economic circumstances, ethnicity relationships, colonialism, resource allocation, socio-economic development, international system perception, and internal political development. When those steps involve preferential selection based on of race, gender, or ethnicity, affirmative action generates intense controversy.

Fraser, et. al (2015) defines it as a set of policies and programmes formulated by governments or organisations, targeted directly at historically marginalised groups. They are aimed to reduce inequalities, eliminate discriminatory practices and increase representation of such minorities.

Foley, & Williamson (2019) opined that Affirmative action for inequalities at the workplace are collection of polices created to support and encouraged unrepresented groups at work thereby rectifying the problems of institutionalised forms of discrimination in some Australian corporations. Polices in such places include quotas and gender-equal selection in appointments.

Affirmative action for female political representation is necessitated on the theories of Formal, Descriptive, Substantive and Symbolic representation of women



(Hughes, & Paxton, 2018; Franceschet, et. al., 2018). Several European countries presently have some legislative quota rule(s) for women's representation either at the state or national level imposed by legislation or through political party quota system in Belgium Germany, Iceland, Norway, Italy and Austria, among others (Balafoutas, et. al., 2016).

On legislative quota in African parliaments, Rwanda tops with a legislative quota of 63.8% in 2016. Half of the parliamentarians are women. The large number is because of the male mortality during the Rwandan genocide which claimed educated men (Devlin and Elgie 2008 cited in Dimitrova-Grajzl, & Obasanjo, 2019). In 2010, Senegal passed legislation called the Law on Parity 2010 thus adopting a 50/50 gender leading to an increase in women's representation in the National Assembly in the subsequent election from 22,7% to 42,7% (Tøraasen, 2019). On Nigeria's Affirmative Action on women political participation, Oraegbunam, (2023) argues that the legal situation in Nigeria regarding Affirmative Action may require explicit laws, but the Constitution's lack of explicit provisions may hinder their validity. An activist judiciary will need to interpret Affirmative Action into the constitutional provisions.

### **vii Gender Socialisation**

The learning process by which individuals create and learn gender through socialisation agents such as family, media, and other social institutions. New members are instilled with gender norms and roles through interaction. (John et al.2017), Lindsey (2015), posits that through this process the persona of masculinity and femininity is created by the inculcation of gender roles and norms from childhood. The traditional gender roles and norms are absorbed from the age of three (Solbes-Canales, et.al., 2020). Amin, et.al.(2018) opined that the development

of masculinity in adolescent boys of conservative societies involves the implantation of masculinity norms such as manliness, showing no fear, and having the physical strength to fight and compete in sports. More so financial independence, emotional stoicism and sexual prowess. Okafor, & Ugwu (2017) asserts that in most cases these masculine norms are imposed upon.

The concept of gender socialisation is important in understanding how institutions become gendered and how gender stereotypes are formed through the learning process. Eze, et. al., (2016) argues that discrimination stems from the gender socialization processes and patriarchal structures, where women are often subordinated and controlled. Adebola, (2021) further posits that Gender socialization perpetuates inequality in societies by presenting practices as harmless, favouring men and boys who conform to masculine norms. The several studies indicating reinforcement of harmful stereotypes that limit the opportunities available to individuals based on their gender. Cycles of domination as women and girls are often marginalized and their abilities underestimated. (Amole, 2017; Ejukonemu, 2018; Fakunmoju, et. at., 2021).

Studies have shown correlations between gender male socialization and gender-based violence and sexual abuse (Reidy, et al., 2015, Lisak, 2017 Fry, et. al., 2019)

## **2.2 Theoretical Literature Review**

### **Hegemonic Masculinity Theory**

According to Connell & Messerschmidt (2005), the hegemonic masculinity theory envisages the existence of masculinities in the gender system. The theory asserts that a particular form of masculinity is authoritarian above other masculinities, legitimating the domination of women and other men with their consent.

Furthermore, Hegemonic masculinity in gender relations is a pattern of practices which dominant men in leadership employ to keep women in subordinate positions in the gender system (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005).

It further posits the existence of other variants of masculinities alongside the hegemonic variant: - complicit, subordinate, marginalized, and protest. Complicit masculinities secretly support equal rights for other gender groups depending on the gender system yet do not oppose dominant masculinity. They benefit from the patriarchal dividend which, according to Connell (2005) is the honour, prestige, gains, and respect accrued from maintaining unequal gender relations within the gender system. Subordinate masculinities lack legitimacy among other men in their societies because their type of masculinity is either effeminate sexuality or celibate. The marginalised are discriminated against due to class, race, and religion. The protest masculinities advocate for a change in gender relations, if possible, the gender system.

The theory further asserts that the domination of women in society by these masculinities has a historical perspective. The uneven gender relations between men and women is legitimated by consensus. This theory is related to cultural hegemony rooted in the Marxist theory of cultural hegemony by Antonio Gramsci (1971), which states that the culture of the ruling class is acceptable by other classes in society and the ruling class dominates the proletariat, by the consent of the proletariat.

Dominance exists in interpersonal relations, and social groups to social institutions and bureaucracies (Connell, & Messerschmidt, 2005). According to various literature arising from gender studies and masculinities, in the context of gender

relations, hegemonic masculinities exist in every facet of social life (Messerschmidt, 2015; Park, 2015; Kaelberer, 2019; Lavelle, 2021). Messerschmidt, (2015) examined the discourses of Former President George Bush (Snr) and George W. Bush on the Gulf War and War Against Terror respectively, asserted that speeches given by the former presidents appealed to hegemonic masculinities in the political sphere thus justifying the war and concealing its real political agenda. Park, (2015) examined the construction of hegemonic masculinity in the mass media by looking into coverages by columnists on sports personalities in the National Basket Ball Association (NBA).

In comprehending the manifestation of such masculinities in the political institution, studies have indicated the display of such masculinity in radical right politicians. The right-wing party manifestos depict conservatism, mainstreaming of traditional gender roles for women as well as racist policies in various parliaments across Europe. (Worth, 2021; Geva, 2020; Ralph-Morrow, 2022; Löffler, et al., 2020).

Gender scholars have demonstrated in studies that legislative debates become gendered when legislative measures of gender trigger an interplay between male and female legislators in ways that men control the direction of debates and the outcome (O'Brien, 2019; Lowndes, 2020).

Kantola & Lombardo, (2021) gave instances in which far right-wing populist politicians in the European Parliament developed strategies to divert attention from gender equality during debates on the floor to other matters. Bäck, et.al (2014) demonstrated in studies that during debates on gender measures, female

parliamentarians contribute less to gender and other hard-line policies in the Swedish Parliament.

Literature on studies on gender debates in African parliaments is limited as research is conducted by foreign scholars. Clayton, et. al (2017) studied the pattern of debates in the Ugandan parliament on gender quotas and concluded that women in parliament contribute effectively during those debates. However, women elected on the reserved seats quota usually follow their party's legislative agenda having patriarchal framings.

Connell (2005) on gender equality posited that in most cases, policies on gender equality for women are being brought up by the women, edging the men out. Because men control policy and occupy leadership positions in society, they will resist such policies (Connell, 2005). Hegemonic masculinity is not static but dynamic because men in leadership have alternatives to affect the existing gender system. Jewkes, et.al. (2015) opined that men in such leadership positions usually have a choice to oppress women or change the pattern of dominance, but due to a lack of exposure to other ideas and information, it is severely limited. Subsequently, men are the keepers of culture and belief systems, and tend to use those systems to perpetually dominate women, especially in a patriarchal gendered system (Jewkes, et.al. 2015).

As aforementioned, by Connell & Messerschmidt (2005) hegemonic masculinity has a historical perspective. The historical analysis of the dominance of women accounts for the exclusion of women from decision-making in Nigerian politics. Women in the pre-colonial era in the South west and the North were shared the same gender roles with the men in terms of domestic work and decision making

(Jaiyeola, 2020). Gender roles were categorised in the south east, the men assumed leading roles over the women. An example of such strong male figures was depicted in prose such as Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* (Sesan, 2015). The picture of a such figure would be a man with large households, lands, wives and children, speaking with rhetoric in community meetings with influence as portrayed by Nwaka in the same novel (Sesean, 2015).

Colonialism introduced a new form of patriarchal system as the cultivation of agricultural produce was substituted for cash crop cultivation. According to Jaiyeola, (2020) the British decisively isolated women from the socio-economic activities and locality politics, pushing them to cash crop farming for taxes and food crop farming of subsistence. The men participated in the colonial administration service and the politics through Nigeria which consequently accounts for the low participation of women in politics. The moves of the British administration to tax women and introduce Warrant Chiefs provoked the introduction of women participation in politics Mensah (2021) however the subordinate role played by women in the Nigerian society had its roots from colonial incursion. Ajala (2016) asserts that the unequal status of women is socially constructed as it is general perception to have men in control over the economy and polity.

### **2.3 Empirical Literature Review**

Treas, & Tai, (2016) conducted research on a study on Gender Inequality in housework across 20 European Nations. The method adopted was a quantitative method using random sampling of 7733 respondents. Ages range between 18–65 and legally married, cohabiting, or in civil partnerships. Using inventive feminist theories of gender stratification, and various cultural variables, the question was

whether gender ideology affects husband-wife shares of housework. Its findings confirmed that men and women perform less housework in climes where the public perception supports gender equality. Also in countries with insufficient housing policies women do more housework than any other place.

Musa, et al., (2016) conducted a study on how gender differences in achievement goals may influence academic performance in different subjects. The researchers collected data from a sample of senior secondary school students in Borno State, Nigeria, and analyzed the results to determine any significant findings or patterns. The study involved 827 students from 18 schools across the state, using a correlational design. Achievement goals were measured using the Hierarchical Model of Approach and Avoidance Achievement Goals Motivation Scale (MANAVA), and overall academic performance was measured using the aggregate of average scores. The data was analysed using the above approach. The results showed that males outperformed females in English and academic performance, but there was no gender difference in Mathematics. Gender affects learning goal orientation but not performance approach or performance avoidance goal orientation.

Lari, (2016) carried out a study to evaluate the performance of the Qatar government in achieving gender equality for Qatari women in the workplace. The researcher used the qualitative research method via personal interviews with 25 Qatari women at the management level in various occupations. The researcher relied on *Theorizing Patriarchy* by Sylvia Walby to ascertain the effectiveness of the 1995 reforms on gender laws. The results showed the effectiveness of the reforms as the government implemented policies in the inclusion of women in

decision-making, and other policies. However, Qatari women still face cultural challenges, especially in senior management level positions.

Wolf et al,(2016) examined the rate of enrolment of children in Ghanaian schools to establish a gender gap in education of girls. Using the quantitative analysis, a total of 68 school children participated from grades 3 through 8 and their 52 caregivers participated in the study. The 68 schoolchildren represented approximately 45% of the sample population at the school. This resulted a gender gap as girls' attendance lower compared to boys.

Pansardi, & Vercesi, (2017) carried out a study on the presence of gender bias in the Parliamentary Selection Committee of the Italian parliament from 1994-2013. The theoretical framework was based on the neo-institutional partisan approach. After reviewing much literature and the records of the selection committee within the period in view, three hypotheses were formulated and the results confirm evidence of bias as women were appointed to feminine committees and were given fewer assignments in other committees controlled by right-wing politicians.

Oyesomi, & Olorunyomi, (2017) studies dealt with female participation in politics using indigenous communication, considering socio-economic characteristics. Four communities in Lagos and Ogun states were selected for the study. Data was collected through surveys, Focus Group discussions, and in-depth interviews. The majority of respondents were between 18 and 35 years old. Results showed that young women participate more in politics, with 40% aged between 26-35 and 8.2% over 55.

Obayelu & Chime (2020) carried out a study on women's empowerment in rural Nigeria using data from the 2013 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey



(NDHS). The data was analysed using descriptive statistics and a regression model. The Findings showed that most decisions were made by spouses, and decisions on earnings were jointly made. Women's agency has the highest relative contribution to women's disempowerment, and women in northern Nigeria are less empowered than their southern counterparts. A husband's education and age are inversely related to women's empowerment, while education, household size, and being the household head are directly related.

A study was conducted by Belarmino & Roberts, (2019) on an analysis of Gender Roles in Japan. The Researchers used the qualitative method to investigate the gender role expectations in Japan that lead to inequality, especially with the cases of non-reporting of violence against women and other forms of discrimination they face in the labour sector. The study was conducted at Chukyo University located in Nagoya City in Japan using a random sample of 10 young women ranging from 18 to 22 years of age. The findings showed that Japanese women face traditional gender roles, prioritizing family responsibilities over career advancement, and conforming to societal norms, limiting freedom of expression and individuality.

Abubakar & Dasuki (2018) explored the relationship between women's empowerment and Information and Communication Technology (ICTs), focusing on WhatsApp's potential in Nigeria. It uses the theoretical framework of Sen's Capability Approach to evaluate its impact on human development. The result showed that WhatsApp can empower women by enabling their participation in social, economic, and political activities. However, contextual factors hinder their full use.

Ashraf, & Ali (2018) carried out an empirical analysis on the Socio-Economic Well-Being and Women Status in Pakistan. The researchers relied on the Gender Inequality Index and Human Index amongst other variables. Using the quantitative method data analysed covered the period of 1980-2014. Results showed a negative relationship between economic deprivation and the gender inequality index indicating that when economic deprivation of Pakistani women increases, Pakistani women will not contribute to economic development.

Tøraasen, (2019) examined the adoption of Gender Parity Law in Senegal. The researcher adopted the qualitative method of research by conducting semi-structured interviews with 20 respondents. Thirteen (13) respondents were former and current parliamentarians. Seven from the academia, women groups and bureaucrats. Seven respondents were academics, women's group members, and bureaucrats who could give an account of the process that led to the adoption of the legislation. Results showed that affirmative action by women groups in the country and Executive-legislative relations were the factors that led to the passage of the Law.

Orisadare, (2019) examined the role of women's groups in politics in Osun State, Nigeria, focusing on their challenges and implications for economic development. The study analysed primary data from 30 women's groups in Osun State's 10 Local Government Areas. It was found that women's groups lack a political agenda and are often unaware of gender equality laws or affirmative action, thus grassroots involvement may not be sufficient to encourage more women's participation and influence economic development.

Kleven, et al, (2019) studied the impact of childbirth on gender equality in Denmark. Using secondary data from the administrative records results revealed a gender gap in wages of working-class women who gave birth against others. Working-class women in that circumstance had to resign from their duties.

Adebite & Machethe (2020) studied the Financial Inclusion Gender Gap (FIGG) in Nigeria's smallholder agriculture sector, analysing secondary sources. The study found that FIGG increased from 12% in 2016 to 20% in 2014 and 24% in 2017, attributed to socioeconomic, cultural, institutional, legal, and regulatory factors affecting formal financial services demand and supply. Strategies to bridge the gap were identified.

Landivar, et. al, (2020) examined how the COVID-19 pandemic impacts on the United States labour force causing gender inequality. Using the existing data, they compared the rate of employment before and after the pandemic. Results showed that women were at a higher disadvantage in some sectors than men. More women have to quit their jobs

Sá., et. al, (2020) carried out studies on gender gaps in research productivity among elite scientists in the United States, Canada, and South Africa. Quantitative method used, analysing 943 researchers' papers and scholarly output over five years.. Results showed a gender gap as there was an overrepresentation of men among the most productive and cited scientists.

Acosta et al. (2020) study centred on the inaction of the Ugandan government on gender mainstreaming in its climate change policy. Qualitative data was derived from semi-standard interviews with stakeholders on climate change and gender, among other themes. It was found that the Ugandan Government's inaction on

gender mainstreaming in climate change policy was due to limited awareness, inadequate institutional capacity, and competing priorities. The study emphasizes the importance of incorporating gender perspectives for equitable and sustainable outcomes.

Adeniji, et al., (2020) investigated the effect of gender inequality and maternal mortality rate on economic growth in Nigeria. The researcher used the quantitative method by sourcing data from the World Development Indicators (WDI 2017) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the period of 38 years (1980–2017). The following variables were involved- inclusive growth proxies by the growth rate of gross domestic product (GDP), maternal mortality rates, infant mortality rates, inequality, female primary education attainment and female secondary education attainment and female labour force. Results showed that maternal mortality, gender inequality and infant mortality have negative effects on economic growth.

Wagner, et al, (2021) carried out a study on how the effect of gender inequality on an online encyclopaedia. Using quantitative analysis, results showed a gender bias in the manner online articles on prominent women were portrayed against men in different dimensions.

#### **2.4 Gap in the Literature**

The Chapter discussed all concepts and a specific theory related to the subject matter. Furthermore, various empirical studies on the subject matter, as provided by various researchers, were examined. Having studied the various works of scholars in the field of gender, there exists a gap in the area of legislature in terms of how legislative speech is gendered by examining the floor at floor debates on

the Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Bill in the House of Representatives proceedings and the Senate. Moreover, how the decisions of the Nigerian parliament have affected other gender related bills as a result of a demonstration of hegemonic masculinity

#### **2.4 Theoretical Framework:**

The Theory of Hegemonic Masculinity, as posited by Connell & Messerschmidt (2005), is the theoretical framework that forms the basis for the study. The Theory provides a comprehensive understanding of how dominant forms of masculinity are constructed and maintained within society. Thus, how masculinities are construed within the Nigerian Parliament in considering the gender bills offers valuable insights into how these masculinities navigate to perpetuate and legitimate unequal relations between men and women. Its relevance will be applied to resolve the research questions stated in the research.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This section gives an account of the methodology, sources of data, and analysis.

#### **3.0 Research Design**

The study adopted a mixed-methods research design. This design allowed for the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative research method was necessary because the data was centred on Legislative speech. Studies have demonstrated the importance of Legislative speech in policymaking (Lauderdale, & Herzog, 2016; Bäck, & Debus, 2019). The Quantitative method was used to measure the records of the status of legislative measures obtained and displayed in tables. The combination of both methods provided a more comprehensive understanding of the role of Legislative speech in policymaking and the effectiveness of legislative measures. This approach also allowed for the triangulation of data, increasing the validity and reliability of the findings.

#### **3.1 Sources of Data**

The data collected was secondary. Information from official debates (Hansard) of June 8, 2016, in the House of Representatives, March 15, 2016, and December 21, 2021, in the Senate, respectively. Furthermore, information from the Status of Bills and Resolutions of the Eighth and Ninth Assembly, compiled by the House and Senate Committees on Rules and Business. The rationale was that debate on the GEOB and other gender-related measures happened during the period in view. The floor deliberations carried the responses of the parliamentarians on the GEOB,

while the records on legislative measures showed the National Assembly's responsiveness on gender-related issues. This information is important in assessing the progress made by the National Assembly in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. It also provides a basis for future legislative action on gender-related issues.

### **3.2 Data Analysis**

In analysing the text of the debates, the Thematic analysis method of Clarke and Braun (2006) was used. The model identifies analysis and reports themes within a text (Clarke & Braun, 2006). The researcher analysed the data according to Clarke & Braun (2006), six stages in thematic analysis. First, the researcher had to be familiar with the text by reading the debates and thereafter created codes to classify familiar texts related to the first research question:

*What were the factors that affected the non-passage of the Gender Equality Bill in the National Assembly in the Eighth and Ninth Assembly?*

Common codes were created alongside text used frequently in the transcripts. Thereafter, the researcher began to look for themes in the codes by discovering the relationship between the texts, and research question 1 and created themes. A narrative report was given on each theme at the end of the analysis to answer research question one. In answering research question 2, data obtained was presented as Bills on gender issues from the House and Senate in tables with their percentages.

Basic Content analysis was carried out on the entire data. Basic content analysis according to (Drisko & Maschi, 2016) is a technique in content analysis in which words are analysed using word count tools to appreciate the literal communication

content of the text. Words are measured in frequencies to underpin the importance of the subject matter. This was found in Marcon, et. al (2022) study of responses to the legislation of organ donation in Canada's province of Nova Scotia in which content from 26 discussions from Facebook groups on the subject matter was analysed.

### **3.3 Problems of the Research Methodology:**

In the course of the study, the researcher encountered constraint regarding the availability of gazetted copies of some gender based bills. The bills were either not available or gazetted at the Paper Office Unit, Information Department of the National Assembly. The Hansard of Senate proceedings of December, 15, 2021 was not published on the National Assembly site. The researcher relied on the transcripts obtained from the Editors Unit in the Senate.



**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

This chapter centres on the analysis of the data from Hansard and the status of Bills. It deals with an analysis of the secondary data to answer the research questions and compute the Research Hypothesis.

**4.0 Analysis of the Hansard**

**Table 1:1 Total Summary of Participants**

<b>Date of Proceedings</b>	<b>Men in Favour of the Bill</b>	<b>Men Against</b>	<b>Women in Favour</b>	<b>Total Participants</b>
House Proceedings of Wednesday 8 June 2016	4	2	3	9
Senate Proceedings of March 15, 2016	5	2	3	10
Senate Proceedings of December 21, 2021	5	7	3	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>34</b>

**Table 1.2: Total Summary of Comments from Hansard**

<b>Total Discussions on Bill</b>	<b>Comments from 14 Men in Favour of Bill</b>	<b>Discussions from 11 Men Against the Bill</b>	<b>Comments from 9 Female participants(in favour)</b>	<b>Presiding officer/ Majority Leader Comments</b>
70	16	21	11	22

*Source:* Collated by researcher

#### 4.1 Analysis of Gender-based Bills introduced in the Eighth and Ninth Assembly

**Table 1.3: Gender-based Bills introduced in the Eighth Senate(2015-2019)**

	<i>No &amp; Title</i>	<i>Sponsor(s)</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Reading</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1.	SB 37 Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, 2015	Sen. Biodun Olujimi	30/9/2015	Awaiting Second Reading
2.	SB 97: Protection Against Domestic Violence Act (Amendment) Bill, 2015	Sen. Dino Melaye	20/10/2015	Awaiting Second Reading
3.	SB. 116 Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill, 2015	Sen. Biodun Olujimi		Netegived 15/6/2016
4.	SB 262: Sexual Harassment in Tertiary Educational Institutions Prohibition Bill, 2016	Sen. Ovie Omo-Agege	04/05/2016	Passed
5.	SB 277: Free Integrated Maternal and Child Health Care Bill 2016	Sen. Umaru Ibrahim Kurfi	26/7/2017	Awaiting Second Reading

*Source:* Collated by researcher

**Table 1.4: Gender-based Bills introduced in the Eighth House of Representatives(2015-2019)**

	<i>No &amp; Title</i>	<i>Sponsor(s)</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Reading</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1	HB. 86 Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill, 2015	Hon. Uzoma Nkem-Abonta	21/10/2015	Referred to the Committee of the Whole 5/11/2015 Adjourned consideration 8/6/2016
2	HB. 124 National Council for Widows, Dependent Children and Orphans (Establishment, Special Provisions, etc)	Hon Ayuba Muhammed Bello	24/11/2015	Referred to the Committee on Women Affairs and Social Development 2/3/2017
3	HB. 1156 Family Economic Advancement Programme (Establishment, Etc.) Act (Repeal) Bill, 2017	Hon. Mohammed Gudaje Kazaure	28/9/2017	Referred to the Committee on Women Affairs and Social Development 24/10/2017

4	HB. 1500 National Centre for Women Development Act (Repeal and Re-Enactment) Bill, 2018	Hon. Gideon Gwani	3/7/2018	Awaiting Second Reading
5	HB. 1594 Women Participation in Elections Support Bill, 2018	Hon. Sadiq Ibrahim	18/12/2018	Adjourned debate 18/12/2018
6	HB. 843 Sexual Harassment in Educational Institutions Bill, 2016	Senate	19/7/2017	Awaiting Second Reading
7	HB.1192 Optional Paternity Leave Bill, 2017	Hon. Edward Pwajok	31/10/2017	Negetived 3/5/2018
8	HB. 1198 Sexual Offenders (Registration) Bill, 2017	Hon. Idagbo Ochiglegor	31/10/2017	Referred to Committee on Human Rights 18/1/2018

Source: Collated by researcher

**Table 1.5: Gender-based Bills introduced in the Ninth Senate (2019-2023)**

	SB. No & Short title	Sponsor(s)	1 <sup>st</sup> Reading	Remarks
1	SB. 02: Criminal Code Act (Amendment) Bill,2019	Sen. Oluremi Tinubu	24/09/2019	Passed 14/7/2020
2	SB. 77: Sexual Harassment Bill,2019	Sen. Omo Agege	09/10/2019	Passed 07/07/2020
3	SB. 926: Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015 (Repeal & Re-enactment) Bill, 2022	Sen. Isah, Jibrin	15/02/2022	Committee on Judiciary 27/4/2022
4	SB. 208: Gender and Equal Opportunity Bill, 2019	Sen. Olujimi Biodun	26/11/2019	Debate Adjourned 15/12/2021
5	SB. 1042: National Centre for Women Development Act (Amendment) Bill, 2022	Sen. Apiafi, Betty Jocelyn	27/07/2022	Passed 22/11/2022
6	Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (Fifth Alteration) Bill, No. 35 2022 (Special Seats for Women)	Special Ad Hoc Constitutional Review	23/2/2022	Negetived 1/3/2022
7	Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (Fifth Alteration) Bill, No. 37 2022 (Affirmative Action for Women in Political Party Administration)	Special Ad Hoc Constitutional Review	23/2/2022	Negetived 1/3/2022

8	Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (Fifth Alteration) Bill, No. 68 2022 (Minimum Percentage for Women in Ministerial or Commissioner Nominees)	Special Ad Hoc Constitutional Review	23/2/2022	Negetived 1/3/2022
9	Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (Fifth Alteration) Bill, No. 36 2022 (Expansion of the Scope of Citizenship by Registration)	Special Ad Hoc Constitutional Review	23/2/2022	Negetived 1/3/2022
10	Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (Fifth Alteration) Bill, No. 38 2022 (Indigeneship Rights)	Special Ad Hoc Constitutional Review	23/2/2022	Negetived 1/3/2022
11	Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (Fifth Alteration) Bill, No. 68 2022 (Minimum Percentage for Women in Ministerial or Commissioner Nominees)	Special Ad Hoc Constitutional Review	23/2/2022	Negetived 1/3/2022

Source: Collated by researcher

**Table 1.6: Gender-based Bills introduced in the Ninth House of Representatives (2019-2023)**

	<i>No &amp; Title</i>	<i>Sponsor(s)</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Reading</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1.	HB. 792 Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill, 2020	Hon. Taiwo Oluga	10/3/2020	Awaiting Second Reading
2.	HB. 795 Women's Representation in Legislative Houses Bill, 2020	Hon. Taiwo Oluga	10/3/2020	Awaiting Second Reading
3.	HB. 1937 Mandatory Inclusion of Teaching of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence into Senior Secondary Schools Curriculum in Nigeria Bill, 2022	Hon. Julius Ihonvbere	26/7/2022	Awaiting Second Reading
4.	HB. 121 National Center for Women Development Bill, 2019	Hon. Gideon Gwani	16/7/2019	Awaiting Second Reading
5.	HB. 197 National Hospital for Women and Children Act (Amendment) Bill, 2019	Hon. Nkeiruka Onyejeocha	25/7/2019	Awaiting Second Reading
6.	HB. 900 National Centre for Women Development Act (Amendment) Bill, 2020	Hon. Ogunlola Omowumi Olubunmi	2/7/2020	Awaiting Second Reading

7.	HB. 1147 Maryam Babangida National Centre for Women Development (Establishment) Bill, 2020	Hon. Nkeiruka Onyejeocha	9/12/2020	Passed by the House and Transmitted to the Senate for concurrence Conference Report Adopted 6/4/2023
8.	HB. 1711 Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (Amendment) Bill, 2021	Hon. Adejoro Adeogun	18/11/2021	Referred to the Committee on Women Affairs and Social Development 17/2/2022 Awaiting Report
9.	HB. 1804 Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (Amendment) Bill, 2022	Hon. Sergius Ogun	20/1/2022	Consolidated with HB 1711 10/2/2022
10.	HB. 1003 Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (Amendment) Bill, 2020	Hon. Zakariya'u Galadima	21/7/2020	Awaiting Second Reading
11.	HB. 1883 Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (Amendment) Bill, 2022	Hon. Ganiyu Abiodun Johnson	2/3/2022	Referred to the Committee on Human Rights 21/12/2022
12.	HB. 191 Sexual Offences Act (Amendment) Bill, 2019	Hon. Shina Abiola Peller	18/7/2019	Awaiting Second Reading
13.	HB. 342 National Council for Widows, Dependent Children and Orphans (Assistance) Bill, 2019	Hon. Chukwuma Umeoji	26/9/2019	Awaiting Second Reading
14.	HB. 1006 Sexual Harassment of Students in Tertiary Educational Institutions (Prohibition) Bill, 2020	Senate	21/7/2020	Passed by the House Awaiting Conference Report
15.	Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (Fifth Alteration) Bill, No. 35 2022 (Special Seats for Women)	Special Ad Hoc Constitutional Review	23/2/2022	Netegived 1/3/2022
16.	Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (Fifth Alteration) Bill, No. 37 2022 (Affirmative Action for Women in Political Party Administration)	Special Ad Hoc Constitutional Review	23/2/2022	Netegived 1/3/2022
17.	Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (Fifth Alteration) Bill, No. 68 2022 (Minimum	Special Ad Hoc Constitutional Review	23/2/2022	Netegived 1/3/2022

	Percentage for Women in Ministerial or Commissioner Nominees)			
18.	Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (Fifth Alteration) Bill, No. 36 2022 (Expansion of the Scope of Citizenship by Registration)	Special Ad Hoc Constitutional Review	23/2/2022	Negetived 1/3/2022
19.	Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (Fifth Alteration) Bill, No. 38 2022 (Indigeneship Rights)	Special Ad Hoc Constitutional Review	23/2/2022	Negetived 1/3/2022
20.	Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (Fifth Alteration) Bill, No. 68 2022 (Minimum Percentage for Women in Ministerial or Commissioner Nominees)	23/2/2022	1/3/2022	Passed 8/3/2022

*Source:* Collated by researcher

## 4.2 Thematic Analysis

**Research question 1:-** What were the factors that affected the non-passage of the Gender Equality Bill in the National Assembly in the Eighth and Ninth Assembly?

The Factors affecting the passage of the Bill are summed in the themes from the transcripts. The themes were generated from the 70 discussions which covered the concerns of Members of the National Assembly and later informed their decision in the voice vote.

**Theme I (House of Representatives Hansard of June 8, 2016): The Constitutionality of the Bill.**

Arguments centred around the provisions of Section 42 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as altered) dealing with discrimination and the issue on whether the National Assembly should legislate on a matter.

- (i) I just want us to be mindful of the fact that there is Supreme Court decision that says that when something is already provided for in the Constitution, that you do not repeat it in a legislation.
- (ii) Any matter that is in the Constitution, we should not make law on it. If you find out that the Constitutional issue on Gender Inequality and Discrimination, already our Constitution has mentioned that. There is no way we are going to bring it as a Bill to be passed by this House. This is because any Convention from outside to the extent that it is against our Constitution, we cannot even domesticate it.
- (iii) It is clear and it is a Supreme Court decision and the discrimination against women is already provided for in Section 42 or there about of our Constitution. In fact, the Bill talks about it, the Bill quotes the Constitution. If we are to go by what the Supreme Court had said, that this becomes redundant and it really should not have gotten to this stage. I owe it a duty to bring the Supreme Court decision to the knowledge of the House.
- (iv) Also, more than that, the Supreme Court which is the highest Court of the Land has made a pronouncement on this. We have separation of powers and once the Supreme Court has made a decision that you cannot do this, I think it is wrong for another arm of government to say; Yes, we are aware of what the Supreme Court has said but we can do it and would go back to the supreme court or to the Court for interpretation, which I think is wrong.

**Theme 2: (Senate Hansard March 15, 2016) : Provisions of the Bill granting some advantages to women in conflict with extant laws and the Constitution.**

Members of the National Assembly expressed their concern pertaining the provisions of the Bill granting privileges to women. Clause 5 provides for the modification of certain cultural practices against women especially degrading treatment against widows and other practices. Clauses 6- 14 provide for the elimination of discrimination in various aspects of social life.

- (i) After going through the Bill, I found that Section 5 of this Bill specifically on modification of sociocultural practices are directly in conflict with the Nigerian Constitution, because the Nigerian Constitution is very clear, it scrutinises the customs and practices of all Nigerians, especially in relation to their religious right as guarantee by Constitution.
- (ii) Where she also say a widow shall have the right to an equitable share in the heritage of property of her husband, this is also in conflict with Nigerian Constitution. Section 17, women and men shall have the right to inherit in equitable shares their parent properties; this is also in conflict with Nigerian's Constitution.
- (iii) An existing law is already in place which has already been taken care of by our provision. For example, the issue of guidance and custody of children vary from one community to another and those of us who are lawyers will equally know that when these laws were received, it says:  
  
Where there are inconsistent with local circumstances, the law prevailing in the local circumstances should take effect.
- (iv) Then, if you look at this Bill, it seeks to give women extra advantages which are against this Constitution. Let us look at Section 14 (11), which says:



Eliminate discrimination and social economic ground (12) the right to choose the indigene ship and identity (13) right to confer citizenship all on women. These are special privileges and rights, that this Constitution has envisaged. I therefore, suggest that we suspend this Debate and look at this thing critically.

**Theme 3:(Senate Hansard March 15, 2016): Bill in conflict with custom, tradition and religion.**

The provisions of Clause 5 which deals with Modification of cultural practices was a concern to some Members of the National Assembly. The debate at this point drew strong sentiments touching modification of culture and religious beliefs.

- (i) For Christianity, we have Common Law and for Muslims, we have Sharia Law as recognised by the Constitution. For customs, those who believe in their customs and traditions also have Customary Laws. For the Bill to provide that a Widow shall automatically become the guidance and custodian of her children is in conflict with Nigerian Constitution.
- (ii) there are some provisions of this Bill that are conflicting with the dictates in Islam when it comes to the sociocultural practice which is part of our religion. In the 8th Senate, this Bill was debated. If they are talking of equity, it is alright but equality is no. For this reason, I do not support the second reading of this Bill.
- (iii) Now, Christianity preaches salvation to the sacredness of the institution of the marriage. In the Lead Debate, page 3 and 4 state thus: My highly respected Colleagues, the Gender and Equal Opportunity Bill seek to provide for Women Empowerment in the following areas. That Women

Freedom of Movement continues to be legally restricted in some part of this country. This restriction is often due to marriage laws which mostly and largely are informed by religious believe that a Woman can do whatever she likes. This will give rise to a situation wherein our Northerner language that said, Mijin Hajiya; you will become Mijin Hajiya at the end of the day, where your woman can move around, and interact any how under your watch.

- (iv) This is an apostasy. This is heresy and we must not encourage this kind of law in this Chamber. As long as we live as Parliamentarians, we must come out with laws that encourage morality, after all, our laws supposed to be a product of moral course. That was the original essence of law even in the old Elizabethan England.
- (v) Therefore, we must not join the multitude in the world to do things the way the world do. We must be conscious of our morality. We must stand firm and ensure that our society remains clean and transparent morally.
- (vi) However, from an Islamic perspective which is the social cultural practice of Muslims, equal opportunities actually infringes on the provision of the Quran and also the Bible.
- (vii) For me, I will not support the passage of this unless the word ‘equal’ is removed. We will have debate on the gender opportunities Bill but when you bring equality into it, it infringes into the practise of Islamic religion. That is where the conflict is and because of this inconsistency, I will not support the passage of this Bill for second reading.

**Theme 4 (Senate Hansard December 21, 2021): No consultations with parliamentarians.**

In the course of the debate, some National Assembly members mentioned that they were not aware of the Bill. They asked for the bill to be stepped down for more consultations.

- (i) We have not seen the main body of the draft Bill, ordinarily, we should have seen it. However, we do not want the title to be in conflict with what is coming inside. Probably, the best thing to do is either we step it down until the draft Bill is presented to us before we endorse it.
- (ii) I suggest that let each one of us have a copy of the draft Bill so that we can now go through it and when we come for re-presentation; our conscience will be very clear instead of anything going in a process that we do not understand. Therefore, we should give our Colleagues the opportunity to go through the draft of the Bill even before we go for public hearing.
- (iii) we may be doing ourselves and the country for whom we are making these laws a lot of justice if we do some further consultations to take care of those sensitive issues which seem to bother some Members of this Chamber and the outer population of our great country that we are making these laws for.  
I see nothing wrong in the advice
- (iv) I advise that my very dear Colleague should consider deeply the idea of withdrawing this Bill for now and re-present it after the consultation is made.
- (v) For me, I see no problem about consultations, a lot of the issues that some of our Colleagues have had about some sections of the Bill maybe lack of proper information about the contents.

(vi) Please, provide each one of us a copy of the Bill, then re-present it for a second reading and if there is any problem which is not fundamental, we will resolve it either in the Committee level or in the public hearing. You do not lose any face by consulting with other Colleagues so that we can take informed position about what is in or outside the Bill.

Research question 2: How many gender-based bills were considered in the Eighth and Ninth Assembly?

**Table 1.7 Summary of Gender bills Introduced in the Eighth Assembly**

	<b>Bills introduced (8<sup>th</sup> Assembly)</b>	<b>Gender Bills introduced (8<sup>th</sup> Assembly)</b>	<b>Gender-Bills passed</b>	<b>Nos Assented</b>	<b>Percentage of Gender Bills Introduced</b>
<b>Senate</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.51%</b>
<b>House of Representatives</b>	<b>1643</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.42%</b>

**Table 1.8 Summary of Gender bills Introduced in the Ninth Assembly**

	<b>Bills introduced (9<sup>th</sup> Assembly)</b>	<b>Gender Bills introduced (9<sup>th</sup> Assembly)</b>	<b>Gender-Bills passed</b>	<b>Nos Assented</b>	<b>Percentage of Gender Bills Introduced</b>
<b>Senate</b>	<b>1130</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.88%</b>
<b>House of Representatives</b>	<b>2232</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.97%</b>

### **4.3 Discussions of Findings:**

From the data collated from the Hansard, 25 men debated the Gender Equality and Equal Opportunity Bill, 2022 of which 14 men spoke in favour against 11 who spoke against it. Despite the number of men in favour of the Bill, the opponents were able to convince other masculinities in the Chamber to vote against it, ultimately in a voice vote. As stated by Connell & Messerschmidt, (2005), other complicit masculinities will not openly support gender-based issues due to the “patriarchal dividend” they enjoy from hegemonic masculinities.

The Thematic Analysis answered the first Research Question in Section 4.3. The concerns of the parliamentarians about the bill centred on the Constitutionality of the Bill; its provisions conflicted with the Constitution and other extant laws on granting some advantages to women; the Bill conflicted with relevant customs, traditions, and religions and asked for further consultations.

The Second research question was answered in Tables 1.7 and 1.8, which revealed that gender bills accounted for less than 1% of the number of bills introduced in the House of Representatives and Senate. In the Eighth Assembly, only the Sexual Harassment of Students in Tertiary Educational Institutions (Prohibition) Bill, 2019, was passed in the Senate, without the House of Representatives concurrence. In the Ninth Assembly, five bills were passed, but only the Sexual Harassment of Students in Tertiary Educational Institutions (Prohibition) Bill, 2023, and the Maryam Babangida National Centre for Women Development (Establishment) Bill, 2023, were passed and are awaiting Presidential Assent.

The Gender Equality Bill, initiated as a private-member bill, lacked executive representation in the Eighth and Ninth Assembly, as displayed in Tables 1.3 – Table

1.6, highlighting a gap in Nigeria's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. This highlights the need for increased advocacy and pressure on policymakers to prioritize gender issues in their legislative agenda. The history of executive-legislative relations in parliament has accelerated the passage of key legislative measures, such as the Child Right Act and the Advanced Fee Fraud Act. The Child Rights Bill was introduced and passed within three months in the Fourth Assembly, while the Advanced Fee Fraud Bill was introduced in 2005 and adopted on May 31, 2006 (Rules and Business, 2003; Rules and Business, 2005). Executive influence on gender-based legislation was evident in Senegal, where the re-election of Former President Abdoulaye Wade was tied to his commitment to the Gender Parity Law, which requires political parties to field equal numbers of men and women in legislative and local elections (Tøraasen, 2019).

The theory of Hegemonic Masculinity by Connell & Messerschmidt, (2005) which states the dominant masculinity supports the unequal relations between men and women was displayed in the following pattern during debate

- (i) Arguments on the constitutionality of the bill and conflict with extant laws as presented in the thematic analysis did not suffice as the relevant committees would have conducted public hearing and further worked on the bill.
- (ii) On custom, only the courts of law as provided Section 18(3) of the Evidence Act 2011 can void any custom if they contradict public policy or natural law, equity, and good conscience.
- (iii) Using Rule 76(3) Senate Standing Orders to step down the bill in Theme 4 exemplifies how political intuitions can become gendered, as Lowndes (2020) asserts. Conversely Parliamentarians in the European Parliament

use strategies to divert debate on gender equality, focusing on illegal immigration and victimization of citizens, resulting in an oscillating policy direction in gender legislation. (Kantola & Lombardo, 2021).

- (iv) Parliamentarians in Theme 3 of the thematic analysis displayed hegemonic masculinities through expressions like "Mijin Hajiya," which depicts women exercising control over men. These expressions showed lawmakers had limited information on the bill's principles, perpetuating gender inequality and limiting women's representation and participation in politics. Hegemonic masculinities are culturally and socially constructed, perpetuating gender inequality in parliament.

The manner adopted to stop the bill reflects National Assembly's responsiveness to gender legislation at a holistic level. Results from the tabular presentation showed a very minimal response. This representation was later reflected in their position on the Constitutional Amendments on Gender Equality.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The summary of findings and proposed recommendations are discussed in this Chapter.

#### **5.0 Summary of findings:**

The study's broad objective was to investigate the factors responsible for the non-passage of the Gender Equality and Equal Opportunity Bill in the Eighth and Ninth Assembly. The study's specific objectives were: -

- i Identify the factors that played against the Gender Equality Bill during floor debates in the Eighth and Ninth Assembly;
- ii. Identify gender-based bills considered in the Eighth and Ninth National Assembly.

The study answered the two Research questions: -

1. What were the factors that affected the non-passage of the Gender Equality Bill in the National Assembly in the Eighth and Ninth Assembly?
2. How many gender-based bills were considered in the Eighth and Ninth Assembly?

The direction of the research centres on the theory of Hegemonic Masculinity which posits that there are several masculinities and the dominant type dominates women and other men in the gender system (Connell, 2005).

The findings showed the presence of Hegemonic masculinities, cultural and religious sentiments dominating the concerns of the members during the debates.



Consequently, the Members had little information on the general principles of the bill. The findings revealed minimal consideration of other gender-related Bills as Hegemonic Masculinities dominating the two Chambers prevented passage of the bills. These hegemonic masculinities in the two Chambers exerted their influence by dismissing or undermining the importance of gender-related Bills, thereby hindering their progress hence the gender bills representing 1% of bills introduced with no Presidential Assent. In addition, there was no Executive bill on gender equality introduced during the period. This lack of consideration highlights the need for further efforts to challenge and dismantle these dominant power structures in order to promote gender equality and ensure the passage of inclusive legislation. Finally, the findings showed that the National Assembly is a gendered institution with its set of behaviours and actors responding to gender bills and measures. For instance, the display of hegemonic masculinities, who used formal rules as tactics to stop the progression of the bill and other gender-related in the legislative process. Ultimately, the National Assembly did not succeed to close the gender gap, enabling a legal framework for the period in view relating to gender-based legislation.

### **5.1 Recommendations**

Given the position of parliament on the Gender Bills, the following is suggested.

- i. The Gender Equality bill be re-introduced as an Executive bill in the 10<sup>th</sup> National Assembly. Also the Constitutional Amendments on Gender Equality namely:- a Bill for an Act to Alter the provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 to Provide for Special seats for women in the National and State houses of assembly; and for Related Matters, 2022; a bill for an Act to Alter the Provision of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 to expand

the Scope of Citizenship by registration; and for Related Matters, 2022; a Bill for an Act to Alter the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 to provide criteria For qualification to become an indigene of a state in Nigeria; and for Related Matters; a Bill for an Act to Alter the Provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 to Provide for Affirmative Action for Women in Political Party Administration; and for Related Matters, 2022; and a Bill for an Act to Alter the Provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 to Provide a Minimum Percentage for Women in Ministerial or Commissioner Nominees; and for Related Matters, 2022; be re-introduced as Executive Bills. The Executive Arm can engage the Legislative given the history of Executive–Legislative Relations in Nigeria. This was the instance during deliberations on the Child Right Law which was initiated as an Executive Bill and other Enactments.

ii. The lawmakers need to be sensitized on the concept of gender equality for women. Sensitization should take the form of workshops and interactive sessions, especially before debate on the general principles and throughout the legislative process. The sensitization should be on the general principles of gender equality for women. Examples of countries in Africa embracing gender equality, the need for a legal framework for gender related issues. Sensitization should be continuous and periodic until the enactment stage of the bill is finalized. This approach would ensure that lawmakers have a comprehensive understanding of the gender bill and its implications, enabling them to make informed decisions. Additionally, involving experts and stakeholders in these workshops and interactive sessions would provide valuable insights and perspectives on gender equality, further enriching the legislative process. The exercise will require the assurances of the men in parliamentary leadership to actively participate and support the inclusion of diverse

voices in the decision-making process. By fostering an inclusive environment, where all perspectives are heard and respected, the gender bill can be strengthened and its implementation can be more effective.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

Gender Equality for women is predicated on women contributing effectively to the global economy because of their potential. Given that the population of women is increasing at a geometric rate, the need to involve women in politics and the economy fosters economic development.

The decisions of the parliamentarians in the National Assembly on the gender bill signify the patriarchal situation of the country in the political scene. Creating a legal framework for equality for women would protect women and enable them to contribute to national development. However, raising religious sentiments and using other tactics is needless in this modern era. The parliament should balance their resolutions with the political will to enable a legal framework on gender issues. As the Tenth National Assembly commences, another opportunity awaits to make gender equality for women achievable.

## **5.3 Recommendations for Further Studies:**

It is recommended that the dynamics of gender relations in parliament be studied in understanding the opposition to gender-based legislation.

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