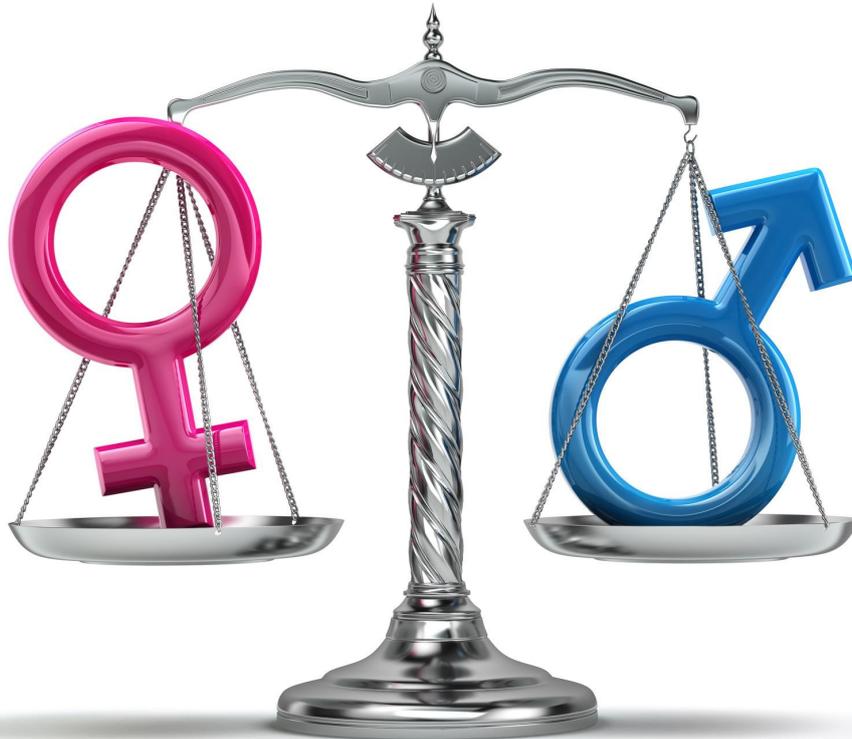


ATHENA PERSPECTIVES

Fresh and Deep Dimension to the News

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1.1 Tackling Gender inequality, GBV for economic and social growth in Nigeria

Introduction

The World Economic Forum estimates that it will take 134 years that is until 2158 for women to be at par with their male counterpart in the gender parity statistical measurement of the equality of female and male in a given area.

Worldwide, the employment-to-population ratio has consistently been far greater for males than for women and will increase in 2025. According to the ECA's none of the targets for United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality are on track. For instance, equal representation in parliaments won't be reached until 2063.

"Accelerate Action," the theme for International Women's Day 2025, calls for urgent action to build an inclusive society. The consequence weighs more in Africa when 50% of its population is left out.

Gender parity refers to the state of equal access to resources and opportunities for all people, regardless of gender. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) of less than 1 indicates that girls are less advantaged than boys. Practically, gender equity is about treating people fairly and women and men having equal opportunities.

European countries have made considerable efforts in the gender parity between men and women as the Gender Equality Index score for the European Union is 71 out of 100 showing a 0.8-point improvement over the 2023 Index score, and a total increase of 7.9 points since 2010. Following the government's legislation and spending, Iceland has closed the gender gap by more than 90% for the fourteenth consecutive time in a row, with a 91.2 percent gender equality rate, making it the most gender-equal nation in the world. Except Iceland, Norway (2), Finland (3), and Sweden (5) are all Nordic nations, making up four of the top five. Europe is home to seven of the top ten, including Belgium (10), Lithuania (9), and Germany (6). Fourth place goes to New Zealand. Sadly, this is the not case for Asia and Middle East countries which still score low in the Gender Parity Index

While women's employment in the EU has increased, a Statista report found women's economic parity dropped from 61% in 2019 to 58.2% in 2023 and despite a 1.5% increase in women's representation to 24.4% in 2023 compared to the last edition, women continue to be underrepresented in parliaments, ministerial positions and gender equality in the U.S. remains restricted by outdated gender stereotypes and expectations.



The Africa continent is only halfway toward achieving gender parity. According to the Africa Gender Index 2023, Analytical Report released by the African Development Bank Group and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) shows that women in Africa score just 50.3% in equality across economic, social, and public representation areas which are a slight improvement from the 48% score in 2019.

African countries have less than 10% of women in mid-level positions, such as Morocco (5.6%), Nigeria (8%) or Sudan (9%). Which is still far from the objective of 30% desired by the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995. In the Africa Gender Index 2023 Analytical Report measures gender equality across 54 African countries scoring them between 0% or having the most gender inequality and 100% - representing full equality yet inequalities reached a critical level in West Africa. Women's economic parity dropped from 61% in 2019 to 58.2% in 2023. The majority of underage marriages globally occur in West Africa. Niger and Mali are the most affected, with a prevalence of 77% and 61% respectively.



However, some African countries have shown improved female representation in national parliament in 2022. With the Equality of Result quotas, Rwanda made history as the first African country to top the ranking with 61.25% followed by Senegal- 46.06%, South Africa- 45.61% . Sadly, the country with the lowest female representation in Africa is Nigeria with 3.91% followed by Gambia- 8.62%.

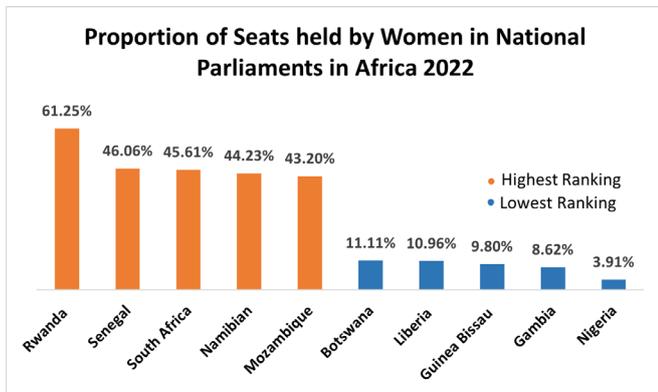


Figure 1. shows the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments in Africa as of 2022.

Declining women’s representation in Nigeria politics and governance

Nigeria has the lowest percentages of women in national parliaments and in several Nigerian sectors though there is a national Gender Policy (NGP) formulated a 35% Affirmative Action in 2006; women are grossly underrepresented according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)..

. A woman has not become a service chief and the present senate is dominated by men with just 4 female senators to 105 male senators. In the 2023 elections, women made up little over 10 percent of the more than 15,000 candidates running in all national and subnational categories.

Since 2011, women’s involvement in Nigerian politics has been declining and the 2023 elections show a bigger problem is ahead for women politically if this continues. With only 3% of Senate seats and 4% of House of Representatives seats held by women, the proportion of women in Nigeria’s National parliament has decreased drastically.

Number of Female Senators to Male Senators in Nigeria since 1999

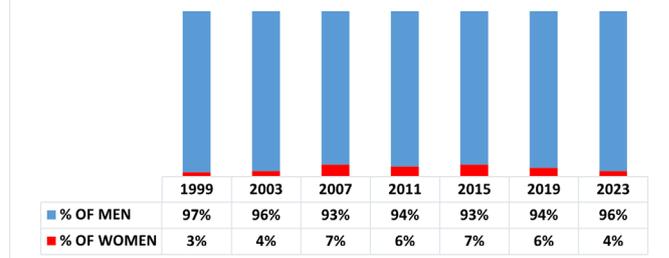


Figure 2 – Number of Female to Male Senators in Nigeria since 1999

Number of Female Reps to Male Reps in Nigeria since 1999

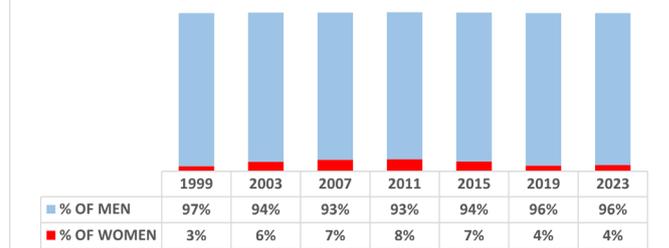


Figure 3 Showing Female to Male House of Representative members in (Nigeria)

Gender-based violence increases inequality against women

While the fight to attain parity is exigent, GBV has worsened women’s already poor state, especially in Africa where patriarchal cultural norms hold sway. Over one-third of women and girls globally will experience some form of violence in their lifetime. According to the World Health Organization’s estimates, approximately 35% of women globally have suffered intimate relationship or non-partner sexual violence at some point in their lives.

GBV Prevalence in Africa

A 2021-2023 Afro barometer survey shows that gender-based violence is a major concern for African women. 15 of the 20 countries with the highest rates of child marriage globally are in Africa. Currently, 130 million African girls and women are married as children. Countries with the highest levels of child marriage score poorly on gender parity in education and socio-economic opportunities for women. Central African Republic (47th), and Chad (43rd) are among the lowest-ranked countries on the Socioeconomic Opportunities for Women indicator and are the two lowest-ranked countries on the Gender Parity in Education sub-indicator. At 47%, DR Congo has the highest prevalence of intimate partner violence in Africa followed by Equatorial Guinea, Uganda, and Liberia.

GBV in Nigeria

Despite significant global advancements toward gender equality, GBV against women continues to ravage Nigeria with femicide as a result of the get-rich-fast syndrome has exacerbated the already dire situation. In Nigeria, 31% of women have faced physical violence since the age of 15. Most violence is committed by an intimate relationship.

Laws have not deterred GBV in Nigeria.

Regretfully, the proliferation of bodies and laws tasked with addressing GBV have not deterred it due to the lack of political will to ensure the implementation of these laws among economic, cultural, and socio-economic factors still see the prevalence of GBV on the rise in Nigeria. Demanding equality can aggravate women's circumstances as Nigeria's patriarchal society acknowledges cultural norms rather than legal pronouncements and the culture is against the law that upholds the rights of women.

Challenges to achieving Gender Parity include :

1. Finance: One of the key challenges in achieving gender equality by 2030 is an alarming lack of financing. Addressing women's issues has only received a pitiful 0.13 percent of all official development assistance and a staggering USD 360 billion annual deficit in spending on gender-equality measures.

2. Poverty: According to recent estimates, 75% of countries will reduce public spending by 2025 which will disproportionately affect women and marginalized groups. This could result in over 342 million women and girls living below the poverty line by 2030.

3. Instability Also, the COVID pandemic, geopolitical conflicts, climate disasters, and economic turmoil have pushed an extra 75 million people into severe poverty, since 2020.

4. Economic barriers/cultural norms - Economic inequality has mostly prevented millions of women globally. Cultural norms: limit women to domestic positions. digital platforms can enhance threat detection and event response.

Conclusion

Denying half of the population from contributing to the economy forfeits potential growth that could have come from women who are excluded from the growth process and this will put women among the majority of the continent's poor.

Additionally, victims of domestic violence are less likely to be in charge of their own reproductive choices, which have detrimental effects on children.

Women's rights to participate in government are denied by their underrepresentation in government. Undermining women's involvement in today's development could lower the country's future growth potential, which is another form of inequality that warrants consideration, as the fate of women impacts the fate of the next generation. Since reducing these disparities is crucial to promoting economic progress, we can create a more inclusive nation by tackling them.

Recommendations

1. Policy and legislation that will enforce a spending ratio to gender equality should be promoted.
2. There is a need to tackle harmful gender norms, GBV, traditions, and cultural practices and address systemic barriers to boost women's economic and social participation.
3. Building law enforcement capacity includes educating and retraining police officers to conduct efficient investigations and prosecutions of cases involving gender-based violence.
4. Creating awareness and providing specialized support systems should be put in place by establishing systems for GBV survivors to receive financial aid, therapy, and easily accessible shelters.
5. Collaborate with traditional and religious leaders to combat damaging cultural practices and advance gender equality.

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2. Issues in the News:

Top four stories on our thematic areas in Nigeria

NDLEA arrests wanted auto spare parts dealer over 77.5kg Angola cocaine deal

Operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) have arrested Levi Chidiebele Ubodoeze, a wanted automobile spare parts dealer, three weeks after launching a manhunt for him over a failed attempt to export two kilograms of cocaine concealed in vehicle propellers to Angola.

For more: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/03/ndlea-arrests-wanted-auto-spare-parts-dealer-over-77-5kg-angola-cocaine-deal/>



Customs to FAAN: NAHCO, SAHCO warehouses under our control

Nigeria Customs Service, NCS, weekend, said the Nigerian Aviation Handling Company, NAHCO, and Skyway Aviation Handling Company, SAHCO, Import & Export warehouses are licensed Customs bonded warehouses operating in full compliance with Section 122 of the Nigeria Customs Service Act, 2023. This is coming amid allegations of an attack on the Director of Aviation Security Services at the Murtala Muhammed Airport, MMA, by personnel of the NCS.

For more: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/03/customs-to-faan-nahco-sahco-warehouses-under-our-control/>



Zamfara govt suspends salaries of 207 school teachers over truancy

No fewer than 207 Secondary school teachers whose salaries were suspended by Zamfara state government for truancy have apologised to Governor Dauda Lawal, saying they are sorry for the wrong doing.

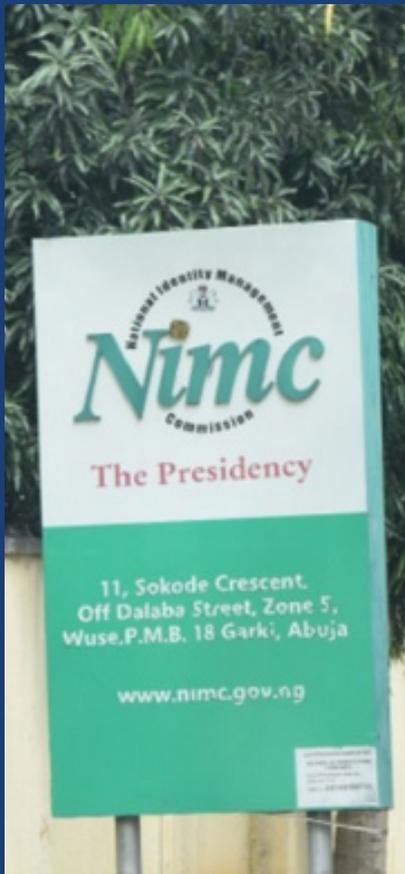
Presenting their apology letters on Friday to Governor Dauda lawal through the commissioner ministry of Education, Science and Technology Mallam Wadatau Madawaki, the suspended teachers confessed of absconding to class room.

For more: <https://tribuneonline.ng.com/zamfara-govt-suspends-salaries-of-207-school-teachers-over-truancy/>

'Modify NIN Only On Official Self-Service Portal', NIMC Warns Nigerians

In a statement signed by Head of Corporate Communications at NIMC, on Monday, said the caution note was to ensure data security and integrity. The agency reassured Nigerians that its self-service portal is secure, reliable, and provides users with the convenience of updating their information from anywhere.

For more: <https://www.channelstv.com/2025/03/10/modify-nin-only-on-official-self-service-portal-nimc-warns-nigerians/>



3. Regional Updates

Top stories from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger (BCCN)...

Chad foils attempt to destabilise country – minister

Chad's government has said security forces had thwarted an alleged effort to destabilise the country on Wednesday night, after a group of people attacked the presidential palace in the capital, N'Djamena. "An attempt at destabilisation has been foiled. Nineteen people died and six were injured, including 18 assailants and one soldier," Foreign Minister Abderaman Koulamallah told state TV. He added that 24 individuals armed with knives, rather than guns, had attacked the guards around the presidential palace. Calm has now returned to N'Djamena.



Cameroon officials say country's military seized weapons from terrorists re-arming Boko Haram

Cameroon's military says it has seized several hundred weapons and combat uniforms that were being smuggled to a hideout of the Nigeria-based terrorist group Boko Haram. Officials say troops have been deployed in a bid to capture more weapons and prevent Boko Haram from re-arming itself.

Beninese army suffers 'hard blow' in border attack

Benin forces have suffered heavy losses in an attack near the border with insurgency-hit Niger and Burkina Faso, authorities have said. Colonel Faizou Gomina, the National Guard's chief of staff, said one of Benin's most well-equipped military positions had been hit in the north on Wednesday evening. "We've been dealt a very hard blow," Col Gomina added.



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