

STRATEGIC METRICS FOR ASSESSING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated strategic metrics for assessing diversity, equity, and inclusion in political appointments in Nigeria. The study was mainly anchored on the intersectionality Framework and the representative bureaucracy theories. The library research design, which centres on gathering and collating secondary and archival sources like books, journals, articles, gazettes, publications, digital and online materials, was adopted for this study. Detailed discussions of the objectives and key aspects of the subject matter helped in bringing to light critical findings of the study, which revealed that the absence of committed leadership, weak and ineffective institutions are major factors hindering the application of strategic metrics to assessing equity, diversity, and inclusion in Nigeria's political appointments. It was also found that application of the equity ratio, ensuring inclusiveness with sincerity of purpose as well as maximizing the creativity that is inherent in diversity, is germane to engendering equitable distribution of political appointments in Nigeria. It was therefore recommended that strategic leadership built on strong and effective institutions, capable of establishing meritocracy, and encouraging even political participation in Nigeria, should be on the ground.

KEYWORDS: Strategic metrics, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Political appointment, and Meritocracy.

INTRODUCTION

The political appointment process in Nigeria is often marred by inequities, with certain individuals or groups receiving preferential treatment. This act of

unfairness has bred a system where merit is no longer the primary parameter or metric for considering competence, giving room to lack of trust in institutions, disillusionment, and apathy among the citizenry in their various participations in political activities (Idike, 2014).

In all civilised societies, the allocation of resources bordering on “who” gets “what” has been a critical strategic success factor that enhances the growth and continuity of such societies, when the allocations are being done without biases. To ensure the mitigation or eradication of such biases, certain metrics otherwise known as “canons for political appointments and inclusion” must be followed (Ibeanu, Okoye & Aniche, 2022). Strategic metrics for assessing diversity, equity and inclusion which border on the representation of women, youth and persons with disabilities in political appointments in Nigeria, have been a crucial phenomenon right from the era of agitating for self-rule and independence from the colonial masters, to the clamouring for regional governance by indigenous elites and the eventual zoning of leadership of the country and certain sensitive offices and positions to some geographical regions and groups (Klarsfeld, Booysen & Tatli, 2014). The need for equitable inclusion that could bridge the existing diversity in the Nigerian political space, given its integral role in development, has elicited national interest, because Nigeria is a multicultural country (<https://www.researchgate.net>). The relevance of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in governance and, by extension, politics, cannot be wished away, as it directly influences the representation, participation, and well-being of the multicultural groups within the various geographical populations of Nigeria (Klarsfeld, 2014).

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as critical aspects in the scheme of appointment in Nigerian politics play a significant and strategic role in the evaluation and inclusivity that exist in the representation of the diverse cultural and geographical groups that make up Nigeria. Unfortunately, most of these diverse cultural and geographical groups are either underrepresented or marginalized in political, economic, and social matters of local or national interest. The importance of these metrics and canons is critically strategic to aiding the identification of areas of disparities in terms of resource allocation, tracking progress of efforts put into developmental causes over time, and informing data-driven decisions that would fast-track national cohesion and promote equity and inclusion among underrepresented or marginalized groups (Mitra, 2023). The critical nature of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as strategic parameters for assessing political appointments in Nigeria is further heightened due to the diverse population and

complex political underpinnings. The application of the (DEI) metrics or canons enables and empowers stakeholders and other political actors to be equipped with the necessary and needed strategic tools to put in place and promote greater representation, equity, and inclusion in governance, thereby contributing immensely to a much more just, equitable, and an all-inclusive political society (Ganesh,2024).

The effectiveness of every political appointment is hinged on certain key performance indicators (KPIs) that are well driven by diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) metrics. Prominent among these metrics according to Boogaard(2024), are: The diversity index(it measures the representation of various groups, using parameters such as ethnicity, gender, age and disability status, to measure level of inclusivity), equity ratio(the evaluation of fairness that exists in every opportunity, using parameters such as unbiased treatment that would ensure equal access to appointments and career advancements), inclusion score(the assessment of inclusivity of opportunities using parameters such as transparency, accountability and inclusive participation) and turnover rate (Tracking the rate of departure among appointed officials from underrepresented groups, indicating potential issues with inclusion or equity).

Nigeria's political landscape, equity, and diversity as terms are intertwined. Equity refers to the principle of fairness and justice in the distribution of resources, opportunities, and representations. It is about ensuring that all individuals and groups have equal access to participate, contribute, and benefit from various aspects of society, including education, healthcare, employment, and governance (Yoshino, 2006). Diversity, on the other hand, is the acknowledgement of the values and differences that exist among Nigeria's diverse population, including the ethnic, cultural, religious, and socio-economic underpinnings. Politically, diversity should engender the promotion of inclusivity and representation of various groups in the areas of decision-making, allocating positions, and policy-making processes (Wilkerson, 2020). The effective interplay of these factors in every political activity could give room to the inclusion of appointments of individuals and groups from various geographical regions, enclaves, or areas of Nigeria.

Various objectives guided this study. Prominent amongst them is the need to identify and evaluate existing metrics used in assessing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the process of political appointments in Nigeria. This objective focuses on the current parameters used by political actors in measuring DEI in Nigerian political appointments. Critical amongst these is the federal character principle (FCP). It requires that appointments to public offices reflect the country's

diverse ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups. It further harnesses equitable representation of the country's six geo-political zones, balanced ethnic and religious beliefs, and a fair quota system in political appointments of individuals in terms of gender representation, youth, and the disabled in public offices (Sulaiman & Lawal, 2023).

Closely related to the above is the need to develop a comprehensive set of strategic metrics for assessing DEI in Nigerian political appointments. In advancing this objective, the need to seek and create a robust context-specific framework for measuring DEI in Nigerian political appointments becomes germane. For instance, a tailored set of metrics as readily discussed above is integral in assisting policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders to accurately assess the efforts of DEI, identify areas for improvement, and track progress over time. Nonetheless, examining the relationship between DEI metrics and good governance outcomes in Nigeria is one of the major objectives that informed this study.

Investigating the impact of DEI on the outcome of governance in terms of transparency, accountability, and responsiveness cannot be wished away in a study of this nature. How DEI impacts, redirects, and influences operations in governance to embrace transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to the yearnings and clamours of the marginally disadvantaged in the process of political appointments and activities is pivotal to every inclusive and democratic government, of which Nigeria as a country is not exempt.

Significantly, this study will enhance a more nuanced understanding of DEI in Nigerian political appointments, as well as create the long-awaited interventions that would engender the increase of representation and inclusion of marginalised and underrepresented groups. Similarly, the effectiveness of DEI metrics will enable this study to support policymakers in arriving at informed decisions that engender good governance and improve public trust in government-owned institutions.

The dire need for context-based solutions and specified recommendations for Nigeria's situations in terms of DEI is critical, taking cognizance of the country's uniqueness in cultural, social, and political stance. This would likely increase the chances of successful implementation and, by extension, the positive impact of these context-based solutions.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The issues associated with the problem of widened diversity, inadequate equity, and inclusion in Nigeria's political processes and appointments have been a

huge challenge that calls for holistic attention between political and non-political actors in the Nigerian political landscape. Nigerian political landscape and processes are littered with biases and sentiments, which exclude equal representation and inclusivity, creating limitations in the democratic principles and potency of Nigeria as a state. The aftermath of the above sentiments finds expression in the ineffective cum weak rule of law system, which has been a threat to national development, especially in the aspect of political appointments, where there have been gross failures and inadequacies in reflecting Nigeria's diversity in terms of geographical zones that have been grossly underrepresented or marginalized intentionally. This has made it difficult to maximize the uniqueness inherent in our various geographical locations to advance a unified country, capable of addressing the myriads of issues that emanate from poor decision-making and policy formulation from irresponsible governance in recent times (Adeleye & Atowologun, 2014).

The political processes and parameters that govern the appointment processes appear to be laden with biases, inequities, and fraudulent underpinnings, with certain quarters receiving preferential treatment to the detriment of others, giving room to political moral failings and lack of trust in Nigerian governments (Ezeneme, Uduegbunam & Nwokike, 2025). This failure in trust and absence of inclusion reflects a system where merit is no longer considered, an act that has given rise to a lack in the aspect of trust in institutions and loss of integrity among the citizenry. Similarly, in the area of inclusivity, certain groups like; women, people with disabilities, minorities and certain ethnic groups seem to be marginalized, this alone to a large extent, undermines and limits the passion and zeal that drives inclusivity and participation in legitimate and democratic institutions by the undermined, thereby encouraging inequalities in social and economic parlance, negating the concept of democracy and adequate participation and representation of citizens (Igiebor, 2024). Crucial among these problems is the absence of strategic metrics of accountability and transparent mechanisms in Nigeria's political processes and appointments. This perpetuates moral decadence and a culture of impunity that relegates every sincere effort to project equity, diversity, and inclusion in Nigerian political processes and appointments. Consequently, these inadequacies have not been operational, given the existence of weak institutions in Nigeria at the beck and call of "strong individuals" (Okibe, 2020). This study, therefore, primarily examined the effectiveness of strategic metrics put in place to ensure national unity in Nigeria in line with best global practices, giving utmost attention to equity, diversity, and

inclusion in political activities and processes, especially in the aspects of political appointments, resource allocation, and the representation of groups' interests.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OF STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

The concept of strategic assessment explains the processes and techniques employed by organisations to evaluate their internal and external environments in relation to their activities to identify their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) (Humphrey, 1996). It borders assessing and analysing numerous factors, such as, market trends (happenings in activities), competitors' activities (What happens in the activities of their counterparts), Customers' needs (immediate & distant clamours, aspirations of recipients of their activities) and organizational capabilities (Presence of adequate resources: Human, material, machines and money) to pilot strategic-decision-making. In the context of political appointments, strategic assessment is a critical component of shaping the entire activities of political parties, ranging from information gathering, planning, execution, monitoring, evaluating, and getting feedback. It is a critical component that helps organisations, including political parties, to identify potential opportunities and threats in their activities, evaluate their internal capabilities and resources to engage in certain activities, develop informed strategic plans and decisions to galvanise their operations, and establish contingent and aligned techniques to monitor and adjust their activities as the need arises (Porter, 1980). Strategic assessment borders on multifaceted techniques put in place by organisations to monitor and evaluate their activities or offerings, using certain key performance indicators (KPIs) or parameters to measure performance or success.

UNDERSTANDING DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

The challenges of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the Nigerian political space and processes, especially in appointment, have engendered a lack of trust in leadership and political activities in the Nigerian citizenry. From the colonial era to the regional and eventually as an independent state, the issue of DEI in Nigerian political activities has remained an unsolved problem. The political history of Nigeria, both as a geographical area and as an independent state, has been riddled by non-inclusive practices that marginalise the youth, women, and persons with disabilities. Political parties in their activities have further widened the gap of

exclusivity by their failures to provide spaces or comprehensive track records that would include the underrepresented to ensure their representation for economic provisions and policy implementations.

The transition to civil rule in 1999 marked the eventual return to democracy, with the renewal of hope and focus on promoting inclusive governance; unfortunately, progress in this direction has been low. Despite past and recent efforts to promote inclusion in Nigerian political activities, the aspect of appointment has remained dominated by a select few elites often referred to as “cabals” (Ezeani et al, 2024). In the context of political appointments in Nigeria, diversity refers to the representation of various groups, interests, and identities in appointment positions. It borders on areas such as: Gender diversity (ensuring that women are represented in positions of appointments, addressing the historical imbalances and underrepresentation of women in Nigerian politics). Diversity, according to Ojo (2015), is of two major types: ethnic and geographical diversity. Ethnic diversity is the representation of the various ethnic groups in Nigeria, for the sole purpose of promoting inclusivity and addressing the issues of diversity such as population, language and cultural differences that exist among a group of people in the country, While geographical diversity is ensuring that appointed officials representing different regions and zones, do so with a holistic and utmost sincerity of purpose, promoting regional balance and addressing the unique needs of various areas. These representations serve as metrics for assessing how best the issues pertaining to diversities are being addressed when matters concerning political appointments in Nigerian politics that border on ethnic groups and geographical locations in Nigeria are being discussed.

Disability inclusion, in the opinion of Agbaje (2016), is ensuring that people with disabilities are represented in positions of appointment, promoting equal opportunities, and addressing the unique challenges faced by such groups. Disability inclusion serves as a formidable metric to checkmating the exclusion of disabled persons from their legal rights in contributing their political quota to Nigerian development, when it comes to political appointments. Youth representation borders on ensuring that young people are represented in positions of appointment, promoting intergenerational dialogue, and addressing the unique needs and perspectives of younger Nigerians (Anifowose, 2017). The promotion of the aspirations, needs, and yearnings that concern marginalised groups in the political processes of Nigeria, especially in the aspect of political appointments, is crucial to ensuring inclusivity in a multicultural country like Nigeria. Diversity, equity, and

inclusion in these perspectives can be seen as parameters to ensuring the smooth sailing of political activities and processes across various groups' interests, as it concerns their collective developmental needs. The realization of inclusive diversity in political appointments is vital to the promotion and overall inclusive governance, for the sole aim of addressing the needs of diverse groups and building a much more equitable society. Deliberate efforts are required to identify and address biases, to ensure equal opportunities and holistic promotion of diverse groups' representation in political appointments.

The Westminster Foundation for democracy (WFD) and the National Institute for Legislative and democratic studies (NILDS) (2023) conducted a study on "inclusivity and participation of women, young people and persons with disabilities in political activities." It was found that political parties in Nigeria have not yet facilitated inclusion among their members, particularly women, youth, and persons with disabilities. It was recommended that frameworks and strategies capable of ensuring holistic representation of marginalized groups should form the basis of political parties' manifestos in Nigeria. Closely related to the challenges posed by the absence of an institutional framework is the issue of cultural and social barriers. NILDS (2023) conducted a study on "cultural and social imbalances amongst marginalized groups," and its major finding revealed that there was a high level of exclusionary practices in the political appointment processes of Nigerian political parties. It was recommended that the gap that limits access to resources, as it borders on unequal exposure to economic opportunities and education on the part of the underrepresented groups, should be bridged. Relatedly, the study of Yohanna and Malagwi (2022) titled, "They called us senseless beggars," investigated the manner of treatment and the attendant exclusion meted out on persons with disabilities in Nigeria. Findings of the study showed that various barriers, such as physical, attitudinal, and institutional barriers, mainly prevent persons with disabilities from participating in political activities in Nigeria. It was recommended that special agencies in the form of interventions be established by governments in all tiers to arrest this growing trend.

Similarly, Akanji (2020) conducted a study titled "Assessing diversity and inclusion in Nigerian Politics: A critical analysis." The study provided a critical analysis of diversity and inclusion in Nigerian Politics, traversing the historical and contemporary contexts of Nigerian politics as well as highlighting inherent opportunities and challenges. Findings showed that limited representations, exclusionary practices, and institutional barriers are major factors that inhibit the

holistic representation of marginalized groups. It was recommended that a comprehensive approach is required to address the root cause of exclusion and marginalisation in Nigerian politics. Olutola (2019) carried out a study titled “Diversity, equity, and inclusion in Nigerian public service: Challenges and prospects.” The study examined the challenges and prospects of promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Nigerian public service, with a strong focus on leadership roles and institutional culture in promoting diversity and inclusion. Findings revealed that committed leadership, formidable institutional culture, and on-the-job training and development are critical factors in driving inclusivity in the Nigerian public service. It was therefore recommended that sustained commitment to leadership, institutional culture, and continuous on-the-job training are essential to the promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Nigerian public service. Oyinloye (2018) conducted a study on “Promoting diversity and inclusion in Nigerian politics: A framework for action.” The study proposed a framework for promoting diversity and inclusion in Nigerian politics, with a major thrust on issues that address the root causes of exclusion and marginalization. Findings showed that comprehensive approaches, institutional reforms, and engagement of the civil society with sincerity of purpose are crucial steps for promoting diversity and inclusion in Nigerian politics. It was recommended that promoting diversity and inclusivity in Nigerian politics must be hinged on sustained commitment that borders on comprehensive approaches that address the root causes of exclusion and marginalization.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The intersectionality framework and the representative bureaucracy theories are two theories adopted for this study. The intersectionality framework was developed by Kimberly Crenshaw, an American civil rights advocate, in 1989. The theory is a critical framework that examines how different social identities, gender, ethnicity, and disability intersect to engender unique experiences of discrimination and marginalization (Asiyanbi, 2025). The theory is a formidable tool for analysing how different social amenities intersect to affect the experiences of individuals and groups in the Nigerian political landscape. The theory finds alignment with this study because, in the context of political appointments, intersectionality plays a vital role in helping to understand how metrics like gender, ethnicity, disability, and socioeconomic statuses intersect to influence an individual’s chances of being

appointed into a particular political position. For instance, a woman from a minority ethnic group may face unique challenges in securing a political appointment, given to both gender and ethnic biases. Also, an individual with disability may be faced with tougher barriers to political appointments due to doubts about his or her ability and lack of accessibility to vital social networking. This theory also considers how different forms of oppression could be meted out to people vying for political positions in Nigeria. Women who are of a low-income background may face both sexism and classism in their pursuit of political appointments. The theory can also be used to analyse the gender and ethnic composition of political appointees. Through it, certain revelations and patterns of exclusion and marginalization in the representation of various groups in Nigeria's political appointments will come to light. Overall, the theory provides policymakers through the intersectional lens the ability to identify and address unique barriers faced by different minority groups, like women and persons with disabilities. It also offers nuanced and powerful approaches to understanding the complex dynamics of political appointments in Nigeria.

The representative bureaucracy theory propounded by the American political scientist, Donald Kingsley, in 1994, borders on the concept of bureaucratic representation. The theory suggests that a bureaucratic process should reflect the demographic characteristics of the population it serves (Ezeji, Ozigbo, Ezewankwor & Agama, 2024). In the Nigerian context, this theory is particularly relevant to addressing the diverse ethnic and cultural landscape. In applying this theory to the political appointments in Nigeria, the theory seems to align with the federal character principle (FCP) by promoting representative bureaucracy, which ensures that public institutions reflect the country's ethnic, geographic, and cultural diversities. However, the FCP has been seen by critics in Nigeria as a practice that has been compromised by political clientelism, where national politics is approached with ethnic mindsets, appointments are being based on loyalty and patronage, rather than merit (Ezeani, Okoye & Akov, 2024). Overall, representative bureaucracy theory offers valuable insights into the importance of diversity and representation in public institutions. However, in the Nigerian context, it is challenging to implement this theory in practice, particularly in the context of ethnic politics and patronage.

METHODOLOGY

The library research design is the accepted research methodology for this study. As a qualitative research approach, it considers the secondary data sources to

arrive at a position of discourse (Asemah, Ekharefo, Gujbawu & Okpanachi, 2017; Arijeniwa, Pepple & Asemah, 2023). In consonance with the above, the study relied on secondary materials such as books, magazines, and webzines, newspapers, and articles in book chapters, journals, and online materials that report on appointments and issues in inclusivity. A thematic data analysis that aligned with the structured themes of the subject matter was adopted. Data were extracted from newspapers and articles, journals, and online materials. These data were assigned codes relating to the research questions, from which clear and concise themes that reflect the data were analysed, informing the discussion of findings below.

DISCUSSIONS

How Marginalisation Takes Place in Nigerian Political Appointments

Young persons (Youth), women, and persons with disabilities have been the most marginalised in the political activities and processes in Nigeria. This marginalisation often plays out in the form of underrepresentation, political apathy, inequity, and continuous exclusivity that separate these groups from the Nigerian political appointments. Young persons (Youth) have suffered huge underrepresentation that has relegated them to the background in the scheme of things in Nigerian political processes, especially in the aspects of appointments into offices (Ezeani et al, 2024). In 2020, immediately after the #EndSARS protest, President Muhammadu Buhari launched the Presidential Empowerment of individuals in the Nigerian political space, which has been negatively affected by recurring biases and sentiments that underpin the processes of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Despite the introduction of the federal character principle, the strategic metrics that unify the geopolitical zones of the country have been manipulated by a few political individuals referred to as “cabals”, in pursuance of their selfish and personal interests (Atewologun et al, 2014). The continuity of this practice has gone a long way to frustrate laudable efforts put in place by successive governments and well-meaning individuals. Ezeani et al (2024) note that the bureaucratic process of the federal character principle (FCP) and other metrics do not reflect the demographic characteristics of the Nigerian populace, which is the foundation of marginalization in Nigerian political appointments.

The Climate of Political Appointments in Nigeria

Unfortunately, the issue of deep-seated cultural and social barriers in the Nigerian political activities, coupled with insincerity of purpose on the part of the

leadership, has not allowed the above measuring parameters and their associated initiatives to see the light of the day, the aftermath of this is the ever increasing and continuous exclusion of young persons from political appointments across all tiers of government as well as absence of equity, broadening the exclusion gap (Nduka, 2022). The failure to sincerely commit the above parameters to the affairs of young persons in the aspect of politics has necessitated the heightened rate of crime and other negative vices among the youth in recent times (Vite, Stephen, Gbimoiye & Kabee, 2020) On the other hand, women have been grossly underrepresented in Nigerian political appointments in the past and present, owing to socioeconomic and cultural factors. Most women do not have the opportunity to connect with the right sphere of influence that would broaden or enlighten their political zeal or participation. Again, cultural and religious factors have also impeded women's inclusion in Nigerian politics and appointments (Henry, Rose & Amoge, 2023). For instance, in certain Nigerian states like Ebonyi in the South-south and Bauchi in North-central Nigeria, Women's exclusion from political appointments has its negative toll on these states' development (United Nations' Statistics Division, UNSD, 2015). However, with the recent push through platforms like women's emancipation, the proportion of women's representation in Nigerian political appointments has risen from 3.1% in the year 2000 to 7.5% in the year 2008 (<https://www.researchgate.Net>, 2023.Doi:10:4314/ajpas.v).

Relegation of Strategic Approaches

The challenges faced by persons with disabilities in Nigerian political appointments are rising with every passing day. This is due to their continued exclusion from political activities and offices that would have helped in providing for them, a special and better sphere of influence, and an evergreen sense of belonging. This physical barrier has impeded the holistic representation and their eventual appointments into political offices.

Ethnicity biases

Attitudinal, language, and cultural barriers, poor representation, lack of access to resources due to their minority status, lack of access to education, and untimely information are all ethnic biases that militate against the rights of inclusivity of persons with disabilities in terms of political appointments in Nigeria (Yohanna, 2020). Ordinarily, every marginalized group, individual, or geographical zone should be seen and felt for as a national rather than ethnic enclave. In recent

times, the marginalisation and exclusion ratio of youth, women, and persons with these disabilities, hinged on ethnic and religious biases, rooted in the mindsets of placing one's tribe, culture, and ethnicity above issues of national interests.

Replacement of competent persons with political affiliates and allies

The above is a handy evidence of issues and challenges that militate against the effectiveness of strategic metrics used in assessing diversity, equity and inclusion in political appointments of marginalised groups especially persons with disabilities in Nigeria as enshrined in the national disability act of 2018 and the electoral law of 2022, which provides legal protections and guarantees for persons with disabilities as regards participation and inclusion in political processes and appointments. The remote issues that confront the exclusion of these groups and their eventual marginalisation, irrespective of the legal provisions backing the rights of their inclusion, are underpinned by incompetent persons handling or overseeing political processes at the expense of the competent ones, as well as cultural, ethnic, or religious biases directly or sub-consciously promoted by the existence of weak institutions. Evidently, the provision of certain legal frameworks and regulations, such as the 2018 disability act and the 2022 Electoral Law, has made robust room for the inclusion of disabled persons in political activities in recent times. Corroborating these regulatory frameworks, the P-YES initiative has played an expansive role in broadening the horizon of youth inclusivity, by creating more jobs across the 774 local governments with initiatives like the Not-too-Young to run, a federal government initiative that advances the participation of hitherto marginalised groups. Related to these are the NILDS & the WDS initiatives, both providing first-hand information on how marginalised groups can be strategically positioned for equitable inclusion. The actualisation of these lofty efforts by governments and well-meaning individuals is yet to yield significant results because the drivers of these initiatives and institutions place cultural and political differences, as well as ethnicity, above competence and issues of national interest. A supportive example of these claims is the overhauling of the various heads and directors of government agencies in 2018-2023, by the Buhari administration, replacing these heads of government agencies with persons from the Northern or Fulani extraction. Most of these appointments or replacements were either vetoed by the president or by the National Assembly (NASS) members, who bypassed due processes and gave no consideration to competence. (BusinessDay, Friday, August 23rd, 2024).

Weak/ineffective institutions

Similarly, in the aspect of equity and social justice, the judiciary; the supposed last hope of the common people, has become weak, in passing unbiased judgements that would favour the common people and bridge the gap that has been existing between the opportuned and the inopportuned in Nigeria, the gross irregularities that surrounded the 2023 presidential election and the eventual verdict of the supreme court in favour of a doubtful candidate underscores the fact that weak or ineffective institutions are the major factors promoting exclusivity and inequity of marginalised groups in Nigerian political appointments and processes (Iruke, 2023, Peterside, 2023).

APPLICATION OF STRATEGIC METRICS TO ENSURING INCLUSIVITY OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS IN NIGERIAN POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

Equity ratio in distributing Positions of appointment, resources, and representations

Equity, no doubt, is a vital metric to the realization of inclusivity of marginalised groups, especially in Nigerian political appointments. The application of these metric borders on the even representation of youth, women, and persons with disabilities in political processes, activities, and appointments, through the creation of platforms that include them in the scheme of things and activities that represent their interests.

Harnessing and cross-fertilising ideas, innovative creativity in diversity

Nigeria, being a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural state, ought to embrace and maximise the various ideas and innovativeness that come from its various diverse ethnic, cultural, and religious groups, thereby maximising talents and ideas inherent in the diverse groups that make up the state. A strategic application of this step will be to give political opportunities for technocrats from the six geopolitical zones of the country to handle certain strategic issues that would engender national growth for a limited duration, based on what financial, economic, or institutional reforms such technocrats are competent to handle.

Ensuring inclusivity with sincerity of purpose

Every political, economic, cultural, or ethnic activity carried out in respect of promoting inclusivity must have national interest as a driving spirit. The application

of inclusivity with sincerity of purpose as a cardinal perspective is seen in political activities that appoint or consider people competent, irrespective of their ethnic origin. The sincerity in this context is that competence that would engender national interest and development is not being sacrificed on the altar of “exclusivity in inclusivity.”

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research concludes that strategic metrics for assessing diversity, equity, and inclusion in Nigerian political appointments are not adhered to by political actors in the processes of appointing people for political or civil service positions, hence the continued marginalisation of certain groups and persons. Political actors marginalise groups and individuals from certain geographical locations or ethnic extractions through non-compliance with legal, social, and economic parameters that would ensure holistic inclusivity. Against this backdrop, the researcher recommends that:

1. Governments should ensure that there are powerful and effective institutions, with the drivers of such institutions having the will, power, and sincerity of purpose to ensure that the social, legal, and economic requirements of inclusivity are strictly adhered to in all political appointments.
2. Groups, individuals, or persons with disabilities or from minority groups should be given political opportunities to constantly participate in political activities from the grassroots to the national levels to avoid outright exclusion by corrupt political actors in the processes of political appointments.
3. Governments should ensure that meritorious processes form the basis of all political appointments in all tiers of government. This can be done through constant and regular checks and balances of institutions, by ensuring that parameters such as gender, youth, and inclusivity of persons with disabilities are properly adhered to in all political processes, activities, and appointments in Nigeria.

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