

PERCEPTION ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION INITIATIVE OF MINORITY GROUPS IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM OF OYO STATE

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to examine diversity and inclusion on political system in Oyo state. Purposive sampling was used to select 20 respondents to represent each ward that gives the total sample size of 200 respondents. Using descriptive research in primary data were collected and analysed using frequency count, percentage and bar chart. Findings indicated that while some progress has been made in promoting inclusivity—especially in terms of increased political participation by women and youth—there remain significant gaps in achieving full representation. In line with the findings above, the study suggested that the government ought to introduce and enforce gender quotas and youth representation requirements within political party structures and electoral processes to ensure that women, youth, and marginalized groups have greater access to leadership positions.

Keyword: Government, Political Diversity, Political Inclusion, Politics, Political System.

How to Cite: Akinyemi, J. A.; Ilori, G. K. and Olawuyi, E. O. (2025). Perception on diversity and inclusion initiative of minority groups in the political system of Oyo state. *OYSCATECH Journal of Management, Economics, and Communication Studies*, 3(1), 25-31. <https://oyscatechpublications.org/>

Introduction

There is not just one legally accepted definition of politics but a wide range of definitions. In other words, the term has a great number of acceptable and legitimate meanings. As such, politics is a loaded term. Even respected authorities cannot agree on what the subject is all about. But if political scientist speaks of socialism, conservatism, liberalism, politics, then everyone of his audience places on those his own personal interpretation, they have different opinions and therefore, it is difficult to achieve agreement between them. (Miller, 2002)

Politics has been described in such different ways: as the exercise of power, exercise of authority, the making of collective decisions, the allocation of scarce resources, the practice of deception and manipulation, and so on (A. Heywood, 2017). Political situations arise out of disagreement which provides the basis for politics. The disagreement arises from fundamental differences of condition, status, power, opinion, and aim. People have different opinions, viewpoints and make different judgments but differed from each other in such a variety of ways that it would be impossible to achieve agreement about everything.

People disagree on how the limited resources which are available to the society should be distributed. Should political power be concentrated in the hands of a few leaders? Or should it be widely dispersed among the members of a society? Should everything be shared equally? For example, do some people deserve a bigger share than others? Since it is possible to increase the resources available to a group (by conquest, technological advance or better management of existing resources), further questions arise.

Nigeria is a country characterized by significant ethnic and cultural diversity making the current system struggles to incorporate a broad range of voices and perspectives. This leads to several key problems in minority groups, women, and youth often find themselves excluded from political participation. These issues hinder Nigeria's democratic development and prevent the government from effectively addressing the needs of its diverse citizenry.

Nigeria's vibrant tapestry of ethnicities, cultures, and voices deserves a political system that reflects its richness. However, the current system falls short, hindering both democratic progress and effective governance. A comprehensive study on diversity and inclusion initiatives is crucial for a diverse and inclusive political system, to foster a more robust democracy. When a wider range of voices are heard and represented, policies are more likely to reflect the needs of the entire population, leading to greater legitimacy and public trust. Inclusion fosters a sense of belonging and reduces social tensions. When diverse groups feel they have a stake in the political process, they are more likely to work together for the common good. This can lead to greater stability and national unity and Diversity of perspectives leads to better decision-making.

This study examined the challenges of achieving diversity and inclusion within Nigeria's political system. The study analysed the current level of representation of various

minority groups in government institutions and political parties and identify the factors that hinder participation in the political process, such as social norms, economic limitations, and political party structures.

The scope excluded delving into the intricacies of specific political parties or individual political figures. The focus will remain on the broader systemic issues that impede diversity and inclusion. This study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities for creating a more inclusive political system in Oyo State, using Ibarapa Central Local Government as a case study.

Research Methodology

The design for the study was survey method, considering the nature of the survey method. This is more appropriate because the researcher is interested in observing what was happening to sample subject without any attempt to manipulate them. Although, the researcher went through a lot during (the time) distributing the questionnaire to the inhabitants and partisan politicians at Ibarapa Central Local Government areas in which it is distributed randomly through the ten (10) wards in Ibarapa Central Local Government areas to help fill the questionnaire. Nevertheless, the basis of research design was to examine diversity and inclusion initiative on political system in Ibarapa Central Local Government area of Oyo State, Nigeria.

The techniques employed in choosing the target population is purposive sampling technique. The purposive sampling techniques helps the researcher to reach the sampled-on purposes. The study area consists of 10 wards. Hence, 20 respondents were randomly chosen to represent each ward. This gives the total sample size of 200 respondents.

The data collected for this study were analysed using descriptive method such as bar chart, frequency count, percentage and histogram. The study hypothesis was however tested using inferential method of chi-square. All

analyses were carried out through the use of Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS).

This was to ensure objectivity accuracy and validity of research findings.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents by socioeconomic characteristics (n= 200)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Gender			
Male	140	70.0	
Female	60	30.0	
Age			
Less than 30	74	37.0	
30 – 49	26	13.0	
49 – 60	64	32.0	57
Above 60	36	18.0	
Educational status			
SSCE	34	17.0	
OND/NCE	66	33.0	
HND/BSc	92	46.0	
MSc	8	4.0	
Years in Politics			
Less than 10	92	46.0	
Above 10 years	108	54.0	17.8
Total	200	100.0	

Field Survey, 2025

2. Effects of Political Diversity in Oyo State

The distribution of the respondents based on the effects of political diversity in Oyo State was presented in Table 2. Majority (90.0%) of the respondents affirmed that political diversity encourages difficulty in decision making in the study area while 10% disagreed with the statement. In addition, 60.0% and 50.0% of the respondents strongly agreed that

political diversity causes ethnic/religious tension and leads to political polarization in the study area respectively.

On the contrary, 3.0%, and 2.0% of the respondents strongly disagreed that political diversity causes ethnic/religious tension and leads to political polarisation in the study area respectively.

Table 2: Effects of Political Diversity in the Study Area (n=200)

S/N	Effects of Political Diversity in the Oyo State	SA	A	D	SD
		Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)
1	It encourages difficulty in decision making	80 (40.0)	100 (50.0)	10 (5.0)	5 (5.0)
2	It causes ethnic and religious tension	120 (60.0)	70 (35.0)	6 (3.0)	4 (2.0)
3	It leads to political polarization	100 (50.0)	90 (45.0)	6 (3.0)	4 (2.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Percentages are in parentheses

3. Perception of Inclusive Initiative in Oyo State Politics

The distribution of the respondents based on the perception of inclusive initiative in Oyo State politics is presented in Table 3. All (100.0%) of the respondents affirmed that inclusive initiatives in Oyo State politics

encourage participation from underrepresented groups. Furthermore, 55.0% and 50.0% of the respondents strongly agreed that inclusive initiations in Oyo State politics will encourage gender quotas and lead to inclusive policy-making in the study area.

Table 3: Perception of Inclusive Initiative in Oyo State Politics (n=200)

S/N	Effects of Political Diversity in the Oyo State	SA	A	D	SD
		Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)
1	It encourages participation from an underrepresented group	100 (50.0)	100 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
2	It encourages gender quotas	110 (55.0)	90 (45.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
3	It leads to inclusive policy-making	110 (55.0)	80 (40.0)	6 (3.0)	4 (2.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Percentages are in parentheses

4. Prospects in Diversification of the Economic System of Oyo State

Table 4 revealed the distribution of respondents based on their perceived prospects for economic diversification in Oyo State. The respondents strongly agreed that diversification prospects of the economic system in the study area include results in clear

policies and implementation (50%) and increment in government revenue (55.0%) while 50% and 45.0% of the respondents claimed that economic system diversification in Oyo State results to clear policies and implementation and increases government revenue respectively.

Table 4: Prospects in diversification of economic system in the Study Area (n=200)

S/N	Effects of Political Diversity in the Oyo State	SA	A	D	SD
		Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)
1	It results in clear policies and implementation	100 (50.0)	100 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
2	It increases government revenue	110 (55.0)	90 (45.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Percentages are in parentheses

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the study were tested and the results are presented below. It is to be noted that all the hypotheses were stated in null form.

H01: There is no significant relationship between diversity and inclusion initiatives in the political system of Oyo state

The test of the significant relationship between diversity and inclusion initiatives in the political system of Oyo state is presented in Table 5. All the variables are revealed to be

positively correlated with one another. Political Diversity has a positive relationship with Difficulty in decision-making, Ethnic/Religious tension and Political polarisation with probability values of 0.713, 0.775 and 0.831 respectively. Difficulty in decision-making has a low positive

relationship between Ethnic/Religious tension and Political polarisation with probability values of 0.804 and 0.801. Ethnic/Religious tension and Political polarisation have a positive relationship with a probability value of 0.804.

Table 5: Correlation on the test of significant relationship between diversity and inclusion initiatives in the political system of Oyo state.

		Political Diversity	Difficulty in Decision	Ethnic/Religious tension	Political polarization
Pearson Correlation	Political Diversity	1.000	0.713	0.775	0.831
	Difficulty in decision making	0.713	1.000	0.804	0.800
	Ethnic/Religious tension	0.775	0.807	1.000	0.801
	Political polarization	0.831	0.801	0.804	1.000

Source: Field Survey, 2025

H02: Government initiatives does not influence the diversity and inclusion of the political system of Oyo state

Table 6 shows the P-value at which 95% confidence interval or 5% level of the significance level is chosen for the study. As such, the p-value should be less than 0.05. In the above table, it is .000. Hence, the result is significant. The F-ratio in the table represents an improvement in the prediction of the variable by fitting the model after considering the inaccuracy present in the model. If the null hypothesis is true F-ratio will be close to 1.0

while there will be large F-ratio when the null hypothesis is wrong (Zar, 2022). In the above table, the value is 41.150, which shows that the independent variables statistically significantly predict the dependent variable, $F(1, 68) = 41.150$, $p < .05$. These results estimate that as the p-value of the above table is below the tolerable significance level, thus there is a possibility of rejecting the null hypothesis in further analysis. Hence, government initiatives have a significant influence on the diversity and inclusive initiative in the political system of Oyo State.

Table 6: Government initiatives does not influence the diversity and inclusion of the political system of Oyo state

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	31.188	3	10.396	100.178	.000 ^b
	Residual	9.562	96	.104		
	Total	41.150	99			

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Study Summary

Nigeria, a nation rich in ethnic and cultural diversity, faces a significant challenge in ensuring its political system reflects that richness. The current system struggles to incorporate a broad range of voices and perspectives, leading to several key problems in minority groups, women, and youth often find themselves excluded from political participation. This study ascertains diversity and inclusion initiatives in the political system in Oyo state. The specific objectives are to ascertain the socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents, investigate the effects of political diversity, inclusive initiations in politics in and the prospects of diversification in the economic system of Oyo state.

The result shows that majority (70.0%) are male while the other 30.0% of the sampling population are female. The result shows that males dominate the political office holders in the study area. In addition, 37.0% of respondents are aged 30 years and below, 13.0% of the respondents fall within the age range of 30 – 49 years while 18.0% of respondents were above 60 years of age with the mean age of the respondents estimated at 57 years. This revealed that the majority (65.2%) of the respondents are still in their active age. The distribution of the respondents based on educational level revealed that 17.0% of the respondents had SSCE, while 83.0% of them had either OND/NCE, BSc or MSc education. Furthermore, majority (90.0%) of the respondents affirmed that political diversity encourages difficulty in decision-making in the study area while 10% disagreed with the statement. In addition, 60.0% and 50.0% of the respondents strongly agreed political diversity causes ethnic/religious tension and leads to political polarization in the study area respectively.

Inclusivity in policy-making is limited, with many policies not addressing the specific needs of these groups. Barriers such as cultural biases and socio-economic inequalities continue to hinder political participation,

particularly for women and youth. Political diversity has positively impacted governance in some areas, leading to more inclusive decision-making, though its effects are uneven. Resource allocation remains inequitable, with rural and disadvantaged communities often receiving fewer benefits. Social cohesion is also affected, as the exclusion of certain groups from political processes contributes to tensions among ethnic, religious, and political factions. Overall, stronger diversity and inclusion initiatives are needed to achieve equitable representation and resource distribution.

Concluding Remarks

This study has explored the diversity and inclusion initiatives within the political system of Oyo State, emphasizing their impact on governance, representation, and policy development. The findings indicate that while some progress has been made in promoting inclusivity—especially in terms of increased political participation by women and youth—there remain significant gaps in achieving full representation and equitable resource distribution. Barriers such as socio-economic disparities, cultural biases, and structural inequalities continue to hinder certain demographic groups, particularly women, youth, and marginalised communities, from accessing equal opportunities in the political sphere. Political diversity is key to fostering social cohesion and inclusive development, yet more deliberate efforts are required to ensure a truly representative and fair political system in Oyo

Policy Recommendations

Introduce and enforce gender quotas and youth representation requirements within political party structures and electoral processes to ensure that women, youth, and marginalised groups have greater access to leadership positions.

Political parties should establish internal diversity policies, including training

programmes and mentorship initiatives, to prepare underrepresented groups for leadership roles.

Support civic organizations that promote political inclusion and provide platforms for underrepresented groups to voice their concerns and advocate for change.

Ensure that policy-making processes are inclusive by engaging representatives from diverse demographic groups in consultations, discussions, and decision-making. This will result in more equitable and inclusive policies that address the needs of all sectors of society. Strengthen diversity and inclusion training for public officials and policymakers to foster a culture of inclusivity in governance.

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