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13 Women Empowerment through Political Participation in Rising Powers: Comparison of Turkey and Nigeria

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Introduction

Feminists have always argued that the world has had enough of men dominating in major human endeavours. According to Randall (2006: 3) activities of women and their achievements in leadership positions has made women's representation or political participation a topic for discussion. Arguments about participation were a significant part of international debates about democracy. It is argued that women are equal citizens and therefore should share equally with men in policy-making process. Without women's participation in political institutions, it is not possible to build sustainable democracies. In this sense, Madeleine Albright puts this approach into words as follows: "success without democracy is improbable and democracy without women is impossible" (National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), 2010: 12).

To prevent all forms of discrimination against women the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted "The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)" in 1979, which is often described as an international bill of rights for women. By accepting the Convention, states commit themselves to undertake a series of measures to end discrimination against women in all forms, including:

- to incorporate the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system, abolish all discriminatory laws and adopt appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women;
- to establish tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination; and
- to ensure elimination of all acts of discrimination against women by persons, organizations or enterprises.

(www.un.org)

Yet, despite deliberate attempt to increase women's activity in politics, the fact remains that even in developed states women are less represented.

The countries, which aim to solidify democracy, have put in place measures in order to ensure the empowerment of women. This is because women empowerment has been recognised as a

prerequisite for women's advancement and the underpinning in society of gender equality. The political empowerment of women is founded on the equality between men and women, rights of women to fully develop their potentials and the right of women to self-determination and self-representation (Fadia, 2014: 539). Since politics is all about influence and power and it remains a struggle of competing viewpoints about resources apportionment and distribution, political struggle has largely been in the domain of men. In this context, the marginalization of women in spheres of politics is as a result of this limited conception of the relevance of women in politics (Ajogbeje, 2016: 71).

Rising powers have also shown some level of concern about women empowerment. For instance, the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) did not only create BRICS Feminist Watch but has also organized an 8th BRICS summit in Goa, India under the theme "Building Responsive, Inclusive, Collective Solution" in 2016. In July 2018, at the 10th BRICS Summit Johannesburg Declaration, preambles 32, 99 and 100 reiterate the rising states' commitment to ensuring women empowerment and political participation in member states. Preamble 99 for instance states "... including of women parliamentarians, we look forward to further strengthening of BRICS exchanges in this regard" (BRICS, 2018). Two emerging powers, Turkey and Nigeria, which are considered by Goldman Sachs to constitute the next tier called MINT countries (Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey) are under investigation in this chapter.

The goal of this chapter is to look at the women empowerment capacities through political participation in Turkey and Nigeria. In addition, this chapter aims to contribute to the theoretical literature of rising powers a new determining factor, "strengthened democracy through women's political participation". In the first part, the women empowerment and rising powers concepts will be introduced. The second part will analyse the current situation in the BRICS countries and regarding women's political participation. And then, Turkey and Nigeria are discussed and compared with each other through the determining factor "strengthened democracy through women's political participation".

Women Empowerment and Rising Powers

Power in international relations is explained in various ways. For instance, Machiavelli uses the term "power" as an ultimate goal for mankind and the state. In his book, *The Prince*, he examines the means and methods of gaining and keeping power. For ages, humans have built their relationships with others on power politics. In this regard, the international system has recently introduced a new type of dialogue by experts who want to draw a certain line between powers (Kınık & Tüfekçi, 2018). The aim is to categorize powers in order to make each of them remember what their role is in the system. By doing so, the status quo is preserved and the leadership of the US continues, at least in the mind of the people. Through this new type of dialogue, several acronyms have been produced, such as BRICS, MINT, MIST, PINE and MIKT.

In addition, through these acronyms, new powers such as China, Russia, Brazil, India, South Africa, Indonesia, Mexico, Turkey and Nigeria came to the forefront in order to seek a global political role with strong powers. Since the concept "rising power" is quite volatile, it is a prerequisite to determine several criteria to make a thorough categorization. In this sense, democratic development, population, geographic location, economic development, military capability, technological development, and soft power are the main criteria (Tüfekçi, 2016: 103–104). It is a fact that these states penetrated global politics with their expanding political and cultural influence and rapid economic development (Yavuzçehre & Öztepe, 2016: 211).

Here we look at the various activities of these states and their endeavour to ensure women empowerment and political participation and aim to compare Turkey and Nigeria through the lens of a new determining factor, “strengthened democracy through women’s political participation” under the democratic development criteria.

The BRICS and Women Empowerment

At the club level and individual state levels the BRICS continue to put measures to ensure female empowerment leads to massive or equal participation of women in political portfolios. At the club level, the BRICS demonstrated its commitment to women empowerment when it declared at its 8th Summit that

we reiterate the commitments to gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls as contained in the 2030 Agenda. We recognise that women play a vital role as agents of development and acknowledge that their equal and inclusive participation and contribution is crucial to making progress across all Sustainable Development Goals and Targets.

(BRICS, 2016)

It is necessary to act based on the declaration to booster the inflow of women contribution in politics.

Despite the economic strides made by China in recent times, the situation of women empowerment and political participation is not encouraging. This is because the international ranking of female deputies in the People’s Congress dwindled from 12th in 1994 to 52nd in 2012. Again, the gap between women participation in diverse structures of political power in the country has widened (Zeng, 2014: 136). This can be blamed on the ineffective and discouraging proactive policy for women’s participation implemented by the government of China, which has not brought about a broader participation of women in politics. Over time, the drawing back of women from waged production becomes mirrored at the political level in their falling participation in party and government leadership. (Howell, 2002: 44). The situation is not the same in India. Fadia (2014: 542) mentions that women’s participation in the political sphere has been encouraging. The increment in participation rather empowers women, boosts their level confidence, changes perceptions about their contribution as well as improves their societal status. The 73rd and 74th amendment of the constitution were responsible for the strengthening of grassroots democracy and political participation in India. The 110th amendment of the constitution in 2009 elevates female representation to 50 percent from 33 percent.

The case of Brazil is even better because the state has witnessed the increase in women’s participation in legislative positions since 1998. The adoption of legislation, which provides quotas for female candidates, is a major contributing factor to this improvement. However, despite this being a remarkable breakthrough, the number of elected women in the political sphere has remained stable over time. The stunted growth of women in political representation in Brazil is largely blamed on electoral financing that influences state election (Moisés & Sanchez, 2016: 27). Despite the finance hurdles, 2018 witnessed the highest number of women seeking presidential tickets in the history of Brazil. Senator Ana Amelia reiterates that the more women participate the more the state gains. With the exception of Jair Bolsonaro and Marina Silva all major presidential candidates have selected female running mates. Moreover, recent polling in the country reveals that 80 percent of the electorates in the country think that Brazilian democracy would improve if women were elected into public offices (Shook & Harden, 2018).

In Mexico, the existence and the activities of NGOs have been critical in ensuring women’s political participation and human rights. According to the 2000 World Values Survey, 42 per

cent of Mexicans in the year 2000 believed that women were second to men in effective political leadership (Inglehart, 2004). This showed a backward thinking in a rising state like Mexico. Zapatistas, a groups formed to cater for victims of earthquake in 1985, and the Partido de la Revolucion Democratica (Democratic Revolution Party-PRD) formed in 1989, are instrumental in ensuring female political participation in Mexico. The PRD for instance availed 30 percent quotas for women, which got extended to other political parties (Randall, 2006: 12). Fernanda (2014: 5), employing data from the Federal Electoral Institute and the National Survey on Citizens and Political Culture of Mexico suggests that a series of social factors constrains political participation of women in Mexico. These social factors are embedded in organizations, which are structured to satisfy the male oriented practices. Religion and biased cultural value have negatively affected the number of women in political positions. Randall (2006) notes that the failure to integrate women and other sectors into the political process breeds doubts on the capacity of the political system when women are given the sole responsibility of representing the needs of women.

Women Empowerment Capacities through Political Participation in Turkey

Mustafa Kemal Ataturk emphasised the need for gender balance when he said “If a society does not wage a common struggle to attain a common goal with its women and men, scientifically there is no way for it to get civilized”. In 1934, the right to vote and be elected was given to women in Turkey. This breakthrough in Turkish politics came at the time when same rights were not given to women in many European states. Though a breakthrough, there is a wide gap between women in active politics and other women who consider it a distant reality. (Çelik & Lukuslu, 2012: 31). The participation of women at the initial stages was largely in issues of equality regarding domestic violence, labour force and restricted participation in education. A turnaround of events was witnessed when these issues were politicized by the organization of women. This led to the essential changes and development in the Turkish state. Ayata and Tutuncu (2008: 365) indicate that in the last decade feminists movements have played a critical role within the Turkish political landscape by both their demands and infiltration into political movements and parties. The trends had positive effects on the key legal changes, which affect the political, social and economic status of women. Despite the historical struggle, women continue to be under represented in Turkish politics. Stefan Fule (EU Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy) once remarked that there is a need for Turkey to make reforms that will see an increase in women in political activities. This is because Turkey compared to the EU average appears to lag behind in its effort to increase women political representation. Some 80 years after the introduction of women rights, less than 15% of women have made it to the Turkish parliament, to date.

A recent report published by the Global Gender Gap Report (GGGR) (2017) puts Turkey 131st on the list of 144 countries and 8th amongst the 17 Middle East and North African States. This report benchmarks national gender gaps on education, economic health and political criteria (GGGR, 2017: 3). The report explains that though Turkey sits on 131st position, it is progressing towards closing the gender gap in its legislator, senior official and manager positions. The only place where the gap keeps on widening is political empowerment (GGGR, 2017: 21). Among the G20 group of countries, Turkey falls behind France, Germany, United Kingdom, Canada, South Africa and Argentina.

Previous research on women’s political participation in Turkey has lamented the scanty number of women in the game. However after the local election of 2014 the following

distribution was witnessed across metropolitan municipality mayors, municipal councillors, village head positions: 3 out of 30 elected metropolitan municipality mayors, 37 out of 1,366 municipality mayors, 2,198 out of 20,498 municipal councillors and 58 out of 18,143 heads of village positions were held by women (TUIK, 2014: 137). It is also the case that women fall behind men with regard to political representation. The rate of women deputies in the state is 14.73 as of February 2016 (TBMM, 2016) and only two of the 16 ministers of state are women. Many studies have tried to outline some reasons for women remaining in the shadow of men. Data from 2014 revealed that 30.3% represents the participation of women in the workforce. The main reason for the low percentage is household chores (TUIK, 2014: 78–79).

Women representation in politics, political parties, government and among political leaders is limited despite the lack of sexist provisions concerning political rights. This is an indication that problems exist in the political rights implementation given to women to ensure equality with men (Caglar, 2011: 59). Various social, cultural, economic and political factors account for this. Factors preventing women from active participation in politics are low education levels in the rural areas especially, traditional patriarchal family relations, excessive political pressures of fathers, husbands, brother and other households, and most importantly financial constraints and lack of confidence (Doğramaci, 1997: 141 cited in Caglar, 2011: 65). Inadequate political parties' policies for women, their sexist methods and applications; their unwillingness to nominate a female candidate for the Turkish elections means that Tansu Ciller remains the only female to hold a prime minister position. Women who appear to have the potential for making female challenges heard in parliament are denied the chance of taking part in processes of making decisions. It is against this background that the Turkish state has made some assurance that it will develop policies as well as propose regulations and make them laws resulting from decisions, engagements and advices of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and later establishments like Organization For Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), International Labour Organization (ILO), European Social Charter and in accordance with the Action Plan of Cairo Conference on World Population Development (TUIK, 2014: XXIII). In some democracies, despite the constraints, women engage themselves with the women's wing of the political party they are affiliated to. However, studies on Turkish political parties have revealed that the effectiveness of women cannot be felt due to social and political reality in the branches of women that are not able to get an effective political activity (Altindal, 2007; Yaraman 1998). It is also mentioned that women appear to prioritize their party identities instead of their female identity without being mindful of the disparity between both ideologies. Again representatives working in the female branches find fulfilment in being seen in the political spectrum and so do not give attention to the issue of gender equality. They avoid being part of crucial political party decisions and only apply the decisions taken by the political party (Cakir, 2001: 407–408).

Alkan (2009: 35) also relates that the three main factors underlining the inadequate participation of women in Turkish politics are the existence of figurativeness in politics, the exclusion of locals from the political field of interest until recently, and the gross limitation of social mobility of women at the local community level. Spreading women's participation across all local politics and actively in the municipal, metropolitan, metropolitan municipal council, provincial council and village leadership level is a necessity for democratic consolidation, justice and vibrant governance. However, women are rarely seen in leadership positions after elections are held.

The most important significant indicator of women's participation in Turkish politics is their active involvement in province and metropolitan mayoral elections. Political parties more often only prefer that women join councillorship elections. Yavuzçehre and Öztepe (2016: 217)

summarize that though recent involvement of women in national and party politics has increased especially in the last four elections, there is much room for improvement. The participation of women will add to efforts to bridge the wide gender gap in the country. More importantly the participation of women in the processes of making decisions actively and equally with men is a necessity for a democratic consolidation since the local governments are the basic units of the executive that are closest to the public and therefore carry out local resources and services for supervision. To ensure these goals are reached, the level of education of women must increase, NGOs and local governments and female politicians should apply more sensitivity to female problems and female politics, as they take responsibility in resolving them. Women should also be given a quota so as to check the predominated male politics at the party level as central government endeavours to make legal regulations in a way that female empowerment related issues are implemented.

The Turkish government reforms and proposed policies to close the gender gap by ensuring more women participation in politics can also be considered as a way of negotiating to become a EU member (Bozkurt, 2010: 6). Yet, the Turkey report of the European Commission in 2018 mentions that women's participation in Turkey needs to be improved since Turkey's number of women in politics is below EU average (European Commission, 2018).

Women Empowerment Capacities through Political Participation in Nigeria

Though lagging behind in terms of women political participation, Nigeria's case is different from that of Turkey. When President Buhari said that his wife's position is in the kitchen and in his bedroom as his response to the public criticism she made about his government, many women showed their dissatisfaction.¹ The comments of the Nigerian President came at a time when people are tirelessly working to empower women. Meanwhile decades of struggle by international bodies via several declarations and charters to eliminate discrimination against women are yet to materialize in the Nigerian political dispensations. Before elections scores of women dominate rally grounds in the bid to campaign for their various parties. The presence of women in political rallies adds more colour to the political forums with their attention seeking party dresses, singing and shouting of party slogans.

Table 13.1 illustrates the state of women's political participation in Nigeria. Despite the fact that 50% percent of the Nigerian population is made up of women, Nigeria has the lowest number of females in politics in sub-Saharan Africa (Orisadare, 2018: 3). The return of Nigeria to democratic rule since 1999 has been marked by scores of women contesting for a plethora of political positions throughout the five successful elections the state has had. Unfortunately, results after elections showed poor performance by the women. A study on why women do not appear in political positions reveals that many women go through party registration but refuse to regularly participate in party caucuses and meetings during which important decisions are taken. The frightening nature of party congresses sometimes discourages women from participation. For this reason some women think that only women who are willing to be "dirty" and irresponsible would have the guts to attend such party gatherings (Ajogbeje, 2016: 72). Many women have gone through traditional gender violence. Some women who came out to contest the elections were however flagbearers of the least popular parties in the country. This creates the assumption that the more competitive parties cannot accommodate them. Out of the three women who participated in the Nigerian general election in 2003, two women represented the least popular party. Though the 2015 elections witnessed a decrease of violence meted out to females, the reality of the Nigerian election in some regions is that it is violent prone. Despite

the setbacks suffered by women in Nigeria, they still have the capacity to influence the voting pattern. In many cases however women do not even consider their fellow women as capable of leading the nation. They rather follow the trend of voting for men (Ajayi, 2005).

Table 13.1 Global comparison of percentage of women in national parliament as at 1st April 2018

<i>Averages</i>	<i>Lower Houses</i>	<i>Upper Houses</i>	<i>Both Houses</i>
World Average	23.8%	23.9%	23.8%
Sub-Saharan Africa	23.9%	23.1%	23.8%
Nigeria	5.6%	6.5%	6.1%

Source: Orisadare, 2018

Moreover, the existence of a powerful class of male political pundits in the Nigerian political system who have run the state historically has grossly undermined their participation and reduced the chances of women in Nigerian politics. Unlike in Rwanda where women have more than 50% parliamentary representation, the political game in Nigeria is such that men have dominated. In South Africa and Rwanda women are allowed to contest winnable seats at the party level to allow equitable distribution (Orisadare, 2018). If quota systems were to be implemented at the party level in Nigeria, an equitable distribution would be achieved quite quickly. For instance, a 35% minimum quota for women representation could be implemented. Quotas, however, are not enough although they can provide an impetus for further gender policies. The Canadian President Justin Trudeau, for instance, ensured gender equity in his government by appointing an equal number of men and women. In the Buhari government cabinet in Nigeria only 16 percent were women despite a national gender policy that assigned women a minimum of 35 percent. Nevertheless only 14 out of 360 House of Representative and 7 out of the 109 Senate seats are occupied by women (Orisadare, 2018: 12).

In Nigeria women only make up 20% of the formal business sector due to limited access to finance. Men on the other hand are more likely to get finance compared to women despite research that women are twice more likely to repay loans. Their financial constraints have further crippled their ability to provide needed collateral for loans. Attempts to strengthen their property rights through the Land Administration Act could not be materialized since ownership of land is still dependent on the patrilineal inheritance system, which favours only male.

The rights of women in Nigeria were greatly in jeopardy during the period 1914–1960s. The British policy during those years of colonization was informed by the English culture and traditions of a single sex political system, which was against the indigenous dual-sex political system (Olugbemi, 2011). The colonial masters at that time did not put any relevance on the contribution of women in the society. They also refused to appreciate the significant contribution of women in education and the traditional participation of women in public society affairs. The interesting aspect of women empowerment trends in those times was that Nigerian men recognized the contribution in social, economic and politics and for that matter became polygamous whilst their British colonial masters considered their wives as weak vessels. During those times of colonialism, Nigerian women formed the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) as the female political wing that rubbed shoulders with the political activities of men (Olugbemi, 2011). These are all indications that women were empowered during colonial periods and political spaces were available for their participation in national politics. They were

less influenced by the western world in their efforts to participate in national politics as they contributed to nationalism and independence attainment.

After years of independence many Nigerian women still continue to play important roles in politics. The problem is not coming out or vying for position but winning it. To ensure women join with their male counterparts in government, many states continue to adopt a gender quota system for public elections. Half of the states in the world today use some electoral quota for parliaments (Dahlerup, 2005). The international recommendations are believed to influence the use of the quota system. To close the structural gap quota systems are critical though they do not completely solve the problem. In some other democracies, quotas are in relation to bridging the gap about ethnicity, region, linguistics, religion, and gender. Quotas for women stipulate that a certain number of women should make up a certain number in a group, club, association or even government. The French government has one of the strongest local level quotas of 50% (Dahlerup, 2005). There is no clear gender quota for the Nigerian state but the National Gender Policy (NGP) aims at empowering women through basic education and the abolishment of traditional practices harmful for women. The main objective is to reduce gender biases, which are found in the traditional customs of the country. The initiative aims to achieve women empowerment for political capacity of women (Olufunke, 2013: 28). Both a public and private sector gender sensitive framework has been established for that purpose. It looked at achieving 35% of elected positions to be occupied by female gender by 2015. Unfortunately, the goal has not been actualized, so far. There is also evidence that the Women Affairs and Social Development Ministry has received a lower if not the lowest ministerial budgetary allocation from the national budget when compared with other ministries (Orisadare, 2018: 10). That is why the situation of women is so deplorable in Nigeria since while the women's population is around 100 million, 60% of the 75 million poor Nigerians are women (Orisadare, 2018: 11).

Although Saudi Arabia is considered oppressive especially in relation to its women, surprisingly it is showing much willingness to address women related political challenges having issued a decree in 2013 to introduce a 20% percent quota for the 150-member Shura Council as well as appoint 30 women to join the consultative assembly whereas Nigeria, a democratic nation and the largest black state on earth appears to lack clear and ground breaking policies to solve its political challenges concerning women's representation. Rwanda, a country that suffered near extinction due to genocide has a record of electing up to 64 percent of its women in parliamentary elections (Adaji, 2017: 1). South Africa, Nigeria's economic rival in Africa is competing with established powers like Britain whilst Nigeria remains with other states at the bottom.

Conclusion and Final Remarks

The two states under discussion appear to underperforming in their endeavours to ensure equitable representation of women in the individual states. Political dynamics of these two states are not the same but the economic strides achieved by both means that when other tenets of democratic consolidation like equality in political representation are achieved more development could be witnessed in them. Table 13.2 indicates that Turkey has almost twice the GDP of Nigeria despite abundant resources including oil in Nigeria. Nigeria has however, a huge workforce and it has double the population of Turkey. The population growth rate also indicates that Nigeria's population grows faster than that of Turkey. Whereas Nigeria's population sex ratio stands at 1.03 Turkey's population sex ratio stands at 0.97. The Human Capital Index score difference in between the states is only 9.27.

Table 13.2 Comparison of Turkey and Nigeria

	Turkey	Nigeria
GDP (US\$ billions)	857.75	405.08
GDP per capita (constant '11, intl. \$, PPP)	23,679.40	5,438.92
Total population (1,000s)	79,512.43	185,989.64
Population growth rate (%)	1.56	2.61
Population sex ratio (female/male)	0.97	1.03
Human Capital Index score	60.33	51.06

Source: The Global Gender Gap Report (GGGR) data

Table 13.3 illustrates the economic, educational, health and political empowerment scores of both countries. Though very developed in all three sectors, economic, education, and health, scores given show very little difference between the two states. With a GDP twice that of Nigeria, Turkey could have done far better than Nigeria.

Table 13.3 Comparison of Turkey and Nigeria according to the country scores for the four subindexes

TURKEY (T)/ NIGERIA (N)	T	N	T	N	T	N	T	N
	2006				2017			
	Rank		Score		Rank		Score	
Global Gender Gap Score	105	94	0.585	0.610	131	122	0.625	0.641
Economic participation and opportunity	106	59	0.434	0.612	128	37	0.471	0.728
Educational attainment	92	104	0.885	0.816	101	135	0.965	0.813
Health and survival	85	99	0.969	0.966	59	94	0.977	0.972
Political empowerment	96	99	0.052	0.049	118	135	0.088	0.052

Source: The Global Gender Gap Report (GGGR) data

Table 13.4 is an illustration of the political empowerment of both states. Though the political history and dynamics of the two states would not allow us to make fair comparison between them, the table illustrations indicate that both states score below 100. The two states have setbacks in women empowerment endeavours. One main difference is that Turkey was under colonial rule but has witnessed a series of coups d'état. On the other hand, Nigeria has experienced both. The colonial legacy as mentioned before rather had negative effects on the female empowerment setting in the Nigerian state. This was due to the political and cultural orientation of the colonizers prior to independence. Now that the colonial masters have gone through the enlightenment period and have resolved to close the gender gap, Nigeria is lagging behind in its effort to catch up with the other states. Both South Africa and Rwanda were

affected by the same colonial legacies but have done enough to ensure they can catch up with the world. The Turkish state, although developed and more powerful in terms of global politics, appears to be constrained by the traditional belief that women belong to the home.

Table 13.4 Comparison of Turkey and Nigeria regarding political empowerment index.

<i>TURKEY/NIGERIA</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>N</i>
	<i>2006</i>				<i>2017</i>			
	<i>Rank</i>		<i>Score</i>		<i>Rank</i>		<i>Score</i>	
Political empowerment	106	84	0.067	0.096	118	135	0.088	0.062
Women in parliament	105	115	0.10	0.08	108	139	0.171	0.059
Women in ministerial positions	123	45	0.04	0.29	135	103	0.040	0.136
Years with female head of state (last 50)	21	40	0.06	0.00	38	69	0.057	0.000

Source: The Global Gender Gap Report (GGGR) data.

This chapter brought together information from previous studies done on female empowerment and political participation in emerging power states with much emphasis on Turkey and Nigeria. The chapter acknowledged several setbacks in both states impeding women’s participation in national and local politics. In the case of Turkey, the lack of few women’s will to engage and encourage other women to join politics, the societal defined job of a woman to do house chores, and financial constraints are among the impediments. Though Turkey has not satisfied the gender equity demand of the EU, this is one of the foreign factors pushing the political will of the Turkish state to resolve female related issues that currently restrict women’s representation in the country. Nigeria on the other hand is characterized by violent elections in some areas, which discourages many females who want to actively join politics. This has resulted in some women thinking politics is dirty and reserved for only dishonourable people. The predomination of some men in the political game has also scared away women who are nursing political ambitions. In cases where women are allowed to contest, the seats are either difficult or even impossible to win. It is also observed that women are also constrained by finance. Though several different factors determine the level of finance needed to empower oneself for political representation it is evident that money is a problem. Both states have put measures in place but little significant progress has been made. The Nigerian government has reneged on the 35% minimum women representation whereas Turkey has done little to give a clear road map for women empowerment in the state. The other MINT members could come together, make the club a realistic one and try just like BRICS to make sure they progress economically as issues of women empowerment become paramount in doing so. Yet, currently neither Turkey nor Nigeria seem to be rising powers from the perspective of strengthened democracy through women’s political participation under the democratic development criteria, given the fact that their political empowerment ranks are 118 and 135 out of the 144 countries, respectively.

Note

- 1 Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari on a visit to Germany said: “I don’t know which party my wife belongs to, but she belongs to my kitchen and my living room and the other room”.

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