A CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK TO ASSURE GENDER PARITY IN NIGERIAN POLITICS: UGANDA IN PERSPECTIVE*

Abstract
Nigerian women have played prominent roles in history like Queen Amina of Zaria, Hajia Sawabo Gambo, Margaret Ekpo, and Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti. However, gender parity in post-independence politics has been a goal yet to be achieved due to factors with roots in cultural, traditional and religious discrimination. This has hampered full women participation & representation in Nigerian politics. Uganda has made better progress, in contrast to the Nigerian experience. Nigeria is ranked 33 in the female gender inequality index; Uganda is number 5 in the list. The objective of the research was to identify factors that made Uganda better. Trends in other jurisdictions were also analyzed. The doctrinal approach as well as interview was utilized. The finding was that 1995 Ugandan Constitution provided gender quota assuring gender equality, positive government policies and the political will and commitment demonstrated by government. Recommendations made include that the Nigerian Constitution should be amended to provide a quota for gender representation by political parties, elective positions and appointive positions in Nigeria, that Cultural and religious barriers to women participation in politics should be addressed by mass enlightenment to change public bias, engagement with traditional and religious leaders and enlisting civil society groups in the discourse.

Keywords: Gender Quota, Political Participation, Elections, Parliamentary Representation

1. Introduction
At Independence while the continent celebrated, women were quietly bracing themselves for the second independence- the struggle for a woman’s space in political life of postcolonial Africa. Most independence struggles always highlighted men at the forefront at the expense of women’s contributions. Women achievements were not as revered as those of the men who led militaristic struggles. Times are now changing, albeit slowly. Africa has had seven (7) female presidents. Sahle –Work Zewde is currently the latest: appointed female president of Ethiopia in 2018. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim of Mauritius became president on 5th June, 2015. She is the third female president of Mauritius in history, which has the highest record of female heads of state on the continent. However, Ellen Sirleaf Johnson, was the first elected female head of state of Liberia on the continent in 2006. In Nigeria, progress has been slow. In Africa, Ethiopia & Rwanda are blazing the trail in pushing women to prominence politically. This was acknowledged by the African Union Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat who stated that “the momentum to recognise men and women as equal in politics is vital as we work towards the Africa we want.” The Global Gender Gap Index for Nigeria as of 2011 was 120 with a gender gap index of 0.6011, which declined to 133 with a gender gap index of 0.6210. For Uganda, it was 29 with index of

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2 M. Kiruga, Which countries in Africa are headed by female presidents? https://www.quora.com accessed 7 March 2019. Everyone else has either been appointed as an interim president (Central African Republic, South Africa or nominated as in Mauritius or ascended constitutionally (such as after the death of the president as happened in Malawi & Gabon)) ibid
4 ibid
0.7220 in 2011, and by 2018 it rose to 43 with gender gap is 0.679. This paper aims to highlight constraints to Nigerian women backwardness in the Nigerian political sphere, and identify the factors that have shaped the Ugandan template to enable women make better progress in women participation and representation in politics.

2. Conceptual Background

The etymology of commitment to gender equality in the United Nations can be traced to the UN Charter and Universal Declaration on Human Rights 1948 which states that rights and freedoms will not be limited by person’s gender and establishes that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. UN created the Division for the Advancement of women (DAW) in 1946 to champion women’s empowerment and gender equality in order to ensure that women that constituted half of the world’s population enjoy equal rights as well as live in dignity as equal citizen everywhere. The AU member states are signatories to the AU General Assembly landmark Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women which was adopted in 1979. The AU commitment to gender equality has its origin in the African Charter on Human and Peoples Right. It is momentous to state here that gender inequality and discrimination thrive among various strata in Nigeria. The language of the 1999 Constitution is unacceptable being gender insensitive because the male pronoun ‘He’ appears in the Constitution about 235 times. It is advocated that a replacement of the pronoun ‘he’ with ‘a person’ or ‘He and She.’ Also, the provision of Section 29 (4) (b) of the Constitution is seen by anti-child marriage advocates as being inequitable for the girl child/women.

Images of men and women are conveyed by myths and fairy tales as well as pictures and religious texts. These images may be the source of attitudes and beliefs and they may reflect and maintain stereotypes. Gender is a system of power relations that affects individuals, relationships and society. It can also be said to mean a woman or man in a specific place and time. It changes from time to time and varies from culture to culture. It subsists from country to country. Gender inequality can be the disadvantageous treatment of an individual or group of individuals based on gender. Sexual harassment is a form of illegal gender discrimination. It is treating of an individual differently based upon his/her gender in academic or extracurricular activities, class assignments given in classroom, class enrolment, physical education, grading and/or athletics. Discrimination against women is defined as ‘any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. In this sense, it is submitted that women are discriminated against in politics in Nigeria.

While Nigeria is ranked 33 in the female gender inequality index, Uganda is number 5 in the list. From independence in 1960 to 1999 only about 3.1% of women were elected into political office and 5% into

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7African Union Gender Policy. 2009.
8As at 2017,with an index of 0.64, Nigeria ranked 122 on the world global gender gap index see World Data Atlas https://knoema.com/atlas/topics/World-Rankings/World-Rankings/Global-gender-gap-index?baseRegion=NG
9See Editorial, Nigeria Law Legalised Gender Discrimination. Online
12Crawford(n.11)
14Langston University, Gender Discrimination Defined.
15The United Nations Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (now referred to as Convention or CEDAW), 1979, article 1.
16(n.5 &6)
appointive position respectively. With the re-introduction of democracy in 1999, there has been a drastic increase in women political participation in both elective and appointive capacities. However, we submit that in spite of this seeming increase, women are still highly marginalized considering the disparity in the proportion of men to women in politics and decision making positions.

During the military dictatorship of General Ibrahim Babangida, the first woman Vice-Chancellor was appointed in the person of Professor Grace Alele Williams as first female vice chancellor of the University of Benin, a federal institution. Other distinguished women academics have followed suit. The 2nd and particularly the 3rd Republic witnessed further progress with respect to women participation in politics and decision making. Few women emerged as councillors. Worthy of note is Late Chief (Mrs.) Titilayo Ajanaku, as Chairperson of Abeokuta Local Government Council in Ogun State, two female Deputy Governors, Alhaja Sinatu Ojikutu and Mrs. Cecilia Ekpenyong in Lagos and Cross River State, respectively. Furthermore, only one woman was elected to the Senate and very few others to the House of Representatives. It is worthy of note that before 1999, the percentage of women in the Federal Executive council never exceeded 3.1%. The position improved significantly with the inauguration of President Olusegun Obasanjo on May 29th 1999 as President. Significant progress was made on women empowerment in terms of political appointments. He appointed four (4) females out of the twenty nine(29) senior ministers representing 13.7% and 3 out of the eighteen(18) junior ministers representing 16.6%. Furthermore, he appointed two (2) women advisers and two(2) senior special assistants; then six (6) special assistants and one(1) special assistant to the vice president as well as eight (8) permanent secretaries. During this time, women were also appointed as commissioners and therefore members of the executive councils in all the states. It provided a boost to the rising calls for women representation at all levels.

Parliamentary Representation
Nigeria runs a bi-cameral legislature; The Senate known as the upper house(Red Chamber) and the House of Representatives known as the Lower House (Green Chamber). It is worthy of note that before 1999, the proportion of seats occupied by women in the national parliament never exceeded 3.1%. In 1999, out of the total seat of 469 (Senate and House of Representatives), there were only fifteen (15) women representing 3.19%; this increased to twenty five(25) in 2003 representing 5.33%. There was a further increase in 2007 to thirty four(34) representing 7.24% and a slight decline in 2011 to 33 representing 7.03%. By 2007, significant breakthrough was recorded with the election of Hon Patricia Etteh as 1st female speaker of the House of Representatives, from 6 June 2007 until 30 October 2007, though short-lived. However, between 2003 and 2007, 4 to 6 women were elected as deputy governors. In spite of these improvements, the general representation of women in politics and decision making in Nigeria is still a far cry from the global benchmark of 35% affirmative action.

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17 Notably, Prof Jaiyesola Akande, Vice-Chancellor Lagos State University; Late Prof (Mrs) Aize Obayan of Covenant University (first Vice-chancellor of a private university); Prof Mrs F. Agbebaku, Acting vice chancellor, Ambrose Alli University; Ekpoma, Prof Laraba of the University of Abuja, Prof … appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University of Benin in October 2019 (see F. Igbeokoyi, UNIBEN VC Restate Commitment to Academic Best Practices, (2019) Daily Independent Online a accessed on 4 December, 2019. Nigeria has had about sixteen (16) female vice-chancellors.
19 ibid
20 Luca,(n.7) p29
22 Luca,(n.7) p29
The 8th National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was inaugurated on June 9th 2015 to run till June 2019.\(^{25}\) It is a regrettable fact that Nigeria has been identified as the country with the lowest number of women in their national parliament in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Out of a total of 438 members of the bi-cameral national parliament, there are only thirty (30) women: seven senators and twenty three (23) members of the House of Representatives.\(^{26}\)Following the National Assembly general elections held on February 23rd 2019,\(^{27}\) only six females were elected into the 109 member upper house i.e. the Senate(5.45%) otherwise known as the Red Chamber. 11 females made it to the 360 member House of Representatives(3.65)\(^{28}\).

No wonder, Bill Gates declared that Nigeria and India were the worst countries on the global gender inequality index.\(^{29}\) Further, this may hamper the drive to improving human capital development and achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals(SDG).\(^{30}\) Guinea has the highest level of female representation at parliament with 50 percent female representation followed by Guinea Bissau with 40 percent. Nigeria has the lowest female representation in the sub-region. Senator Oduah called for a collective effort to ensure at least 30 percent female representation in all levels of government in West Africa.\(^{31}\) No wonder, Bill Gates declared that Nigeria and India were the worst countries on the global gender inequality index. Further, this may hamper the drive to improving human capital development and achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal(SDG).\(^{32}\)

### 3. Women Parliamentary Representation In Other Jurisdictions

The International Parliamentary Union (IPU) has been tracking women’s participation in national parliaments for decades, monitoring progress, setbacks and trends. The 2019 report which is based on fifty countries that held elections in 2018 shows that the global share of women in parliament continues to rise, albeit slowly. In 2008, 18.3 per cent of MPs were women compared to 11.3 per cent in 1995, a commendable increase.\(^{33}\) According to the IPU’s yearly analysis, the share of women in national parliaments increased by nearly one percentage point last year, from 23.4 per cent in 2017 to 24.3 per cent in 2018. This 0.9 percentage point increase confirms the continuing rise of women in parliament, at a slightly faster rate of change compared to previous years. This is encouraging but each country report has to be taken on its own value. IPU President and Mexican MP, Gabriela Cuevas Barron said

> More women in parliament mean better, stronger and more representative democracies that work for all the people. The one per cent increase we saw in 2018 represents a small improvement on women's parliamentary representation. This means we are still a long way to achieving global gender parity. For that reason, we urge for greater political will in adopting well-designed quotas and electoral systems that eliminate any legal barrier that might be hindering the opportunities for women to enter parliament.\(^{34}\)

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\(^{28}\)Olumide&Ors(n.16) The Peoples Democratic Party has four female senators and three female members in the House, while the All Progressives Congress has two in the House and six in the Senate.  
\(^{30}\)(n.20)  
\(^{31}\)Senator Oduah, President of the ECOWAS Female Parliamentarians Association (ECOFEPA) during their summit in Abuja in July 2018.  
\(^{32}\)(n.20)  
\(^{34}\)(n.24)
Regional Trends

The IPU monitors progress of women representation in Parliaments. The 2018 report based on 50 countries that held election in 2018 showed that proportion of women in parliament continued to rise.\(36\) It was 18.3% in 2008 and rose to 23.3% in 2017 to 24.3% in 2018.\(37\) The Americas continued to lead all regions in terms of the average share of women in parliament (30.6 per cent) and it is the first region to surpass the threshold of 30 per cent. The biggest growth seen was in Antigua-and-Barbuda’s upper chamber (+19.6 points) partly explained by the small size of parliament. In Asia, women won 22.7 per cent of the seats in 2018 elections increasing the overall share of women in parliament to 19.6 per cent, but still below the global average. The most notable progress occurred in Bhutan’s lower chamber (+ 8.5 points) where seven out of the ten women standing were elected. Countries in Europe made incremental progress in 2018 with the share of women in parliament rising to 28.5 per cent overall. One of the most impressive gains in women’s representation occurred in Latvia which jumped from 19 per cent to 31 per cent (+ 12 points). Despite a decrease in the number of women candidates in Latvia, more women were elected mainly due to being placed higher on party lists. Sub-Saharan African parliaments witnessed relatively modest progress in 2018, with a regional average share of women parliamentarians at 23.7 per cent. Djibouti saw the most dramatic gains regionally and globally, among lower and single chambers, as the share of women in parliament rose from 10.8 per cent to 26.2 per cent (+ 15.4 points). In 2017, a self-assessment exercise on gender sensitivity was carried out in partnership with the IPU, leading to a new electoral law in early 2018 requiring that at least 25 per cent of parliamentary seats be held by women. Rwanda also held elections in 2018. Despite a decrease in the proportion of women, the country has maintained its top position in the global ranking, held since 2003, with 61.3 per cent of women parliamentarians. The Middle East and North Africa region experienced limited progress in women’s representation in 2018 with an overall share of 18.1 per cent of female parliamentarians, the lowest regional average. However, Bahrain made history with its first woman speaker and the third ever in the region, and an increase of 7.5 percentage points of women elected to its lower house. The IPU 2018 report noted that well–designed quotas lead to significant increases in the women representation in Parliament. Nigeria does not have any such quota in place unlike Uganda.

4. Challenges To Nigerian Women Participation In Politics

Women face daunting challenges in the struggle to be relevant in politics in Nigeria. These include the following:

Nature of Politics

The nature of political participation does not encourage women as co-equal participants. Politics in Nigeria is highly restrictive due to overwhelming influence of political ‘godfatherism’. The nature of political activities is also a contributory factor. Most political meetings are held very late at night and culturally women may find it daunting to attend given cultural inhibitions. Tied to these are often violence, thuggery, high wired and volatile display of power struggles that often dominates struggle for power. So, inevitably women cannot succeed at nominations for elective positions within political parties. Consequently, they are left to struggle for political patronage which again political influences of godfathers hold great sway. Of great importance are also religious and cultural inhibitions. Due to the influence of religion particularly Islamic religion in the core North, it appears to be a restrictive factor to women openly participating in political activism. Culturally, in southern Nigeria, women are not often encouraged to compete shoulder-to shoulder with men for elective positions. Rather, they are preferred for political appointment. It may not be easy for those who are married to do the rounds of electioneering from place to place which exerts great energy and tasks the home. Added to this is huge financial outlay required to fund publicity, political agents, political rallies etc. Ngara states that politics attracts high


\(36\)(n.26)

\(37\)(n.26)
costs and when the stakes are high, a huge war chest is indispensable. No wonder, the overweening influence of
godfathers. He states further that negative perception of politics by women themselves is particularly unhelpful
to their cause.38

Election Violence
Election violence is a sore point in politics on the African continent. This keeps away competent women who
would otherwise have thrown their hats into the ring. The 2019 Governorship election in Kogi State, Nigeria led
to burning alive of Salome Abuh, woman leader of the main opposition party, Peoples Democratic Party(PDP)
by suspected thugs loyal to the ruling All Progressives Congress( APC).39 The same election saw physical
harassment of Natasha Apkoti, female governorship candidate of the Social Democratic Candidate (SDP) in
the same State election. 40 In 2018, the IPU published a report in conjunction with the Parliamentary Assembly of
the Council of Europe.41 The study confirmed the high prevalence of sexism in European parliaments with 85 per
cent of women MPs interviewed saying they had experienced some form of gender-based violence. 

4. Poor Educational Attainment
Ngara submits that a low level of educational attainment was part of the reasons militating against women
advancement in the political space and governance.43 However, the authors disagree. Whilst this may have been a
factor in the past, it is no longer the case today in Nigeria. Women in Nigeria are found at the commanding
heights of the Nigerian economy, private sector and public sector. Nigerian women are able to hold their own
educationally in any academic attainment today. Prof Grace Alele-Williams was the first woman to attain a
doctorate degree and made a professor of Mathematics by the University of Lagos in 1976.44 Others have
followed suit. It must be stated however that the number is too low when compared against total number of
institutions in Nigeria, such that only sixteen (16) have so far been appointed as vice-chancellors.45 Total number
of universities is 174-43 federal, 52 State, 79 private. It is important to note that females account for about 40%
of the total student admission with 30% at doctoral level.46 However, at managerial level of these institutions,
that is Governing Council members, University Management, Posts of Deans/Directors and Professors, women
constitute between 16-25%. These are startling low figures, a trend termed ‘the masculinization of the academic’

The period of military rule contributed significantly in reducing what little gains were made during colonial and
pre-military era in the nation. The command structure of the armed forces and the paucity of women among the
high ranks in that era was a fait accompli in reducing access to political power by appointment. Thus, the period
from 1966 did not foster women participation in politics and very little was heard of women in politics and

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38 Ngara (n.15)
42 IPU (n 26.
43 Ngara,(n.15)
47 (n37)
decision making. It can safely be concluded that the military take-over of government in 1966 did little to expand political space for women as military appointments were restricted to top military brass which did not have women significantly. At federal level, few women were entrusted with governance and the few appointments were restricted to state levels.

Factors That Have Aided Rising Profile of Women in Nigeria

Ngara argues that in spite of these challenges, the rising number of educated women and professionals, the growth and increased political activism, increased advocacy for women’s rights by women groups, the increasing recognition of the role of women in governance and implementation of affirmative action by successive government since the return to democracy and the outstanding achievements of women in politics and administrative positions has not only improved the visibility and pedigree of women in governance but has also created bright prospects for a more active role for women in politics and decision making in Nigeria. Also, several educational policies have been adopted by governments since the 1980’s to reduce gender disparity in Nigeria. They include:

- Blueprint on Women’s Education (1986)
- The Strategy for Acceleration of Girls Education (2003) and the National Gender Policy 2006

5. Women Participation In Politics In Uganda

In Uganda, women’s political leadership has come a long way. In the past Uganda has had a female vice president and currently has the first ever-female speaker: Ms Rebecca Kadaga presiding over parliament. This is seen as significant progress though it has come 50 years after independence. This speaks volumes of the struggle of women to be heard and seen in the political arena. One of the main push that has aided the rise in the number of women in parliament in Uganda are statutory provisions. Primarily, is the provisions in Uganda 1995 Constitution as amended. This has provided a fitting framework to expressly advance the cause for improved women representation. Of paramount importance are Articles VI & XV. They are located in the section titled ‘National Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy’ which are key. Article VI: Gender balance and fair representation of Marginalised Groups ‘The State shall ensure gender balance and fair representation of marginalised groups on all constitutional and other bodies’. Article XV: Recognition of the Role of Women in Society ‘The State shall recognise the significant role that women play in the society’. The 1999 Nigerian constitution does not contain any such provisions. There was a Bill before the Eighth National Assembly to fix quotas for appointive positions but it was not successful. Furthermore, Article 78(1) of the Constitution prescribes composition of the Parliament thus (1) Parliament shall consist of …..A. Members directly elected to represent constituents.B. One woman representative for every district.C. Such numbers of representatives of the army, youths, workers, persons with disabilities & other groups as Parliament may determine.

Sub-section 2 states that upon expiration of ten years after commencement of the Constitution, then every five years subsequently, Parliament can review representation of paragraphs (B) & (C) in order to retain, increase or abolish. Sub-section 3 stated that only representation under (A) & (B) would be by universal adult suffrage and by secret ballot. Of significant note is the provision for women representation at local councils by virtue of the Local Governments Act of 1997 which provided for one third representation of women at all levels of local Government including representation by the youth and elderly. The Local Government (Amendment) Act, 2010

49 Ngara (n.15)
50 https://en.m.wikipedia.or.wiki.Specioza Naigaga Wandira Kazibwe, a surgeon & politician was Vice-president of Uganda from 1994-2003. She was the first woman in Africa to hold the position of vice-president of a sovereign nation, accessed 10 March 2019.
amends section 10 of the Principal Act by providing that the chairperson of district women council and chairperson of sub-county women council shall be ex-officio members of the councils.51

### Table 2
*Composition of The Tenth Parliament of Uganda As At 12th April 2018*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Nos of MPs</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>65.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Composition of 10th Parliament-https://www.parliament.go.ug as of 12 April 2018*

As is evident from Table 2, out of a total membership of 452, 157 are females which is 34.7% of total membership.52 In contrast, females are only 6.4% in the Nigerian Parliament. This situation must not remain same. Even so, a critical analysis of the Ugandan Parliamentary numbers by categories of representation would reveal that the number of female representation is actually as a result of high number of women district representatives, not women who stood and won elections directly in constituencies. See the breakdown in Table 4 below. Of significant mention also is the provision for women representation at local councils by virtue of the Local Governments Act of 1997 which provided for one third representation of women at all levels of local Government including representation by the youth and elderly. The Local Government (Amendment) Act, 2010 amends section 10 of the Principal Act by providing that the chairperson of district women council and chairperson of sub-county women council shall be ex-officio members of the councils.53 Uganda has 127 districts54. This is very significant because Table 3 shows the actual number of women directly elected is abysmal (just 19) compared to the male figure which is 271. It is the constitutional provisions for women representation at other categories that increased substantially the number of women in the Parliament. Thus, it is seen that constitutional and statutory provisions that fix quota for representation for gender is a very significant push in ensuring increased participation of women at all levels of the Ugandan political process. The women are not just left to contend for political posts with men within the political parties.

### Table 3
*Breakdown of Male/Female Representation by Categories In Ugandan 10th Parliament*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Number of Male Members</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number of Female Members</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Directly Elected By Constituents</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>UPDF</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Workers Representation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

51 Paragraph 10(paragraph g. see https://uli.or/ug/legal
53(n,42)
In a study by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) it was stated that the percentage of women in Ugandan public service was 33%. However, the vast majority were at the lower rungs, whilst at senior management level it is 22%; and 16% at middle management. It also noted that affirmative action had greatly contributed to increasing women representation as seen thus:

1. Gender equality was provided for in the Constitution, Local Government laws and other statutes.
2. Women quota in Parliament and local councils had increased.
3. The Gender Inequality Index for Uganda is 116 out of 146 countries, a better situation compared to Nigeria.
4. Celebration of Women Day serves as a major boost to advance the cause of gender mainstreaming in politics and public service.
5. The Socialist party of America organized a Women’s day on February 28, 1909, in New York, and in 1910 International Socialist Women Conference suggested a women day be held annually. The first occurred in 1911.
6. It is a day that puts the spotlight on women in the nations of the world, on women as victims, activists and heroes of women’s fight for equal treatment and freedom from discrimination and harmful cultural practices. Uganda declared the 8th of March which is internationally recognised as women’s day as a public holiday.
7. The Privat sector in Uganda is also involved in actively promoting the training and equipping of women with skills they require for advancement in careers for the private sector. Among the initiatives is the Federation of Uganda Employers programme for women titled ‘Female Future Uganda’. The objectives include:
   a. To promote women in top decision –making positions in the corporate world.
   b. To enhance the capacity of young women to take up management positions.
   c. To provide a forum for women managers and women on boards to interact and exchange ideas.
   d. To increase the number of women leaders and women board members in all sectors.

Part of the benefits touted for organizations that key into the program is ensuring full utilization of gender to enhance productivity and that a sizeable number of women at the helm improves risk management. The Ministry

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58https://www.internationalwomensday.com. The theme for 2019 was Balance For Better
59In Istanbul, Turkey the police used tear as to disperse Women’s day marchers, in Tehran, Iran women activists appeared unveiled on the streets, various items displaying women rights were on display.
60The program was adopted from the female future model for the Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry (NHO)
of Public Service (MPS) Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines in Human Resource management for the Public sector 2011 also highlights the importance of women’s equal participation in the public administration as an important institution and in support of national democratic goals.61

6. Conclusion and Recommendations
It is apparent that there is need for a major push by legal and policy instruments to improve the participation of women at all levels of the political sphere in Nigeria. To achieve fair gender representation at all levels of politics is a matter that cannot be left to whims and caprices of political parties or inclement political godfathers alone. The afore mentioned barriers to achieving equitable representation is real and requires concerted and sustained push by all stakeholders as has been exemplified in the Ugandan situation. Countries with well-designed gender quotas elected significantly more women to parliament than those without, respectively, seven (7) points more in single or lower chambers, and seventeen (17) points more in upper chambers. IPU Secretary General, Martin Chungong said

It’s encouraging to see that the tools that the IPU has been advocating for many years, such as well-designed and well-implemented gender quotas, are beginning to bear their fruit. The IPU, with our many years of experience in empowering women in parliament, is at the disposal of any parliament that wishes to achieve gender equality.62

This is an offer the Nigerian Government will do well to accept. Therefore, the 1999 Constitution should be amended to reflect categorical quota for women for elective offices by political parties for National Assembly, State Houses of Assembly and Local Government Councils. Furthermore, a clear policy on quota of women for appointive offices should be enunciated by Government. This should be strictly monitored just as the Federal Character policy which stipulates fair representation for all parts of the country is monitored. Another is celebration of International women’s day as public holiday in Nigeria. This will serve as a focus on progress made so far and identification of areas of need for dire intervention. Civil Society groups should play a more critical role in sensitizing government and political parties of the need to expand the political space to enable women play more active roles to fulfill their ambitions. Traditional rulers should encourage qualified women in their domain to run for elective offices and engender support for such women. Cultural and religious barriers to women participation in politics should be addressed by mass enlightenment to change public bias. Civil Society groups should play a more critical role in sensitizing government and political parties of the need to expand the political space to enable women play more active roles to fulfill their ambitions. Traditional rulers should encourage qualified women in their domain to run for elective offices and engender support for such women. Cultural and religious barriers to women participation in politics should be addressed by massive enlightenment to change public bias.

62 (n. 24)