NAVIGATING VIOLENCE AND GENDER EQUALITY IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN POLITICAL CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT
Violence and gender equality continue to be pressing concerns in contemporary Nigerian politics, posing significant challenges to the democratic process and the inclusion of marginalized groups, particularly women. In Nigeria, political campaigns and elections are often marred by violence, intimidation, and corruption, eroding the credibility of the democratic process and hindering the full participation of citizens. Women, in particular, face unique challenges in navigating the political landscape, with gender-based violence and discrimination creating barriers to their political participation and leadership. The patriarchal power structures that dominate Nigerian politics further marginalize women, making it difficult for them to access political positions and contribute effectively to decision-making processes. Efforts to address these challenges have been made, including the passage of laws and policies aimed at promoting gender equality and increasing women's representation in politics. However, implementation and enforcement remain major obstacles, as entrenched cultural norms and lack of political will limit the effectiveness of these measures. Additionally, the intersectionality of violence and gender equality with other social issues, such as poverty and lack of access to education, exacerbates the challenges faced by women in Nigerian politics. This study provides a detailed analysis of the issues of violence and gender equality in Nigerian politics in the 21st century, through a historical analysis, this paper will explore the root causes, manifestations, and potential solutions to address these challenges.

Introduction

In the complex landscape of Nigerian politics, two pressing issues continue to shape the country's democratic journey in the 21st century, violence and gender equality. Despite strides towards promoting democracy and inclusivity, political violence remains a persistent challenge, with intimidation, coercion, and physical aggression often employed by parties and candidates to achieve their objectives. Concurrently, gender equality remains a significant concern, as women are vastly underrepresented in positions of power and decision-making, facing discrimination and barriers to political participation. Scott (1986) opines that gender as term generally refers to formalized social identities and practices affecting interactions between men and women in modern and contemporary societies. It is the historical and cultural concept that opposes the idea that differentiate between men and women can be defined in strictly biological terms. The intersection of violence and gender inequality in Nigerian politics exacerbates the challenges faced by women, perpetuating a cycle of exclusion and inequality. Gender inequality is particularly marked in political leadership. According to the Inter-Parliament Union, in June 2017 23.6 percent of all national parliament were women (World Development Indicators 2018). Apparently, this number may look low, but from a historical view it actually represents a huge progress. (Approximately, nine percent of all the national parliamentarians in 1987 were women. By 1995, this number had risen to 11.3% and reached 14.3% in 2002.) Jaquete (1997) avers that "the growing participation and presentation of women in politics is one of the most remarkable developments of the twentieth century" Considering the above analysis, this was a new and a recent development, still women in politics often face intimidation, harassment, and violence from their male counterparts, making it difficult for them to fully participate in political processes. Addressing these issues requires a collaborative effort from policymakers, civil society, and the international community to foster a culture of non-violence, uphold human rights, promote women's participation, and create a more inclusive and equitable political system. Only through collective action and a steadfast commitment to democratic values can Nigeria overcome these obstacles and pave the way for a more just and inclusive political landscape. Navigating violence and gender equality in the contemporary Nigerian political context can be a challenging and complex task. Nigeria, like many other countries, has a long history of gender-based violence and discrimination against women, especially in the political sphere. However, with the increasing awareness and advocacy for gender equality, there have been some positive changes in recent years. One of the key challenges in navigating violence and gender equality in Nigerian politics is the prevalence of patriarchal attitudes and practices that perpetuate gender-based violence and discrimination.

Several scholars, activists, and political figures have given opinions on violence and gender equality in 21st-century Nigerian politics. Here are a few notable individuals who have spoken on these issues: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, the renowned Nigerian author and feminist has been a vocal advocate for gender equality and has spoken out against violence and discrimination faced by women in Nigerian society. She has highlighted the importance of challenging traditional gender norms and promoting women's rights in politics and beyond. Amina Mohammed, a Nigerian diplomat and former Minister of Environment, Amina Mohammed has been a strong advocate for gender equality and women's empowerment in Nigerian politics. She has emphasized the need for more women in leadership positions and has worked to address issues of violence against women in the country. Olusegun Obasanjo, the former President of Nigeria has spoken out against violence and corruption in Nigerian politics, emphasizing the importance of promoting peace, democracy, and gender equality in the country. He has called for greater inclusion of women in decision-making processes and has advocated for policies that support women's rights and empowerment. Funmi Iyanda, a Nigerian media personality and women's rights activist, Funmi Iyanda has been a vocal advocate for gender equality and has spoken out against violence and discrimination faced by women in Nigerian society. She has used her platform to raise awareness about these issues and to promote women's rights and empowerment. These individuals, among others, have contributed to the ongoing discussions and efforts to promote gender equality and address issues of violence in Nigerian politics. Their voices and advocacy have been instrumental in raising awareness and driving positive change in the country.

Violence and gender equality are two key issues that continue to plague Nigerian politics in the 21st century. Despite efforts to promote democracy and inclusivity, violence remains a common feature of Nigerian politics, with political parties and candidates often resorting to intimidation, coercion, and even physical violence to achieve their goals. Gender equality is another major challenge in Nigerian politics, with women severely underrepresented in positions of power and decision-making. Despite the passage of laws and

policies aimed at promoting gender equality, women continue to face discrimination and barriers to political participation. The intersection of violence and gender equality in Nigerian politics is particularly troubling, as women are often disproportionately affected by political violence and are more likely to be targeted for speaking out or running for office. This creates a chilling effect on women's political participation and perpetuates a cycle of inequality and exclusion. To address these issues, Nigerian policymakers and civil society organizations must work together to promote a culture of non-violence and respect for human rights in politics. This includes holding perpetrators of political violence accountable, promoting women's participation in politics, and creating a more inclusive and equitable political system. Ultimately, achieving gender equality and ending political violence in Nigerian politics will require a concerted effort from all stakeholders, including government officials, political parties, civil society organizations, and the international community. Only through collective action and a commitment to upholding democratic values can Nigeria truly achieve a more just and inclusive political system.

The overview of the concepts mentioned could include the following: Political Violence in Nigeria, this involves an examination of the various forms of political violence that occur in Nigeria, such as election-related violence, inter-ethnic conflicts, and insurgency. It also explores the impact of political violence on democratic processes, governance, and social cohesion in the country. Strategies to Address Political Violence, this section focuses on the different approaches and interventions that can be implemented to address and prevent political violence in Nigerian politics. This may include strengthening institutions, promoting dialogue and reconciliation, enhancing security measures, and fostering a culture of peace and tolerance. Gender Equality in Nigerian Politics, this concept delves into the challenges and barriers faced by women in Nigerian politics, such as discrimination, cultural norms, and lack of access to resources. It also highlights the importance of promoting gender equality and women's participation in decision-making processes to achieve inclusive and representative governance. Women's Political Participation, this section explores the ways in which women can overcome barriers to political participation in Nigeria, including advocating for policy reforms, building networks and alliances, and challenging stereotypes and biases. It also emphasizes the need for targeted interventions to support women in leadership roles. International Perspectives, this concept involves examining how other countries and international organizations have addressed political violence and gender inequality in their own contexts. It may include case studies, best practices, and lessons learned that can be applied to the Nigerian context to promote peaceful and inclusive political processes.

Conceptual Overview

Gender-based violence refers to any form of violence, abuse, or harm that is directed at an individual based on their gender. It is a manifestation of power dynamics rooted in gender inequality and discrimination. Gender-based violence can take many forms, including physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse. Judith Butler (1990) opines that the challenges traditional notions of gender as a binary and fixed category, arguing that gender is performative and constructed through repeated actions and behaviors. Gender refers to the social, cultural, and psychological characteristics and roles associated with being male or female. It is different from biological sex, which is determined by physical characteristics such as chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive organs. Gender is a complex and multifaceted concept that can include aspects of identity, expression, and behavior. It is not limited to just male and female, as some individuals may identify as non-binary, genderqueer, or gender fluid. Gender identity is deeply personal and can vary from person to person. Michael Kimmel (2000) was of the view that gender norms and expectations are socially constructed and perpetuated, highlighting the ways in which masculinity and femininity are performed and enforced in everyday life. Gender can also be understood as a social construct that shapes how individuals are expected to behave, think, and interact based on their perceived gender. These expectations can influence various aspects of life, including relationships, career choices, and access to resources and opportunities. Gender norms and stereotypes can be restrictive and can contribute to inequality and discrimination based on gender. It occurs in various settings, including domestic relationships, workplaces, schools, and communities. Gender-based violence is a pervasive issue in Nigeria, affecting women in various aspects of their lives, including the political sphere. Women in politics are particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence, which can manifest in physical, sexual, and psychological forms, undermining their ability to participate fully in political activities. Examples of gender-based violence include domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, honor killings, and human trafficking. Gender-based violence affects individuals of all genders but disproportionately impacts women and girls. Efforts to address gender-based violence focus on

prevention, support for survivors, and changing societal attitudes and norms that perpetuate such violence. It is essential to promote gender equality, challenge harmful gender stereotypes, and hold perpetrators of gender-based violence accountable to create safer and more inclusive communities for all individuals. Gender is a complex and multifaceted concept that goes beyond biological differences between males and females. It encompasses social, cultural, and psychological dimensions that shape individuals' identities, roles, and experiences in society. Scholars have explored gender from various perspectives, including feminist theory, sociology, anthropology, and psychology.

Violence refers to the intentional use of physical force or power to harm, injure, or damage someone or something. It can manifest in various forms, including physical violence (such as hitting, kicking, or punching), verbal violence (such as threats, insults, or harassment), emotional violence (such as manipulation or coercion), and sexual violence (such as assault or harassment). Violence can have severe and long-lasting effects on individuals, communities, and societies, leading to physical and emotional harm, trauma, and sometimes even death. Addressing and preventing violence require a comprehensive approach that includes education, awareness, support services, legal measures, and advocacy to create safer and more peaceful environments for everyone.

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, opportunities, and treatment of individuals regardless of their gender. It involves ensuring that all people, regardless of their gender, have the same access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making processes. Gender equality is important for creating a fair and just society where everyone has the chance to reach their full potential without discrimination or bias based on their gender. This includes addressing issues such as unequal pay, representation in leadership positions, access to education, healthcare, and other resources. Efforts to promote gender equality aim to create a more inclusive and equitable world for people of all genders. Gender equality is a fundamental human right and a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world. It is enshrined in international human rights treaties and agreements, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Sustainable Development Goals. Achieving gender equality involves addressing deep-rooted societal norms, stereotypes, and practices that perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality. It requires dismantling systemic barriers that limit the full participation and opportunities of individuals based on their gender. This includes working towards equal pay for equal work, promoting gender diversity and representation in leadership positions, ensuring access to education and healthcare for all genders, and combating gender-based violence and discrimination.

Equality refers to the principle of treating all individuals fairly and impartially, regardless of their differences or characteristics. This includes ensuring that everyone has equal rights, opportunities, and access to resources, regardless of factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or socioeconomic status. Promoting equality involves challenging discrimination, bias, and systemic barriers that prevent certain groups from fully participating in society. It also requires addressing power imbalances and working to create a more inclusive and just society where everyone can thrive. Equality can be achieved through various means, including implementing laws and policies that protect the rights of marginalized groups, promoting diversity and inclusion in workplaces and communities, and raising awareness about the importance of respecting and valuing differences. Ultimately, striving for equality is essential for building a more just and equitable world where all individuals have the opportunity to reach their full potential and live with dignity and respect.

The political context in Nigeria is complex and multifaceted, influenced by various factors such as history, culture, religion, ethnicity, and economic challenges. Nigeria is a diverse country with a large population and multiple ethnic groups, which has contributed to political tensions and competition for power. The Nigerian political system operates as a federal republic with a presidential system of government. The President is both the head of state and government, and there is a bicameral legislature consisting of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The country has faced challenges with corruption, inequality, insecurity, and governance issues over the years. Ethnic and religious divisions have played a significant role in Nigerian politics, with competition for power often reflecting these cleavages. This has at times led to political instability, violence, and electoral disputes. Additionally, there have been concerns about the centralization of power, lack of accountability, and transparency in government institutions. Civil society organizations, the media, and international partners have played important roles in advocating for good governance and democratic principles in Nigeria. The Nigerian political context is characterized by a complex interplay of factors that

continue to shape the country's political landscape and influence its development trajectory. The Nigerian political landscape is complex, with deep-rooted patriarchal norms and structures that often hinder women's political participation. The dominance of male political elites and traditional power dynamics shape the political environment, making it challenging for women to navigate and succeed in politics.

Patriarchy refers to a social system where men hold primary power and dominance in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege, and control of property. In a patriarchal society, men typically hold more power and authority than women, with male-centered norms and values often shaping social structures and institutions. This can result in the marginalization and oppression of women, as well as other gender identities that do not conform to traditional male-dominated norms. Patriarchy can also manifest in various ways, such as through gender-based discrimination, unequal access to resources and opportunities, gender-based violence, and limited representation of women in leadership positions. Efforts to challenge and dismantle patriarchy often involve promoting gender equality, challenging traditional gender roles and stereotypes, and advocating for the empowerment and rights of all genders. Patriarchy is a complex social structure that intersects with other forms of oppression and discrimination, such as racism, classism, and ableism, and addressing it requires collective efforts to create a more just and equitable society for all. Challenging and dismantling patriarchal attitudes and behaviors is a fundamental step towards promoting gender equality and combating violence against women in Nigerian politics. Addressing deep-seated gender norms, stereotypes, and power dynamics is necessary to create a more inclusive and gender-responsive political environment.

Women in Nigerian politics: Representation and Participation

Women's representation and participation in Nigerian politics have been historically low compared to men. Leadership is a very broad notion that has different connotations depending on the field of knowledge. Inglehart and Norris (2003) examines that the concept of political leadership is more restricted, referring specifically to the sphere of institutionalized politics and government. It has to do with people's effective and ongoing participation in the institutional dynamics of representation and deliberation- voting, being voted, holding public office in the full exercise of their political rights. Despite the fact that women make up a significant portion of the population in Nigeria, they are highly underrepresented in political leadership positions. This underrepresentation can be attributed to various social, cultural, and economic barriers that restrict women's participation in politics. Some of the challenges that women in Nigeria face in terms of political representation and participation include: cultural norms and traditional practices that reinforce gender roles and stereotypes, limiting women's involvement in political decision-making processes, limited access to education and resources, which hinders women's ability to compete with men in the political arena, discriminatory laws and policies that disadvantage women in politics, such as limited opportunities for women to run for political office or restrictions on their participation in certain political activities, violence and intimidation against women in politics, which can deter them from seeking or holding political positions, lack of support and mentorship for aspiring female politicians, making it difficult for them to navigate the male-dominated political landscape. Despite these challenges, there have been efforts to increase women's participation in Nigerian politics. For example, the National Gender Policy of Nigeria aims to promote gender equality and empower women in political and decision-making processes. Additionally, there have been campaigns and initiatives to encourage women to run for political office and to advocate for gender-sensitive policies and practices. Increasing women's representation and participation in Nigerian politics is crucial for promoting gender equality, ensuring diverse perspectives in policymaking, and addressing the needs of all members of society. Efforts to address the barriers that women face in politics and to create more inclusive and equitable political systems are essential for advancing women's rights and empowerment in Nigeria.

Women in 21st-century Nigerian politics have made significant strides in challenging traditional gender norms and increasing their representation and participation in political leadership roles. Increased Representation, in recent years, there has been a gradual increase in the number of women holding political positions in Nigeria. Women have been elected as governors, senators, members of the House of Representatives, and local government councilors, reflecting a growing recognition of the importance of women's voices in decision-making processes. Advocacy for Gender Equality, women in Nigerian politics have been at the forefront of advocating for gender equality and women's rights. They have pushed for legislative reforms to address gender-based violence, promote women's empowerment, and increase women's representation in political leadership positions. Political Activism, women activists and advocates in Nigeria have played a crucial role in

mobilizing support for social justice causes, including women's rights, good governance, and accountability. They have organized protests, campaigns, and advocacy initiatives to push for positive change in the political landscape. Role Models and Inspirations, women leaders in Nigerian politics serve as role models and inspirations for young women and girls, encouraging them to pursue careers in politics and public service. By breaking barriers and challenging stereotypes, these women pave the way for future generations of female leaders. Policy Advocacy, women in Nigerian politics have been instrumental in advocating for policies that address the needs and concerns of women and marginalized groups. They have championed initiatives related to women's health, education, economic empowerment, and gender equality, contributing to the overall development and well-being of society. Collaboration and Networking, women in Nigerian politics have formed networks and alliances to support each other, share resources, and amplify their voices. These networks provide a platform for women to collaborate, strategize, and advocate for common goals and interests. Women in 21st-century Nigerian politics are making significant contributions to shaping the political landscape, advocating for gender equality, and advancing the rights and interests of women and marginalized groups. Their presence and leadership are essential for building a more inclusive, equitable, and democratic society in Nigeria.

Gender-based Violence in the Political Sphere

Gender-based violence in the political sphere refers to any form of violence, harassment, or discrimination that is specifically targeted at individuals in political roles based on their gender. This can include violence or threats of violence, sexual harassment, intimidation, discrimination, or other forms of abuse directed at individuals in political positions, or those seeking to enter the political sphere, simply because of their gender. Gender-based violence in the political sphere can take place in various forms, such as: Sexual harassment, unwanted sexual advances, comments, or behaviors that create a hostile or uncomfortable environment for individuals in the political sphere. Threats and intimidation, individuals may face threats, intimidation, or violence based on their gender in an attempt to silence or deter them from participating in political activities. Discrimination, individuals may face discrimination or obstacles in their political career based on their gender, such as being denied opportunities for advancement or facing unequal treatment compared to their counterparts of a different gender. Online harassment, social media and online platforms are increasingly used to target individuals in the political sphere with abusive and harmful messages based on their gender. Addressing gender-based violence in the political sphere is crucial to ensuring the full participation and representation of all genders in politics. It requires creating safe and inclusive environments, implementing policies and laws to prevent and address gender-based violence, and promoting gender equality in political decision-making processes. By addressing gender-based violence in the political sphere, we can work towards a more equitable and just society where all individuals can participate in politics free from violence and discrimination.

Patriarchal Challenges in Nigerian Politics

In Nigerian politics, patriarchal challenges refer to the barriers and obstacles that women face in accessing leadership positions and participating fully in political processes, due to the dominance and control of men in decision-making roles and structures. Some of the patriarchal challenges faced by women in Nigerian politics are: Limited Representation, women are underrepresented in political offices, with men holding the majority of positions of power and influence. This lack of representation hinders women's ability to contribute to policymaking and decision-making processes. Societal Norms and Stereotypes, traditional and cultural norms often dictate that the role of women is predominantly in the home, rather than in positions of political leadership. Stereotypes and gender-based expectations can undermine women's credibility and capabilities in the political sphere. Limited Access to Resources, women may face challenges in accessing the necessary resources, such as funding, networks, and support systems, to run for political office. This lack of resources can impede their ability to compete effectively in the political arena. Discriminatory Practices, discrimination and bias against women exist in political parties, electoral processes, and institutions, making it difficult for women to navigate the political landscape and advance their political careers. Violence and Harassment, women in Nigerian politics often face threats, intimidation, and violence as a means to deter them from participating or speaking up. This can create a hostile environment that discourages women from actively engaging in political activities. To address patriarchal challenges in Nigerian politics requires concerted efforts to challenge gender norms, promote women's leadership, increase representation, provide support and resources for women in politics, and create a more inclusive and equitable political environment. By recognizing and addressing these challenges, Nigeria can work

towards achieving greater gender equality and empowering women to play a more active role in shaping the political landscape.

Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Participation in Nigerian Politics

Promoting gender equality and increasing women's participation in Nigerian politics is crucial for building a more inclusive and representative democracy. Here are some strategies to achieve this goal: Legal Reforms, enact and enforce laws that promote gender equality and ensure women's rights in politics, such as gender quotas, anti-discrimination laws, and measures to address violence against women in politics. Capacity Building, provide training, mentorship, and support programs for women aspiring to enter politics, including leadership development, public speaking, campaign management, and networking opportunities. Political Party Reforms, It is expedient to encourage political parties to adopt internal policies that promote gender equality, such as gender quotas for candidate selection, women's wings within parties, and support for women candidates in party leadership positions. Public Awareness Campaigns, raise awareness about the importance of women's participation in politics through media campaigns, community outreach, and educational programs to challenge stereotypes and biases against women in leadership roles. Supportive Policies, implement policies that support work-life balance for women in politics, such as childcare services, flexible working arrangements, and maternity leave provisions to enable women to balance their political and personal responsibilities. Engaging men as allies, encourage men to support and advocate for gender equality in politics, challenge harmful gender norms and stereotypes, and promote women's leadership within their own networks and communities. Electoral Reforms, advocating for electoral reforms that promote women's representation, such as proportional representation systems, reserved seats for women, and measures to address barriers to women's political participation. International Partnerships, collaborating with international organizations, donors, and partners to provide technical assistance, funding, and support for initiatives that promote gender equality and women's participation in Nigerian politics. Implementing these strategies and creating an enabling environment for women's political participation, Nigeria can work towards achieving greater gender equality and building a more inclusive and representative democracy.

Role of civil society organizations in advocating for gender equality

Civil society organizations play a crucial role in advocating for gender equality by raising awareness, promoting policy changes, advancing women's rights, and holding governments and institutions accountable. The key ways in which civil society organizations contribute to advancing gender equality include the following:

Advocacy and raising awareness, civil society organizations work to raise awareness about gender issues and challenges, helping to educate the public, policymakers, and other stakeholders. They advocate for gender-responsive policies and programs that promote gender equality and women's rights. Policy research and analysis, civil society organizations conduct research and provide data and analysis on gender-related issues, which helps to inform policies and programs aimed at improving gender equality. They also advocate for the implementation of gender-responsive policies and legislation. Capacity building and empowerment, civil society organizations provide training, resources, and support to empower women and girls to advocate for their rights and take on leadership roles in their communities. They also work to build the capacity of grassroots organizations and individuals to promote gender equality and women's rights. Also, monitoring and evaluation, civil society organizations play a critical role in monitoring and evaluating the progress of gender equality initiatives. They hold governments, institutions, and other stakeholders accountable for their commitments to gender equality and help track progress towards achieving gender equality goals. Partnerships and coalition-building, civil society organizations often collaborate with other stakeholders, including government agencies, international organizations, businesses, and other civil society groups, to advocate for gender equality and women's rights. They work together to develop coordinated strategies to advance gender equality and address common challenges. Civil society organizations serve as important advocates and catalysts for change in promoting gender equality and women's rights. Their work helps to drive positive social change and create more inclusive and equitable societies for all individuals, regardless of their gender.

Overcoming Barriers to Women's Political Participation in Nigeria

Overcoming barriers to women's political participation in Nigeria requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses various challenges and obstacles that women face in entering and thriving

in the political arena. Here are some key strategies to overcome these barriers:

Addressing Cultural and Societal Norms: Challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes that limit women's participation in politics. Promote gender equality through education, awareness campaigns, and community engagement to change attitudes and perceptions about women's leadership.

Providing Access to Education and Training: Ensure that women have access to quality education and training opportunities that equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to engage in politics effectively. This includes leadership development programs, political literacy training, and mentorship initiatives.

Creating Safe and Inclusive Political Spaces: Address violence and harassment against women in politics by implementing measures to ensure the safety and security of women candidates and politicians. This includes legal protections, support services, and mechanisms for reporting and addressing incidents of violence.

Increasing Economic Empowerment: Address economic barriers that prevent women from participating in politics, such as financial constraints and lack of resources. Provide support for women to access funding, resources, and opportunities to run for office and engage in political activities.

Promoting Women's Leadership: Encourage and support women to take on leadership roles in politics through affirmative action measures, mentorship programs, and networking opportunities. Recognize and celebrate the achievements of women leaders to inspire others to follow in their footsteps.

Advocating for Policy Reforms: Advocate for policy reforms that promote gender equality and women's rights in politics, such as gender quotas, anti-discrimination laws, and measures to address barriers to women's political participation. Engage with policymakers, political parties, and civil society to push for legislative changes that support women's political empowerment.

Building Coalitions and Alliances: Strengthen alliances and partnerships between women's organizations, civil society groups, political parties, and other stakeholders to collectively advocate for women's political participation. By working together, women can amplify their voices and influence decision-making processes.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate progress towards gender equality in politics, including tracking women's representation in elected positions, assessing the impact of policies and programs, and identifying areas for improvement. Use data and evidence to inform decision-making and drive change. Implementing these strategies and working collaboratively across sectors, Nigeria can overcome barriers to women's political participation and create a more inclusive and representative political landscape that reflects the diversity and voices of all its citizens.

International Perspectives on Addressing Political Violence and Gender Inequality in Nigerian Politics

International perspectives on addressing political violence and gender inequality in Nigerian politics can provide valuable insights and best practices that can be adapted and implemented in the Nigerian context. The following are some key international perspectives and strategies:

Legal Frameworks and Accountability, many countries have implemented legal frameworks and mechanisms to address political violence and promote gender equality in politics. Nigeria can learn from countries that have strong anti-discrimination laws, electoral violence prevention measures, and mechanisms for holding perpetrators of violence accountable. International organizations like the United Nations and regional bodies like the African Union can provide guidance and support in this area. Also, gender quotas and affirmative action, several countries have successfully increased women's representation in politics through the implementation of gender quotas and affirmative action measures. Nigeria can consider adopting similar policies to ensure a more equitable representation of women in decision-making positions. Countries like Rwanda, Sweden, and Norway have made significant progress in this area and can serve as models for Nigeria. Capacity building and training, international organizations and donor agencies often provide support for capacity building and training programs to empower women in politics. These programs can include leadership development, political literacy training, and skills-building initiatives to enhance women's participation and effectiveness in political processes. Nigeria can leverage these resources and partnerships to strengthen women's political leadership.

Civil Society Engagement, civil society organizations play a crucial role in advocating for gender equality and combating political violence.

Nigeria can learn from international examples of successful civil society campaigns and initiatives that have raised awareness, mobilized support, and pushed for policy reforms to address these issues. Building strong partnerships with civil society can amplify efforts to promote women's political participation. In addition, media and Communication Strategies, international experiences show the importance of media and communication strategies in shaping public perceptions and attitudes towards gender equality and political violence. Nigeria can explore innovative approaches to using media platforms, social media campaigns, and public awareness campaigns to challenge stereotypes, promote women's leadership, and condemn violence against women in politics. International Partnerships and Solidarity, Nigeria can benefit from building partnerships and solidarity with other countries and international organizations that are committed to advancing gender equality and women's rights. By participating in regional and global networks, sharing best practices, and learning from the experiences of others, Nigeria can strengthen its efforts to address political violence and gender inequality in politics.

Through these international perspectives and experiences, Nigeria can enhance its strategies for addressing political violence and gender inequality in politics, ultimately creating a more inclusive and representative political system that empowers women to fully participate and contribute to decision-making processes.

Conclusion

To attempt to complement the study of causes of gender inequality in political leadership, Inglehart and Norris (2003) then suggest or propose the existence of cultural barriers, which are linked to the diffusion of certain traditional values concerning the place of women in society and in political community. In the context of 21st-century Nigerian politics, addressing political violence and promoting gender equality are critical issues that require comprehensive strategies and interventions. International perspectives offer valuable insights and best practices that Nigeria can adapt and implement to tackle these challenges effectively. Key strategies include strengthening legal frameworks, implementing gender quotas and affirmative action, providing capacity building and training for women in politics, engaging civil society, utilizing media and communication strategies, and building international partnerships and solidarity. By drawing on these international perspectives and experiences, Nigeria can enhance its efforts to address political violence and gender inequality in politics, creating a more inclusive and representative political system that empowers women to participate fully in decision-making processes.

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