



WOMEN'S ELECTORAL SENTIMENT SURVEY

To Vote or Not to Vote

Tracking women's electoral perspectives
ahead of Nigeria's 2027 General Elections

Inaugural Edition

Pre-Election Baseline

Nigeria 2026

DATA PARTNERS



805
WOMEN SURVEYED

6
GEOPOLITICAL ZONES

60%
VOTING INTENTION

96%
SECURITY CONCERN

Wave 1 of 4
Quarterly Series
2026–2027

Disclaimer

PURPOSE

This report presents findings from the inaugural wave of the To Vote or Not to Vote Women's Electoral Sentiment Survey, conducted by ElectHER Development Initiative to track and surface women's electoral perspectives ahead of Nigeria's 2027 general elections. Its purpose is to make women's voices visible in pre-election public discourse and to inform evidence-based programming, policy dialogue, and advocacy across the electoral ecosystem.

ATTRIBUTION OF FINDINGS

The findings contained herein reflect the self-reported views and sentiments of survey respondents only. They do not represent the individual or institutional views of ElectHER Development Initiative, its staff, its funders, or any partner organisation named in this report. ElectHER's role in this publication is that of a research and programme organisation — to gather, analyse, and present what members of the public have communicated through the survey process.

FUNDER STATEMENT

This publication has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union through the EU Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria Project (EU-SDGN II). The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of ElectHER Development Initiative and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Union or any partner.

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Acknowledgements

This inaugural edition of the *To Vote or Not to Vote* survey was made possible with the support of the European Union through the **EU Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria Project (EU-SDGN II)**. ElectHER is grateful for this partnership in advancing evidence-based programming on women's electoral participation in Nigeria.

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We are particularly grateful to *BellaNaija* and *Women in Management, Business & Public Service (WIMBIZ)* for their collaboration in reaching and engaging women across Nigeria during the data collection process. We look forward to expanding on this partnership for subsequent editions of this survey series.

We also acknowledge *Zikoko*, who will support in amplifying and disseminating the findings of this report upon publication, helping to ensure that these insights reach a broad and engaged audience.

Executive Summary

As Nigeria approaches its 8th electoral cycle since the return to civilian rule, the imperative to deepen democratic inclusion becomes more pronounced. Understanding how women — who constitute approximately half of the country's voting population — perceive and engage with the electoral process is critical. This report presents early insights into women's electoral sentiment ahead of Nigeria's 2027 general elections, based on the inaugural wave survey of 805 women across all six geopolitical zones.

60%

Intend to vote in 2027

72%

Little or no trust in electoral process

96%

Concerned about election insecurity

94%

Willing to vote for a female candidate

41%

Believe their vote matters

81%

Feel candidates don't address their issues

70%

Have no preferred candidate or party

44%

Had no access to voter education

What Women-Specific Data Reveals

GENERAL POPULATION

77%

Voting intention (national survey)

76%

Believe vote influences outcomes

WOMEN ONLY — ELECTHER SURVEY

60%

Voting intention among women

41%

Believe vote influences outcomes

INTENTION GAP

-17 pts

EFFICACY GAP

-35 pts

This divergence is invisible in surveys that do not disaggregate by gender. It is the central justification for this report and for the quarterly series it inaugurates.

The Participation-Representation Gap

The stage is set for Nigeria's 2027 general elections against a backdrop of heightened public scrutiny of electoral credibility. The country's 2023 general elections saw a turnout of only 25% (INEC, 2024), reflecting persistent voter apathy despite widespread civic interest. Within this broader gap lies a more structural imbalance: the gap between women's demographic weight, their electoral participation, and their political representation.

Women constituted approximately **47.5%** of registered voters in the 2023 elections (INEC, 2023), yet structural barriers — insecurity, limited care alternatives, economic pressures, and insufficiently targeted voter education — continue to shape how, whether, and under what conditions women engage with elections.

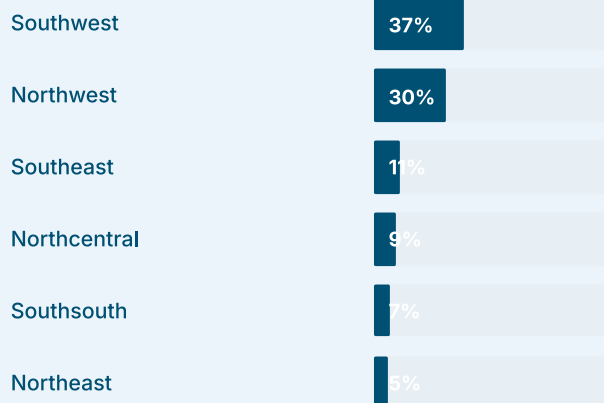
Mainstream polling tends to aggregate public opinion without disaggregating gendered experiences of democracy. This creates a critical blind spot: women are not a peripheral bloc but a central constituency whose electoral behaviour is shaped by distinct socioeconomic and political realities. It is within this gap that ElectHER, through this survey, intervenes.

Methodology

A stratified multi-stage sampling design was used to ensure coverage across Nigeria's **6 geopolitical zones**, with embedded urban-rural representation. The inaugural wave achieved N=805 against a 3,000-respondent target. Data was collected via CAPI (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing), administered by trained enumerators.

A supplementary social media digital sentiment layer from Instagram and X was included using partner-led polls and comment analysis — functioning as triangulatory signals rather than representative data.

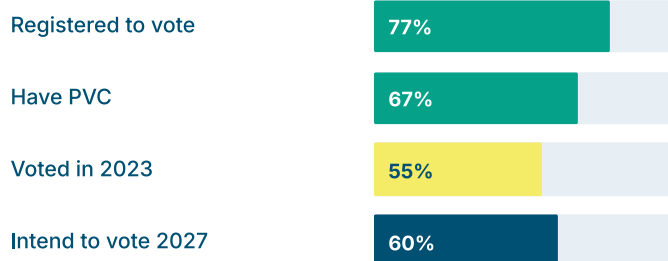
SAMPLE AT A GLANCE



Urban: 71% | Ages 18-34: 66%

Who We Heard From & Electoral Readiness

The survey data is dominated by women aged 18-34 (66%), consistent with Nigeria's youth-heavy population. Southwest (37%) and Northwest (30%) respondents are overrepresented; women in conflict-affected Northeast (5%) and Northcentral (9%) are underrepresented — meaning insecurity effects are likely understated.

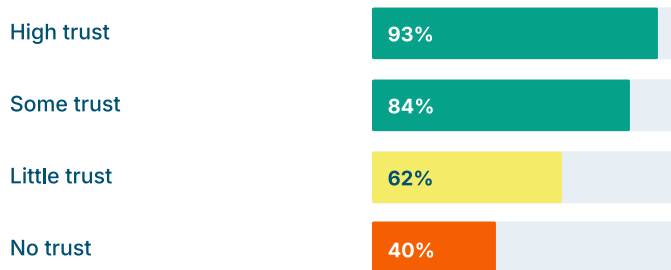


Education and voting intention show a counterintuitive pattern: primary/secondary-educated women show **72% intent**, while tertiary-educated women show **59%**. This reflects scepticism, not disengagement — higher-educated women are disproportionately *undecided* (24–25%), applying greater scrutiny before committing. They are reachable through credibility-building interventions.

Trust, Voice & Political Efficacy

72% of respondents express little or no trust in the electoral process — yet even among women with no trust, 40% still intend to vote, indicating that participation is driven by perceived civic duty rather than confidence in the system alone.

TRUST → VOTING INTENTION



41%

of women believe their vote can influence election outcomes

44% of women surveyed had no access to voter education. Increased voter education could directly improve perceptions of vote utility and, consequently, likelihood to participate.

Barriers to Women's Participation

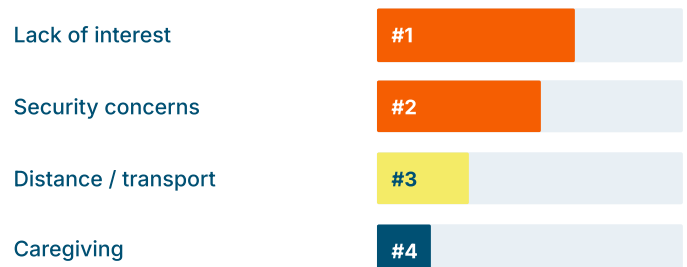
96%

concerned about election-related insecurity

Only 29% of respondents consider their communities safe or very safe. Security concerns are most acute in northern Nigeria — ongoing insurgency in the northeast, banditry in the northwest, and farmer-herder conflict in the Middle Belt already limit movement and access to civic infrastructure.

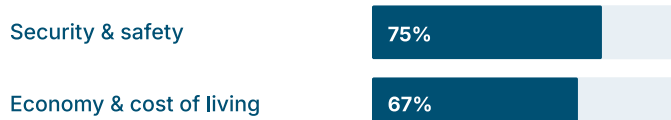
A second, distinct barrier: motivational disengagement. Among women who won't vote or are undecided, **lack of interest** is the leading stated reason — cited more frequently than security concerns. This is followed by distance to polling units, lack of transportation, and caregiving responsibilities.

TOP BARRIERS (NON/UNDECIDED VOTERS)

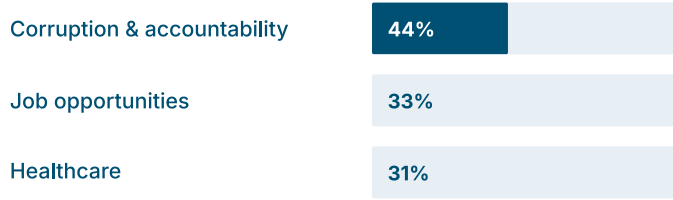


Drivers of Participation

TOP ISSUES INFLUENCING WOMEN'S VOTE



81.4%



feel candidates are NOT addressing the issues that matter to them

This is the highest-magnitude finding in the dataset. Women are not indifferent to politics — they are disengaged from a political conversation that largely ignores them. This is the root cause of motivational disengagement, and the most direct lever available to political actors.

The Gender Power Paradox

94%

willing to vote for a female candidate

28%

perceive female candidates as visible

There is strong demand but inadequate supply. The evidence indicates women demonstrate equal leadership competence as their male counterparts cross-culturally (Buss et al., 2024). The disconnect is structural — formal political rules and informal party practices around gatekeeping limit women's access to the highest levels of political leadership.

Segmentation: The Women Who Will Decide 2027

Committed Voters

60%

Largest and most stable segment. Even among women with low institutional trust, 62% still intend to vote — participation is driven by civic duty and issue salience. Sustained turnout depends on security and cost-of-living conditions.

Conditional Voters

24%

Undecided women whose participation depends on trust, safety assurances, and targeted engagement. Among women with no trust, only 40% intend to vote. **70% of all respondents have no preferred candidate** — the female vote in 2027 is almost entirely unanchored.

Disengaged Women

16%

Do not intend to vote. Face compounded barriers: low trust, weak efficacy, limited education, and no access to voter information. Without targeted interventions, likely to remain excluded from the electoral process.

First-Time / Inactive

45%

Did not vote in 2023. Sensitive to administrative and experiential barriers — PVC access, election-day safety, and procedural clarity. A key opportunity for mobilisation through voter education.

Pathways to Women's Turnout in 2027

Scenario 1

Suppressed Participation

Distrust, insecurity, and economic pressure reinforce each other. 72% report low trust; 96% security

Scenario 2

Conditional Engagement

Women participate selectively based on issue urgency — security (75%) and cost of living (67%). Turnout is

Scenario 3

Empowered Turnout

Trust, safety, and reliable information improve. 93% of high-trust women intend to vote. Expanding voter

concern; 24% undecided drift to abstention. Outcome: lower female turnout, especially in low-access groups.

volatile, shaped by short-term signals. With 70% having no preferred candidate, the female vote remains highly responsive to campaign messaging quality.

education and strengthening election-day safety can convert uncertainty into participation. 94% willing to vote for female candidates once visible.

Policy Recommendations

Converting voter intent into turnout requires deliberate action from all stakeholders. With 60% of women intending to vote, 72% reporting low trust, and 96% concerned about insecurity, the following recommendations focus on the most critical levers.

For the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

- **Close the trust gap through proactive communication.** With 72% reporting low trust, INEC should prioritise clear, consistent public communication on electoral processes and safeguards.
- **Expand access to voter education.** 44% of women report no exposure to voter education. Targeted, localised campaigns are critical.
- **Commit to gender-disaggregated data collection and publication.** Publishing gender-disaggregated data on registration, PVC collection, and turnout would enable evidence-based targeting of female voter mobilisation efforts.
- **Address misinformation as an electoral participation risk.** 60% of women have encountered false political information. INEC should develop a proactive plain-language strategy directly countering misleading narratives about the process, PVC procedures, and voting day logistics.

For Political Parties

- **Address the issue-responsiveness gap urgently.** 81.4% of women feel candidates are not addressing their concerns. Security (75%) and cost of living (67%) are women's top voting drivers. Parties failing to speak credibly to these issues are ceding the largest undecided voter bloc in the electorate.
- **Increase the visibility of female candidates.** While 94% of women are willing to vote for female candidates, only 28% perceive them as visible.
- **Lower barriers for women's participation.** Internal reforms such as reduced nomination fees and structured support should improve candidate diversity.

For Civil Society Organisations

- **Prioritise traditional media.** Traditional media is the most trusted source at 60.7% — ahead of social media (44.6%). Radio is the most accessible medium in rural and conflict-affected areas.
- **Support structurally excluded groups.** Focus on women with lower education levels, where participation intention drops to as low as 39%.

For Media Organisations

- **Counter misinformation actively.** 60% of women have encountered false political information. Trusted media has a specific responsibility to provide reliable electoral information.
- **Increase female representation in coverage.** Amplify female candidates to reflect the 94% demand for women's political participation.

For ElectHER & Research Partners

- **Establish the quarterly series as a public data resource.** This survey is the only recurring survey series tracking electoral sentiment specifically among Nigerian women. ElectHER will formalise the public release schedule, publishing wave-on-wave trend data through the *Hernalytics* platform.



Scale sample and geographic coverage in Wave 2. Northeast (5%) and Northcentral (9%) are underrepresented. Wave 2 will target oversampling in these zones to capture the full security-driven voter suppression picture.

Conclusion: The Future of Women's Political Participation

The data assembled in this inaugural survey does not describe an apathetic electorate. It describes a conditional one.

Nigeria's 2027 general elections will unfold in conditions materially different from any preceding cycle. The global order is restructuring around competing power blocs. International development financing is contracting. Commodity markets remain volatile, and the domestic economy continues to absorb the compounding effects of structural reforms whose costs are distributed unevenly — falling most heavily on those with the least capacity to absorb them. Women know this. Their responses in this survey are not expressions of political passivity; on reflection, they are a calibrated scepticism, earned through repeated experience of electoral cycles that promised transformation and delivered continuity.

The 17-point gap between women's voting intention and the general population's is not a data anomaly — it is a political signal. So is the finding that over 8 in 10 women feel unaddressed by the candidates competing for their votes. So is the fact that 70% have, as of this writing, no preferred candidate or party for an election that opens in approximately seven months. These are not signs of withdrawal from democracy. They are the markings of an electorate holding its decision, watching carefully, and waiting for something worthy of its commitment.

What this survey makes legible — and what ElectHER intends to track, wave by wave, through to election day — is the precise nature of that conditionality. Democratic systems that consistently fail to convert women's participation into women's representation — and women's representation into policy outcomes that reflect their lived realities — tend, over time, to forfeit the participation itself. The trajectory visible in this data, if unaddressed, points in that direction.

The 2027 cycle presents a narrow but real window. The evidence here is not a lament — it is a diagnostic, offered in the conviction that political systems can respond, that actors across the electoral ecosystem can choose to do so, and that a constituency of this scale and this discipline, once meaningfully engaged, changes outcomes.

ElectHER will continue to watch, measure, and publish. This is Wave 1.

Ibijoke Faborode

Chief Executive Officer, ElectHER Development Initiative

May 2026

About ElectHER & References

About ElectHER

About This Series

ElectHER is a gender-responsive electoral programme organisation working to increase women's participation and representation across Nigeria's electoral landscape. Through **Hernalytics** — ElectHER's civic technology platform — and a suite of research, training, and candidate support programmes, ElectHER generates the evidence and builds the capacity needed to make Nigeria's elections more inclusive and more credible.

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The *To Vote or Not to Vote* survey series is a product of ElectHER's research and policy function, designed to track women's electoral sentiment across each wave of the 2027 electoral cycle. Findings are published to inform civil society, government, media, and political actors. Wave 2 is planned for Q3 2026.

Wave 1 of 4

Inaugural Edition — Pre-Election Baseline
N=805 | Nigeria 2026

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Wave 1 of 4 – 2026

Making women's voices **count** in Nigeria's electoral discourse.

The *To Vote or Not to Vote* Women's Electoral Sentiment Survey tracks Nigerian women's electoral perspectives across quarterly waves ahead of the January 2027 general elections. This is the first of four planned editions establishing the pre-election baseline.

805

WOMEN SURVEYED

6

GEOPOLITICAL ZONES

34

SURVEY VARIABLES

4

PLANNED WAVES

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