Nigeria and the Implementation of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325: A Critical Analysis

Gabriel, T. Abumbe & Dickson, E. Ekpe.
Department of Political Science
University of Calabar
Calabar - Nigeria
Correspondence Author: gabrielabumbe@yahoo.com

Abstract
On the 31st October 2000 unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 and mandated member states to domesticate this resolution as a matter of national policy. This paper examines some of the contentious issues that arose with the implementation of that resolution in Nigeria. It adopted a purely qualitative approach whereby data drawn from secondary sources were analyzed, described and explained within the context of the subject matter under discussion. The study revealed that the implementation of Resolution 1325 in Nigeria was pregnant with political, economic, socio-cultural and constitutional challenges. The paper recommended strict application of the quota system whereby a certain percentage of government appointments would be reserved for women. After all, countries such as Rwanda and France adopted this system and achieved progress. Once this system is applied in Nigeria, then the objectives for which UNSCR 1325 stood for will be achievable.

Keywords: Implementation, UNSCR 1325, Conflict Resolution, Peace, Peace-Building, Women Empowerment

Introduction
The inclusion of women in conflict resolution and peace-building is a complex issue that has been addressed in various international and national forums. The importance of this is highlighted in several documents, such as the Beijing Platform of Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Maastricht Guidelines, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and various UN Security Council Resolutions. These documents stress the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in achieving peace and security. The multiplicity of these initiatives is a graphic reminder of the disproportionate role women find themselves in when it comes to conflict resolution.

It must be pointed out that in almost all conflicts in the world, 90% are civilians and a majority are often women and children (United States Institute for Peace, 2011). This explains why women are being tagged "victims" of conflict (Norville Valeri, 2011). Women are either at the battlefront, rapped or brutally abducted as in the case of Chibok girls in Northern Nigeria who now have been forced into marriage by their captors (Abumbe et al. 2018). They suffer disproportionately from sexual violence and displacement (Norville, 2011). Besides, women in other parts of the world are being used by terrorist groups to commit atrocities after being brainwashed into it. There are staggering cases of women suffering in conflict-ridden areas - more than 200 cases in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). More than 500,000 people lost their lives in the genocide that took place in Rwanda in 1994, while Sierra Leone experienced a death toll of no less than 50,000. Additionally, during the 1990s, an estimated number of 20,000 to 50,000 women died in Bosnia-

Herzegovina. In 2008, it was pointed out that out of a total of 13,347 people killed in Nepal in 1998, 1,013 were women, and 417 were children (Upreti, 2008).

Despite their precarious conditions, women have been known to have participated in many conflict resolutions or protests of war. Randell (1987) has shown instances where women protested against the proliferation and manufacturing of nuclear and atomic bombs. Particularly worthy of note is the Greenham protest camp where about 30,000 women protested against the installation of cruise missiles in Britain. Women played a crucial role in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, and many were leading figures in the protests. They organized and participated in various demonstrations, including marches, sit-ins, and boycotts, often at great personal risk. Their activism helped to raise awareness about the injustices of the apartheid system and contributed to the eventual downfall of the regime. Despite facing discrimination and violence from the authorities, women continued to fight for their rights and the rights of others, inspiring a generation of activists in South Africa and beyond (Berstein, 1986).

Empirical evidence is enormous to show the usefulness of women in conflict resolution, yet women have been continuously neglected during the peaceful resolution of conflicts or post-conflict arrangements. For example, in a survey carried out by the UN over eleven (11) peace processes in the world, it was discovered that less than 3% of women signatories to peace agreements and less than 8% participated in the peace agreement (Becker, 2003). The Nepalese government and the Communist Party of Nepal engaged in a prolonged conflict in 2003, but the conflict was ultimately resolved through peaceful means. Unfortunately, there were no women on both sides of the negotiation team even though the government had appointed one woman as a member (Upreti, 2008). Women were also not invited during the peace negotiation between the rebels and the government of Liberia in 2003 (Norville, 2011; Ofem, Okpa, & Joshua, 2021). These experiences were discouraging and rekindled the determination of women folks to fight for equity and fairness which culminated in a series of conferences leading to the 31st October United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) was adopted in 2000 to address the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and girls. It recognized the critical role of women in conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding, and post-conflict reconstruction. The resolution emphasized the importance of women's participation at all levels of decision-making in these processes and reaffirmed the importance of their equal participation in efforts for peace and security. Since its adoption, several other resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security have further strengthened and expanded its goals. The 2015 UNSCR 1325 recognized the crucial link between preventing gender-based violence and armed violence and highlighted the importance of involving women in peacebuilding at local and global levels. Based on this assumption, states including Nigeria were expected to domesticate this resolution as a major feature in national policies. This is not to say that studies on gender equality in conflict resolution have virtually been absent, studies in this regard were at the strategic level without providing a corresponding policy direction which is the concern of this study. Therefore, the broad objective of this paper is to find out why since the domestication of UNSC Resolution 1325 as a framework in Nigeria in 2015, female folks in Nigeria have not been adequately represented in any conflict resolution mechanism (Okoi, Ogar, Ubi, Ubi, & Okpa, 2022). We asked some fundamental questions; what factors have handicapped the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 in Nigeria? Could it be challenges associated with Politics, economy, socio-cultural factors, the competitive nature of women or constitutional challenges.?

Conceptual Clarification

Within the context of policy, implementation is the process by which the actual goals, aspirations and intentions of any policy are translated into concrete action. This is the most

difficult part of the policy cycle because policy decision-makers often work with certain assumptions. Firstly, that the policy will be implementable; secondly, that there will be enough materials and financial resources; thirdly, that there will be enough time to achieve all within recorded time. Unfortunately, these assumptions may not be feasible and make any policy unimplementable. This explains why some scholars are of the view that policy implementation is the graveyard for policy designers. Within the context of this paper, implementation is taken to mean the actual translation of the goals and objectives of UNSCR 1325 into concrete reality in Nigeria. Again, as explained with the policy cycle above, this is the most difficult part because of Nigeria's rustic traditional peculiarities.

United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325:

UN Security Council Resolution 1325, adopted unanimously on October 31, 2000, is a landmark resolution that aimed to protect women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence during armed conflicts and recognized their critical role in peace-building and conflict resolution. The resolution was based on four pillars, which are as follows:

i.   Participation: The resolution called for the increased participation of women at all levels of decision-making in conflict prevention, management, and resolution, including in peace negotiations, peace operations, and as special representatives of the UN Secretary-General. It recognized the importance of women's full and equal participation as active agents in creating and sustaining peace.

ii.   Protection: The resolution emphasized the need to protect women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence during armed conflicts. It recognized the devastating impact of such violence on women's physical and mental health, as well as on their families and communities, and called for measures to prevent such violence and to hold perpetrators accountable.

iii. Prevention: The resolution stressed the importance of taking proactive measures to prevent conflict and address its root causes. It recognized that addressing issues such as poverty, inequality, and discrimination was essential to prevent conflict and promote sustainable peace.

iv.   Relief and recovery: The resolution recognized the particular needs of women and girls in situations of armed conflict and called for measures to ensure their access to essential services, such as health care, education, and economic opportunities, as well as their participation in relief and recovery efforts.

In summary, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was a significant step in recognizing the important role of women in peace-building and conflict resolution. The resolution's four pillars highlighted the need for women's full and equal participation in decision-making, protection from violence, prevention of conflict, and relief and recovery efforts.

Peace:

Peace is defined differently by various scholars. Rummel (1981) defines peace as a state of tranquillity without violence or war, while Galtung sees it as the absence of agitation and hostility. Some scholars criticize Rummel's (1996) definition for focusing too much on the absence of war. Nonetheless, the study defines peace as a state of overall well-being, characterized by harmonious relationships, freedom from violence and war, and mental tranquillity among individuals, groups, states, or nations.

Conflict:

It is important to note that not all conflicts are necessarily negative or destructive. Conflict can sometimes be necessary to bring about change, facilitate growth, and foster innovation. Conflict can also be an opportunity for individuals and groups to clarify their values and priorities, and to learn more about themselves and others. However, if conflicts are not managed or resolved constructively, they can lead to negative consequences such as violence, aggression, and social disintegration. Therefore, it is important to develop effective conflict resolution strategies that can help to minimize the negative effects of conflicts and

promote positive outcomes for all parties involved. There are various approaches to conflict resolution, including negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and litigation. Each of these approaches has its advantages and limitations, and the choice of approach will depend on the nature and complexity of the conflict, as well as the preferences and resources of the parties involved. Overall, conflict is an inevitable part of human interaction, and it is important to recognize its causes, dynamics, and consequences to manage and resolve conflicts effectively. By doing so, individuals, groups, and nations can promote peace, harmony, and cooperation in their relationships and interactions

Conflict Resolution:

Conflict resolution is different from the broader concept of conflict management, which involves limiting, containing or regulating conflicts. John Burton (1990) argued that the international community has been unsuccessful in controlling long-lasting socio-political conflicts, which has resulted in the emergence of conflict resolution as a means of resolving disputes constructively, rather than simply pacifying them. Miller (2003:8) stated that conflict resolution refers to a variety of approaches that aim to solve conflicts by addressing problems, rather than simply managing or informing about them. Resolving a conflict involves meeting the basic needs of all parties and alleviating their fears through necessary satisfiers, from a needs-based perspective. Conflict resolution is both a principle and a process that requires open communication channels between parties in conflict, with the ultimate goal of reducing, eliminating or terminating all types of conflicts.

Peacebuilding:

Peacebuilding involves developing and maintaining positive relationships across various social boundaries, including those of ethnicity, religion, class, and race. Its goal is to address social inequalities and transform the underlying structural conditions that give rise to deadly conflicts. Peacebuilding is a process that aims to end armed violence and establish human rights, democracy, protection, and reconciliation after atrocities. It includes interventions to prevent violent conflicts and connects grassroots groups with policymakers and powerful entities. Strategic peacebuilding aims to not only resolve conflicts but also to build societies, institutions, policies, and relationships that sustain peace, justice, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability. It requires building cross-group networks and alliances to create a foundation for sustainable human development and security.

Research Method

This study has adopted a qualitative approach, which is purely normative-oriented. Gauba (2003) and Biereenu-Nnabugwu (2006) have pointed out several distinguishing features of this approach. They contend that the approach has value as the major concern, critical and prescriptive, based on speculation and logic, commits to right and wrong validity and lastly, the method is largely deductive. This approach is drawn from secondary sources, textbooks, journal articles, government publications, the internet, etc. The information deduced from these sources is cogently described, explained and analyzed within the context of the subject matter under investigation.

Theoretical Foundation

Every social science-oriented study is always guided by a theory because it provides and guides an understanding of the study. In this regard, this study will make use of two theories: The Patriarchal theory and the Feminist theory. The patriarchal theory, attributed to Sir Henry Maine, is a set of ideas that aim to justify and explain the dominance of men over women in all aspects of society. According to this theory, gender inequality is an inherent part of human social structures that has existed since the dawn of humankind. The theory posits that the family, with the father as its head, was the origin of the state, and that the father's authority was absolute within the family unit. This perpetuates gender inequality by creating power differentials between men and women in society. The aim here is to show that contrary to Western conventional wisdom which explains that all men are equal and that it is

necessary to assign roles and responsibilities to people according to competence and capacity, traditional African societies still adhere strictly to roles differentiation which society prescribes for each member of the society. Thus, certain tasks are exclusively reserved for men. The idea of women's emancipation is a new development and alien to our rustic traditional society and is likely to remain so in the foreseeable future.

The patriarchal theory has received criticism in modern times. Medennan Morgan and Edward Jenks, who support the matriarchal theory, argue that polyandry and matriarchal families were the primary social structures of families. They suggest that polyandry evolved into monogamous families and matriarchal families later gave way to the patriarchal state. (Gerde, 1986). Besides, Edward Jenks also holds the view, Henry Maine's idea of social development of the state was wrong. For him, the earliest primary group that gave rise to the state was the tribe, then came the clan and finally the family (Walby, 1990). Some feminist writers have argued that the patriarchal theory is biased against women. For them, rather than say individual men oppress women, feminists see this oppression as being legitimized by the theory. These criticisms suggest that the patriarchal theory does not take into consideration the changing dynamics of society. It provides its analysis at the micro level by merely describing an existing situation without providing a clue as to how the situation so described can be resolved. From this standpoint, the patriarchal theory can be described as a necessary but not sufficient explanation as to how the issue of gender inequality can be resolved in Nigeria in particular and other parts of the world in general. It is because of this loophole that we discard the theory and turn to Feminist theory.

The Feminist theory is a recently developed field of scientific enquiry which came into light against the backdrop of persistent marginalization of women in many aspects of society especially that of conflict resolution. Scott (1986) argues that the theory not only provides a critique but also seeks to emancipate women by challenging the historical public and private policy divides that have denied women access to political space. The thrust of the theory is that if women folks are provided with the same opportunities within the state, institutions and policies, then conflict will less likely to occur. The most important goal of this study is that explains the varying degrees to which women have been subordinated in public and private life, the reasons why this happened and is still happening and provide a way forward. The key area of focus within gender studies includes a wide range of topics related to discrimination and exclusion based on sex and gender. These issues are deeply rooted in society and have been studied and analyzed by scholars and activists for decades (Chodoraw, 1990). Overall, gender studies seek to understand the complexities of gender, and how these complexities intersect with other aspects of identity, such as race, class, and sexuality. It also aims to challenge gender-based discrimination and work towards gender equality and justice. Unlike the normative patriarchal theory, the feminist theory is important for this study for its predictive relevance which is an important factor to consider for an administrative man. For this reason, it is adopted as the theoretical framework for this study.

Literature Review

Women have the potential to contribute to peace efforts in various ways, including participating in peace talks, rehabilitating children affected by armed groups, advocating for social services over military expenditure, and convening peace discussions across conflict lines. Historical examples such as the International Congress of Women in 1915 and the struggle for equal rights highlight women's involvement in conflict resolution. Women can play important roles in all stages of peace processes, including crisis management, negotiation, transitional management, security, justice, and reconstruction (Rehn and Sirleaf, 2002; Omang, Okpa, Okoi, & Iniama, 2020).

Agustiana and Pakpahan (2004) found that women in Central Sulawesi and North Malhku are not just victims or combatants in conflicts but also serve as peacebuilders, decision-makers, and leaders. Examples of women-led initiatives such as the Black group in

Serbia and the AVEGA in Rwanda demonstrate that women have contributed to achieving peace and providing psychological support to conflict victims. A comparative study by the ICG in conflict-ridden African countries showed that women play a crucial role in promoting reconciliation and reintegration, as well as bringing communities together and normalizing daily life. Women's mobilization and commitment are essential in facilitating community normalization processes (Upreti, 2008:11).

Randall (1987) cited studies that showed women played a significant role in the movement against nuclear proliferation and protests against the installation of cruise missiles and apartheid. Lihamba (2003) argued that women's contribution to sustaining peace extends beyond large-scale conflicts to the family and community level, where they play a crucial role in shaping future generations. Women's responsibility for bringing up all humans determines the kind of individuals they will become. The 1992 UNFPA report highlighted that women determine the quality of children, and their education, awareness, and control over family resources affect children's development and later success.

Agbajobi (2010) argued that women are crucial to the peace-building process due to several reasons. Firstly, they constitute half of every community, and peace-building must be a joint effort between men and women. Secondly, women are the primary caretakers of families, and their exclusion from peace-building affects everyone. Thirdly, women are advocates for peace and play essential roles as peacekeepers, relief workers, and mediators, as seen in Sudan and Burundi in the Horn of Africa. In Africa, women have traditionally been involved in traditional mediation to resolve conflicts, as documented by Ngongo (2003) and UNESCO (2003). Mirian and Chinwe (2006) argued that due to their innate qualities and societal position, women must actively participate in conflict prevention and resolution, and peace processes, and serve as peace envoys and delegations.

Reconciliation is a complex and multifaceted process that involves various components, such as justice, healing, forgiveness, and cooperation. It refers to the restoration of relationships, harmony, and social cohesion after a period of conflict or division. Reconciliation is not only about ending violence but also about addressing the root causes of the conflict and promoting sustainable peace. Women can play a critical role in the reconciliation process, particularly in addressing the needs, fears, and aspirations of conflict victims. Women have unique perspectives and experiences that can contribute to building trust and empathy among conflicting parties. They can also bring attention to the specific challenges faced by women and girls during and after conflicts, such as sexual violence, displacement, and exclusion from decision-making processes. Women's participation in peace processes is essential for their sustainability. Research has shown that peace agreements are more likely to last when women are involved in the negotiation and implementation phases. Women's participation can also lead to more inclusive and equitable outcomes, as they often prioritize issues related to social justice, human rights, and community development.

Furthermore, women's involvement in peacebuilding can reduce the risk of inadequate outcomes or the failure of the entire process. When women are excluded from peace processes, their needs and perspectives are often overlooked, which can undermine the legitimacy and effectiveness of the agreement. In contrast, when women are included, they can help ensure that peace agreements are comprehensive, responsive, and sustainable. In summary, women's participation in reconciliation and peacebuilding processes is crucial for achieving sustainable peace. By assisting conflict victims in addressing their needs and building broken relationships, women can contribute to the healing and rebuilding of communities affected by conflict. By ensuring that women's perspectives and needs are included in peace processes, we can work towards more equitable and inclusive outcomes that promote sustainable peace.

Women and Peacebuilding

The goal of peacebuilding is a multifaceted approach aimed at achieving sustainable peace in communities and regions affected by conflict or violence. The primary objective of peacebuilding is to bring an end to armed violence and establish conditions for long-term stability, development, and prosperity. In addition to ending armed violence, peacebuilding seeks to establish and promote human rights, democracy, and reconciliation in the aftermath of atrocities (Ofem, Okpa, & Joshua, 2021; Omang, Okpa, & Okoi, 2022). This involves addressing the root causes of conflict, promoting social justice, and building strong institutions that can support sustainable peace. It involves interventions designed to prevent the start or resumption of violent conflict, connecting grassroots organizations with policymakers, and addressing strategic issues like economic prosperity and environmental sustainability. Women's role in peacebuilding is vital because of the historical and cultural manifestations of patriarchy, which have led to male domination in social, legal, political, religious, and economic systems. Aristotle portrayed women as inferior to men and assigned them subservient roles in society (Ofem, Okpa, and Joshua, 2021; Omang, Okpa, and Okoi, 2022).

Frederick Engels, a Marxist thinker, argued that the rise of patriarchy was a result of the emergence of private property. He believed that the transition from a communal society to a class-based society led to the accumulation of wealth and resources, which in turn led to the oppression of women. Engels argued that the development of the nuclear family, in which men controlled the property and women were relegated to domestic roles, was a key aspect of the patriarchal system. However, this argument was disputed by historian Gerda Lerner, who suggested that the patriarchal belief system existed before the development of a class-based society. Lerner argued that women were already oppressed in prehistoric societies and that patriarchy was not simply a result of the emergence of private property. Instead, she believed that the oppression of women was deeply ingrained in the cultural and social norms of early societies. Overall, while Engels and Lerner may have had different perspectives on the origins of patriarchy, they both recognized that the oppression of women has been a persistent feature of human history in some parts of Nigeria, there is a belief that politics and conflict resolution are the domain of men, which is a gender issue.

While earlier theorists agreed with Aristotle's views on the role of women in society, later intellectuals challenged patriarchal beliefs. Some argue that maternal authority is equal to paternal authority and that both parents are equally responsible for their children. In modern times, patriarchy is seen as a system of institutionalized control where a dominant group makes decisions for a subordinate group considered weaker and inferior (Dheret, 2011). The cultural beliefs and values that maintain the status quo often keep decision-making power at the top, which can result in the underrepresentation and exclusion of women in peace negotiations, conflict resolution, and decision-making processes. In Nigerian society, patriarchy is pervasive, and women are expected to conform to male dominance and female subservience, which makes it challenging for them to participate in political activities. Patriarchy is considered a social construct that forms the basis for inequality in political authority(Dayo, 2006:205; Ofem, Okpa, and Joshua, 2021; Omang, Okpa, and Okoi, 2022).

Feminist theory is a diverse and complex set of ideas that seeks to understand the experiences of women and other marginalized genders in society. Ultimately, feminist theory aims to create a more just and equitable society for all people, regardless of gender, race, class, ability, or sexuality. It does not seek to promote the superiority of women over men, but rather to challenge the structures of power and privilege that perpetuate gender inequality and other forms of oppression. It examines how masculinity and national security policies legitimize male characteristics and contribute to the under-representation of women in powerful positions. Different versions of feminist theory provide various explanations for women's subordination, including legal obstacles and deeply rooted structures of patriarchy. Marxist and socialist feminists focus on the labour market and the double burden of unpaid work that women face.

These theories highlight the differential access to resources and responsibilities between men and women and provide a framework for analysis(Sylvester. 1994).

Nigeria Implements United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325

UNSCR 1325 is a landmark resolution that was adopted by the United Nations Security Council on October 31, 2000. It recognizes the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women and girls and calls for their full and active participation in all efforts to promote and maintain peace and security. The resolution also emphasizes the need to protect women and girls from gender-based violence in situations of armed conflict and to ensure their equal access to relief and recovery services. Two years after its adoption, in 2002, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement that encouraged member states to develop National Action Plans (NAPs) to fulfil the objectives of UNSCR 1325. These plans are intended to provide a framework for member states to implement the resolution's provisions and to ensure that efforts to promote peace and security are gender-responsive and inclusive. As of 2016, 63 countries had adopted NAPs to implement UNSCR 1325. These plans typically address political, social, and human security policies, and require interagency coordination across various government ministries, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders. They also focus on the participation of women in decision-making processes related to peace and security, the prevention and response to gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, and the inclusion of gender perspectives in all aspects of peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. Overall, the adoption of NAPs represents an important step toward implementing the principles of UNSCR 1325 and advancing the women, peace, and security agenda. However, much work remains to be done to ensure that the implementation of these plans is effective, sustainable, and truly transformative for women and girls affected by armed conflict.

In August 2013, Nigeria launched its first National Action Plan (NAP) to domesticate UNSCR 1325, which was adopted by 8 states. However, it had limitations such as not considering violent extremism and lacking crisis management and recovery strategies. In May 2017, Nigeria launched its second NAP for 2017-2020, which was more detailed and had clear implementation, monitoring, evaluation strategies, and reporting pathways. The Second National Action Plan (NAP) for the Prevention and Response to Gender-based Violence (GBV) in Nigeria is a strategic framework designed to reduce all forms of violence against women and girls in the country. The plan aims to achieve globally agreed development plans and targets, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's Agenda 2063. Overall, the Second NAP aims to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs and the African Union's Agenda 2063 by promoting gender equality and ending violence against women and girls in Nigeria.

However, despite this apparent zeal and determination to implement the UNSCR 1325 in Nigeria, the ratio of males and females in conflict resolution and peace-building in Nigeria is very low. Women have not occupied positions which could allow them to play an active role in conflict resolution. For example, since 2000, the country has produced only one female Governor; viz: Dame Virginia Ngozi who was Governor of Anambra State from November 2006 to February 2007. Within the same period, the country produced only one female Ambassador; viz: Uzoma, Ikechi Emenike of Abia State. One area where women have grossly underrepresented in the National Assembly. The table below shows the ratio of women to men in the National Assembly since 1999.

Table 1: Showing Male vs. Female Representatives in the Parliament

Characteristics	Male	Female	Female ratio
2019 – Present	440	29	6.2%
2015 – 2019	438	31	7.1%
2011 – 2015	438	31	7.1%
2007 – 2011	435	34	7.2%
2003 – 2007	445	24	5.5%
1999 – 2003	454	15	3.2%

Source: Statistics Research Department, September 2, 2021

Table 1 above shows the disproportionate ratio between the male and female counterparts. It is realized that since 1999, the ratio of females in the National Assembly rose marginally from 3.2%, between 1999-2003 to 5.5% between 2003-2007, then from 7.2% between 2007-2011 where it fell marginally to 7.1% between 2011-2015 and remained steady between 2015-2019 and eventually fell to 6.2% since 2019. These figures are self-revealing, that women are inadequately represented in the National Assembly which arguably is the basis for women's predicaments. But above all, Nigerian women have over the years grappled with multiple challenges which have impacted their ability to contribute positively to the conflict resolution process in Nigeria.

Challenges to the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Nigeria

The implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Nigeria had many challenges. These challenges include but are not limited to political challenges, economic challenges, socio-cultural challenges, competitive tendencies of women and constitutional challenges.

Political Challenges:

In Nigeria, the power imbalance between genders has led to a lack of female representation in decision-making, diminishing their political authority and influence. Although women have been making attempts at improving their situation both at a local and global level, their lack of political power has resulted in their continued marginalization from the mainstream. Women's perception of politics and societal norms and values that define gender roles as well as religious beliefs discourage their participation in conflict resolution. Despite Nigeria signing international agreements and treaties that promote women's participation in politics and peace processes, the imbalance of power between men and women hinders the involvement of women in these efforts.

Economic Challenges:

Women are at a disadvantage due to a lack of resources, unemployment, economic discrimination, and violence against them. The work that women do is mostly in the unregulated informal sector where they are engaged in activities that generate low income. Unfortunately, these activities are not properly included or accounted for in the National Accounting System (Gelpi, et al., 1986). Men have more purchasing power and influence due to their productive gender roles. Only a small number of wealthy people in Nigeria possess the economic clout to participate in peace process committees, which means that women are marginalized from having a say in decision-making. For women to be able to actively engage in decision-making and implementation, including in peace process committees, they need to have financial autonomy.

Socio-cultural Challenges:

Strictly following cultural practices that discriminate against women, particularly in the northern region, could impede the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 because society's values, norms, and religion consider political activities to be masculine. Women have been excluded from the sphere of conflict resolution or peace processes, which are reserved for men. These social beliefs and ethnic religious doctrines have become self-fulfilling prophecies (Rosaldo and Lamphere, 1974:20-22).

In Nigeria, men hold a dominant position in all aspects of women's lives due to the highly patriarchal nature of society. The cultural norms that support this patriarchy are deeply ingrained and protected by traditional institutional structures. Discrimination against women is widespread and is often justified by customary laws and practices that are widely accepted. Women are excluded from participating in various areas such as community development, family matters, and peace processes in some cultures. As a result, women have been made to feel inferior and disadvantaged in the socio-political arena, even in urban areas. These cultural norms and stereotypes have led women to accept that they are weaker and not suitable for participating in peace processes, which are often seen as an arena for men's masculine abilities (Agbalajobi, 2009:79).

The Competitive Tendency of Women:

The challenge of women's lack of cooperation and unity is a significant obstacle to their progress in Nigeria. Many elite women prioritize their political agendas over common interests, which leads to a lack of collaboration among them. This was demonstrated during the 2011 People's Democratic Party presidential candidate primaries when only one female candidate received a vote from female delegates. Psychological factors such as ego-driven behaviour, a belief in one's superiority, and language or social class differences contribute to this lack of cooperation among women.

Political: Political Pressure or Political Ambition.

The personality of individuals is influenced by their social status, such as being born into a wealthy or high-class family, receiving higher education or education abroad. These individuals often have special connections with international power and better access to information and resources. However, despite their advantages, women are considered weaker and should be encouraged and given opportunities to participate in peace processes as they are often the worst affected by conflict and a threat to peace and security.

Constitutional challenge:

Although the 1999 Nigerian constitution espouses the principle of non-discrimination, it falls short of providing equal opportunities for men and women in various aspects of life. This lack of equal representation and provisions for gender equality is a problem for justice and fairness. Unlike constitutions in South Africa and Uganda, the Nigerian constitution does not address the disadvantaged position of women or the disparities that exist along gender lines. However, recent movements have emerged to advocate for personal and social change in the status of women in public life and governance.

Conclusion

Since Nigeria domesticated the UNSCR 1325, there have been six (6) different administrations, viz: 1999-2003, 2007-2011, 2011-2015, 2015-2019 and 2019-present. In all of these administrations, the National Action Plan (NAP) under the auspices of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development has been the springboard upon which UNSCR 1325 and NAP were to be implemented. Yet, successful governments since 1999 have either feigned ignorance of UNSCR 1325 and NAP or do not have the political will to implement it as women have continually been marginalized in almost all areas of Nigeria's socio-economic and political life. Some Nigerians have attributed the difficulty in implementing UNSCR 1325 to some factors including political, economic, cultural and constitutional challenges.

While these challenges are by no means endemic, it must be pointed out that the rustic traditional male chauvinist society in Nigeria and the political will arguably are the two most important factors that have handicapped the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Nigeria. The country needs to adopt a more pragmatic quota system approach which provides a significant number to be voted for into the National Assembly, appointed into Federal and States executive councils and elected as Local Government Chairpersons. Countries such as Rwanda and France have adopted the quota system with phenomenal results within the

trajectory of development. This is both a social and economic will. These practical steps are necessary if Nigeria hopes to make the best of the opportunities, women can offer in peace-building and conflict resolution especially now that the country is prone to conflicts.

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