

CHANGING-GENDER IN POLITICAL INCLUSION (PRECOLONIAL- POSTCOLONIAL PERIOD): A STUDY OF KOGI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The political inclusion of the ethnic groups of Kogi State, Nigeria, during the pre-colonial time disappeared with colonialism. The positions of female chiefs and the advisory role of wives declined. The emerging political system sidelines intelligent contributions to society's decision-making that can only come from women's experience. Therefore, it denies observations needed to make decisions that can contribute to achieving social order. This raises the question of who the beneficiaries of changing gender dynamics in political inclusion are. To find an answer, this paper adopts two objectives: 1) it examines Nigerian policies made in the male-dominated government in achieving social order, and 2) it finds out the beneficiaries of changing gender roles in policymaking. Related literature was reviewed, and liberal feminism served as the explanatory framework. The data was generated through a survey, in-depth interviews (IDIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and documentary searches. The survey data were analysed using descriptive analysis. IDI, FGD, and documentary data were analysed using content analysis. The findings indicate that policies made in the male-dominated government induced poverty among most Nigerians. The findings also indicate that the beneficiaries of the shift toward gender-inclusive policymaking are manufacturers of sophisticated imported products. The paper then concludes that changing gender in political inclusion is a social problem that requires modification of the political system. It recommends political inclusion (revival of women as advisers to their husbands and the government at large) that yields functional policies, and the development and implementation of economic policies that benefit the natives.

Keywords: Changing-Gender, Multination, Political System, Political Activities, Social Order.

1. Introduction

During the 19th and 20th centuries, the political power of Nigerian women was eroded. British colonialists added anti-women bias to the patriarchal traditional practices with the aid of colonial laws and also colonial influences such as change in people's attitudes and values, change in time possession, change in skills possession, change in experience, change in education, change in method of information dissemination and so on. The diffusion of the anti-women bias has been so assimilated into the Nigerian patriarchy that the fight by women political activists against discrimination against women in politics has been only semi-successful, and the great awareness of the need to involve more women in politics cannot withstand the anti-women bias. To date, women remain underrepresented in Nigerian politics. Many of them are not part of public political participation, except for voting. The

few who made it there play second-fiddle roles. They are perceived as powerless (Maliki, 2013).

In the words of Falola (2007), patriarchy combined with colonialism changed gender roles and gender relations during the 20th century. As male chiefs collaborated with the British colonial administration on tax collection and governance, the importance of female chiefs declined. Even as Nigerian elite women now challenge many aspects of patriarchy and are gradually organising to ensure that the democratic rule in Nigeria expands sufficiently to accommodate them, the degree of success is still low. Other studies, like Mohammed (2023), report the same pattern of colonial and post-colonial norms of a male-dominated political system in Nigeria. Focusing on the ministerial appointees at the federal level, for example, a total of 341 ministers served from 1999-2015; only 47 (14%) were female, while 294 (86%) were male. From 1999 to 2015, women had not been governors in any of the states of the federation; very few had been elected as deputy governors in 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015. The percentage representation of local government chairpersons by sex from 1999 to 2015 shows that males are more elected or appointed (91%) to the positions of local government chairperson than females (9%).

The colonial and post-colonial systems of government and politics in Nigeria are foreign, byproducts of westernisation and to a large extent mainstream. They extinguished the pre-colonial system of government and politics in which women held certain political roles and established a male-dominated political system. There are very few women political aspirants in recent times. Despite some beneficial consequences of the mainstream government policies, such as the establishment of government hospitals and pregnant women with abnormal pelvis no longer dying in the hands of traditional birth attendants but undergoing cesarean section, there are many harmful consequences. The policies on economic, health, family, legal, religious, military, and political education made society a poor, dependent polity (Mohammed, 2026).

The changing gender dynamics in political inclusion violate the social law that 'collective decision yields social order in society' and instead induce social problems in Nigeria. Policies established and enacted amid changing gender dynamics in Nigeria's political inclusion prove this point, as the objectives of almost all of them seem not to have been achieved. Included are: Fuel subsidy removal policy, National Population Policy & Family Planning (No.03/dRPC-PAS/IB/June 2022), National Health Promotion Policy, Nigerian National Defence Policy, National Policy on Education, Nigeria Data Protection Act (2023), National Judicial Policy, Legal Status of Freedom of Religions or Beliefs. The objective of the fuel subsidy removal policy in Nigeria, according to Izom, Wakili, and Aliyu (2023), is to control the economic burden of fuel subsidies on the country's finances, which has a significant negative impact, leading to an annual budget deficit. However, Abdul, Pius-Ajibade and Ibrahim(2025) reported a rise in inflation as the macroeconomic impact of the removal of fuel subsidies in Nigeria. The removal of fuel subsidies is hurting the Nigerian economy and the entire strata of society. Despite the government's assurances that the policy will save money for infrastructure development, reduce corruption, and encourage investment in the oil sector, the average citizen is worried about the negative effects of removing fuel subsidies on their lives, including higher fuel costs. Its attendant increases in the cost of living, transport costs, and prices of goods and services are making necessary items unavailable, thereby reducing their standard of living and increasing the poverty level in the country.

The goal of the National Population Policy & Family Planning (No.03/dRPC-PAS/IB/June 2022) in Nigeria is to control the population structure that puts Nigeria in a demographic crisis characterised by the youthful bulge, unemployment, emigration, national killing nationals, and a high maternal mortality rate (National Population Policy & Family Planning, 2022). Despite this policy, day-to-day life shows that many small family-sized units are not free from problems. Olawoye et al. (2004) emphasised the declining standard of living among both large and small families. Furthermore, the Nigerian goal of the National Health Promotion Policy is to empower the Nigerian populace to take timely actions in disease prevention, improving their health and wellbeing, as well as taking measures that ensure a healthy society, with the objectives:

- a) Foster health promotion interventions targeted at addressing social determinants of health, reducing inequities, and tackling priority burden of diseases in Nigeria.
- b) Facilitate health promotion interventions in support of the Government's efforts directed at ensuring and sustaining healthy behaviour, healthy lifestyle, and enabling environment, including healthy public policy.
- c) Enhance human resource and capacity strengthening for the delivery of health promotion interventions.
- d) Strengthen systems to monitor, evaluate and manage evidence related to health promotion interventions (FMHN, 2019).

A critical view reveals that the objectives are unlikely to be achieved, especially in reducing inequities. The poor are excluded from the competition for health care services by the wealthy, who can afford more expensive medications and medical procedures (Mohammed, Mohammed, and Zom, 2019). Similarly, the Nigerian National Defence Policy (NNDP) has the overall objective of protecting Nigeria, the people and core values. Specifically, the policy seeks to achieve:

- a) Establishing and maintaining strong, professional, people-oriented and well-equipped Armed Forces capable of responding effectively to both internal and external threats and contributing to national development.
- b) Ensuring citizens' participation and mobilisation of relevant resources in national defence based on the principle of total defence.
- c) Supporting the creation of an enabling environment for self-reliance in the production of military equipment and supplies.
- d) Projecting the image of the country that emphasises the tenets of good governance, democracy and human rights, good neighbourliness and promotion of international peace and security (NDP, 2016).

However, there are escalating insecurity issues (Ya'u, Zaggi, and Mohammed, 2026). Further still, the national educational aims and objectives include:

- i. The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity; (ii) the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society; (iii) the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around; and (iv) the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society (Omuruyi & Epelle, 2004).

However, many challenges have been identified as impairing the realisation of the educational goal. The challenges identified in NAP (2021) are as follows:

- Low enrolment of children, particularly the girl child.
- Low completion of basic education, i.e., high rate of dropout, in the South-Eastern Zone of the Country.
- Shortage and poor-quality infrastructures in schools, e.g. classrooms, water, electricity, toilets and furniture
- Low capacity of teachers and inadequate remuneration of trained ones.
- Low access to technological and scientific equipment for learning
- Inadequate sporting and recreational facilities.
- Lack of adequate facilities for vulnerable groups, especially people with disabilities
- Poor coordination of adult literacy programmes
- Child labour
- Inadequate provision for technical and vocational training in the existing educational curricula
- Weak regulatory mechanism on quality assurance and affordability of private higher institutions.
- Poor condition of learning, especially in public schools.
- High disparity in cut-off marks among students from different states in federal institutions
- Inadequate security for students and teachers in parts of the country where banditry and insurgency occur.
- Slow implementation of Safe School Declaration across the Country
- Abduction of students and educators.
- Drop in Standard of Education

On the account of low achievements of objectives of policies established and enacted during the era of changing-gender in political inclusion Nigeria, and the policies are the wrong engines that made the society a poor, dependent polity, this study aims to examine this political system that sidelines women contributions toward collective decision making for the society and denies part of observations needed to make decisions for achieving social order in Kogi State, Nigeria.

Theoretical Consideration

Oakley has been a prominent figure in the development of feminist sociology. She does not strongly align with a particular feminist perspective. Her analysis of gender roles fits most closely with the liberal feminist tradition because it suggests that women's oppression is not universal but is historically variable. Oakley (1974) posits that: Gender roles are changing and there is inequality against women in the changing gender roles. The series of Factory Acts from 1819 restricted child labour and established the mother-housewife role. From 1914 to 1950, women received many legal and political rights to employment, but with the retention of housewifery. The dual burden locks many women into poorly paid jobs. To control this harm, there is a need for system modification. Oakley's (1974) positions can be applied to explain this study: Gender roles in the political systems of the pre-colonial ethnic groups of Kogi State are changing, and there is inequality against women within these changing roles like the series of Factory Acts from 1819, which restricted child labour and established the mother-housewife role, the emergence of colonialism through the colonial policies decreased the importance of the position of female chiefs and the advisory roles of

wives to husbands on public issues. The changing gender in political inclusion is not fashioned to benefit any of the genders, and it is most harmful to women, because policies established and enacted during the male-dominated political system lock the majority of men and women in discomfort, poverty, stress, injustice, constraint, dependence, insecurity, hunger, debt, etc. It is most harmful to women because it blocks women's voices and their ability to help themselves. Oakley's position that controlling the harmful consequences of changing gender roles needs system modification can be applied to control the harmful consequences of changing gender roles among the ethnic groups under study. Modification of the political system is necessary through the revival of women's role in politics to enhance actionable, effective policies that benefit the natives. In a nutshell, adopting the liberal feminist position, it is safe to say there is a change in political participation among Nigerian men and women. The changing gender roles in political inclusion refer to the suppression of female roles in decision-making, the interpretation and application of laws, and the enforcement and implementation of laws, policies, and court decisions.

2. Methodology

The study population consists of adults (20 years old & above), men and women among the Igala, Ebira and Okun ethnic groups of Kogi State, Nigeria. The study area is large and heterogeneous. Thus, a multi-stage sampling technique was used to divide the population into smaller units. At stage I, the population was divided into Kogi East, Kogi Central and Kogi West senatorial districts. Based on familiarity with the locations of the Igala, Ebira, and Okun people, the three senatorial districts were selected for the study through a purposive sampling technique.

Stage II: Each of the Senatorial Districts is further broken into Local Government Areas (LGAs). For proper management of the study population, two (2) LGAs were selected from each of the three Senatorial Districts, and, as in stage I, purposive sampling was used to select them. Ankpa and Idah LGAs from the Igala land, Adavi and Okene LGAs from Ebira land, and Kabba-bunu and Yagba-West from Okun.

Stage III: Each of the six selected LGAs has people with a homogeneous (ethnic, cultural, and linguistic) background, from whom any adult (aged 20 years and above) can provide data for the study. However, due to time and financial constraints, two Wards were selected from each selected LGA using the Simple Random Sampling Technique by lottery to ensure equal chances of selection. Ankpa I and Enjema I from Ankpa LGA, Igecheba and Ugwoda from Idah LGA, Ogaminana and [Idanuhua](#) from Adavi LGA, [Upogoro/Odenku](#) and Obehira/Eba from Okene LGA, Otu and [Odo-Akete](#) from Kabba-Bunu LGA, [Iyamerin/igbaruku](#) and Odo-Egbe from Yagba-West LGA.

Stage IV: The selected Wards were broken down into major towns or villages according to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC, 2015) statistics. One (1) town or village was selected from each of the selected Wards using a simple random sampling technique. *Emere* from Ankpa I, *Enagbede* from Enjema I, *Adumu* from Ugwoda Ward, *Old-GRA* from Igecheba Ward, *Ogaminana* from Ogaminana Ward, *Idanuhua* from Idanuhua Ward, *Upogoro* from Upogoro/Odenku Ward, *Okengwe* from Obehira/Eba Ward, *Otu* from Otu Ward, *Kabba* from Odo-Akete Ward, *Iyamerin* from Iyamerin/Igbaruku Ward, and *Ijalu* from Odo-Egwe Ward.

Stage V: One (1) major Street or Area was selected from each of the selected Towns or Villages using a lottery Simple Random Sampling Technique and based on the Independent

National Electoral Commission (INEC 2015) statistics on major Streets or Areas. *Emere L.G.E.A. School Area* was selected from Emere; Enagbede Mango Tree Area from Enagbede; By-L.G.E.A. School Area from Adumu; and *Old-GRA* is the only main Area. It was selected: Abadagi Street from Ogaminana; Road by Postal Agency Obuburu from Idanuhua; Road by R.C.C. School Upogoro from Upogoro; Road by Ali's Compound Okengwe from Okengwe; Ogbagba from Otu; Kabba Metropolis is the major Area. It was selected: L.G.E.A. School Area from Iyamerin and *Adefola's Restaurant Area* from Ijalu.

Stage VI: The Major Streets or Areas were divided into Households. The Availability Sampling Technique was used to select 67 households, each with members from all three ethnic groups. A total of 201 households (67 X 3 ethnic groups) were selected.

Stage VII: Four (4) Individual Respondents (2 Males and 2 Females aged 20 years and above) were selected from each of the selected households using the Availability Sampling Technique to ensure equal gender representation and the selection of indigene. Indigenes are in the position to best account for traditional gender roles and how the roles are changing over time. That is, 402 male Respondents and 402 female Respondents are selected. However, the questionnaire returns were 790 out of 804 administered.

The primary data (survey, IDI, and FGD) were collected from six Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Kogi State, Nigeria. The data collection involved six (6) research assistants because of the heterogeneity of the study area. Each Research Assistant was attached to a Local Government Area (LGA). The researcher organised training for the research assistants for data collection. Also, 12 in-depth interviews were conducted with those who witnessed the colonial period among the three ethnic groups. In addition, 12 FGDs were conducted among the adults (18-40 years) and older adults (61-75 years) with knowledge on the changing gender in political inclusion among the three major ethnic groups using an FGD guide. Finally, for secondary data, archival records on the political activities of men and women during the pre-colonial periods of the Igala, Ebira, and Okun were sourced from Clifford (1936) and Weise (2013) using a pro forma. Colonial policies were sourced from Naankiel (2016). Gender and Ethnic Representation in the Kogi State Elective, executive, and appointive positions from 1999 to 2023 was sourced from the Kogi State Ministry of Information, Lokoja. The quantitative primary data were analysed using descriptive analysis, and the qualitative primary data and secondary data were analysed using content analysis.

3. Results and Discussion

Politics is any interaction among individuals, groups, or institutions that seeks to make collective decisions or solve collective problems. It is the activities associated with the governance of a society. Table 1 shows the political roles of the Igala, Ebira and Okun men and women during the pre-colonial period.

Table 1: Gender Roles in the Pre-Colonial Politics of the Three Major Ethnic Groups of Kogi State

Gender Role	Public decision-making, leadership, and law-making		
	Igala	Ebira	Okun
Essentially, the male gender role	268(100%)	266(100%)	256(100%)
Essentially, the female gender role	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0)
Total	268(100%)	266(100%)	256(100%)

Source: Survey Data, 2021

Table 1 shows that 268 (100%) Igala respondents, 266 (100%) Ebira respondents, and 256 (100%) Okun respondents indicate that decision-making for the public, leadership in the public sphere, and law-making for the public were essentially male roles across the three ethnic groups in the pre-colonial era. Archival records (in Clifford 1936:393-435 and Weise 2013:161-167) and other qualitative data corroborate this finding. The qualitative data show that political roles were essentially male and that women held secondary roles in the pre-colonial period. IDI and FGD data reveal that women participated both directly and indirectly in public decision-making. All women took advisory roles. In decision-making in either the household or the public sphere, all wives were advisers to their husbands. The adviser roles involved indirect participation in decision-making for communities and societies. IDI and FGD, including archival data, reveal that women held both direct and indirect roles in decision-making within communities and societies. The three qualitative data reveal that the mouthpiece of god was a unisex role in the pre-colonial government and a call to service from the gods. Older women, medicine women, influential businesswomen, women with spiritual wisdom, traditional birth attendants, marriage counsellors, and so on, participated alongside men in decision-making for the three societies. Such women commanded, guided, ruled, and gave verdicts, especially in marital issues. Female leadership titles among the Igala include iye-oja or iyewa (community or group mother) and Atama-ebo (the mouthpiece of the gods), which can be either male or female. Leadership titles were spiritually and/or genealogically based. Elections to the many leadership offices were conducted by kingmakers, with guidance from the gods and consideration of lineage and intelligence. The leadership positions and roles were based on ascription and intellect.

A discussant among Igala older women ages 61-75 FGD in Adumu, Ugwuoda Ward, Idah LGA of Kogi State, Nigeria (2021) states:

Women diviners, in particular, were given titles or offices, such as advisers to the Ata (king) and to society at large. Such women held titles such as counsellors, judges, fortune-tellers and revealers(FGD 2021).

Archival records reveal the following:

Igala females played significant roles in shaping the contours of Igala royal and political fortunes. The Igala reckon their very first Igala Attah of the Jukun dynasty as a woman named Ebulejonu. She (Ebulejonu) died childless, leading to the succession and transfer of

political sovereignty to her brother, Agenapoje. Igala women have featured prominently in the legends and historical literature in their active agencies as cultural mediators and political brokers. The journals of the 1832-34, 1841, and 1854-57 Niger expeditions reference an Igala royal woman of great influence and as gatekeeper to the Attah. Within the Igala political and royal arenas, certain women distinguished themselves as overtly influential. This was the case of Princess Okwina Amocheje, daughter of the Attah Ameh Ochreje. Omoka, a royal princess in Ogugu, is also referenced as very powerful. Inikpi, the daughter of Attah Ayegba Idoko, is the legend who sacrificed her life to save her father's kingdom. Oma-Odoko, another legend, sacrificed the Igala kingdom. There are other instances of Igala women who have risen to political prominence within the historical consciousness. In Egume, Adebun, a female contemporary and acquaintance of Queen Ebulejonu, was the first Onu of Egume. The Onu of Egume is reckoned as the most important district governor of the Attah (Weise, 2013:162, 168).

While Igala had a centralised system of government with the Ata (father) title as the king or father ruling over the Igala Kingdom and also presiding over some neighbouring ethnic groups, public leadership among the Ebira and Okun was by clan. IDI informant (an older woman aged 80) in Osisi, Upogoro Ward, Okene LGA (2021), said that:

Leadership was by clan. The most senior male in the clan was the head of the clan, and the heads of each household that made up the clan were his council of chiefs. In cases where there were females older than the clan head, those older females indirectly formed part of the councils of chiefs, as the clan head also consulted the older women before making a decision.

Another IDI with an Okun aged citizen (an Okun older managed 76) in Ijalu, Odo-Egwe Ward, Yagba-West LGA, Kogi State, Nigeria(2021)stated that:

In the pre-colonial Okun society, as passed down to us by our parents, society was made up of clans, and clans were made up of households. The husband/father headed each household. At the clan level, the most senior male was the head of the clan. All the clan heads were of equal status. There was no central society authority.

Table 2: Gender Roles in the Colonial Politics of the Three Major Ethnic Groups of Kogi State

Gender Role	Public decision-making, leadership and law-making		
	Igala	Ebira	Okun
Malestream	268(100%)	266(100%)	256(100%)
Female dominated	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0)
Total	268(100%)	266(100%)	256(100%)

Source: Survey Data, 2021

Table 2 shows the changing gender in political activities during colonialism. 268 (100%) Igala respondents, 266 (100%) Ebira respondents, and 256 (100%) Okun respondents indicated that political activities in their respective communities and societies became male-dominated during colonialism. This implies that women's roles in collective decision-making, leadership, and lawmaking within communities and societies went extinct. The gendered

dynamics in Igala, Ebira, and Okun government and politics gradually faded in favour of male-dominated government and politics during the colonial period. The qualitative data corroborate the finding. The qualitative findings reveal that the whites realised that they needed to add more tactics to the use of force and formal education to achieve success in imperialism (subject natives to render labour services to colonialists). The relegation of women to the background in government and politics is one key method that enabled the colonialists' divide-and-rule. An IDI Informant (an older woman of about 86years old) in Ogwagwa, Otu Ward, Kabba-bunu LGA, Kogi State (2021) recounts that:

With the introduction of modern politics, only men entered it; no woman thought of doing so. The men were in charge; if they got to find out their women like/wish to be in politics, such women were regarded as prostitutes, and they were called negative names. This is because even in traditional times, women were honoured and invited to take royal titles in society. Women do not aspire to leadership in society.

Table 3: Gender Roles in the Post-Colonial Politics of the Three Ethnic Groups

Gender	Political Roles		
	Igala	Ebira	Okun
Male gender role	196(73.1%)	175(65.8%)	146(57.0%)
Both gender roles	72(26.9%)	91(34.2%)	110(43.0%)
Total	268(100%)	266(100%)	256(100%)

Source: Survey Data, 2021

Table 3 shows that 72 (26.9%) Igala respondents, 91 (34.2%) Ebira respondents, and 110 (43.0%) Okun respondents indicate that political participation is both gendered and role-based in the post-colonial period. This result indicates a gradual realisation of the importance of political inclusion. Tables 4, 5 and 6 present documentary data (official statistics) on the gender representations in Kogi State elective, appointive and executive positions from 1999 to 2023.

Table 4: Comparison of Gender and Ethnic Representation in the Kogi State Elective positions from 1999-2023

Elective positions	1999-2003						2003-2007						2007-2011						2011-2015						2015-2019						2019-2023							
	Igala		Ebira		Okun		Igala		Ebira		Okun		Igala		Ebira		Okun		Igala		Ebira		Okun		Igala		Ebira		Okun		Igala		Ebira		Okun			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F				
Governor	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
Deputy Governor	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0		
House of Assembly																		24	1							10	0	5	0	7	0	10	0	5	0	7	0	
LGA Chairperson	8	0	4	0	6	0	8	0	4	0	6	0	8	0	4	0	6	0	8	0	4	0	6	0	8	0	4	0	6	0	8	0	4	0	6	0		
Councilors																																	74	11	34	12	59	14

Source: Kogi State Ministry of Information, Lokoja, 2021, 2023

Table 4 shows a comparison of gender representation in Kogi State Elective positions from 1999 to 2023; the statistics reveal that males have occupied the offices of the Governor, Deputy Governor, and LGA chairpersons. Only the 2011-2015 House of Assembly had one woman among 25 members. From 2019 to 2023, there were 37 female Councillors and 202 male Councillors. In a nutshell, female gender political representation in elective positions has been relatively marginal.

Table 5: Comparison of Gender Representation in the Kogi State Executive Positions from 1999-2023

Executive Positions	1999-2003		2003-2007		2007-2011		2011-2015		2015-2019		2019-2023	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Heads of Government	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	2	27	4
Parastatals	A		A		A		A		4			

Source: Kogi State Ministry of Information, Lokoja, 2021, 2023

Table 5 compares the gender representation among heads of government parastatals in Kogi State. The table shows 2 female and 14 male heads of government parastatals in the 2015-2019 tenure, and 4 female and 27 male heads of government parastatals in the 2019-2023 tenure. Statistics on the preceding tenures are not available.

Table 6: Comparison of Gender Representation in the Kogi State Appointive positions from 1999-2023

Appointed positions	1999-2003		2003-2007		2007-2011		2011-2015		2015-2019		2019-2023	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Commissioners	9	5	13	2	14	1	13	2	16	1		
Permanent Secretaries							21	3				
Special Advisers											46	4
Senior Special Assistants												
Secretary to the State Government	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
Heads of service	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
Deputy heads of service												

Source: Kogi State Ministry of Information, Lokoja, 2021, 2023

Table 6 presents gender representation in Kogi State appointed positions from 1999 to 2023. The table shows that the Offices of the Secretary to the State Government and heads of service from 1999 to 2023 have been occupied by males. Statistics available show three (3) female and twenty-one (21) male permanent secretaries during the 2011-2015 tenure, and four (4) female and forty-six (46) male special advisers during the 2019-2023 tenure. The statistical records are evidence of a gradual attempt at the reintroduction of political inclusion in Kogi State Government and Politics today.

Qualitative data on gender roles in the post-colonial politics of the three ethnic groups corroborate the quantitative data. In this late post-colonial period, few women in the study location aspire to leadership positions, unlike in pre-colonial times, when women were honoured with leadership roles. A discussant among the Igala male (ages 18-40) FGD among Justice and Progressive Contribution Men Group of Ofabo Enagbede in Enjema I Ward, Ankpa LGA of Kogi State, Nigeria, mentioned the following:

In 2015, Hajia Habeeba contested the House of Representatives seat, and Hajia Haleema contested the governorship seat. In 2019, Hajia Habeeba again aspired for the House of Representatives.

An in-depth interviewee (an Ebira older man aged 82) in Obuburu, Idanuhua Ward, Adavi LGA, states that: *As for politics, it was male-dominated during the colonial era, but women have started to participate.*

This implies that the system of government and politics, even though it is largely mainstream, is quite unlike the closed-to-be-total mainstream colonial government.

Table 7: Ethnic Group, Gender of Respondents and their Responses on Functional Policies in Colonial and

Post-Colonial Nigeria

Ethnic Group of Respondents	Gender of Respondents	Some Policies in Colonial and Post-Colonial Nigeria							
		British Textile Policies in Colonial Nigeria		Revised National Policy on Food and Nutrition in Nigeria, 2016		The Green Alternative Agricultural Sector Roadmap (2016-2020)		Whistle Blowing 2016	
		Functional	Dysfunctional	Functional	Dysfunctional	Functional	Dysfunctional	Functional	Dysfunctional
Igala	Male	0(0.0%)	134(17%)	0(0.0%)	134(17%)	0(0.0%)	134(17%)	0(0.0%)	134(17%)
	Female	0(0.0%)	134(17%)	0(0.0%)	134(17%)	0(0.0%)	134(17%)	0(0.0%)	134(17%)
Ebira	Male	0(0.0%)	132(16.7%)	0(0.0%)	132(16.7%)	0(0.0)	132(16.7%)	0(0.0%)	132(16.7%)
	Female	0(0.0%)	134(17%)	0(0.0%)	134(17%)	0(0.0%)	134(17%)	0(0.0%)	134(17%)
Okun	Male	0(0.0%)	122(15.3)	0(0.0%)	122(15.3)	0(0.0%)	122(15.3)	0(0.0%)	122(15.3)
	Female	0(0.0%)	134(17%)	0(0.0%)	134(17%)	0(0.0%)	134(17%)	0(0.0%)	134(17%)
Total		0(0.0%)	790(100%)	0(0.0%)	790(100%)	0(0.0%)	790(100%)	0(0.0%)	790(100%)

Source: Survey Data, 2021

Table 7 presents some policies in the mainstream government and politics. This is to measure the effectiveness of mainstream government and politics. Table 7 shows that 790 (100%) of the respondents indicated that the policies are dysfunctional. This implies that the decision made for the societies by the mainstream government caused difficulties. It produces low or poor productivity, underemployment, poverty, problem family units, religious psychosis,

injustice, insecurity, political bigotry and a poor health care system. Government is the mechanism for determining and enforcing policy. A failed or failing government determines and enforces dysfunctional policies, whereas a successful government determines and enforces functional policies.

The quantitative findings corroborate the qualitative findings, which show that policies in the mainstream government and politics negatively affected the societies under study. This is justified by discussants and interviewees raising the issues of a poor standard of living among many households, the loss of traditional skills and knowledge, unproductive modern skills, and a poor economy as a byproduct of the policies. The spiritual and intellectual guidance in decision-making, policy-making, implementation, law-making, and enforcement, which may have come from women, is trampled upon and cut out. Furthermore, the policies displaced many traditional skills and knowledge. The new, modern skills and knowledge acquired are indirectly draining wealth from the economies of the Igala, Epira, and Okun. Modern skills and knowledge render many men and women unproductive—this has led to poverty for many of them, rather than improving their economic status.

An FGD discussant among male residents (ages 61-75) of the road by Ali's Compound in Okengwe, Obehira/Eba Ward, Okene LGA, says that:

The good sides of changing gender in political activities are deceptive. The policies establish modern skills among our men and women that do not yield rest except stress and stress-related diseases”.

An in-depth interviewee (an Okun older woman aged 82) stated that:

Changing gender in political activities, especially in policymaking, made mainstream government and politics seem to make life easier. However, a critical view will reveal that it is a mechanism of exploitation by the introducers. Compared with the pre-colonial time, the Okun people are not self-reliant. The standard of living generally declined during the era of changing gender roles. Many Okun men and women face economic difficulties. Many modern jobs available today are unreliable and burdensome.

4. Discussion of Findings

The study focuses on analysing the consequences of changing gender for political inclusion and identifying the beneficiaries and victims of the harm. Therefore, the study examines policies made during the era of changing gender roles in political inclusion, relative to the achievement of social order. It also identifies the beneficiary of the changing gender in political inclusion. The study reveals that the policies are highly dysfunctional in the Nigerian society. It also reveals that the policies are mechanisms used by manufacturers of sophisticated foreign products to drain wealth from the three societies. The findings corroborated those of similar previous studies: Abdul, Pius-Ajibade and Ibrahim (2025), NAP (2021), Ya'u, Zaggi and Mohammed (2026), Mohammed, Mohammed and Zom (2019), Olawoye et al. (2004). Liberal feminist theory best explains the findings. Changing gender in political inclusion is not designed to benefit the natives. Policies established and enacted during the male-dominated government and politics lock the majority of native men and women in discomfort, poverty, stress, injustice, constraint, dependence, insecurity, hunger, debt, etc. Modification of the political system is necessary through the revival of women's role in politics to enhance actionable, effective policies that benefit the natives.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study concludes that policies established and enacted during the male-dominated government and politics are highly dysfunctional. The policies enhance the labour economy and therefore drain wealth away from the Igala, Ebira, and Okun economies, rather than improving them. A failed or failing government determines and enforces dysfunctional policies. Thus, the male-dominated government in Nigeria, and Kogi State in particular, is a failing government. There is every need for political system modification to achieve a high revival of political inclusion. To achieve this, the following recommendations are made:

- i. The policies do not produce functional institutional (economic, family, religious, legal, military, political and health) education. This in turn produces low or poor productivity, underemployment, poverty, problem family units, religious psychosis, injustice, insecurity, political bigotry and a poor health care system in the societies. As such, there should be a revival of the element of pre-colonial government and politics where women's voices were valued in collective decision-making. Kogi State government through the media corporation should bring the enlightenment programmes, and through the state education board should review the school curriculum to accommodate women as adviser to their men, women who have out grown gestation and lactation (older women) or have medical knowledge or have spiritual knowledge or have-and-render obstetrical services or render marriage counselling or influential (rich business women) etc. should participate directly in decision making, in interpretation and application of laws, and in enforcement and implementation of laws; policies; and court decisions.
- ii. The policies enhance the labour economy and therefore drain wealth away. To curb this, the Government of Kogi State should establish and implement a quality production policy, a consumption of local products policy, and an education policy that incorporates school curricula with content that teaches improved/modernised traditional practical education and technical skills, and encourages vocations, good morals, unity, and good governance.

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