THE WOMAN POLITICIAN, A SQUARE PEG IN A ROUND HOLE, AND ITS CONSEQUENT EFFECTS ON WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN POLITICS: PERSPECTIVES OF NIGERIAN WOMEN POLITICIANS

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Abstract

This study aimed to find out the reasons behind the under-representation of women in political leadership in Nigeria, amongst several factors, such as socio-cultural norms, a patriarchal society, media misrepresentation, and financial constraints. A major and poignant factor to consider is public perception of women engaging in leadership since unfavourable perceptions will invariably lead to few votes, and as a consequence under-representation. The study aimed to find the point of view of women politicians on this based on comments, their experience in politics, and interaction with the electorate and male politicians. This research is purely qualitative, within the interpretive research paradigm since the interpretive paradigm deals with perceptions, and enables the researcher delve deep into the world of the participant. The work was premised on African Feminism hypothesis, and the Agenda Setting theory. It employed the qualitative research method, and collected data through in-depth interviews using the interview guide as instrument. The population consisted of women politicians from Plateau State while Snowball sampling technique was utilised to select 10 women politicians. Based on women politicians' experience in politics, findings revealed that the general perception about women engaging in politics was negative. Also, it was discovered that women are not welcome into the political space both, by male politicians and the electorate. The study concluded that the media have significant roles to play in changing the negative narrative about women, especially when it comes to their occupying leadership positions in society. Recommendations include that the media should positively project women through their agenda setting role since the media are seen as socialising agents.

Keywords: Leadership, Marginalisation, Perception, Political, Underrepresentation

Introduction

The percentage of women in the global population, according to the World Bank's collection of development indicators based on United Nations data was reported at approximately 49.7% (World Bank, 2025), yet in terms of leadership they are glaringly underrepresented. At present (10th Assembly), Nigeria's Senate has only 4 women out of 109 seats, representing about 2.7% of the chamber. In the House of Representatives, there are 16 or 17 women out of 360 seats, which is approximately 4.4% to 4.7% of the membership. Overall, women constitute about 4.2% of the

combined 469-member National Assembly. This reflects a decline in female representation compared to previous assemblies, and places Nigeria among the lowest in Africa for women's parliamentary representation (The Nation, 2025; Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre- PLAC, 2025; National Assembly Legislative Training Fellowship- NALTF, 2025).

In the 9th Assembly there were 7 female Senators out of a total of 109, while 11 female candidates out of 360 were members of the House of Representatives (Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre, 2022). In the 8th Assembly 22 women were elected into the House of Assembly while 7 were elected into the Senate. There were 29 women in total within the 8th Assembly (Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre, 2019). No woman has been elected as Governor in any State in Nigeria, however, in Anambra State, Virginia Etiaba, who was Deputy Governor under Governor Peter Obi held the position of Governor from November 2006 to February, 2007 following his impeachment. No woman has been elected as President in Nigeria, and only a few women have been Presidential aspirants, they include Sarah Jibril, Remi Sonaiya. Obiageli Ezekwesili and Uju Kennedy, stepped down before the actual elections. We can see clearly from the above statistics that women are underrepresented in political leadership in Nigeria. Women underrepresentation has given rise to several efforts and instruments to encourage women political representation such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979 by United Nations General Assembly. The Beijing Platform for Action adopted in 1995 and Item 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals. In Nigeria there is the 35 per cent Affirmative Action initiative. Senator Abiodun Olujimi presented a bill in 2016 advocating for gender equality in political and public life which was rejected. Former First Lady Aisha Buhari requested for special seats for women in support for a bill to reserve seats for women in the National and State Assembly introduced by Nkiruka Onyejeacha in 2022 which was rejected and has been reintroduced (PLAC) Women remain underrepresented in spite of the various efforts put in place. According to Dosumu (2024) the lack of affirmative government action is a major factor impinging on women political representation, the government must show its commitment by, adapting and domesticating international and regional human rights instruments. The non implementation of government policies relating to women inclusion is to some extent responsible for women underrepresentation in politics Udoh etal (2024). Asides the non implementation of policies by government the general perception is that women should not be involved in politics. Voters think that men are better suited emotionally, make better leaders and leaders need to be tough (Cella and Manzani, 2023). Women belong in the kitchen and are clueless in terms of decision making and politics while men are best suited to politics and leadership (Gurung, 2021). Negative perceptions and attitudes toward women in leadership is a major factor adversely affecting women political representation (Toskov and Cretti,2023).

Statement of the Problem

Women are grossly underrepresented in political leadership in spite of their numbers in terms of population, and the benefits they have to offer with regard to their talents, skills and competence. Women tend not to be given a chance to engage in decision making. In Nigeria, the number of women in all levels of governance is abysmal. Women have the right to be involved in political leadership, and not be discriminated against.

Women are exposed to several obstacles, such as a patriarchal system, socio cultural and religious norms, financial constraints, stereotypes, media misrepresentation, and

violence in politics. A major obstacle is the adverse perception of the electorate on women participating in politics, in the first place. It is generally considered out of order for a woman to engage in politics. The woman politician, has, therefore, already failed before she has embarked on her political journey because it is considered out of place. She is perceived as a square peg in a round hole. Not only is the woman politician considered incompetent, she should not be seen to be participating in politics in the first place. In spite of this perception, women have been found to be a force to reckon with in terms of their contributions to political leadership it is important to find out perceptions about women engaging in leadership because negative perceptions about the woman in politics invariably leads to underrepresentation. The far reaching effects of negative attitudes towards women politicians extends beyond individual careers and the broader political landscape by deterring women from participating in politics Coffe et al (2024). Toshkov and Cretti (2023) underscore the importance of understanding the nature of public attitudes toward participation of women in politics referred to as political gender attitudes because it reveals the reasons for the gender gap in politics and understanding this will help in devising ways of reducing this. This study aims to have a deep insight into perceptions about woman politicians because of the far reaching consequences in terms of women political representation.

Objectives of the Study

This research aimed to find out from women politicians:

1. Why women are underrepresented in political leadership?

2. Peoples mentality about women participating in politics, and

3. How the women politicians are regarded by the public.

Theoretical Framework

African Feminism
The African feminism hypothesis is vital to this study because it deals with the experience of the African woman within the African setting, and on African continent in which western feminism cannot apply. African feminism focuses on the needs of the black woman in Africa, including the challenges they face in their daily lives (Atanga, 2013, as cited in Stuhlhofer, 2019). The African culture and tradition generally stand as an obstacle to women's involvement in politics because gender roles dictate that women play supportive roles behind the scenes. Maathai, as cited in Stuhlhofer (2020) discusses how culture, tradition and religion are used to inhibit women from participating in politics.

Patriarchy also stands as a major obstacle and impediment to women in realising their full potential in terms of leadership in Africa, as such, African feminism aims to tackle patriarchy within the African society by advocating for gender equality in order to enhance women inclusion in decision making (Fafa, 2020). The indigenous nature of the African feminism hypothesis makes it appropriate for its usage in this study.

Agenda Setting Theory
The Agenda Setting theory is a media effects theory propounded by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972. According to this theory, the attention and prominence the media gives to an issue reflects the importance an audience attaches to the issue, hence, Guanah (2014, as cited in Guanah & Adeoye, 2024) declares that, "until the media are involved, no matter or issue revolves; every issue remains docile until the media choose to activate it and cause it to be matters of national discourse" (p. 11); this suggests that the media are powerful, and have influence on perceptions. The more the media projects an issue, the more importance an audience attaches to the issue.

This theory is relevant to this study because media reflect society, and society reflects the media since media depict societal norms and values in its contents. Sanni (2016)

explains how the media reflect society, but exaggerates societal reality in its representation, thereby increasing inequality, women subordination and marginalisation of women.

Media reflect and reinforces societal expectations like gender roles, and, over time, the repeated exposure to particular themes gradually alter our perceptions and attitudes. Media content mirror and reinforce cultural norms and values like gender roles, and media's framing of issues has the capacity to impact public opinion and cultural discourse (Media Criticism Review, 2023).

In relation to this study, the woman politician is perceived to be out of place in the political space, according to societal norms and standards, and the media reinforces this notion and perception through the framing process in its agenda setting role. In essence, since the woman politician is undermined by society, the media mirror this notion in a vicious cycle through its representation, which invariably impinges on women political representation in numerical terms.

According to media effects theories, cumulative effects tackles effects as a result of constant exposure to similar content rather than a single event, meaning that an audience begins to accept the media's framing of reality as their own representation of reality (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). This study suggests in line with the cumulative model of media effects that the constant misrepresentation of women over time has a negative effect on public perception of women. The media have, over the years, used stereotypical framing which Littlejohn and Foss (2009) explain as frames along gender lines in relation to representation of women.

Women's Contributions to Political Leadership

According to Winnie Byanyima, former Executive Director Oxfam International, when women engage in public decision making, you get policies that benefit women, children and families in general (Byanyima, 2017). They promote women's rights, children's rights and stand up for the interest of communities. According to Jarroud (2015), Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, who headed the UN at a time, states that women have successfully built and run countries and cities' economies and formidable institutions; "however, women, who are an inevitable component in boosting the economy tend to be neglected, sidelined and discriminated against" (Guanah, Dalung, & Anho, 2018, p. 135).

Following 35 years of working in over 100 countries around the world, the National Democratic Institute- NDI (2023) has found that women work across party lines, are highly responsive to constituents concerns; they help in supporting lasting peace, encourage citizen confidence in democracy through their participation, and prioritise health, education and key development indicators.

Women in leadership also reduce petty and grand corruption, and reduce the rate of bribery in public services (Bauhr, Charon & Wangnerud, 2018). According to Madaliene Albright (as cited in National Democratic Institute, 2023), the world is wasting a precious resource in the dramatic under-representation of women in leadership positions, often resulting in the exclusion of women's talents and skills in political life. In spite of the benefits women bring to decision making in politics, they are marginalised

Women Marginalisation

Marginalisation can be defined as the process or result of making somebody feel as if they are not important and cannot influence decisions or events; the fact of putting somebody in a position in which they have no power (Oxford Learners Dictionaries, n.d). Marginalisation means to make a person or a group of people unimportant and powerless in an unfair way (Longman Dictionary, n.d). Women are marginalised when they are side-lined,

which could be economic, social, or political. In relation to politics, women face marginalisation in many regions of the world, but to various degrees, because they do not, and are not encouraged to engage in decision making. Guanah and Nwabueze (2021) assert that:

> Women tend to be discriminated against and marginalised via various means which include: ethno cultural tenets, non-implementation of women's rights, customary/Sharia laws, religious doctrines, gender structure, male chauvinism, lack of education, lack of economic independence, domestic violence, lack of skills, deprivations of quality health, employment and politics, socio-economic and political marginalization as well as total exclusion from the decision making process at all levels of the society (p. 8).

According to Ezenwa and Ogwudile (2023), women marginalsation deals with gender imbalance, gender inequality, gender bias and gender discrimination which, according to them, means favouring and giving preferential treatment to males at the expense of women. Okebukola (2008, as cited in Ezenwa, 2023) explains that in Nigeria governance is dominated by men, as a result woman are not well represented in decision making positions; women are therefore discouraged from contesting for political office. Emordi, Sengupta and Ikednma (2021) explain how marginalisation, gender inequality, and discrimination are hindrances to women's economic and political development as a result women are not able to contribute their quota in terms of development in comparison to men. A 2019 study on woman marginalization in politics reveals that women suffer marginalization in spite of their numerical strength which does not translate to increase in women representation in governance. Rather, women's social and political advances are met with stiff resistance Ake, Bamidele, Olakunle, Olubukoye and Ake (2019). Women are discriminated against on grounds of their gender leading to marginalization which excludes them from political participation and decision making.

Factors Leading to the Marginalisation of Women

Amongst several factors, such as socio-cultural and religious expectations, patriarchy, media misrepresentation and financial constraints, is the negative perception of women engaging in politics. Stereotypes dictate that women are warm and communal, but less competent, less intelligent, and less skilful; in other words they are less ambitious, independent and strong. (Bye, Solianik, Five & Agai, 2022). This is not in tandem with attributes of leadership which include confidence decisiveness and strength. The woman in politics is therefore perceived to be playing against the natural order. The contrary perception towards women engaging in political leadership is a major obstacle to their representation which cannot be ignored, and must be tackled. Public perception therefore is a formidable concept that must be examined.

Public Perception

Perception can be defined as a belief or opinion, often held by many people, based on how things seem (dictionary.cambridge.org, 2019). An opinion is the position, favourable or unfavourable, neutral or undecided people take on a particular issue, policy, action or leader. Opinions are not facts, they are expressions of people's feelings about a

specific political object (Palezts, Owen & Cook, 2012). With regard to this study, perceptions and opinions are used interchangeably to mean the same thing.

Limani (2006, as cited in Leka & Kosumi, 2017) defines public opinion as a thought or belief that most people hold; the voice of the people. Though there are varying definitions of public opinion, agreement on these varying definitions is that public opinion is "a collection of individual opinions on an issue of public interest and these opinions can exert influence over individual behaviour, group behaviour and government policy" (Ziolkowski, 2001, p. 183).

Key factors in public opinion firstly include the fact that an issue must exist; secondly, a good number of individuals must express themselves or have an opinion; thirdly, there must be some form of consensus in opinion on the issue and finally this consensus should exert influence directly or indirectly (Leka & Kosumi, 2017).

In relation to this research, women in politics can be considered as the issue at hand. Secondly, a majority of people have a formed opinion, favourable or unfavourable, on women in political leadership. Thirdly, there is a general consensus on women politicians, and, finally, this consensus on women in politics has reinforcing influence on women representation in politics. A 2022 study carried out by Ette and Akpan-Obong reveal that negative perceptions disincentive female politicians from political participation leading to low percentage of women in elective and appointive positions. Nwagwu, Iwual and Ebeh's 2024 study on public perception of women indicate that unfair perception of politically active women discourages Nigerian women from participating in politics and holding public office. Consequently, as inferred by these studies, negative perceptions on women engaging in politics leads to underrepresentation of women in politics.

The power of public opinion therefore should not be underestimated, especially within democracy, because it has the ability to influence and steer the course of events in terms of outcomes. Hobbs (as cited in Ziolkowsi, 2001), in emphasising the power of public opinion, states that truly the world is governed by opinion. Still on the power of public opinion, Locke (as cited in Zolkowski, 2001) distinguishes classes of law as divine law, civil law and the law of opinion and reputation.

Ziolowski (2001) describes the power public opinion wields as well as the force and vitality it carries. Public perception is very important because of its ability to influence outcomes. Therefore, the views of the Nigerian public on the woman politician are very important, relevant and powerful, as they play a key role in determining voting outcomes and consequently women political representation. Hence Zolowski (2001) states that:

> A given public opinion is likely to be anywhere between a highly emotional and prejudiced point of view and an intelligent and informed opinion. The net result of the interplay of these two groups may well be a biased prejudiced opinion about the matter in question (p. 184).

Methodology

This research is purely qualitative, and the views of women politicians were sought through an in-depth interview. Ten (10) women politicians were engaged in in-depth interviews. The interview guide was adopted as the instrument of data collection while the area of study is Plateau State, Nigeria.

The scope covers women politicians in Plateau State, Nigeria. Women politicians were purposively selected based on the following criteria: first, they are women; second, they are from Plateau State, and third, they are politicians. The snowball sampling technique was employed where a primary data source was identified who nominated other potential data sources who agreed to participate in this study. This study was based on referrals from the identified data source. Data was analysed using Nvivo software. Data was coded into analytically distinct segments for examination to enable the drawing of conclusions. The researcher analysed the coded data obtained from the interview and conclusions were drawn.

Ten participants were involved in this study where they were engaged in in-depth interviews. They were purposively selected in line with the research topic in order obtain data. The names of the participants were withheld based on consent and ethical considerations and coded as follows;

Participant 1	Has been involved in politics for 12 years and has sought a seat with the House of Representatives. She holds an appointive position with the state government
Participant 2	This is a politician of over 10 years, a one-time candidate for the House of Representatives and a founder of a woman leadership initiative
Participant 3	A politician of over 10 years and a one-time candidate for the House of Assembly
Participant 4	This woman politician has been involved in politics for over twelve years and has held an appointive position at the national level
Participant 5	A former counsellor who has sought a seat in the House of Assembly. She has served as an executive member within her local government
Participant 6	A former educationalist, a politician and a woman leader
Participant 7	A seasoned politician engaged in politics for over two decades, has held appointive positions within the state and elective positions in House of Assembly, her local government and a state executive position.
Participant 8	A grassroots politician with over two decades of experience
Participant 9	Has served as a politician over two decades and has held appointive positions
Participant 10	This woman politician has been involved in politics for ten years and has held the position of Campaign Woman Leader.

Presentation of Data

Below are excerpts from the interview by some respondents based on the research questions

1. Reasons women are under-represented in political leadership.

The summary of the data gotten from the oral in-depth interviews with the

respondents, when these researchers sought to know why women are under-represented in leadership, were that it is as a result of several factors such as socio-cultural expectations, financial constraints, a patriarchal system, media misrepresentation of women, and negative perceptions about women engaging in governance.

Participant 9

Culture: There are many countries that have had female Presidents or Prime Ministers, and they have done very well, but the African culture, especially the Nigerian culture, does not believe that. They do not even believe that a woman should be given a chance to be Governor, talk more of being a President.

Participant 2

Finance: In fact, one of the most challenging things for women running for office is the cost of engaging the media; it is a huge amount, and men have mastered the game already. They have the resources, and have mastered the use of the media. So we need the media to deliberately cut down costs. When the woman comes into politics she has less finances to fund herself. And then the godfathers of course, they would like to pump in money to the men.

Participant 6

Patriarchy: Generally, in the African context, it is assumed that it is men that are supposed to be in leadership position. In politics, it is common to see that, when 14 Commissioners are appointed, only one or two will be a woman. Also, men would rather have their male counterparts contesting for positions, be it elective or appointive, rather than have women. This has been the norm, right from time immemorial; they have always preferred their male counterparts to contest.

Participant 2

Media Under-Representation and Misrepresentation: The media tend to be a bit biased in the sense that they do not portray women equally with men. The media need to focus on the capacity of women, emphasizing what women are bringing to the table. The media tend to disseminate stories about women, that do not portray them as competent leaders. They present them in such ways that make people conclude they are not capable of occupying the public offices they are seeking for.

2. General mentality of the public about women running for office.

In wanting to know how from the respondents their feelings about the general mentality of the public about women running for public offices, majority of them feel the public sees women as those who are supposed to be behind the scenes, concluding that they are created to look after the home, hence, should not seek the limelight. During an interview, one of the respondents relayed her experience thus:

Participant 3

I actually wanted to run for House of Representatives seat in my constituency. People were surprised that a woman was running for a public office of that 'magnitude'; they suggested I should have gone for a lower position. I remember some saying, 'Why didn't you go for a Councilor seat?' Someone said that specifically to my face that I should have started from being a Councilor, first. Some said I should have gone for State House of Assembly seat instead.

Participant 1

People were a bit surprised. Men kept asking, 'Where did you get this idea from? Who told you to do this? How did you come about this? You are a woman oh!'

The foregoing experiences clearly show that the societal perception is that men should always dominate the women. Even

when there are qualified women to occupy public offices, they are looked down upon.

3. How women politicians are perceived

The general views of the respondents interviewed was that women politicians are generally perceived negatively; the positive aspects being their nurturing mothering role. However, generally, they are resented, underestimated, and seen as weaklings and immoral. They are seen as:

Participant 3

Weak and Underestimated: The general belief is that a woman is a weakling, even though one cannot specifically tell where this stems from. That is the belief, and the media seem to have continually promoted this in their reportage.

Participant 6

Incompetence: Women politicians are perceived to be incompetent and retrogressive**.** The general perception is that any woman that goes into politics has no serious purpose in life, maybe she is not serious, or has no serious contacts.

Participant 2

Immoral: Women politicians are seen as prostitutes who are aspiring for positions not suited to the stereotype on the role for women. People sell these stories out first to discourage women from coming into the political space, and also discourage people from supporting women who are in the political space. Such a wrong perception that people have about women in politics is really one of the challenges that is stopping women from assuming positions of authority.

Participant 4

Resented:

Majority of the respondents are of the opinion that women are resented. Specifically, a participant explained that there is resentment directed toward the woman politician in terms of concessions they receive on grounds of being women. She narrated her experience thus: When I was screened by my political party before the primary election, I remember two different men complaining that free forms were given to women while the men were made to pay for their own. I told them I paid N250, 000 for my forms, and did not get them free. There can be that kind of resentment.

Participant 10

Respect: Women are respected and seen as mothers who are always concerned with the welfare of her family. The general perception is that the woman as *our mother*. In an African setting the woman is seen as a mother.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of this study is that women are under-represented in political leadership as a result of several factors such as socio-cultural norms, financial constraints, a patriarchal system, media misrepresentation of women and negative perceptions about women engaging in political leadership. In line with participants' comments on financial constraints, finance is a major challenge for women, and specifically the lack of financial support hinders women's political participation (Lytikka, 2021)

Women's cultural roles and obligations are perceived to be incompatible with the position of a political leader. This aligns with the findings of Li (2024) in his study where women's traditional and cultural roles and obligations are considered incompatible with the position of a political leader. The Afro Feminist theory explains how culture, tradition and religion are used to water-down women's agency in meaningful participation in political leadership (Maathai, as cited in Stuhlhofer 2020). Stereotypes about a woman's supposed cultural or traditional roles contradict a woman's leadership aspirations.

In terms of media misrepresentation, it was found that the media undermine women in line with Markstedt`s (2007) study in which she states that women's viability, character and appearance are the focus of media rather than policy priorities of the woman politician. This lines up with one of the participant's comments about the media focusing on irrelevant issues pertaining to the woman politician, rather than focus on her competence and capability. It is important to note that media representations have an influence on perceptions and attitudes as stated by Ogbongawon (2015) below:

> The media are considered portent forces that are very active in shaping popular beliefs and perceptions. They have spectacular potentials in influencing social attitudes, positively or negatively, one way in which they shape audience perceptions and attitudes is through the institution of representation (p. 102).

Patriarchal practice is one of the factors women are under-represented in leadership positions. According to Oneil, Savigny and Cann (2015), since the media undermine women, the general perception is that the serious business of politics is primarily for men. Findings from this study align with this view where participants stated that the general perception is that men are expected to hold leadership positions.

The second finding of this study is that the public`s general mentality is that women should not be involved in politics. Women are expected to maintain the status quo, fulfilling gender appropriate roles assigned to women by playing supportive and subordinate roles behind the scenes within the private sphere. That women should not operate in the public sphere by engaging in decision making. As a participant stated, "People were surprised that a woman was running for office and that I should have gone for a lower position." This aligns with studies by Gurung (2021), Ette and Akpan-Obong (2022) Nwagwu, Iwuala and Ebeh (2024) with the general mentality that women should not engage in decision making but should operate in the private sphere playing supportive roles.

Thirdly, this study revealed that women politicians are generally viewed negatively. They are viewed as weaklings, incompetent, immoral and are resented.

However, in one participant's view, the woman politician is respected as a result of the nurturing role women are perceived to play, particularly as mothers. This perception contradicts leadership roles of strength, decisiveness, confidence, as mothers are associated with kindness, gentleness, being considerate, compassionate and caring. This perception is not an advantage to perceptions of women in leadership.

A study by Li (2024) on attitudes towards women in leadership aligns with findings in this study as the study also found that women are perceived to be fragile as a result not suited to high pressure situations. In terms of being immoral, Esshiet (2015) states that the woman politician is perceived to be immoral since she mingles with men at odd hours within the political arena. The perception being that her advancement in politics is in exchange for sexual favours. Adeniyi-Ogunyakin (2014) affirms the view that the woman politician is perceived to be a 'spare-tyre,' 'second fiddle,' and 'prostitute.'

Conclusion

Women are glaringly underrepresented in political leadership as a result of several factors such sociocultural norms and stereotypes, media misrepresentation,

financial constraints, patriarchy and negative perceptions about women engaging in leadership. The woman politician is perceived to be incompetent, a weakling and immoral. Negative perceptions on women engaging in leadership has an adverse effect on women representation in numerical terms therefore public perception of women is not a notion to ignore or undermine because negative perception about women affect voting outcomes leading to gender inequality, hence the underrepresentation of women in political leadership. The media have significant roles to play in changing the negative narrative about women, especially when it comes to their occupying leadership positions in the society.

Recommendations

1. Political parties should specifically reserve some percentage of political offices for the women folk.

2. Since media reflects society, and society reflects the media, the media through its agenda setting role should give women prominence by framing them favourably in their representations.

3. The media, being socialising agents, should positively project women, so that public perceptions about women engaging in political leadership will improve

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