

A Study on Inclusive Practices of Nigeria's Political Parties (2023)

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Foreword

The Political Party Watch Project (PPWP) is another important programmatic intervention by the blossoming and increasingly impactful collaboration of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD). The project is also a bold statement of intent as political parties have returned very meagre results from the many years of attention and resources invested by several key stakeholders; only agencies that are deeply committed to promoting and strengthening democratic governance in Nigeria continue to persist in their interest for the development of political parties. The project builds on an initial study *The Assessment of The State of Nigerian Political Parties: The Case for A Performance Scorecard* by WFD.

Political parties are clearly the fulcrum of any functional, representative electoral democracy due to its dual purpose of popular mobilization for participation in the political process and the constitutional platform for electoral contests. Any endeavor to strengthen democratic governance must therefore address the political party system. After a century since the formation of the first political party in Nigeria, the NNPP in 1923, there are still challenges to our political parties in becoming the vibrant, cohesive and ideologically coherent democratic institutions, which signals a maturing democratic culture. Some of these challenges include those of leadership recruitment, party and election financing, ideological blandness, weak legal compliance, internal democratic processes and exclusion of underrepresented groups. All of these challenges require urgent interventions to nurture our political parties into the threshold of fairly strong agents of democratic consolidation.

The PPWP focused on the exclusionary practices of the political parties ahead of the 2023 general elections; this particular focus was selected for several perceived gaping paradoxes in our political demography. First, our very youthful population is starkly excluded from both political party administration and political governance. Second, the complete inverse relationship that exists between the significant number of women participation in the electoral process and of women representation in elective positions. By statistical fact, Nigeria has one of the most abysmal data in this respect globally, which has consistently ranked below the African average. Third is the insensitivity to People with Disabilities (PWDs) in a communal, religious society known for a strong inclination for democratic rule. Thus, the present study is a scientific enquiry into the extent of the problem, the specific dynamics and manifestation of the exclusive practices of our political parties. The aforementioned social groups – Youth, women and persons with disabilities are the focus. The nature of this enquiry is sensitive and easily subject to partisan lenses, NILDS-WFD therefore ensured a rigorous scientific methodology by field experts. The study mapped the six geopolitical zones and surveyed all the 18 political parties; the mixed methods of both qualitative and quantitative techniques ensured a very rich and illuminating dataset from the Focused Group Discussions and interviews and accurate assessment from the questionnaires administered. The findings are quite illuminating and informs the actionable recommendations that are made by the study.

A commendable feature of this study is that although it was a strictly academic exercise, the engagement with the broad spectrum of stakeholders in the political party system- the Inter Party Advisory Council (IPAC, the umbrella association of all political parties in Nigeria), political party chieftains, the Nigerian electorate, the disabilities Commission, women groups, INEC, the Nigerian Youth Parliament, academia and civil society ensured a broader than usual insight into the problematique of the study.

The recommendations made in this research work are actionable and hopefully will form the next steps of PPWP. If fully implemented, I am particularly convinced this will give important mileage to the quest of making our political parties institutions capable of midwifing an enduring democratic legacy.

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Executive summary

Political parties are the building blocks of any elective democracy in that they define the pathways for mobilising and canvassing for votes as well as serve as focal points for engaging on governance. As pivotal as the place of political parties in a democracy are, Nigeria's experience with party organising has been one of mixed results, with particular concerns about the exclusion of women, young people, and persons with disabilities.

This study examines the degree of inclusivity of political parties in Nigeria against the backdrop of perceived unfulfilled potential that responds to women, young people, and persons with disabilities who want to engage in politics. Its significance rests in the understanding that political parties are about the only institution of democracy in Nigeria that have not witnessed significant development since the return to democracy in 1999. Indeed, the near stalled state of their development has become a source of concern in the face of the urgency for democratic dividends.

The study appraises the 18 political parties that competed for votes in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria to determine the extent to which their activities have facilitated inclusion among their members, using a survey administered in 12 selected states across the six geopolitical zones (two per geopolitical zone) and key informant interviews (KIIs) in the party headquarters in Abuja.

The findings reveal that while all the political parties may seem highly inclusive on paper, notably in terms of processes, provisions and opportunities for women, young people, and persons with disabilities, the reality is to the contrary. There is a lack of evidence that many of the parties have comprehensive membership registers, nor one with disaggregated social characteristics, such as women, young people, and persons with disabilities. Some of the parties have well-articulated and crafted provisions for these underrepresented groups in their constitutions and manifestos, but there is very limited evidence to suggest that they are consciously implemented. It is claimed that equal opportunities exist for all party members, including freedom to aspire to any leadership position in the parties, seeking nomination for elective positions, and accessing political appointment on the strength of membership of a political party. However, the reality is that members who enjoy such opportunities are relatively few, especially when compared to the number of positions competed for and taken by the three aforementioned groupings.

The study also reveals that, although party membership may be a prerequisite to aspire and access leadership in political parties, nomination tickets and political appointments, other factors such as the right connections and informal networks of influence often skew the process. Rather than actively supporting these three unrepresented groups, parties often find it difficult to change the status quo, and as a result risk losing out on powerful voices from within these groups. Only a few women have climbed the ladder of political influence in political parties, with limited impact in turn on the further promotion of women participation in politics. This is mirrored in the case of young people, with factors of affluence and personal ambition often leading to identification with party elders to the neglect of their peers. The prominence of persons with disabilities is usually lower, given the small percentage of representation in the overall party membership, hardly being recognised beyond the face of the National Persons with Disabilities Leader. Overall, the skewed practices within political parties has had a neutralising impact on how individuals and groups can mobilise, influence and achieve representation, as well as agency, for themselves and these underrepresented groups.

Based on findings from the study and previous research and literature, the following are a set of targeted recommendations for key stakeholders in Nigeria, aimed at redressing the situation and helping political parties to enhance their inclusivity:

A. National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies

- i. Legislators and policymakers should ensure that legal frameworks at all levels of government reflect a commitment to achieving gender parity and do not preclude or exclude underrepresented groups through discriminatory laws or practices.
- ii. Legislators should review existing legislation in order to increase inclusivity and to reduce the costs of running for elective positions across the different tiers of party structures - Ward, Local Government, State, and National - for women, young people and people with disabilities.
- iii. Legislators should institute quotas at all levels that include rank order rules for candidate lists for women (including vertical and horizontal placement), young people, and persons with disabilities, and introduce both incentives and sanctions (financial and non-financial) for relevant stakeholders.

B. Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

- i. Establishment of publicly accessible registers of political parties with basic search tools capable of categorising members by gender, location, age bracket and disability status to aid vertical and horizontal growth and mobilisation by underrepresented groups.
- ii. Establishment of mechanisms to monitor and ensure compliance of inclusion among women, young people, and persons with disabilities in political parties.
- iii. Ensuring that all political parties invest in regular updates of their membership data in the most comprehensive, comprehensible, and machine-readable format.

C. Political parties

- i. Full implementation of all provisions in political parties' constitutions and manifestos as they relate to women, young people, and persons with disabilities, notably related to candidate selection.
- ii. Design and delivery of off-election programmes to promote inclusion of underrepresented groups in political parties.
- iii. Creation of networks of support for prospective party leadership and elective public office to be paired with established men/women politicians who will play key roles as mentors, thus helping them (especially young aspiring female politicians) build capacity to prepare them for future elections.

D. Development partners and civil society organisations

- i. Support convening of National Conferences on Political Parties and Inclusion where the findings of the report will be disseminated and conversations about a way forward held and preferred solutions promoted for implementation.
- ii. Provision of technical support to political parties to enhance membership drive.
- iii. Provision of support for marginalised groups in terms of political awareness and sponsorship of their meetings. For instance, reservation of political positions for the underrepresented groups through policy and practice.
- iv. Sensitisation and training of women, young people, and persons with disabilities on how to participate actively in politics and political parties.
- v. Supporting development of coalitions of women support groups, non-governmental organisations and grassroots women associations, in addition to supporting existing ones, to coordinate support and advocacy for women aspirants.
- vi. Advocacy and mobilisation by civil society organisations for rural women to be more involved in party politics as previous efforts had focused more on urban women.

Introduction

The history of democracy is about the struggles for inclusion of marginalised groups defined by race, social class, gender and age. The success of such struggles has influenced global awareness and movements for inclusion of often excluded groups, such as women, young people, and persons with disabilities. This is based on the acknowledgement that these segments of society are still alarmingly excluded in political participation in many parts of the world. What does inclusion look like? How does it differ within and between the marginalised groups of women, young people and persons with disabilities? This study seeks to examine the provisions and practices of Nigerian political parties to better understand the realities of the barriers to political inclusion.

This study explores inclusion through political parties because they define the pathways for citizens' mobilisation, engagement, and participation in politics, notably elections and governance. Indeed, the strength of any democracy is dependent on the organising capacity of its parties and the latter's ability to promote inclusion among diverse membership. Within the context of them being the sole vehicle for pursuing access to political powers and, by extension, conveyor of the people's sovereign authority, political parties face a crisis of underrepresentation and inaccessibility by certain categories of citizens, especially women, young people, and persons with disabilities. The right to political inclusivity is widely recognised as fundamental and essential to a well-functioning democracy. Inclusivity, as used, refers to equal and active involvement and participation in decision-making, unrestricted access to leadership positions in political parties, and most importantly, opportunity to aspire for nomination and be voted to represent political parties during competitive elections.

In Nigeria where the political parties are the sole vehicles through which individuals can seek power, marginalised groups always look up to the parties to bridge the deficits in their political participation. Thus, political parties have occupied a central place in the struggle for identity, power, and material resources for societal development. The Nigerian party system has evolved over the years, particularly from the establishment of the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) which was launched in 1922. The NNDP emerged against the backdrop of the introduction of legislative council election in which only British Nigerian males, resident in Lagos and Calabar with up to GBP100 annual income, and over the age of 21, could vote. The criteria was relaxed slightly with the annual income of GBP100 replaced by property tax payment of GBP50 under the Richard Constitution in 1946. The introduction of MacPherson Constitution in 1951 saw an extension of electoral areas beyond Lagos and Calabar but continued to deny women the right to vote. This restriction was lifted in Eastern and Western regions under the Lyttleton Constitution in 1954, while women in Northern Nigeria voted for the first time in 1979.

This incremental approach to the introduction of voting in Nigeria affected the pace of women participation in politics, given that only those who could vote and be voted for dreamt of participating in political parties' activities. A 'No-voting-status' indirectly shuts out women from participating in political parties and politics. While young people and persons with disabilities were not particularly isolated for special care, women who share both characteristics suffered double discrimination. Thus, to historicise political party development in Nigeria is to recognise four key phases, namely: colonial rule up to the end of the First Republic, the five party and later six-party system in the Second Republic, the aborted two-party and five-party system of the Third Republic, and the (multi-party) system of the Fourth Republic.

The different phases were dominated by completely new parties, ensuring political parties and their electoral products (especially legislators) were negatively impacted in the democratic institution building process in the country. Documented works across the different eras in question – i.e., from Sklar (1963), Falola and Ihonvbere (1985) argued that political parties have evolved in terms of their changing patterns on membership, organisational structure and electoral strength and diversity of alliances in the competition for power. The evolutionary trends have also shifted from ethno-regional focus during colonial rule and immediate post-independence era to largely national outlook during the Second Republic and beyond. What,

perhaps, has remained unabated is their character of intra-party wrangling, disagreements, and lack of internal democracy.

Despite their numerical strength in the country's voter register, women, young people, and persons with disabilities remain excluded in major decision-making processes in their political parties. This exclusion, apart from consigning political parties to being the weakest link in Nigeria's democratic process, constitutes a huge drawback to the incremental progress in the country's overall democratisation project since 1999. An earlier review of their performance by INEC after the 2015 general election resulted in the deregistration of several political parties, thus indicating how poorly they had fared since the return to democratic rule.

It is against the backdrop of frustration over the slow pace of reforms of political parties in the face of urgency for expected better results and democratic dividends that this study examines the degree of inclusivity of political parties in Nigeria with a view to identifying gaps for programmatic intervention and reforms. The study attempts to provide answers to several questions among which are: To what extent are political parties in Nigeria inclusive as defined in this study? How do the activities of political parties facilitate the inclusion of marginalised groups? What are the unique experiences of women, young people, and persons with disabilities in political parties? In what ways could inclusion be enhanced by political parties?

Through the answering of these above questions, as well as meeting of the research objectives below, the key finding that the study identifies is that a clear gap exists between policy and practice; between approaches to inclusion, and systematic barriers that prevent the actualisation of political participation by underrepresented groups. As the study will go on to demonstrate, despite many of the political parties having policies in place regarding inclusion, most lack the practice and implementation of them, ensuring the continued and perpetual exclusion of women, young people, and persons with disabilities.

Research objectives

1. Appraise the level of inclusivity in political parties.
2. Determine the extent to which the activities of political parties facilitate the inclusion of their members.
3. Identify the unique experiences of women, young people, and persons with disabilities in political parties.
4. Suggest ways to enhance inclusion in political parties.
5. Propose requisite programmes and entry points that will enhance inclusive political parties in Nigeria.

Analysis of findings

The study measures the degree of inclusivity of political parties in Nigeria, particularly with respect to the plight of women, young people, and persons with disabilities. Within the context of the limited resources available, the three groups were selected for focus because they are often disadvantaged in harvesting the requisite experience to run for office due to the level of their systemic marginalisation and the opportunities accorded them.

The underrepresentation of all three groups in decision-making, notably women and persons with disabilities, when compared to their number in the voter register, has increasingly generated public concerns and demands for increased inclusion for them in party politics. Political parties themselves are the most veritable institutions for learning and experimenting the rudiments to facilitate the realisation of that ambition. The fact that they are the sole vehicles recognised by the constitution to seek and exercise sovereign powers at the federal and subnational federating units in Nigeria makes this all the more apt and imperative.

A. Women and inclusivity in political parties

Democracy is about fair representation of all interest groups in society, and the low representation of women is a violation of the principle of democracy. The return to democracy on May 29, 1999, gave hope for a new dawn in the struggle for more participation of women in Nigerian politics, however despite all efforts put in place, Nigeria is yet to meet the 30% and 35% affirmations as contained in the Beijing platform for action and the National Gender Policy, respectively. There have been five administrations since the Beijing Declaration, namely: President Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007), President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (2007-2010), President Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015), and President Muhammadu Buhari (2015-2023), with four males dominating the seat since the return to democracy, with the position of Vice President following the same trend. The Senate and House of Representatives have also been dominated by males, with only a high of 7.3% women in the Senate between 2007 and 2011, and a high of 7.3% in the House, in the same period (as seen below in Figure 1).

In 1999 and 2003, out of 130 federal boards of public corporations only 7 (5.6 per cent) were women. During the same period, out of 47 cabinet ministers appointed only 7 were women which represent 14.89 per cent. In 2011, more women were given political appointment, 12 women were appointed as Ministers out of 42 which represent 30 per cent and 4 women out of 20 as Special Advisers. In this most recent regime, only 7 women were appointed as Ministers out of 45 ministerial appointees screened and approved by the Senate at the time of this report. Overall, what the situation suggests is that there has been no progress with regards to the number of women elected and appointed in government since the return of Nigeria to civil rule in 1999, and in some cases stagnation has occurred.

Data collected for the study confirms that the level of women's participation and representation in Nigerian political parties is low. Notably, the quantitative data for this study seems to be at a variance with what is on the ground. Interactions with key party officials affirm that women's political participation is still very low despite all the provisions put in place by various political parties.

Figure 1: Election of women into National Assembly and appointment into Federal Cabinet

NASS Chamber/ Cabinet	Election Period						Average percentage
	1999/2003	2003/2007	2007/2011	2011/2015	2015-2019	2019-2023	
Senate	3 (2.8%)	4 (3.7%)	8 (7.3%)	7 (6.4%)	8 (7.3%)	7 (6.4%)	5.7%
	12 (3.3%)	21 (5.8%)	26 (7.3%)	19 (5.3)	14 (3.8%)	11 (3.0%)	
House of Reps	7 (14.89%)	7 (16.89%)	12 (30%)	12 (30%)	6 (16%)	7 (16%)	20.63%

Source: Compiled from Ibrahim and Salihu; Onyeji and Oluseyi.

Political parties such as PDP, ADC, AA and NRM, SDP, ADP, LP, NNPP, ZLP have clear provisions in their constitutions as well as manifestos that are supposed to enhance the participation of women in the activities of political parties but according to some of the leaders interviewed, women (particularly the rural dwellers) do not seem to have interest in politics and political activities.

Figure 2: Parties with provisions to enhance women's participation in their constitutions and manifestos.

S/N	Parties with clear provisions to enhance women's participation in their constitutions and manifestoes	Acronym
1	Action Alliance	AA
2	African Democratic Congress	ADC
3	Action Democratic Party	ADP
4	Labour Party	LP
5	New Nigeria Peoples Party	NNPP
6	National Rescue Mission	NRM
7	Peoples Democratic party	PDP
8	Social Democratic Party	SDP
9	Zenith Labour Party	ZLP

Nigerian political parties have done little to encourage women's participation and inclusion notably as women still only making up a small percentage of nominees for different elective positions. In 2015, 73 political parties contested elections: Of the 760 candidates that contested for the positions of governor and deputy, only 87 (11.45%) were women; of the 747 candidates for senate, only 122 (16.33%) were women; Of the 1,774 candidates for the House of Representatives, only 269 (15.16%) were women (NWTF, 2019). There was no appreciable change in 2019 with 2,970 women contesting for different political offices, with only 62 (4.17%) being elected.

The picture continues to appear dismal in the 2023 election with out of the total number of 15,307 candidates that contested for various elective positions only 1,553 (10.1%) were women (INEC, 2023). It is imperative to note that most of the women candidates who got nominated to run on their parties' platform were from the political parties considered as smaller parties because of their membership strengthen and low or zero representation in government, while political parties with more membership, followers and representations in government – APC, LP, and PDP had lesser numbers of women as their candidates.

Political parties are important in providing access to political participation, but they often function in a leclosed manner and on the basis of patronage. Significantly, the high cost of politics prevents many women from standing for elections, with many women not being able to afford the cost of nomination forms to contest for office. Some political parties such as PDP, ADC, AA, NRM, SDP, APM, and AAC waived the cost of forms for women, but this leverage has not had a significant impact on the number of women contesting for office.

Such waivers have not been able to defray other extraneous and heavy incidental expenses in Nigeria's democracy. (Itodo, Abdu, Dadan- Garba, Ezeayinka, & Asubiaro, 2015). In 2015, the two largest political parties (PDP and APC), waived nomination fees for women but the waiver did not impact positively on the total number of women elected (EUCOM, 2015). Money not only constitutes a challenge to breaking imposed political barriers but getting a nomination often requires the influence of elders (Orji et al., 2018). Furthermore, women often do not have the experience of campaigning, organising and winning support in male-dominated environments.

Figure 3: Political party that provided free nomination form for aspirants during 2023 elections.

S/N	Political party that provided free nomination form for aspirants during 2023 Elections	Acronym
1	Action Alliance	AA
2	African Democratic Congress	ADC
3	African Action Congress	AAC
4	Allied Peoples Movement	APM
5	National Rescue Movement	NRM
6	Peoples Democratic Party	PDP
7	Social Democratic Party	SDP

Many of the major parties have gender empowerment principles in their party manifestos but scholars have argued that their actual commitment to improving the representation of women is limited (Orji et al., 2018). Apart from the fact that prior to 2015, there were no legal requirements for parties to appoint a certain number of women, “most political parties have also failed to implement their party gender policies and there are no sanctions imposed by the members for this failure” (NCWD, 2016). It therefore implies that the workings of parties are geared towards men and patriarchal patronage systems because the rules of engagement at the nomination stages are “defined and organised around patriarchal norms and values” (NCWD, 2016).

A 2018 Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC) report argues that efforts to increase representation have failed because most observers have misdiagnosed the problem. It argues that focusing on “enhancing and expanding women’s political resources” such as education, networks, and mentoring, has produced only “incremental change”. Women are increasingly prominent in businesses and civil society, including activism for more political representation, yet these achievements are not being matched in politics. It suggests that the question should be reframed as one of “discrimination” which has consistently kept women out of leadership and governance and put them on the fringes.

The report therefore recommends affirmative action and quotas, as there is a growing consensus that in Nigeria’s federal system, its local and state settings should provide a platform for emerging female politicians to garner experiences in all the main aspects of political activity, including running for elections, dealing with social and economic stakeholders, and taking decisions affecting the life of a community (Orji et al., 2018).

B: Young people and inclusivity in political parties

The percentage of young people included in political parties across different indices is high, but their political participation is limited to informal engagements such as voting, election mobilisation, campaigns, and rallies, as young people have remained marginalised in policy and decision-making process (UNDP 2016; Ibezim2019; Sule, Shola 2021 and Olajuyigbe 2022). A review of the constitutions and manifestos of 14 registered political parties in Nigeria revealed that all the political parties either have provisions for or created the position of Youth Leader in their respective constitutions from national to the ward levels.

However, only Action Peoples Party (APP) made provisions for young people’s inclusion in its constitution (See Figure 5 below). Article 14(1) of the APP Constitution stated: “in all elective and appointive positions, the party shall reserve 40 (forty) of the elective and appointive positions to young people between the ages of 18 to 40.” Article 14 (2-3) reinforced the party’s provision that “the elective and appointive positions reserved, shall be shared between eligible male and female members of the party on an equal proportion of 50% each. The above position is without prejudice to the right of any eligible young party member between the ages of 18 to 40 to contest for any elective and appointive position of the party apart from the positions so reserved.”



Figure 4: Age distribution of registered voters in Nigeria (Source: INEC 2022)

Most of the political parties' manifestos articulated young people social empowerment programmes such as expanding opportunities for vocational training and entrepreneurial development, promoting core African values in children in primary/secondary schools, campaigns against social vices like cultism, drug abuse, corruption, prostitution, women trafficking and child abuse. These are usually the traditional focus of young people-related policies that have shaped the underrepresentation of the young people in policy and decision roles. Of the 14 political parties' manifestos reviewed, only 6 made clear affirmative policy statements on young people's inclusion in politics.

The Zenith Labour Party (ZLP), for example, commits to allocating approximately 60% of all elective and appointive positions in the party to young people, while the National Rescue Movement (NRM) declared to support new legislation to reserve, at least, 15% of offices in the executive and legislative branches of government for citizens between 25 and 35 years of age. Young Progressives Party (YPP) declares a commitment to 51% affirmative action on political appointments for young people at all levels of government and to engage in a constant transformational leadership drive to sponsor visionary, innovative and selfless young Nigerians without greed for elective offices. The Social Democratic Party (SDP) promised fair representation and inclusion of young people in key positions of the party and government through affirmative action and proportional representations (PR).

Figure 5 presents provisions for young people's inclusivity in the political party constitution and manifesto with the mark (√) against political parties indicating the existence of a provision of inclusivity while (X) means there is no provision. The review affirms that the political party constitutions and manifestos that exist currently are not adequate legal and policy frameworks within the parties to enhance young people's political inclusion.

Figure 5: Provisions for young people inclusivity in party constitutions and manifestos

Party Instrument	APP	ADC	APC	APGA	APM	ADP	Boot	LP	ZLP	SDP	PDP	NNPP	NRM	YPP
Constitution	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Manifesto	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	X	X	√	√

Over the years, there has been growing public awareness and perception of young people's underrepresentation in politics and decision-making. This has resulted in the push for increased young people's interests in political participation. Respondents from interviews indicated that new and smaller political parties are much more open to giving opportunities and platforms to young people to aspire politically. These parties also offer incentives such as low nomination and expression of interest fees as well as waivers for certain categories of aspirants including the young people. However, despite this, most young people still prefer the more established political parties with more visibility and resources, although with limited opportunities for them as young people.

Over-monetisation of politics, unequal access to resources, and lack of opportunities create further dilemmas and have precipitated young people's restiveness. The ENDSARS protest, for example, mirrored the frustration of young people over perceived political exclusion amidst further difficult socio-economic situations induced by COVID-19. Landmark electoral reform such as the enactment of the Not-Too-Young-To-Run Act in 2018 as it is popularly called, presented a unique opportunity for young people because prior to it, there were limited legal and policy opportunities at the political party level to mainstream young people into the decision-making process. There is also a perceived lack of political will and reluctance by the established political class to integrate young people into the political process.

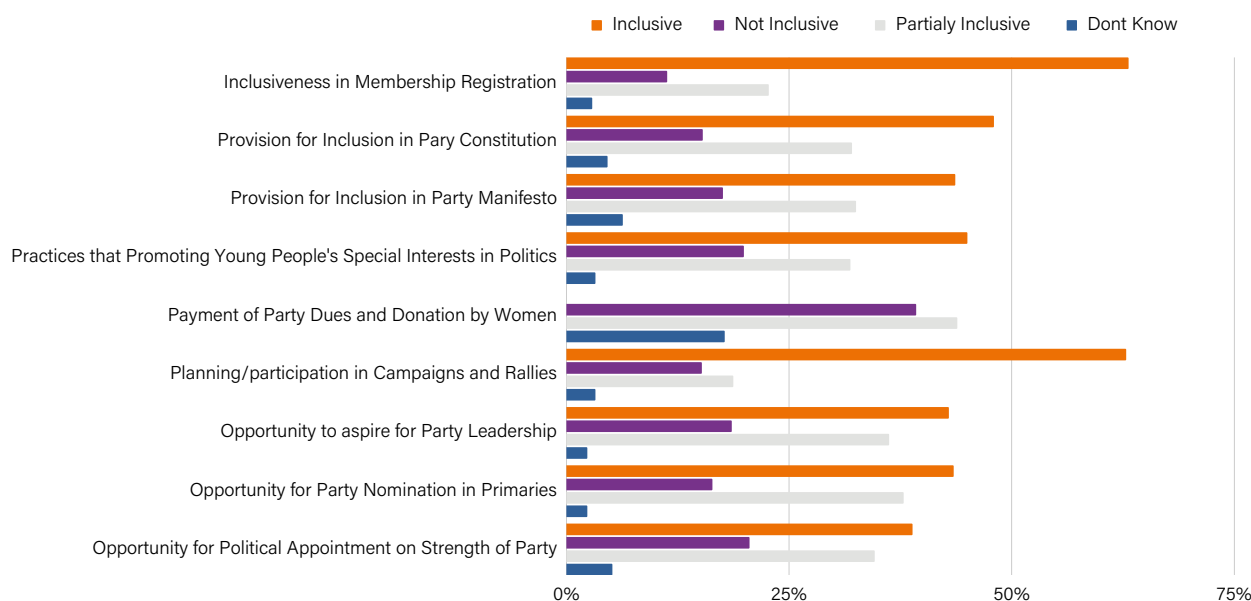


Figure 6 Responses to the section on young people and inclusion in political parties

C) Persons with disabilities and Inclusivity in political parties

Like women and young people, the aggregated data from the surveys suggests that there has been relative progress with the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the political parties, with responses to the criteria employed to measure inclusivity in the political parties being on the whole positive. The respondents claim some degree of inclusion for the persons with disabilities in party registration, also maintaining that the interests of persons with disabilities are provided for in their constitutions and manifestos, with the use of 'special needs' instruments to facilitate their participation in party activities. It was further claimed that persons with disabilities have considerable opportunities to assume leadership positions and participate in party activities.

However, facts from the available party documents did not indicate appreciable progress in the inclusion of the persons with disabilities in the political parties. This finding does not align with most of the claims made by respondents in the surveys. Only six (33 percent) of the political parties have explicit constitutional provisions and manifesto programmes for persons with disabilities visible absence of the persons with disabilities in some of the party constitutions and manifestos is a testament to the poor level of their inclusion in the political parties.

Without clear provisions and structures for their inclusion in the parties, claims suggesting inclusive practices for the persons with disabilities cannot completely verified. Even with the provisions in a few political parties, the data has shown that there are insignificant number of persons with disabilities in leadership positions. Most of the parties could prove that the positions allocated to persons with disabilities are occupied by members of the community. However, in the case of the ZLP, for example, the two slots provided at the national executive level have only been occupied by one person, with this person not demonstrating sufficient interest in participating in the affairs of the party. The problem is partly connected to the long years of social exclusion of persons with disabilities at the societal level and the disempowerment of the group. This has reduced their sense of belonging and willingness to take up leadership positions even when granted such opportunities. Interactions with party officials revealed that persons with disabilities have not shown considerable interest in utilising the opportunities provided by the parties.

Lack of financial inclusion and perception of financial incapacity of persons with disabilities by most of the political parties (through the granting of fee waivers) may have inadvertently contributed to weak inclusion of persons with disabilities in Nigeria's highly monetised politics, with the affluent people and classes controlling the political parties. Lack of impactful contributions by persons with disabilities in political parties is indicative of their poor recognition as members of the party even if they are allocated leadership slots. The political parties lack adequate mechanisms to monitor membership of persons with disabilities and lack mechanisms to attract them into their fold. This finding proves that the parties are yet to appreciate the essence of inclusion of the

persons with disabilities. While concerted efforts are often made to mobilise women and young people into the parties, there is almost an invisible drive to attract persons with disabilities community because there is a weak social acceptance of the group, especially the unfair and prevalent perception that they lack the capacity to make meaningful contributions.

Across the three groups defined in the study, a question as to how the participation of women, young people, and persons with disabilities political party can be better enhanced and made more inclusive, threw up different responses from participants, leading to three top recommendations:

- Provision of equal opportunities for all to participate in political parties affairs
- Delivery of special programmes of empowerment (training on political education, financial support, appointment into political office to encourage and enable them to learn); and
- Free/reduction of cost of nomination forms

Other diverse points were equally raised by respondents including:

- Support to disadvantaged groups within political parties, including membership drive, by CSOs.
- Collaboration with political parties to trace and strengthen intersectional groups-women, young people, and persons with disabilities.
- Sensitisation and training of women, young people, and persons with disabilities on the skills for active participation in politics.
- Crowdsourcing to fund underrepresented groups (women, young people, and persons with disabilities) to sponsor members to elective positions.
- Push for legislation to reduce the cost of running for elective positions in the country.
- Demonstrated participation in the political process instead of waiting for power to be voluntarily relinquished.
- Advocacy to compel every political party to increase sponsorship of female candidates among women, young people, and persons with disabilities.

Overall, most of the respondents are largely in agreement that deliberate programmatic interventions are a necessity to promote inclusion for women, young people, and persons with disabilities in political parties.

Conclusion and recommendations

The findings reveal that while all the political parties may seem highly inclusive on paper, notably in terms of processes, provisions and opportunities for women, young people, and persons with disabilities, the reality is to the contrary. There is a lack of evidence that many of the parties have comprehensive membership registers nor one with disaggregated social characteristics such as women, young people, and persons with disabilities. Some of the parties have well-articulated and crafted provisions for these underrepresented groups in their constitutions and manifestos, but there is very limited evidence to suggest that they are consciously implemented. It is claimed that equal opportunities exist for all party members, including freedom to aspire to any leadership position in the parties, seeking nomination for elective positions, and accessing political appointment on the strength of membership of a political party. However, the reality is that members who enjoy such opportunities are relatively few, especially when compared to the number of slots competed for and taken by the three aforementioned groups.

The study also reveals that although party membership may be a prerequisite to aspire and access leadership in political parties, nomination tickets and political appointments, other factors such as the right connections and informal networks of influences are often deployed to skew the process against would-be aspirants and candidates. In situations where the three underrepresented groups must be granted what is due to them, preferences have often gone to less strong voices in fear of opposition. In fact, to be a woman, a young person, or a person with disabilities and wield a strong voice is to identify oneself as contrary to the status quo. Only a few women have climbed the ladder of political influence in political parties, many of which do not reach out to their primary constituencies to further the promotion of women participation in politics. This has also happened in the case of young people, some of whom because of affluence, often identify with party elders to the neglect of their peers, except when they support for menial roles. The faces of persons with disabilities are usually fewer, given their percentage to the overall party membership, hardly being recognised beyond the face of the National Persons with Disabilities Leader.

Overall, the skewed practices against marginalised and discriminated groups in political parties has had a neutralising impact on how individuals and groups can mobilise, influence and achieve for themselves and their entire social categories.

The following are a set of targeted recommendations, designed based on findings and revelations from the study, for key stakeholders in Nigeria aimed at redressing the situation to enhance inclusivity within political parties.

A. National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies

- i. Legislators and policymakers should ensure that legal frameworks at all levels of government reflect a commitment to achieving gender parity and do not preclude or exclude underrepresented groups through discriminatory laws or practices.
- ii. Legislators should review existing legislation in order to increase inclusivity and to reduce the costs of running for elective positions across the different tiers of party structures - Ward, Local Government, State, and National – for women, young people and people with disabilities.
- iii. Legislators should institute quotas at all levels that include rank order rules for candidate lists for women (including vertical and horizontal placement), young people, and persons with disabilities, and introduce both incentives and sanctions (financial and non-financial) for relevant stakeholders.

B. Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

- i. Establishment of publicly accessible registers of political parties with basic search tools capable of categorising members by gender, location, age bracket and disability status to aid vertical and horizontal growth and mobilisation by underrepresented groups.
- ii. Establishment of mechanisms to monitor and ensure compliance of inclusion among women, young people, and persons with disabilities in political parties.
- iii. Ensuring that all political parties invest in regular updates of their membership data in the most comprehensive, comprehensible, and machine-readable format.

C. Political parties

- i. Full implementation of all provisions in political parties' constitutions and manifestos as they relate to women, young people, and persons with disabilities, notably related to candidate selection.
- ii. Design and delivery of off-election programmes to promote inclusion of underrepresented groups in political parties.
- iii. Creation of networks of support for prospective party leadership and elective public office to be paired with established men/women politicians who will play key roles as mentors, thus helping them (especially young aspiring female politicians) build capacity to prepare them for future elections.

D. Development partners/(international) civil society organisations

- i. Support convening of National Conferences on Political Parties and Inclusion where the findings of the report will be disseminated and conversations about a way forward held and preferred solutions promoted for implementation.
- ii. Provision of technical support to political parties to enhance membership drive.
- iii. Provision of support for marginalised groups in terms of political awareness and sponsorship of their meetings. For instance, reservation of political positions for the underrepresented groups through policy and practice.
- iv. Sensitisation and training of women, young people, and persons with disabilities on how to participate actively in politics and political parties.
- v. Supporting development of coalitions of women support groups, non-governmental organisations and grassroots women associations, in addition to supporting existing ones, to coordinate support and advocacy for women aspirants.
- vi. Advocacy and mobilisation by civil society organisations for rural women to be more involved in party politics as previous efforts had focused more on urban women.

Annex A

Literature review

This section is divided into conceptual review, theoretical review and empirical review. Under the conceptual review, the study reviewed the literature related to the concepts underpinning the study. For the theoretical review, the study found and reviewed literature on the theory behind the topic. The study went on to review relevant literatures that related to research that was conducted in the past. The section concludes with gaps identified in the literature.

Conceptual review

Youth/Young People: Any attempt to define a youth/young people usually generate controversies because the term 'youth' is a fluid and changing concept/category. The United Nations(UN) and the World Health Organization (WHO) concur that a 'youth' is a person aged between 15 and 24. The African Youth Charter (2006) disagrees and defines an African youth/young person as someone between the ages of 15 and 35 years. For Nigeria National Youth Policy (NYP) [2019], a youth/young person is someone between the ages of 18 and 29 years, which is in tandem with the National Youth Service Corps' (NYSC) benchmark for national youth service age. Like the NYSC and the NYP, the "Not Too Young to Run" law stipulates 30 years as a youthful age to run for the exalted position of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Nevertheless, the Nigerian constitution defines youth as persons between ages 18 and 35. This research adopted the Nigeria 2019 National Youth Policy's definition of youth/young people, which places the age bracket of young people between 18 and 29 years.

Persons with disabilities: There is no consensus definition of persons with disability. Some define a person with disability based on the degree of disability, while others provide a holistic view of what the person's disability could comprise, emphasising not only on biological determinants but on social, environmental, and relational ones. For instance, Denis (2016) defined a person with disability as a person with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment, which hinders his or her full and effective participation in society equally with others. However, the World Health Organization (2011) have been able to provide greater clarity into these undefined constructs. A report introduced the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), which conceptualised disability as a dynamic interaction between health conditions and contextual factors that include attitudinal and environmental barriers. This view of disability implies that it is not an attribute of the person alone.

Barnes (1991) and McConachie et al (2006) have identified the role of social and physical barriers in disability. Leonardi et al (2006) asserted that disability is the umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions, referring to the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual with a health condition and that individual's contextual factors that is environmental and personal factors. According to Oliver (1990), "the transition from an individual, medical perspective to a structural, social perspective is a shift from a "medical model" to a "social model" in which people are viewed as being disabled by society rather than by their bodies".

In addition, it is worthy of note that although persons with disabilities are referred to as a single population, but in a real sense, they are a diverse group of people with a wide range of needs. For instance, two people with the same type of disability can be affected in very different ways as some disabilities may be hidden or not easy to see. Towards this end, the World Health Organization (1999) identifies three dimensions of disability that is (1) impairment in a person's body structure or function, (2) activity limitation, such as difficulty seeing, hearing, walking, or problem solving and (3) participation restrictions in normal daily activities, such as working, engaging in social and recreational activities.

In Nigeria, the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018, gave a legal definition of a person with disabilities. In the Act, under interpretation, Part X Section 57, a person with disabilities means:

- a. "A person who has received Temporary or Permanent Certificate of Disability to have condition which is expected to continue permanently or for a considerable length of time which can reasonably be expected to limit the person's functional ability substantially, but not limited to seeing, hearing, thinking, ambulating, climbing, descending, lifting, grasping, rising, and includes any related function or any limitation due to weakness or significantly decreased endurance so that he cannot perform his everyday routine, living and working without significantly increased hardship and vulnerability to everyday obstacles and hazards"; and
- b. "A person with long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on equal basis with others".

This study adopted the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018 interpretation of persons with disabilities. This is because some disabilities may be hidden or not easy to see, and the study is conducted in Nigeria. Hence, the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018 interpretation will be useful in identifying our targeted persons with disabilities.

Women: The definition of a woman has been a longstanding debate that feminist scholars such as Butler 1990 have continued to grapple with. Various definitions have developed to try to accommodate the ongoing and recent complexities of defining a woman. For instance, European Institute for Gender Equality (2016) defines woman as "female human being; a person assigned a female sex at birth, or a person who defines herself as a woman". However, the plural "women" is sometimes used in women rights movement to denote female humans regardless of age.

We examined the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly; the Nigeria National Policy for Women 2016; the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015; the Gender and Equal Opportunity Bill 2020 and the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (As amended). However, none of these documents clearly answered the question, "who is a woman?" For this study, a woman is an adult female human, which is the opposite of man, that is 18 years and above. This is in line with Section 77(2) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria which pegs the age of voter registration at 18 years. It is relevant that we align with this provision of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria on the age of 18 years since the study focuses on political participation.

Political Participation: Political participation is "behaviour influencing or attempting to influence the distribution of public goods" (Booth & Seligson, 1978:6). According to Deth (2021:2), "political participation can be loosely defined as citizens' activities affecting politics". The essence of political participation in any society is the acquisition of power and dispensing power to organise society, harness and distribute resources and to influence decision making in line with organised or individual interests (Arowolo & Abe, 2008).

All groups seek to influence the dispensation of power in line with their articulated interests as a fundamental motive of political participation. Women, young people, and persons with disabilities also increasingly seek more equitable power and representation, distribution and redistribution of resources aligned with their needs and interests.

Okolie (2004:53) perceives political participation as "freedom of expression, association, right to free flow of communication, right to influence decision process and the right to social justice, health services, better working condition and opportunity for franchise". Political participation is one of the key ingredients of democracy in its real sense. Taking the conceptualisation of democracy by Larry Diamond (1989: xvi) into cognisance, democracy provides the equal opportunity platform for political participation and fairness in such competition. Thus, democracy is a system of government that meets three essential conditions as follows:

- i. A meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and groups, especially political parties, for all effective positions of government power, at regular intervals and excluding the use of force;
- ii. A highly inclusive level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies, at least through regular and fair election, such that no major (adult) social group is excluded; and
- iii. It has a level of civil and political liberties, freedom to form and join organisations sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation.

In a similar perspective, Onyeoziri (1989:6) conceptualises four indicative domains of democracy that include:

- i. The domain of individual and group rights and freedoms;
- ii. The domain of popular and equal participation in collective decision;
- iii. The domain of accountability of government to mass publics and constituent minorities; and
- iv. The domain of the application of the principles of equal citizenship in all spheres of life, i.e. social, economic and political.

The conceptual underpinnings of the definitions are freedom and equal opportunity for political participation that democracy avails all groups in society. Participation is a development approach, which recognises the need to involve disadvantaged segments of population in the design and implementation of policies concerning their wellbeing. The strengthening of women, young people, and persons with disabilities' participation in all spheres of life has become a major issue in the development discourses and hence, socioeconomic development cannot be fully achieved without the active involvements of these groups in the decision-making level in all society (Parrot, 2017).

In this study, political participation refers to the active involvement and engagement by individuals from all segments of society- men, women, young people, and persons with disabilities - in political process that affect their lives. Thus, political participation includes the following:

- i. Voting;
- ii. Standing for office;
- iii. Joining of political parties;
- iv. Taking part in the political campaigns of the political parties;
- v. Exerting influence in the decision-making process through public debate and dialogue with the representatives they elected or through their capacity to organise themselves; and
- vi. Exercising public power by holding public office at different levels of administrations- local, regional, national and international.

Inclusivity: The definition of inclusion conveys the idea of equal rights and opportunities for participation in the political process by all, regardless of income, age, gender, sexual orientation, ability, group, culture, ethnicity, religion, and location/special setting (rural/urban or riverine/upland).

In this study, the focus on inclusion has been narrowed to women, young people, and persons with disabilities due to their historical levels of exclusion from the political process. All three shall reflect Nigeria's definitions and policies; and as adopted for this study in the preceding sections on women, young people, and persons with disabilities.

Political Party: In democratic nations, political parties are typically prominent institutions. Orji (2013) asserted that scholars have typically connected political parties to democracy itself. According to Omotola (2009), political parties have been idealised to the point where academics assert that neither democracy nor democratic society are imaginable without them. Dode (2010) asserted that the establishment of democratic institutions in any society depends on the existence of active political parties. These led Adetula and Adeyi (2013) to posit that the success of Nigeria's electoral democracy and political progress depends on effective political parties.

There is no established definition for political parties. However, it is agreed that political parties are organisations set up primarily with the purpose of running for office, and assuming power (Musa et al., 2020).

Any political party exists primarily to seize control of the state apparatus. Likoti (2005) argued that a political party is an established collection of individuals with at least a few members who have similar political objectives and viewpoints and who work to influence public policy by nominating and electing candidates for office. Similarly, Neumann (cited in Obah-Akpowoghaha, 2013) agreed that political parties are societal organisations with active political agents that compete for public support with other groups or individuals expressing opposing viewpoints.

Political parties are viewed as an "instrument for catching power" by some schools of thought (Musa et al., 2020). Johari (2008) posits that a political party is essentially a platform or apparatus for engaging in the struggle for power; as such, it serves as a tool for aggregating interests that call for strident articulation and a means of mobilising public support during election times. In addition, Heywood (2002) believes that a political party is a collection of individuals organised solely for the purpose of running for office or using other legal means to do so. Political parties and other groups are distinguished from one another based on his categorisation of their traits and roles. He sees political parties as formalised organisations with card-carrying members that hold similar political ideologies and hold elected office in order to exercise some degree of government power. Political parties also typically take on a sizable focus issue, addressing all of the major government policy areas.

Nevertheless, Pogoso (2013:4) asserted that "political parties perform other functions, such as mediating between citizens and state institutions; recruiting and training people for political leadership; organising election campaigns; aggregating societal interests, and providing a participatory, responsive relationship with the people; political recruitment and training; education, socialisation, building consensus, providing alternative world views, and political communication, among others".

This study adopted Heywood's (2002) definition of political parties. Thus, in this study political party is a collection of individuals organised solely for the purpose of running for office or using other legal means to do so. The review so far has demonstrated paucity of literature on inclusion of women, young people, and persons with disabilities in Nigerian political parties. This study seeks to fill the literature gap.

Theoretical review

Feminism is a movement that promotes gender equality for women and works to advance their rights and interests. It also includes political, sociological, and philosophical theories and philosophies that address issues of gender difference. In order to comprehend gender inequality, feminist theory focuses on gender politics, power dynamics, and sexuality. Feminist theory devotes a significant attention to advancing the rights and interests of women while also criticising these social and political connections. Discrimination, stereotypes, objectification (particularly sexual objectification), oppression, and patriarchy are some of the topics covered by feminist thought.

Okoye et al. (2022) critically reviews Nigerian women's participation in politics based on the affirmative declaration using intersectional theory as a theoretical foundation. Intersectional theory combines important elements of race theory, gender conflict theory, and Marx's class theory. According to Kimberlé Crenshaw, it is a "prism for understanding specific sorts of issues". For instance, a woman may be perceived as "bossy" or "difficult to work with" if she displays certain behaviours that are typically seen as appropriate for leadership (e.g., being strong, opinionated, and concise), whereas a man would be seen as someone who is prepared for a leadership position if he displayed the same behaviours.

This theory is pertinent to the study because it tackles an argument raised in it: that women are seen as submissive or unsuited for some leadership roles and that when they try to overcome these barriers and

bstacles, they are ultimately cast into the role of the "homemaker."

Okonkwor and Ngozi (2022) used cognitive engagement theory to examine online political participation and its impact on young people in promoting democratic practices in Nigeria and Ghana.

Cognitive engagement is the term employed to define people's willingness and capacity to learn about politics, which ultimately results in participation. It is about young people's willingness to engage in politics in terms of the effort they are prepared to make and the length of time they are prepared to put in political participation.

According to cognitive engagement theory, young people with higher levels of education and access to knowledge would have a bigger influence on political activity. The idea that political involvement is a function of one's education, access to information, political awareness, political interest, and contentment with policies is thus at the core of the theory. The theory is pertinent to the study because it emphasises the causes of young people's active participation in politics through online platforms. The internet's availability of information, adequate education, and procedural knowledge fuel this type of online political participation, enabling young people to make contributions that meet both their needs and the needs of the larger community.

In this study, the intersectional theory is found to be more relevant to the understanding of the study of women, young people and persons with disabilities' inclusivity in Nigeria's political parties.

Empirical review

This study accessed the available related literature on the political participation of women, young people, and persons with disabilities. Orisadare (2019) assessed the role of women's groups in politics, identified their challenges and implications for economic development in Osun state, Nigeria.

The study was carried out using primary data from forums and dialogues within women's groups in Osun state, Nigeria. Findings from the study indicate that there exists a high illiteracy rate among the members of the women's groups and most of them are not aware of existing National or International gender equality laws or affirmative action. This made it difficult for them to participate in politics and contribute their voices to political issues. The study concludes that the present role played by women's groups at the grassroots level may not be adequate in encouraging more women's participation in politics and in influencing economic development. The study therefore suggests that more empowerment programmes, especially in decision making and participation in politics, should be targeted at women's groups at the grassroots levels by the governments and all stakeholders as a matter of priority.

Similarly, Okoye et al. (2022) critically reviews Nigerian women's participation in politics based on the affirmative declaration using intersectional theory as the theoretical foundation. The study revealed that for Nigeria to achieve democratic consolidation, women must aim for prominence in mainstream political growth. He, therefore, recommended that Nigeria's socio-economic, cultural, and political factors that keep women from active participation needed to be addressed to enable full participation in politics.

Abdullahi et al. (2019) used feminist theory to examine the relationship between educational attainment, economic empowerment, cultural factors, and political empowerment on women participation in politics and used Zamfara State as a unit of analysis. The study used quantitative method and adapted a questionnaire from previous studies to test the relationship. 400 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents in two local governments of Zamfara State: Gusau and Gummi Local Governments. Findings of the study showed that there is a relationship between women's economic empowerment and participation in politics in Zamfara State with .000 significant.

However, the relationship between women's educational attainment and participation in politics in Zamfara State was rejected with .436 significant. In addition, the relationship between women's political empowerment and participation in politics in Zamfara State was also rejected with .151. On the contrary, the relationship between cultural factors and women's participation in politics in Zamfara State was accepted with .000 significant. Thus, the paper recommended that cultural practices affecting women participation should be eradicated and encouraged the economic empowerment of women.

Kandawasvika-Nhundu (2021) reviewed various frameworks that seek to promote gender balance in both private and public spheres. The paper argued that despite the existence of various comprehensive frameworks, women continue to experience discrimination in exercising their rights to participate and face barriers to access positions of powers at all levelsof decision making.

The paper further identified political parties as responsible for women's underrepresentation in elective positions of power and decision-making at all levels. That although women are active voters and supporters of political parties, their participation does not translate to inclusion and is not equivalent to their representation in decision making at all levels. Thus, the paper recommended that "women-specific strategies should be reinforced by initiations that systematically engage men and boys on women's empowerment and gender equality promotion – thus making men equally responsible for the achievement of women's empowerment – and by engaging media to providebalanced coverage of women and men and equality issues".

Along a similar line of thought, Brechenmacher and Hubbard (2020) argued that political parties pose specific challenges to women by placing both formal and informal barriers to their participation. These barriers include hyper-masculine cultures in parties, violence, and opaque nomination procedures. The paper further argued that women are often relegated to supportive roles and contend with direct resistance to their participation and leadership. However, the study found that the processes of party formation represent a potential opportunity to address these barriers to women's participation in political parties. Thus, the study recommends several steps that can be taken to support gender inclusion in political parties. These include beginning with gendered political economy analysis; conducting gender and inclusion assessments of political parties; and providing targeted support for gender equality within early party development, among others.

Tracing the history of women marginalisation in politics, Oluyemi (2016) argued that the underrepresentation of women in political participation gained root due to the patriarchal practice inherent in our society, much of which had been obvious from pre-colonial era till date. The paper showed that the national average of women's political participation in Nigeria has remained 6.7 percent in elective and appointive positions, which is far below the Global Average of 22.5 percent, Africa Regional Average of 23.4 percent and West African Sub RegionalAverage of 15 percent.

The paper identified some of the challenges affecting women participation in Nigeria's politics to include patriarchy, stigmatisation, low level of education, odd times scheduled for meetings, lack of finance, political violence, religious and cultural barriers. Consequently, the paper recommended providing capacity for female aspirants, building mass coalition of women support and advocacy group, establishment of legal funds to assist female politicians, and introducing quota system for women at all levels of government.

The various causes of women's low political representation in Nigeria were the focus of Orji et al. (2018). They posit that women's role in Nigeria's socio-economic and cultural landscape appears to be increasing but this has not translated to greater inclusion of women in the political process. To fast-track progress towards gender parity in political representation, the study recommended that stakeholders should see women's political underrepresentation as a question of discrimination against women, locating the responsibility for dealing with the issue of political underrepresentation of women squarely with the political institutions. It noted that young people have also suffered political underrepresentation just as the women. Thus, we turn our focus to also review literature on young people participation in politics.

There are also extensive literatures that study young people participation in politics. For instance, Akinyetun (2021) examined the correlation between young people political participation, good governance and social inclusion in Nigeria. The study used a quantitative research approach and questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The study indicated that there is a significant positive relationship between young people political participation and good governance in Nigeria.

The study further showed a significant positive association between young people political participation and social inclusion in Nigeria. Thus, the study recommended that government should create Democratic Institutes across the 36 states of the federation and an online Orientation Agency that will provide free leadership courses on the art of governance and the promotion of social inclusion among the young people to be able to partake in the political process.

Similarly, Odey and Yusufa (2022) explored youth participation in the 2023 elections in relation to the antecedents of political participation that challenge young people on democratic process. The study used a qualitative research approach through secondary sources of data to get an in-depth understanding of the contemporary situation of young people's activities in the electoral process. Findings of the study indicated that young people have become active participants in the political process of the country since its creation to date. The study further identified poverty, godfatherism, and age limitation as factors affecting active young people's inclusion in the electoral process. Thus, the study recommended the need for government and NGOs to embark on young people's empowerment programmes to provide self-employment opportunities, education and sensitisations on religious tolerance to participate fully in the political process.

Michael et al. (2015) carried out a study on undergraduates' perceptions of political participation in Nigeria. The study is quantitative in nature and used survey research design for data collection. The study revealed that the young people participated in the political space of the country because of their relevance to national development. The study further indicated that the young people were left out of political offices because of the character of political elites that used them as instrument for electoral violence, due to lack of employment opportunities, inadequate political education, and poverty, among others. Thus, the study recommended the needs for value reorientation among the young people to enable them to participate actively in politics.

Facebook usage has an implication on political participation, according to Shamsu (2017). The author investigated the relationship between Facebook usage and young people online/offline political participation and presented an in-depth knowledge and understanding of Nigerian young people political participation. The study is qualitative in nature and found that Facebook usage, interaction with political figures, and political interest significantly enhances political participation among the young people. The author further revealed that Facebook allows marginalised young people to interact with weak and strong political elites on issues of politics, and to share and express their opinions.

Appraising the young people political space and participation in Nigeria, Mohammed (2022) carried out an assessment of the "Not Too Young to Run" Act. The study used a qualitative research approach, using secondary sources of data. Findings of the study revealed that the passage of the Act has positively promoted young people's inclusion on the political arena of the country and further stated that monetisation of politics hinder effective participation of young people in the political competition. Consequently, the study recommended that measures should be put in place that would allow young people to fully get involved in the political process to bring change in their life and the society in general.

Similarly, Ugonma and Ugbor (2020) investigated the effects of increased monetised electoral value chain on the political participation of young people in the 2019 general election. The study adopts Investment Theory of Politics to x-ray the attitude of the elite and politicians in hijacking the electoral process for the accomplishment of self-aggrandisement.

Findings of the study indicated that young people inclusion in the political arena of Nigeria promote democratic principle and practices. Therefore, it recommended the need for strong legal framework to eliminate monetised politics and promote compliance with rule of law to increase young people's political participation. Okonkwo and Ngozi (2022) examined online political participation and its impact on young people in promoting democratic practices in Nigeria and Ghana. Cognitive Engagement Theory was adopted as a theoretical guide for the study.

Quantitative research method was applied using survey research design. Findings of the study showed that social media, quality of information and political interests provided political knowledge that encouraged young people inclusivity in political decision making. The study further stated that young people online political involvement increases massive offline political participation. The study, thus, recommended that the governments of the two countries should use social media as an avenue for creating political awareness among young people to enhance the consolidation of democracy.

In 2007, Nigeria and some other countries signed and adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The 2007 Convention is regarded as a disability rights instrument with an explicit, social development dimension. It adopts a broad categorisation of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Despite the protection of the right to political participation of persons with disabilities and recognition by the African Democracy Charter, persons with disabilities continue to face many barriers that make it difficult for persons with disabilities to take part in political processes and specifically elections.

These barriers range from a lack of laws protecting and guaranteeing the rights of persons with disabilities to political participation and accessibility in electoral processes. In the case of Nigeria, there are no laws that discriminate against the political participation of persons with disabilities. However, numerous barriers make it difficult or even impossible for persons with disabilities to participate fully in politics.

For instance, Waltz and Schippers (2021) examined barriers and facilitating factors of persons with disabilities' political participation, through a literature review and interviews with politicians and political activists in five European countries. The study found six categories of barriers and facilitating factors namely networks, recruitment and mentoring, resources (money, time, and energy), the "hierarchy of impairments," accessibility of political spaces and activities, and laws and policies.

The study thus recommended removing access barriers to political participation, from voting to holding office, including physical and procedural barriers in political spaces. It further recommended that ensuring the equalities of legislation covers politicians; eliminating barriers imposed by benefits systems; promoting direct support for political activists, candidates, and office-holders with disabilities, including access to necessary services and supports; encouraging parties to recruit and mentor persons with disabilities with leadership potential; and considering quotas and job-sharing.

Similarly, Mattila and Papageorgiou (2017) examined the effect of disability on political participation. The study investigated how perceptions of discrimination affected three forms of political participation, namely voting; contacting politicians; and participating in demonstrations. The study used relative deprivation theory (RDT) and social identity theory (SIT) as a theoretical framework. The study found that disability decreases voting, especially when associated with perceptions of discrimination. However, findings of the study revealed that persons with disabilities are more likely to partake in demonstrations and contact politicians than the rest of the population. Thus, the study concluded that disability-based discrimination is not always a hindrance to participation, but rather it sometimes further motivates persons with disabilities to participate.

At the African continent, Opokua et al. (2016) investigated the level of and barriers to political participation of persons with disabilities in the Buea municipality in Cameroon. As Nigeria's direct neighbour with various

cross border connections, this study bears relevance. The study found that the involvement of persons with disabilities in politics in the area was minimal as socio-economic, cultural, and physical barriers hindered their participation in political activities at both local and national levels. The study concluded that there should be conscious efforts through affirmative actions to promote and respect the rights of persons with disabilities and make the political environment more accessible to them in Cameroon.

Using the Ghanaian experience, Arthur (2017) examined the extent of implementation of the Disability Act in promoting political inclusion of persons with disabilities in the country. The study adopted a qualitative research approach. Primary data was gathered from interviews and respondents selected using the purposive sampling technique. The primary data was analysed qualitatively within the framework of the Human Rights Based Theory that underpins the study. The study found that Ghana's Disability Act had no significant influence on the political inclusion of persons with disabilities.

There exists a gap between policy and implementation because the Act sets no guidelines for political engagement. The study also found that the growing influence of partisan activities in local government elections informs the withdrawal of persons with disabilities from the electoral participation at the grassroots level. Financial support for a party's preferred candidates makes local electoral participation competitive and burdensome for persons with disabilities due to their low financial status.

Thus, the study recommended an amendment to the Disability Act, with a separate provision of guidelines for political inclusion and an effective Legislative Instrument (LI) to enforce strictly the processes for persons with disabilities political inclusion. It further recommended an enforcement of sanctions in the Local Government Act (1993), to address issues of political interference in local government elections. It also recommended an executive commitment to an institutionalisation of an affirmative political action to enhance inclusion of qualified persons with disabilities in local and national governance.

Outside the African continent, Priestley et al. (2016) provided the first systematic cross-national assessment of persons with disabilities electoral and political participation, based on research in the 28 Member States of the European Union and in the context of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The study used a mixed-methods approach that included policy analysis, information requests to national experts and secondary analysis of European survey data. Based on the findings, the study suggested four lines of action to address political participation of persons with disabilities, namely: lifting legal and administrative barriers; raising awareness; making political participation more accessible; and expanding participation opportunities in public life. Thus, the study concluded that civil society organisations as well as public institutions have an important role to play as change agents in this regard.

Theoretical framework

Intersectionality is a sociological term used to describe "the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage (Oxford Dictionary, 2015). Merriam-Webster dictionary defines it as "the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalised individuals or groups." It was first coined and used by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a civil rights lawyer and feminist scholar, to describe the double tragedy of discrimination of racism and sexism that black women experience in the United States. In her definition, intersectionality is a metaphor for understanding the ways that multiple forms of inequality or disadvantage sometimes compound themselves and create obstacles that often are not understood among conventional ways of thinking" (Crenshaw, 1989)

Crenshaw's main argument is "that traditional feminist ideas and anti-racist policies exclude black women because they face overlapping discrimination unique to them" (Perlman, 2018). It critiques the "dominant single-axis framework for anti-discrimination law, feminist theory and anti-racist politics", and focuses on the experiences of "most privileged members of subordinate groups" (Crenshaw, 1989). More specifically,

Crenshaw argues that “intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism”, adding that any analysis of social reality” that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated” (Rascouët-Paz, 2020).

Exclusion is a global problem. Intersectionality has become the framework for promoting the desired social justice for the gamut of people experiencing the structural inequalities that have defined and conditioned their exclusion. Underlying the exclusion that people (particularly women, young people, and persons with disabilities), many have in intersectionality multiple opportunities for “transformative coalition building in social movements and grassroots organizations” (Al- Faham, Davis, and Ernst (2019:247). This complements earlier allusion of milestones by Crenshaw (1991) that “the political demands of millions speak more powerfully than the pleas of a few isolated voices.” This permeation accounts for the fast popularity of intersectionality for studying inclusion and exclusion among social groups. It explains, prescribes, and addresses, rather than predicts unequal and inequitable stratifications and within- group differences and outcomes (Buchanan and Wiklund, 2021).

Politics is both an arena for transformational inclusion in resource allocation and distribution as much as it is also a site for exclusion of individual and group interests, leveraging political parties and the intersectional sites depicted in terms of age, gender, sexual orientation. (dis)ability group, culture, ethnicity, religion, and special location/setting. Intersectionality theory thus sees social identities, including women, young people, and persons with disabilities, as interdependent and deriving from their relationship to one another.

Limitations of the study

This study faced a lot of constraints notably related to the timeframe, which was barely three months, being inadequate for the enormity of the expected result. Furthermore, the main research team, all of whom resides in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) could not travel to the selected twelve states across Nigeria, targeted for the study, due to security concerns and short time assigned for completion of the assignment. The states in the study being Benue, Borno, Ebonyi, Edo, Enugu, Kano, Kwara, Lagos, Osun, Rivers, Sokoto, and Taraba.

As a mitigation strategy, twelve state-based enumerators were hired, one per state to gather the needed data, using questionnaire and kobo collect tool app for easy collation and analysis. Key findings from the field and details on methodology used are in annex 2 of this report. Additionally, the study took place at the peak of electioneering, ensuring difficulty in access to political leaders, with most of them being involved in campaigns for their respective political parties, travelling across the country. Lastly, efforts geared towards accessing the political parties’ registers of the members to measure gender differences, age, disability status of registered party’s members were unsuccessful, as some of the political parties’ officials reached and other institutions, did not provide the register by the time the research team completed the field exercises.

Annex B

Methodology

Research Design: This study adopts a mixed-methods approach based on integration of qualitative and quantitative methods and data. The decision to adopt the approach is aimed at gathering rich and nuanced information that would provide detailed insights into the issue under investigation. For the quantitative aspect, the survey was conducted with the use of questionnaire as a major instrument for data collection. The survey was deployed and administered electronically by local enumerators – using Kobo Collect Tool – in 12 states pre-selected from the six geopolitical regions of Nigeria on a balance of two states per geopolitical region.

Local enumerators were selected and trained virtually on the goal and objectives of the process and the expectations from them in the questionnaire administration. After the training, the enumerators were taken through hands-on exercise to create the Kobo Collect Platform for use. For the qualitative dimension, the study employs multiple methods for data collection. This includes Key Informant Interviews (KII), analysis of institutional documents (party constitutions and manifestos, INEC guidelines and electoral laws and other relevant documents) and analysis of secondary materials including previous works published on the subject-matter.

Research Instruments: A questionnaire was employed to collect quantitative data for the study. The survey was designed to around four sections, namely: Section A, Demography, comprises questions about respondent's state/location, gender, age, and level of education, employment status, monthly income, and status of (dis)ability.

Following the section on demography are Sections B, C and D covering the underrepresented groups that constitute the focus of the study (women, young persons, and persons with disabilities) and the extent of their inclusion in political parties with particular respect to process for membership registration, provisions in the constitutions and manifestos, specific needs, payment of dues and donations, planning and participation in party activities/events, opportunities to aspire and seek leadership position in political parties, primaries and appointment into government on the strength of membership of political parties after an election has been won. The last question on each of the three sections requests from respondents how participation of young people in political party activities could be better enhanced and made more inclusive.

For the KII sessions, an interview guide was produced to guide discussions with the research participants. The interview guide consisted of five key questions targeting the groups under investigation and reflecting the key research objectives. The instruments were developed through a rigorous process involving diverse stakeholders across academic and research institutions, development sector and Nigeria's electoral management body (INEC). More specifically, the institutions that participated in the methodology sessions were the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) and The Electoral Institute (TEI).

Study Area: The survey was conducted in 12 pilot states which were systematically selected to reflect the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. In the selection, two states were chosen to represent each of the zones taking into consideration the following criteria: ethno-religious diversity, cosmopolitanism, urbanism, ruling/opposition party balance, year of creation, logistics and security. Therefore, Ebonyi and Enugu states were selected from the South-East region; Edo and Rivers states in the South-South; Lagos and Osun in the South-West, Benue and Kwara states in the North-Central; Borno and Taraba states in the North-East, and Kano and Sokoto in the North- West. The KIIs were conducted exclusively at the head offices of the political parties in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Study population: The study targets women, young people, and persons with disabilities in the political parties.

Sampling Techniques: The Purposive and Snowball sampling techniques were employed to select respondents and participants for the study. These techniques were also employed in the selection of Key Informants for the interviews. The criteria considered for selection of the participants include leadership position at political parties, official membership of political parties, familiarity with party affairs and familiarity with the marginalised group under investigation. The Snowball technique was used to complement the purposive in reaching participants that were not easy to be located given the challenge of accessibility. Across the board, the targets for KII data collection were political party executives (particularly women, young people and persons with disabilities), members of staff of political parties, representatives of Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC) and civil society organisations working on political parties and elections.

Method of Data Analysis: Information gathered from both primary and secondary sources were organised and presented. Analysis was done from them highlighting dominant themes and vertical and horizontal peculiarities and nuances. Multiple triangulation techniques were employed to resolve conflicting position(s) and useful recommendations made to inform programmatic direction for strengthening inclusion in political parties. The quantitative data were presented and analysed with the use of descriptive statistics showing summaries of the datasets in simple percentages, charts, and tables.

For the administration of the survey questionnaire, stratified technique was used to categorise the targeted groups into the key domains of the study – young people, women, and persons with disabilities. After selecting the 12 states from the 36 states and Abuja based on two states by geopolitical zones, a sample of 100 respondents per state, totalling 1,200 copies without regard to the population of the selected states was adopted. Every political party across the 12 pilot states was pre-assigned five copies of the questionnaire to be administered to randomly selected respondents, amounting to 90 per state. The remaining 10 were designated to be administered to another randomly selected member/staff of the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC). At the end of the field exercise, 1,105 copies of the questionnaire were returned, compiled, and analysed.

Presentation and presentation of data

This section presents data on the demography of respondents and their responses on the extent to which political parties in Nigeria are inclusive of women, young people, and people with disabilities in their affairs, particularly as it relates to membership recruitment, respect for provisions in their constitutions and manifestos, internal and external leadership selection processes, decision-making and implementation and appointment making on the strength on membership.

A. Demography

Demographic data collected covers the characteristics of the respondents within the context of their domain distribution by location (state), gender, age, disability status, level of education, employment, and income. One thousand two hundred (1,200) copies of the questionnaire were administered across the 12 states selected for the study, out of which 1,105 questionnaires were returned.

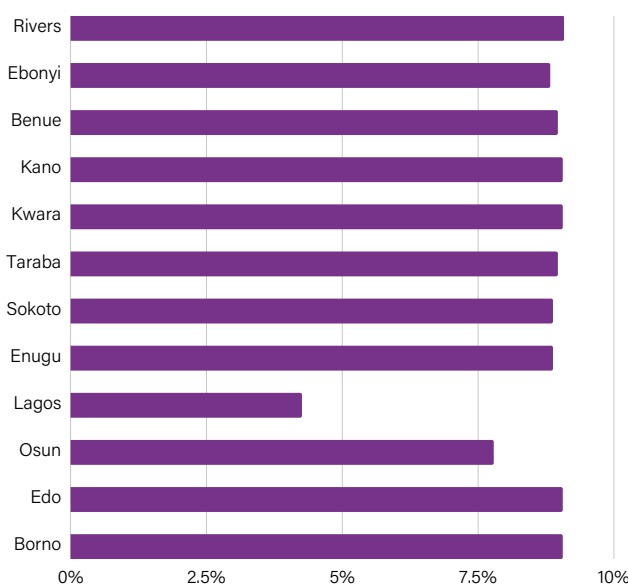


Figure 7: Distribution of respondents by location

It shows that the response rate to the questionnaire administered for this study is 92.1%. This means that most of the respondents selected for the study responded adequately to the questions. This is because of the personal contact and continuous follow up by the research assistants, in ensuring a high response rate.

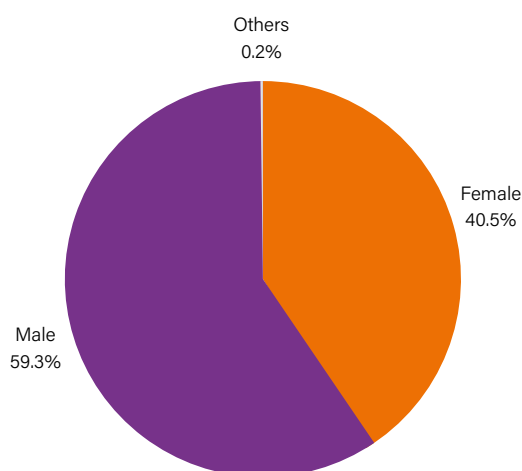


Figure 8: Distribution of respondents by gender

Data in Figure 8 shows that 59.3 percent of the total respondents were male, 40.5 percent were female, and 0.2 percent of the respondents identify themselves as others.

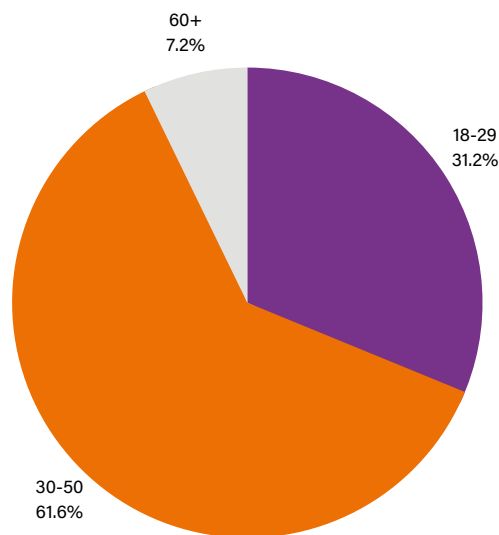


Figure 9: Distribution of respondents by age

Figure 9 shows that 31.2 percent of the total respondents were young people, 61.6 percent were middle aged persons, while 7.2 percent were senior citizens. The study classified the respondents into three categories of young people, middle age and senior citizens, using the Nigeria National Youth Policy of 2019 where the youth is defined as every person between the ages of 18 and 29 years. Thus, the study adjusted the age range for middle age to range from 30 and 59 years, while senior citizens are those 60 years and above.

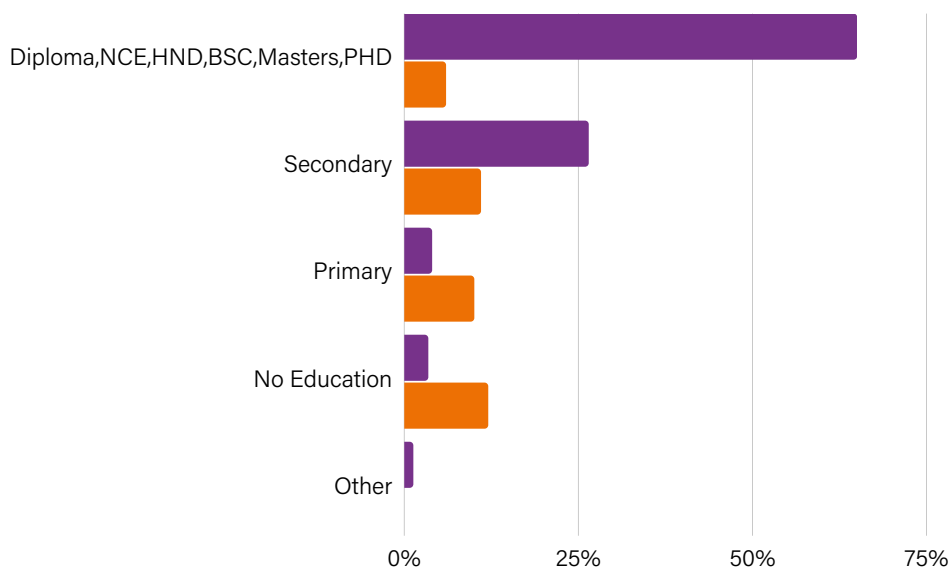


Figure 10: Distribution of respondents by level of education

Figure 10 shows that 65 percent of the respondents had education up to the tertiary level, 26 percent of the respondents had secondary school education, 4 percent had primary level of education, while 3.4 percent of the respondents had no formal education, there is also the 1.2 percent of the respondents who had no formal education. This implies that majority of the sampled population was composed of respondents who had at least one form of education or another.

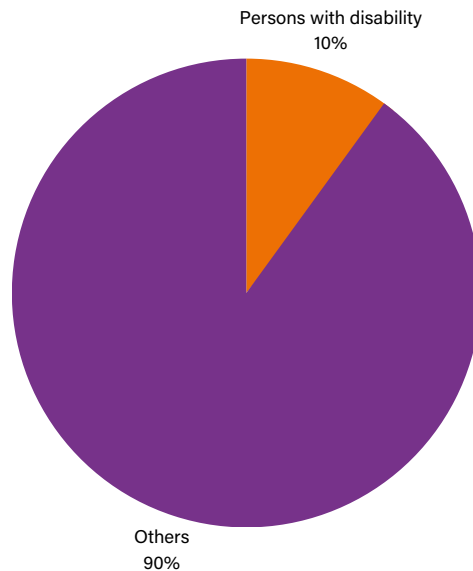


Figure 11 : Distribution of respondents by disability

Data collected shows that 90 percent of the respondents had no disabilities whatsoever, while 10 percent were persons with one form of disability or another. This, for us, was a reasonable number of persons with disabilities respondents that will help the study understand their realities in terms of participation in the activities of political party.

Figure 12 shows that 60.8 percent of the respondents were employed while 39.2 percent are unemployed. Indicating that most of the respondents were engaged in one form of employment or another.

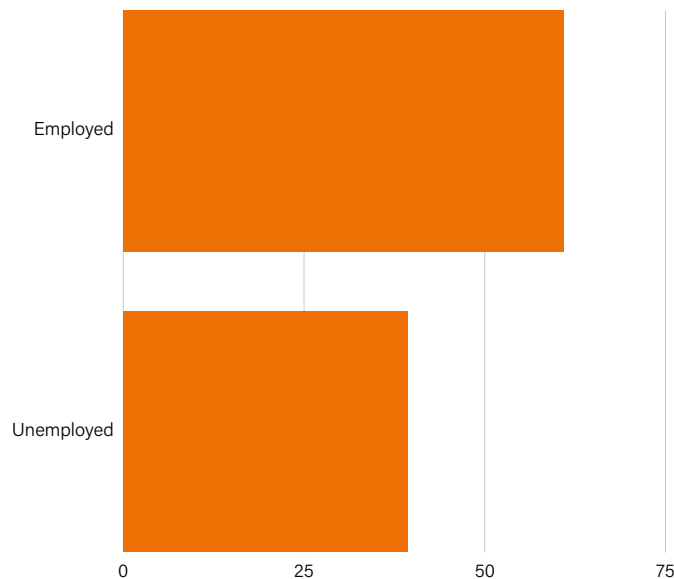


Figure 12: Distribution of respondents by employment status

Results show that 30.40% percent of the total respondents earned less than N165,000 annually, 33.40 percent of the respondents earned between N165,001 and N500,000 annually, 27.6 percent earned between N500,001 and N2,000,000 annually, and 6.3 percent earned N2,000,001 and N5,000,000 annually. Similarly, only 2.3 percent of the total respondents earned N5,000,001 and above annually.

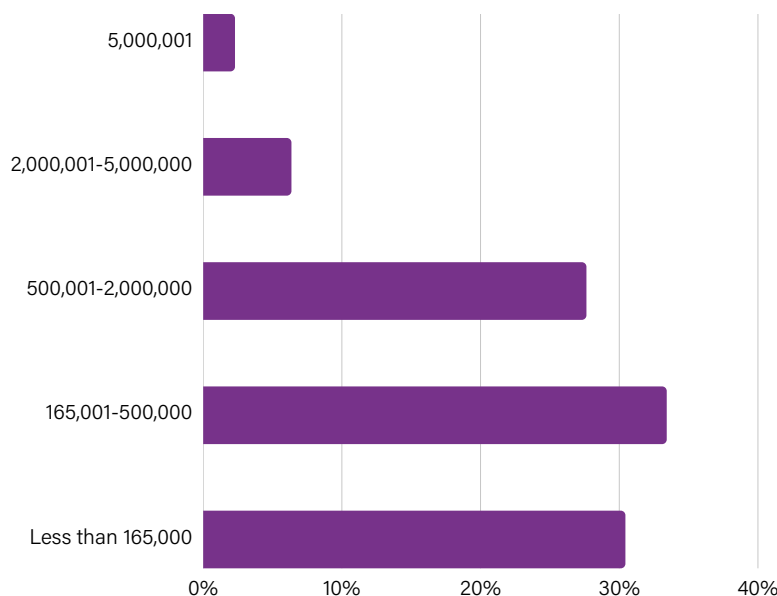


Figure 13: Distribution of respondents by level of income

The study used the official exchange rate of ₦452.05 to USD\$1 per annum. This reveals that majority of the respondents were living above the poverty mark of USD1 per day.

B. Women and inclusivity in political parties

Women constitute slightly more than half of the world's population. Yet their participation in formal political structures and processes, where decisions regarding the use of societal resources generated by both men and women are made, remains unequal. Women in Nigeria are active in the economy and civil society. Though there is some variation across the country, with generally higher levels of participation in the south and urban areas than the north and the rural areas. Levels of education and economic development may explain some of this. However, the high levels of patronage and corruption mean that female representation is sometimes tokenistic rather than substantive. Figure 14 shows the gender distribution of registered voters.

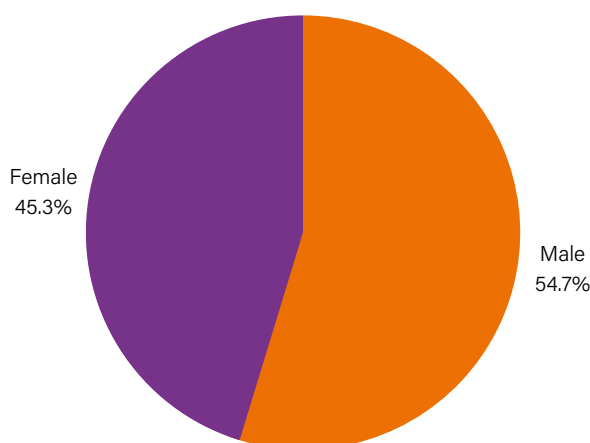


Figure 14: Gender distribution of voter register Source: INEC, 2022

Nigerian governments have subscribed to international protocols like CEDAW and instituted national policies like the NGP to improve women's representation but have done little to implement these concrete measures. Presently, women's representation in legislatures around the world is about 15 percent but the levels of representation in Nigeria has revolved around 2.3% and 7.3%, the highest the country has recorded since the return to democratic rule in 1999. This is despite the pronounced commitment of government and the international community to gender equality and to bridging the gender gap in the formal political arena. (UNDP Report, 2019)

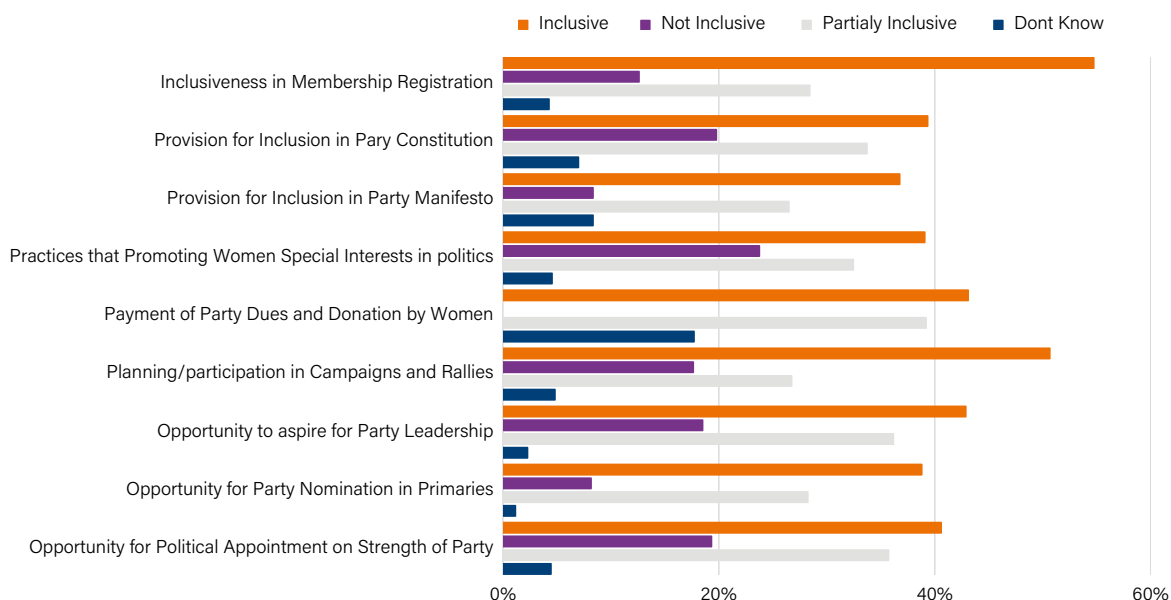


Figure 15: Responses to the section on women and inclusion in political parties

Data shows that 54.75% of the respondents stated that their political parties were inclusive when it comes to the process of registration for party membership, 28.24% said the political parties were partially inclusive while 12.67% said they were not inclusive. This implies that the process of registration is open to all genders as well as those living with disability.

This position was further confirmed by the officials of the political parties interviewed. They stated that every member of the party is expected to be registered to be considered a member of the party. The registration for membership confers certain rights and privileges on the members such as the right to participate in the activities of the political parties and the right to vote and be voted for in the political party.

Results also indicate that 39.37% of the respondents stated that political parties have provisions for women in their constitution that were inclusive of women in the activities of their political parties. 33.76% of the respondents said the provisions by the political parties in their constitution were partially inclusive, and 19.82% said the provisions were not inclusive.

However, the results of the KII held with key party officials of the 18 political parties revealed that all political parties stated that they had different provisions such as affirmative actions of different degrees and forms in their constitutions and manifestos. These provisions are put in place to allow for the inclusion of women in the activities of their political parties. In spite of these provisions, some political parties still reported a low level of participation of women in their activities.

Again, data collected shows that 36.78% of the respondents claim that their political parties have provisions in their manifesto that ensure the inclusion of women in the activities of their political parties, with 26.53% stating the provisions are partially inclusive while 8.41% said they were not inclusive.

The study also shows that 39.1% of the respondents reported that political parties have provisions in their manifestos that promote women's interests, 32.49% said the provisions in the manifestos of the political parties were partially inclusive, 23.8% said they were not inclusive, while 4.62% said they do not know of any provision in the manifestos of the political parties that address the specific needs and interest of women. Results from the KIIs conducted also indicated positive responses from political party leaders interviewed. For example, informants interviewed said that political party meetings, though not clearly stated in the party constitutions and manifestos, are fixed at a time that is favourable to all members to attend. This means that women, whether married or single, can attend meetings without feeling excluded since such meetings are not fixed at odd times. No political party had provisions for nursing mothers, nor a crèche in their various facilities.

Responses from the study also shows that 43.08% stated that political parties had processes and procedures that were inclusive and allows women to pay party dues and make donations to the political party. 39.19% said the processes exist but were partially inclusive, while 17.74% said they had no idea whether such processes existed or not. This was corroborated by the party leaders from different political parties, interviewed during the key informants' interview.

The constitution of the political parties revealed that all the political parties have provisions for the registration of members, which is open to all Nigerian citizens, eighteen years and above, male or female irrespective of their race, creed or colour, region, or religion. They stated that payment of dues and other levies were compulsory and confer rights and privileges on the members of the political party.

On women's participation in planning, campaigns, rallies, events and other activities of the political parties, data shows that 50.68% respondents stated that women's participation in planning, campaigns, rallies and other activities and events of the political parties were inclusive, 26.79% said women's participation in planning, campaigns, rallies, and other events of the political parties were partially inclusive, 17.65% said they were not inclusive, while 4.89% said they do not know. Responses from KII's also confirmed that women were actively involved in all the campaigns, rallies and other events and activities of the political parties.

Data collected again indicates that 42.9% of the respondents reported that political parties have opportunities provided for women to aspire, participate, and contest for any leadership positions within the political parties. 36.2% said the provisions were partially inclusive, while 18.55% said they were not inclusive. 2.35% also said that they "don't know". Interviews with officials of the political parties also confirmed the existence of provisions that allows women to freely aspire, participate and contest for leadership positions. However, the outcome of various elections conducted for both the political party leadership and other national and state level elections do not reflect that such provisions exist, except for the position of national and deputy national women leader, as there are still far fewer women in participatory and representative leadership.

On the opportunities available for women to aspire, participate, and be nominated in political party primaries, data shows that 38.82% respondents reported that opportunities for women to aspire, participate, and be nominated in political party primaries were inclusive, 28.28% said the opportunities were partially inclusive, while 8.23% and 1.23% (14) said the opportunities were either non-inclusive or that they don't know, respectively. Though there are provisions in the constitution of political parties that give opportunities to women to aspire, participate, contest and be nominated in political parties these provisions, however, do not translate to actual participation and nomination of women. Some political parties go as far as offering free nomination as well as intent forms to women. Some also cut the cost of purchasing nomination forms but when the actual primary elections are held, women are often not voted for or given the opportunity to be the party's flag bearer. On further probing, it was revealed that, because the process leading to the election is heavily commercialised/monetised, most of the women who stand in elections do not have such resources to pay their way through.

Additionally, 40.36% of respondents reported that the opportunities provided by political parties for women to be appointed into government on the strength of being members of political parties were inclusive, 35.75% reported that the provisions were partially inclusive, while 19.37% said they were not inclusive.

Interactions with party leaders of the eighteen political parties also indicated that there were opportunities for women to be appointed into governance. Some stated that their political parties have different levels of affirmative action that range from between 30% right up to 50% which have been put in place to ensure adequate representation of women in governance.

C. Young people and inclusivity in political parties

Young people (men and women) are a vital resource and huge assets of any nation. Not only are they legitimately regarded as future leaders, they are potentially and actually the greatest investment of a country in search of development, given their innovative ideas, creative skills and vitality to make positive change happen (Federal Ministry of Youth Development, 2019). Independent research for the British Council has fore told how the young people, and not oil, could become Nigeria's greatest asset in 2030 (Amaize, Shehu and Ehilebu 2014).

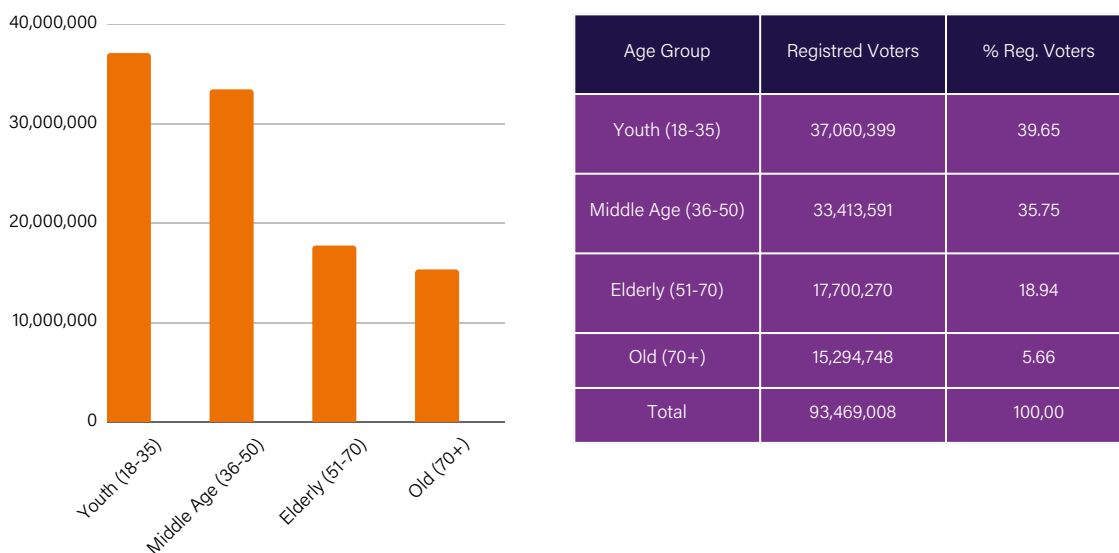


Figure 16: Age distribution of registered voters in Nigeria (Source: INEC (2022))

As strong as their potentials is in Nigeria, including the proportional number to the overall registered voting population put at 39.65% (see Figure 16), young people are often presented as underrepresented and accorded limited opportunity to exert influence over public policy and politics.

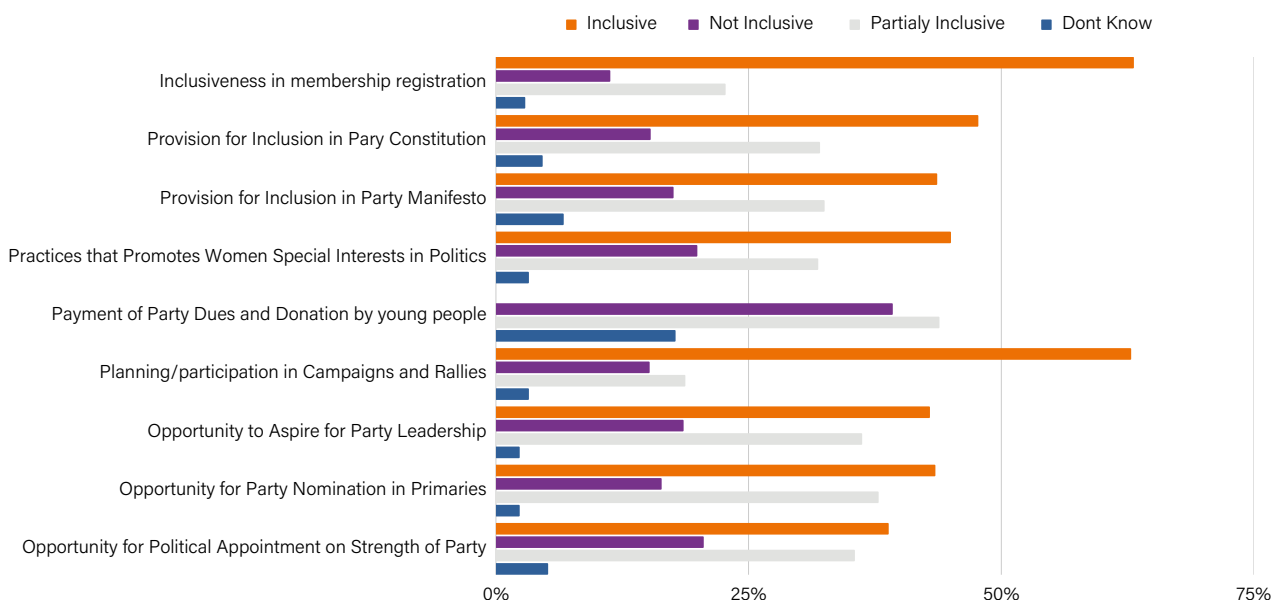


Figure 17: Responses to the section on young people and inclusion in political parties

A question about the process of youth registration for membership of political parties indicated 63.08% of the respondents' claimed processes were inclusive. Another 22.71% said partially inclusive, while 11.31% said it is not inclusive and 2.9% responded "don't know."

Results in Figure 17 show that 47.96% political parties had provisions in the constitution that are inclusive, 32.04% of respondents said the provisions were partially inclusive, 15.3% said non-inclusive while 4.62% said they did not know. Data obtained from interviews also indicated that some political parties had specific provisions for the young people that came in the form of full or partial waiver of party nomination fees so as to encourage participation. However, this has not achieved the desired results due to the disincentive of the high cost of elections especially when running under new or smaller political parties.

Data collected shows that 43.62% reported that political parties had provisions in their party manifestos that were inclusive, 32.49% said the provisions were partially inclusive, 17.56% said the provisions were non-inclusive, and 6.33% said they did not know. However, results from interviews conducted showed that despite the provisions, a greater number of the young people prefer to align with the bigger and more established political parties where opportunities are limited, and competition is stiffer than with the new and smaller political parties where opportunities abound.

Furthermore, responses on provisions for the specific interest of the young people showed that 44.98% of respondents indicated that the political parties had provisions for the specific interest of the young people that were inclusive, 31.86% said the provisions were partially inclusive, 19.91% said they were not inclusive and 3.26% said they did not know.

On youth participation in planning, campaigns, rallies and other activities and events of the political parties, data collected indicated that 62.81% of the respondents reported that young people participation in planning, campaigns, rallies and other activities and events of the political parties were inclusive, 18.73% said the provisions were partially inclusive, 15.2% said they were not inclusive and 3.26% of the respondents said they did not know. Scholars have observed that young people interest in political participation has been on the increase with a desire to break the glass ceiling. However, findings from the interviews revealed that though the young people constitute the most active population in party activities, especially during campaigns and rallies, their representation has remained largely marginal in decision making and representation, as very few young people are given the opportunity to hold positions at both the party level and in government.

Responses on opportunities for the young people to aspire, participate, and be nominated in political party primaries shows that 43.44% of the respondents reported that opportunities for the young people to aspire, participate, and be nominated in political party primaries were inclusive, 37.83% said the opportunities were partially inclusive, while 16.38% and 2.35% (14) said the opportunities were either non-inclusive or that they don't know. There are provisions in the constitution of political parties that give opportunities to the young people to aspire, participate, contest and be nominated in political party primaries.

However, these provisions do not translate to actual participation and nomination of the young people. Some political parties give free nomination and expression of interest forms to the young people. Some also cut the cost of purchasing nomination forms, but when the actual primary elections come up the young people are not voted for because the political process is highly commercialised/monetised, and this does not give ample opportunities to the young people to be elected to leadership positions in the party and even in governance.

On whether there were opportunities for the young people to be appointed into government on the strength of party membership, responses showed that 38.82% of the respondents indicated that the opportunities were inclusive, 35.48% said the opportunities were partially inclusive, 20.54% said the opportunities were not inclusive and 5.16% were undecided. Data from interviews shows that whereas there is a fairly sufficient constitutional and legal framework as well as a favourable policy regime to encourage youth participation, there is limited political will for its realisation.

D. Persons with disabilities and inclusivity in political parties

Over time, different figures have been bandied about as estimates of persons with disabilities in Nigeria. Unlike the 2006 National Population Commission (NPC) which puts the figure at 3,253,160 (2.32%) of the country's 140 million, a 2011 report by the World Bank estimated the number of persons with varying forms of disabilities in Nigeria to be 25 million, out of which 3.6 million have very significant difficulties in moving around. The National Population Commission at the 73rd UN General Assembly General Discussion of Agenda 28 on Social Development in New York also announced a figure of 19 million (Premium Times, 2018). Relying on the 2021 United Nations Population Fund World Population Dashboard, Save the Children International has also put Nigeria's persons with disabilities figure at 32 million (Ibrahim, 2022). Until the 2021/2022 voter registration exercise, INEC voter register had no disaggregated figures for persons with disabilities.

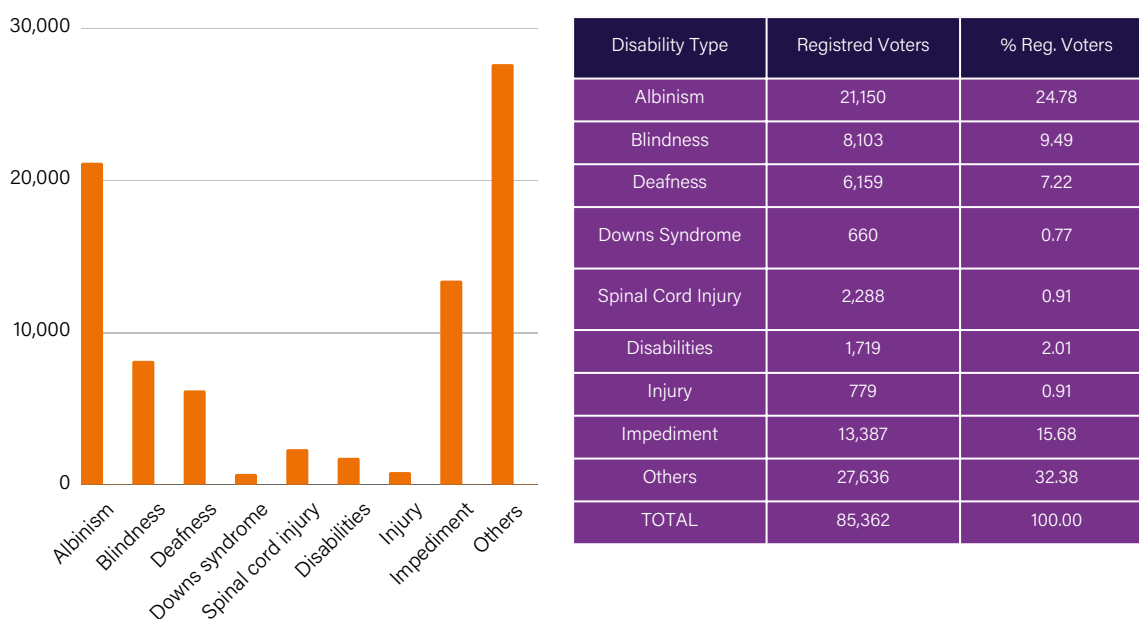


Figure 18: Persons with disabilities distribution of voter register (2021-2022) Source: INEC, 2022

The first attempt at documenting persons with disabilities (and their disability type) by INEC was during the 2021/2022 Continuous Voters Registration (CVR) exercise. It showed various forms of disabilities, including albinism, autism, blindness, cognitive that of the 9,518,188 registered voters during the exercise, 85,362 were confirmed /learning disabilities, deafness, physical impediment, downs syndrome, dwarfism, spinal cord injury and others.

Figure 19 shows a summary of the responses to the questions in the section on persons with disabilities. The question about the process of registration of persons with disabilities in the political parties got 41.54% as inclusive while 32.67% said it was partially inclusive. Another 20.18% and 5.61% of the respondents said "not inclusive" and "don't know" respectively.

Respondents were asked about existing provisions in their constitutions that promote inclusion of the persons with disabilities. The responses appear positive as 32.49% and 27.60% confirmed both full and partial inclusion, respectively as against negative responses of non-inclusion (30%) and those that are not sure (10.32%). In a similar vein, it was discovered that there is a fair measure of provisions for the persons with disabilities the party manifestos as respondents indicated full inclusion (29.41%) and partial inclusion at (30%). The other respondents, 31.22% and 9% indicated "not inclusive" and "don't know", respectively.

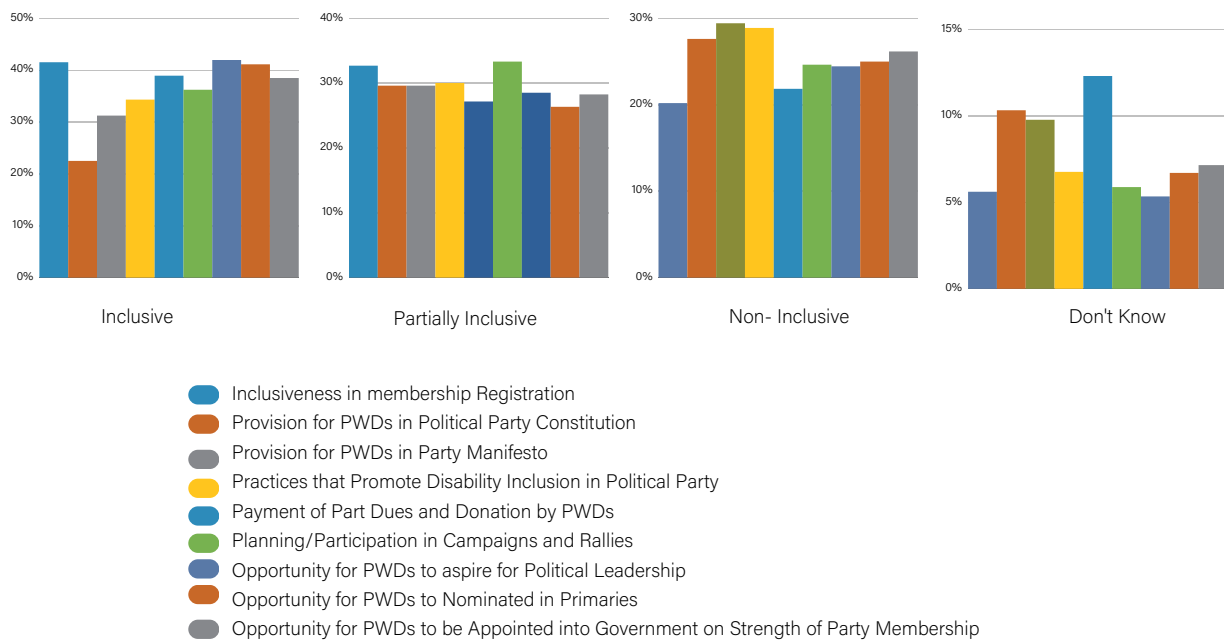


Figure 19: Responses to the section on persons with disabilities

It should, however, be stated that content analysis of the party constitutions did not correspond with the claims by the party officials in the survey. Of the eighteen parties examined, only six parties had clear and convincing policies that protect the interests of the persons with disabilities. These are ZLP, APM, APC, ADP and AAC. ZLP, APM and ADP have clear provisions for inclusion of persons with disabilities for leadership positions at various levels of the state. Seven parties – LP, AA, APP, APGA, ADC, YPP and SDP – are categorised as giving partial provision for the inclusion of the persons with disabilities. Thirties are categorized as such because they only have general statements in support of all individuals regardless of their ethnicity, religion, age, or disabilities.

However, there is no explicit provision for the persons with disabilities in both their constitution and manifesto. The last category of parties include ACCORD, PRP, PDP, NRM, BP and NNPP and do not have any statement in support of inclusion of the persons with disabilities in their constitutions and manifestos.

Enquiry was made about practices established to promote inclusion of persons with disabilities. The question aims to understand the extent to which political parties appreciate the specific needs of the persons with disabilities employ useful tools for their inclusion in party activities.

This includes the use of sign language, braille, and ramps. Responses indicated that most of the parties would have a measure of fair inclusion practices for the persons with disabilities as indicated full inclusion and 28.87% indicated partial inclusion. Another 34.30% and 6.8% recorded “not inclusive” and “don't know”, respectively.

However, except for big events organised by the much bigger/popular parties where sign language experts were hired to render services, during interviews none of the political parties (including IPAC) could give specific ways they provide tools and adequate space to accommodate the interests of the persons with disabilities during interviews. In addition, the documents of the parties, especially the constitutions do not outline such practices for inclusion of the persons with disabilities.

The research further sought to find out the extent to which the persons with disabilities were involved in payment of party dues and donations as a way to measure their financial inclusion in the party affairs. Survey findings show less inclusion of persons with disabilities financial activities of the political parties. Most

respondents (38.91%) answered in the negative (not inclusive). 27.15% indicated partial inclusion while only 21.63% indicated full inclusion in financial contribution to the political parties. The remaining 12.31% replied "don't know." (See Figure 19).

Lack of specific information regarding financial contribution of the persons with disabilities in the parties' documents confirm the absence of their financial inclusion. In terms of involvement of persons with disabilities in planning and participation in major party activities including campaigns, rallies and related events, the survey shows that most of the respondents gave a "partially inclusive" response (33.30%) and full inclusion is 24.62%. The "non-inclusive" and "don't know" options attracted 36.20% and 5.88% from the remaining respondents. It can be concluded that there is a fair degree of inclusion of persons with disabilities in campaigns, rallies, and other party events in the political parties.

In terms of opportunities for aspiring and taking up leadership positions in the political parties, most respondents indicated lack of inclusion as shown in Figure 19. Findings show 42.17% as "not inclusive." Another 24.43% and 28.08% were clicked by the respondents as fully "inclusive" and "partially inclusive." The remaining 5.34% of the respondents said, "don't know".

Parties such as ZLP, SDP, APM, APC, ADP and AAC have specific provisions for membership and leadership positions for persons with disabilities. In the KII interviews, the remaining parties claim they have existing practices to encourage inclusion of the persons with disabilities providing free nomination forms and engaging in awareness to encourage their membership in the political parties. The ZLP, APM, APC and ADP have clearly articulated provisions for leadership positions for persons with disabilities in constitution.

For example, the constitution of the ZLP requires at least a representative of "persons with special need" in the composition of the National Working Committee and other levels of leadership at the geopolitical zones, states and FCT. In its implementation of this provision, the party allocated two positions (male and female) to persons with disabilities clutter but only a woman made herself available.

The APM includes representatives of the persons with disabilities in the composition of the party's Board of Trustees (BOT). The ADP has offices for the National Persons with Disability Leader, Deputy National Persons with Disabilities Leader, and the Two National Vice- Persons with Disabilities Leaders (One each for the North and South). The offices are also present at the Zonal, State, Local Government, Ward, and Polling Unit levels. The APC also has a provision for the inclusion of "Special" (Physically Challenged) Leader whose principal role is to "serve as a link between the Party and people with special needs" (Section 14.24 APC Constitution). Other political parties do not have convincing provisions for leadership positions for the persons with disabilities, although they persons with disabilities such positions during qualitative interviews with their officials at their head offices in the FCT.

There are some mixed responses to the question of opportunities to aspire for nomination at the party responses. 24.98% answered positively (inclusive) but 49.99% gave an outright negative response (not inclusive). Another 26.33% said that it was partially inclusive while the remaining 6.7% responded "don't know." During the interview sessions, most of the parties claim they have flexible nomination policies to encourage the Persons with disabilities to contest for various positions in the party. Only AAC was able to provide evidence that a member of the persons with disabilities community is contesting as a member of State House of Assembly in Plateau State. SDP also pointed out that it had a person with disabilities as presidential aspirant that got through to the convention/primaries of the party and claimed, "he has been a huge support for the drive for inclusion in the party."

There is a similar pattern of responses in terms of opportunities for persons with disabilities on appointment into government on the strength of membership of political parties (should the party win elections), While 26.15% responded positively (inclusive), 38.46% responded negatively (not inclusive), Another set of 28.24% respondents indicated fair inclusion (fairly inclusive), while 7.15% responded "don't know." However, there is no substantial evidence to support the claims in the interview sessions.

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