WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN THE LEGISLATURE: A STUDY OF THE RIVERS STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, 2015-2023

By

Precious Uloma ORIKOHA-EJEKWU(Mrs.)

(PG/NLS/2015096)

Being a Dissertation Submitted to the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies/ University of Benin Post Graduate Programmes in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of Master Degree in Legislative Studies (MLS)

ABSTRACT

This study examined *women's representation in the Rivers State House of Assembly.* 2015-2023. The objectives of the study were to examine the level of women's representation in the Rivers State House of Assembly, to ascertain some of the dynamics and peculiar factors responsible for women's underrepresentation in the Rivers House of Assembly, to ascertain how these motivators of women under-representation hindered women's participation in Rivers, to evaluate how the underrepresentation of women has impacted the development of the State, and to proffer measures that can encourage women's representation in the Rivers State House of Assembly. This is a topical issue in Nigeria's political development as women participation in politics in general and representation in the legislature has remained very poor.

The study adopted the survey method design, employing the purposive sampling technique. Data gathered from both primary (questionnaire) and secondary (published materials) sources were deployed to address objectives 1, 2 and 4; whereas data were sourced from secondary sources to address objective 3.

The study in addressing objective 1 found that women representation in the Rivers State House of Assembly is very low (91.6% of the respondents rated it low). In response to objective 2, the study revealed that political violence and the reproductive role of women are the two major factors that hinder women political participation in Rivers State. In addressing objective 3, the study found that women political activities in the state as they relegated to child bearing, raising and supporting family, becoming mere party supporters and shy away from party leadership as they become afraid of political violence and intimidation. On objective 4, the study shows that the limited women representation in the state house of assembly has positive impacted development in the state. This they do by ensure the stability, progress, and long-term development of the state.

The study further made the following recommendation: there should be a strict adhere to the 35 percent affirmative action as enshrined in the National Gender Policy of 2006 not just in appointive positions but also in elective offices. Thus, Rivers State must respect Nigeria's commitment to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) especially goal number 5 which is targeted at achieving gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in all spheres of the society. There should be a legislation compelling political parties to reserve at least 35 percent of their

tickets for elective positions in all the Rivers States executive and legislature for women. The She-for-She movement should be domesticated in Rivers State by influential women in the education, business and political spheres of state to encourage girls and women to take destinies in their own hands. Also, the Rivers State Ministry of Information and Culture and the various political parties should embark on an aggressive campaign or sensitization to disabuse the mind of Rivers People of the prevailing wrong notion that women in politics are prostitutes, stubborn and disrespectful.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background to the Study

The quest for a fair and equitable society has been on the front burner of global discourse. Several world agencies have been making concerted efforts by expending funds, time and energy in the sensitization of the populace on the need to allow gender balance and allow female folks to contribute effectively to the growth and development of society. And one such way is to allow for equal participation of women in the decision-making process of society through the government. Globally, there has been steady but slow progress in the role played by women in politics because of men's nature and domination, thereby systematically outnumbering the women folk, especially in developing nations in Africa. This is particularly so because of the patriarchal nature of most African societies where women are left to play the second-fiddle through certain cultural sentiments. As a result, there has been a persistent call for the increased representation of women in politics especially elective positions such as the State House of Assembly.

According to the United Nations (2023), women's equal participation and leadership in political and public life are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2020. However, data show that women are underrepresented at all levels of decision-making world-wide, and that achieving gender parity in political life of the global society is still a dream whose its dreamers are yet to regain consciousness. Data by the UN show that as at September 2022, there were 28 countries of the world where 30 women served as head of state or government. This implies that gender parity at that rate will remain elusive for the next 130 years. Only 13 countries has women as the Head of State and 15 countries have women as the Head of Government. Only 21 per cent

of government ministers are women and only 14 countries of the world have achieved gender parity. This shows that gender parity cannot be achieved in terms of ministerial positions in 2077. In the Parliament, only 26 percent of parliamentarians are women according to UN data as at September 2022. Only five countries of the world can be said to have achieved 50 percent or more women in parliament in single or lower houses: Rwanda (61 per cent), Cuba (53 per cent), Nicaragua (51 per cent), Mexico (50 per cent) and the United Arab Emirates (50 per cent). However, as the UN data shows, 27 countries have reached or surpassed 40 percent including 15 countries in Europe, five in Latin America and the Caribbean, five in Africa, one in Asia and one in the Pacific. More than two-thirds of these countries have applied gender quota system by either legislating candidates' quotas or reserving the seats for women.

Globally, there are 24 States which women account for less than 10 percent of parliamentarians in single or lower houses, including three single/lower chambers with no women at all. This implies that at the current rate of women's representation in such States, gender parity in national legislative bodies will not be achieved before 2063. In Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and Northern America, women hold more than 30 percent of parliamentary seats. Women make up 2 per cent of parliamentarians in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Eastern Asia and South-Eastern Asia, there are 22 per cent of women legislators followed by North African and Western Asia with 21 per cent women in national parliaments. There are less than 20 per cent of women members of parliament in Central Asia, South Asia and Oceania.

Since the return to democracy in Nigeria, 1999, data from the National Assembly (2023), show that women representation in national parliament is still a far cry from gender balance. The data shows that in 1999-2003, there were 454 men and 15 women, 2003-2007 (445 men, 24 women), 2007-2011(435 men, 34 women), 2011-2015 (438 men, 31 women), 2015-2019 (438 men, 31

women) and 2019 to date (440 men, 29 women). This implies that Nigeria is yet to meet at least 10 per cent representation for women in the national parliament. The same can be said about the State Houses of Assembly across the Country.

Section 4 (1) and 4 (7) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as Amended) provides for the law making function of the legislature at both Federal and State levels. Consequently, there is a bicameral National Assembly made up of the Senate and House of Representatives at the Federal level, and 36 unicameral state houses of Assembly, all legislating for peace, order and good governance for the constituent states and the Federation (Egobueze, 2014, p. 4). Section 91 of the same Constitution also establishes the State House of Assembly. Subject to the provisions of this constitution, a House of Assembly of a state shall consist of three or four times the number of seats which that state has in the House of Representatives divided in a way to reflect, as far as possible nearly equal population: provided that a House of Assembly of a state shall consist of not less than twenty four and not more than forty members. (CFRN,1999).

The Rivers State House of Assembly for instance, is the legislative branch of the Government of Rivers State. It was inaugurated in 1979. It is a unicameral body with 32 members elected into 32 state constituencies. It is also the watch dog of public funds in that it not only appropriates for the State but scrutinizes how the funds so appropriated are spent. This study therefore explores the level of representation in the Rivers State House of Assembly.

1.2   Statement of the Study Problem

According to Africa Gender Index Report (2019), Women of this generation will define Africa's destiny. A new generation of young women are reaching adulthood better educated than ever before, and ready to play active roles in their communities, the economy and in national leadership. They are doing so at a time

of unprecedented economic, social, environmental and technological change. It is a time when the role of African women is ripe for redefinition. Yet African women continue to face constraints to achieving their potential, as women do in different ways around the world. They face barriers in the workplace and other economic activities including agriculture, and in their access to infrastructure, services and economic opportunities. They experience restrictive cultural norms and practices and discriminatory laws.

They are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. These barriers limit opportunities for all of society, impacting both women and men, but women are often disproportionately affected. In holding back women from achieving their potential, these barriers stand in the way of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Africa's true development potential. The unequal power relations that work to naturalize the categories that are used to understand the world, such as, gender, class, race and nation, and exert a particular way of seeing the world, result in the marginalization and oppression of certain groups of people (Volcic, 2008). It is perceived that women constitute the majority of the category of persons marginalized. Okunna (1992) states that "…a combination of cultural and religious factors have reduced women to mere appendages of their male counterparts", (p. 49). This assertion has been lent credence in various researches (Malik, 2002; Enwefah, 2016; Safa & Akter, 2015).

Traditionally, women are seen as the weaker sex compared to the men (Emslie & Hunt, 2008; Anyansi, 06 March 2022). This is shown in the type of roles being assigned to both sexes. For example, President Mohammadu Buhari was once quoted to have said that the place of the woman was in the other room which is a slight on the capacity and capabilities of the woman to contribute to societal growth and development (Punch 14th October 2016; Premium times 17th October 2016; Reuters 14th October 2016). The story is not far from different cultures in Nigeria which see women as mere appendages to men (IFRA-NIGERIA, 1995). In Rivers State for instance, it was not until

recently that the government signed a law the Rivers State Prohibition of the Curtailment of Women's Right to Share in Family Property Law No. 2 of 2022, that makes it possible for the women to inherit their deceased parents' property (Anyansi, 06 March 2022). The story had always been that whoever dies without a male child will have his properties confiscated by the brothers to the detriment of the daughter(s). The widow of the deceased was not also spared in the cruel seizure that will greet the deceased family in the event of the absence of a male child to continue the lineage, especially among the Ikwerre tribe of the state (Okonkwo, 2023).

In the view of Obioha & Chima (2009), they contend that the general belief in the society is that the role of women starts and ends with bearing children for the men, running the home and nothing more. Sanusi & Adelabu (2015) also shared the same perception in their work, emphasized that women were believed to be a weaker sex created to be nurtured as helpers that were meant to stay back at home while men go to work. This has also been buttressed in the work of Ani (2004) who noted that women constitute the group at the bottom of the ladder in respect to employment, training and status because of discriminatory practices in the society.

However, struggle for supremacy between the women and men has continued to be a universal phenomenon, the origin of which cannot be easily determined. Many scholars have observed that society is usually construed in terms of male and female, which also reflects biologically and in every aspect of human endeavour (Littlejohn, 1999).

Women have continued to play a big role in the political emergence and indeed emancipation of the men in several ways in the politics of Rivers State. The women constitute the bulk of mobilisers and mobilized voters in any election and also help to defend the votes casted (Oraye, 2019). For example, during the 2019 governorship election in Rivers State, the women stood firmly in

defending their votes and opposed the violence that almost marred the election with their lives (Oraye, 2019). This is against the activities of the men folk who were only interested in staking their claims to the election through violence.

Also, in Nigeria, no record of a female governor since 1999. In fact, Nigeria only recorded 24 female governorship candidates in the 2023 governorship election in 23 states, sadly none of these candidates won (Premium Times, March 14, 2023). Currently, there are only 4 deputy governors across the 36 states of the federation (this includes – Cecilia Ezelio (Enugu State), Hadiza Sabuwa Balarabe (Kaduna State), Noimot Salako-Oyedele (Ogun State), and Ipalibo Gogo Banigo (Rivers State)). The Rivers State House of Assembly currently has only one female member while the state has a woman as deputy governor.

Unfortunately, to date, it is yet to be seen that any male group is rooting for a female governorship candidate in Rivers State as such move will be viewed culturally as insanity. Yet the women have continued to contribute their quota to the political development in Rivers State through hard work, dedication and commitment to service with men being the ultimately favoured ones in the political process.

As of today, research evidence shows that women's participation in politics in Nigeria is abysmally low. Whether at the Executive or legislative arm of government, the story is the same. This trend is seen at the federal, state and local levels of government, it is not a recent occurrence. For instance, currently in the House of Representatives, out of 360 members, only 18 are women, representing about 4.61 per cent; Senate has eight women out of 109 members, representing 7.34 per cent (Premium Times, May 7, 2022).

This poor representation of women in parliamentary arm of government such as the Rivers State House of Assembly can be attributed to some factors, such as male-dominant cultures in the various ethnicities, higher illiteracy levels among women, gender discrimination against women, and lack of information to list but few.

1.3   Research Questions

In view of the foregoing, the following questions were raised to guide the study.

I.   What is the level of women representation in the Rivers State House of Assembly?

II.   What are the factors responsible for women under-representation in the Rivers State House of Assembly?

III.   How has women underrepresentation affected women political participation in Rivers State?

IV.   What is the effect of women under-representation impacted the development of Rivers State?

1.4   Objectives of the Study

This study was aimed at investigating the dynamics of women's representation in the Rivers State House of Assembly. Specifically, the study sought to:

i.   Examine the level of women's representation in the Rivers State House of Assembly;

ii.   Understand some of the dynamics and peculiar factors responsible for women's underrepresentation in the Rivers House of Assembly;

iii.   Ascertain how these motivators of women under-representation hindered women's participation in Rivers; and

iv.   Evaluate how the underrepresentation of women has impacted the development of the State.

1.4 **Significance of the Study**

Despite the limited number of women participating in elective politics, Nigeria's history is filled with a rich repository of women activism and involvement not only in politics but in the promotion of human rights, security and peace. It is important to note that in 2006, Nigeria developed a National Gender Policy (2006), which prescribes 35 per cent affirmative action for women into appointive and elective positions. This document therefore serves as a yardstick for measurement of the level of representation of women in the Rivers State House of Assembly.

This study has practical and theoretical significance. The theoretical significance is anchored on Murray (1938) and Maslow (1954) theories of Needs. In the simplest sense, theories of Needs involve one to understand the level of the needs, achieve the primary or lower level needs, as well as master all the needs, at any point in time. These will aid to plan programmes that will enable the person to actualize the objectives. In a more detailed sense, the theories take cognizance of individual differences, interrelationship of factors that can manifest negatively or positively in women's representation in the state legislature.

1.5   Scope of the Study

The study was carried out in Rivers state of Nigeria. The geographical scope of this study was limited to Port Harcourt Municipal Area Council and Obio-Akpor Local Government Area which double as Rivers State seat of power. This is also because, these two local governments host the Rivers State House of Assembly, and serve as residence for lawmakers, legislative staff, legislative aides and civil society organisation. Rivers State is one of the highest populated states in the federation (National Population Commission, 2021). The state has literate, non-literate, urban and rural men and women that are politicians. World Bank (2014) defines urban area as an area with agglomerations of more than 1 million percent of total population in Nigeria, while a rural area is

less than that of urban population. Urban men and women are referred to those living in areas of the state where all the basic amenities are provided, while rural men and women refer to those living in areas of the states where few or none of the basic amenities are provided. Urban areas in this study include areas with planned infrastructures with people from different parts of the world, living, working and doing business. Rural areas lack planned infrastructure, dwellers are mostly natives with few or non-foreigners. These dwellers mostly engage with Fishing, farm activities, petty trading and few government workers.

The study also covers the period between 2015 – 2023 which represents the 8th, and 9th Sessions of the state house of assembly. This period also covers the period Dr. Nyesom Wike governed the state with a female deputy.

1.6   Limitation of the study

The researcher, as a Rivers state indigene, had observed that there are some challenges encountered, women in the state who are politicians and very few of them are members of the Rivers State House of Assembly. Some female politicians were at all times dedicated to carrying out tasks while others do not understand things going on in their political terrain or places of work due to lack of information of events. Similarly, while some lack basic education others do not know how to pay attention, organize, analyze and interpret environmental information. Some of the women are disciplined and can interact favorably with both colleagues and outsiders, understanding concepts of values and morals while some lack these qualities, therefore, the state chosen for this study has adequate characteristics that can achieve the purpose of the study; the populace need more political awareness - the women need guidance counselling on effective participation and representation in political leadership

1.7   Operational Definition of Terms

Women representation: this refers to how men see women (termed the 'male gaze '), or by how society expects women to look and behave. Many representations of women concentrate on sexuality and emotions. For the purpose of this study, it entails the number of women in government in relation to their male folks.

Legislature: A legislature is an assembly with the authority to make laws for a political entity such as a country or city. They are often contrasted with the executive and judicial powers of government.

Women: Woman, female, lady are nouns referring to an adult female human being, one paradigm of gender and biological sex for adult human beings

Gender: This refers to "the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men.

State House of Assembly: refers to a representative legislative body charged with the tripartite functions of law-making, representation and oversight.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The study reviewed the concept of representation, overview of the Rivers State House of Assembly, women's political participation in Nigeria, the legislature, etc. It also covered empirical review and theoretical framework.

2.1 Conceptual Review

Representation provides political intermediation between government and its citizens. Representation aims at promoting inclusiveness (economic, political and social inclusions) and reducing incidence of political and social exclusion or apathy with its attendant impact on governance and development. People are connected to their governments, needs are articulated and opinions are expressed. Representation turns legislature to be the voice of the people and enables it to be the most open and transparent arm of government. It allows citizens greatest access and ensures government by the people. Involvement of citizens in policy decision making and implementation process is important for the promotion of democracy, good governance and development in Africa ECA (2012).

2.1.1 Representation

Baskin (2013) stressed that empirical research from African Legislatures project suggest that both citizens and Members of Parliaments (MPs) place a much higher emphasis on representation and constituency service than on legislation and oversight, creating more pressures on MPS to perform these services and listen to the needs of their constituencies. One of the limitations identified with representation is the tradeoff between national interests or sectional or partial interest of particular group or interest. Thus, the legislators need to choose an optimal mix where sectional interests are

satisfied without sacrificing national interest; broad needs are not sacrificed for narrow needs, especially when the notion of promoting the greatest good for the largest number is a core governance and developmental goal. Barkan (2009) expands representation to include constituency service. This according to the author can include regular visits by legislators to their districts to assist constituents with individual needs. Legislators can also sponsor development projects to provide public service to their districts, "including roads, water supply systems, schools, health clinics and meeting halls."

Hemson (2006) also mentions that although governments at all spheres encourage public participation, social movements and the poor have established that it either does not exist or it is powerless and ineffective. The inherent lack of public participation leads to poor service delivery in areas such as provision of electricity and water. It may be deduced that although representative democracy exists in the legal system, it is unclear about the right of citizens to monitor and scrutinize the quality of governance dispensed by admitted representatives. Bishop & Davis (2002) ask the following questions: "Is it participation when government seeks citizen views but still makes unpalatable decisions? Or does meaningful participation require a community veto over policy choices? And if so, who defines the relevant community?" Hicks, (2005) argues that participatory approaches will fail if people believe that they are being used to legitimize decisions that have already been taken or that the results of their efforts will not matter in the long run. Furthermore, the practice of party politics gives significant control to representative institutions and therefore a top-down approach to government reorganization. Evidence is seen from Hemson, (2006) that although poor people have greater knowledge of council committees than the better off, their participation in development plans is at a low level compared to the elites. It is further shown that voting does not make a difference in participation because politicians cannot be trusted

and all elected parties are the same. According to Piper & Deacon (2006), there is skepticism about the ability of council committees to be non-partisan and dedicated to advancing the collective interests of the councils. Looking at some council committees, it was found that they were poorly developed and thus have little relevance to council processes. The independent and effective ones were vulnerable to party control. This means that success in democratic engagement at local level is less likely since provisions made by legislation are constantly being undermined by the challenges faced in local government areas thus hindering effective public participation.

Abelson et al (2003) consider a deliberative approach to public participation which involves providing participants with information about the issue being considered, encouraged to discuss and challenge the information and consider each other's' views before making a final decision or recommendation for action. These authors found that while participatory methods such as citizens' juries in the United States and their German equivalent (the planning cell) have deliberation as their defining feature, other methods such as citizens' panels and deliberative polls more closely resemble the variants of traditional methods such as surveys and opinion polls. Citizens' juries, panels and consensus conferences (developed in Denmark) are routinely used to integrate technical information and values into planning and resource allocation decisions in the environmental, energy, education and local government fields. In these settings, their basic purpose has been to provide a forum for ''non-expert citizens, acting as 'value consultants', who combine technical facts with public values into a set of conclusions and recommendations'' (Beierle, 1999).

2.1.2. The Land and People of Rivers State

The state owes it name origin to the numerous rivers that transverse the length and breadth of the state. Rivers State is nicknamed the "Treasure Base of the Nation". It is a state in the Niger Delta region of southern Nigeria (Old Eastern Region). Politically it is considered to be among one of

the six states designated as South South geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. The other states are Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Edo, Bayelsa and Delta States. The state was created on 27 May 1967 , when it was split from the former Eastern Region, Rivers State borders includes; Anambra and Imo on the north, Abia and Akwa Ibom on the east, and Bayelsa and Delta on the west. The state capital, Port Harcourt, is a metropolis that is considered to be the commercial hub of the Nigerian oil industry.

Rivers State is a miniature of Nigeria in terms of ethnic diversity. In fact, 28 indigenous languages are said to be spoken in Rivers State, the most dominant of which is the Igbo speaking groups, the Ogoni and Ijaw languages. The population is about 90% Christians and 10% orthodox and few practicing Islam. Rivers State is made up of numerous ethnic groups which includes: Abua, Andoni, Ekpeye, Eleme, Egbema, Ekpeye, Kalabari, Ndoki, Ndoni, Okrika, Ogoni, Engenni, Etche, Ibani, Ikwerre, Ogba, Odua etc.

Rivers state has a rich cultural-heritage, they are friendly and known for their hospitality. It is on record that Port Harcourt is the second biggest commercial, agriculture and busiest Airport and seaports in Nigeria. Rivers state has two seaports situated in Port Harcourt and Onne. The other urban areas in the state include Bonny,Onne and Opobo.

Figure 1. Map of Rivers State Demographic Information

- 7,303,900 Population [2016] – Estimate

- 9,669 km² Area

- 755.4/km² Population Density [2016]

- 3.5% Annual Population Change [2006 → 2016]

Source: https://www.citypopulation.de/php/nigeria-admin.php?adm1id=NGA033

2.1.3 Overview of the Rivers State House of Assembly

The Rivers State House of Assembly is the Legislative arm of the Government of Rivers State, Nigeria. It is a unicameral Legislature with thirty- two Members representing thirty-two State Constituencies (Egobueze, 2012:2).

The Rivers State House of Assembly like other legislatures world over has two structures – the political leadership and the bureaucracy. While the Speaker of the House heads the political leadership, while the Clerk of the House heads the bureaucracy. The Clerk is assisted by the Deputy Clerk who heads the Legislative Department, Section 93 of the 1999 Constitution as amended provides for the office of the Clerk and such other Staff and it states that:

There shall be a Clerk to a House of Assembly and such other staff as may be prescribed by a Law enacted by the House of Assembly, and the method of appointment of the Clerk and other staff of the House shall be as prescribed by that Law.

The House has had a chequered history. The first Assembly was inaugurated on1979 with forty two Members. This Assembly lasted till 1983 when its live span ended. The Second Assembly commenced full legislative assignment on October, 1983 with about forty two Members, and ended its life span abruptly on December 31st after a military interregnum led by General Muhammadu Buhari. The third Assembly came into being in 1990 -1993 through a diarchic structure at the center, and presidential system at the Sub- national level.

This Assembly was again sacked by General Ibrahim Babangida. The fourth and Fifth Assembly were inaugurated on May, 1999 and May, 2003 respectively. Unlike the other Assemblies that predated it, this Assembly had thirty two Members; this was as a result of the creation of Bayelsa State out of the present Rivers State.

The thirty two State Constituencies have continued to exist till date. The Sixth Assembly, of the Rivers State House of Assembly was inaugurated on 30th May, 2007, while the Seventh Assembly was enthroned on May 2011. Like other Houses since after the creation of Bayelsa State, This House has 32 Members returned as elected.

The House currently has the following Officers: the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, House Leader, Deputy House Leader, House Whip and Deputy House Whip. Worthy to note is that all other Members of the House are Chairmen of Committees and each of them is a member of not less than four Committees. Finally, there is an effective bureaucracy headed by the Clerk, who is the Accounting Officer House.

2.1.4   Women's Political Participation in Nigeria: Historical Exploration

There seems to be a consensus opinion that Nigerian women constitute about half of the population of the country and thus should play a vital role in the society. Agbalajobi (2010, p.42) while examining women's participation in the political process in Nigeria found out that despite the major roles they play and their population, the society has not given recognition to this segment of society and in addition to that, they are discriminated against. This is due to some cultural stereotype, abuse of religion, traditional practices and patriarchal societal structures. He further explained that Nigerian women have therefore over the years become target of violence of diverse form based on their positions in promoting transformative politics. But Murdock (1949, p.106) is of the opinion "that biological differences such as greater physical strength and musculature and the fact that women bear children, tend to lead to gender roles out of sheer practicality. Given this fact therefore, a sexual division of labour becomes the most natural and efficient way of organizing society".

One of the great eighteenth century theorist that has contributed to the concept of representation is Edmund Burke. In his famous speech to the electors of Bristol, he expressed his famous view of representation in the following words:

"Parliament is not a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests, which interests each must maintain, as an agent and advocate, against other agents and advocates, but parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole, where not local prejudices ought to guide, but general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member, indeed; but when you have chosen him he is not a member of Bristol, but he is a member of parliament".

We can conclude from his writing that political representation as representation of interests which are objective and impersonal. To him, representation is to be done by an elitist group that knows what is best for the nation. He holds that, inequalities exist in every society and since a mass of people are not capable of governing themselves, then society needs to breed and train certain group of persons.

Historically, in pre-colonial Nigeria to some extent, equality prevailed and this enabled women to play leadership role in various capacities. In traditional societies, political power was diffused, not concentrated in one single individual or level of authority. As Onwuzirike observed, women occupied important roles in the traditional political life and in their different regions; they were actively engaged in politics and held decision-making roles in the governmental institution in their respective regions.

Women's poor participation in politics, like many other problems in Nigeria, has a deep root in the system carved and imposed by colonialism. It began with the colonial occupation, starting with the fusion of the three regions (Yoruba in the Southwest, the Igbo in the southeast, and the

Hausa/Fulani in the North) to the Nigeria's independence and its governance, and then to the post-independent Nigeria. Sir Hugh Clifford Constitution of 1922 disenfranchised women and limited the participation of adult to the wealthy.

Okeoma (2017) states that Nigeria is a Masculine society which is very collectivist as such its Human Resource Management practices will be influenced by the cultural practices. Onyejeli (2010) noted that in Nigeria, there notable levels of inequality amongst the genders when it comes to the number of women in work in comparison to men but she argues that this has been encouraging as among similar countries, Nigeria has the lowest number of women who are not working. A recent report that by the National bureau of statistics (NigerianStat) puts the population of Nigeria as at 2015 at 183 million people of which women constituted 49.5% while men made up 50.5% of the population.

Some suggestions have been canvassed for changing the lot of women in politics and democratic representation in Nigeria. These propositions include providing aspiring female politicians with training and support, and collaborative efforts of men and women (Eme et al., 2014). These proposals indeed do not seem to rhyme with the methodologies of resolute power seekers, as they merely rely on the collaborative readiness of the men (the current trustees of power) to make them successful. Its current wielders do not easily give power away. Men are the current power controllers.

Gender understanding thus entails the giving up of some of the powers in the hands of men. It will take intense struggle on the part of women to achieve this position. Political power is not usually freely given and never handed over to any group of people on a platter of gold. It invariably entails a struggle—for power (Okeke, 2015). The onus of seeking and actualizing a better balance of

power rests with the power seekers, in this case the women, who seek to establish power equality with men (Aluko, 2011, p. 53). Okeke (2015, p. 391) points out that some of the inhibitions against women in political participation and democratic representation (in Nigeria) are self-inflicted. Women in Nigeria, for instance, are founders and leaders of many all-female faith based organizations and other associations with massive female-only memberships. It therefore reflects surprises that women in the country have not translated such significant numbers into electoral fortunes (for the benefits of their gender and others). Okeke further highlights that democracy supposes the alternation of power relations between the male and female gender, by promoting equal opportunities in the distribution of power and influence. In other words, gender parity implies parity of powers in gender relations. Even when denoted as gender tolerance or gender accommodation, the critical issues still border on power shifts, in favour of women. Power relations are not altruistic issues.

2.1.5   The Legislature

The Legislature is the engine of democratic governance as laws made by it set the agenda for the government and regulate the conduct of the people. The legislature in Nigeria, being it the National Assembly or State Houses of Assembly, has a very significant role to play in creating the legal and institutional frameworks for ensuring the existence and sustainability of transparency and accountability in the public service. Abayomi (2003, p.12) observed that, Assemblies have increasingly become scrutinizing bodies, the principal role of which is to deliver responsible or accountable government. Most Assemblies have developed institutional mechanisms designed to facilitate this role. Abayomi (2003, p.13) also noted that the legislature emerged from the need to make government accountable to the people. This need for accountability has ensured that all activities of parliament are open to public scrutiny. Baldwin (2006, p.5) describes the legislature

as "the representative body that provides for legitimacy, enacts legislation and oversees and scrutinizes the actions and activities of the executive in a State".

The legislature is referred to as parliament in Britain, national assembly in Nigeria, congress in United States (Abonyi, 2006). The legislature occupies a key position in the democratic process of government, with the purpose of articulating the collective will of the people through representative government (Okoosi-Simbine, 2010). Awotokun (1998) avers that the legislature is an arm of government that is made up of elected representatives or constituted assembly people whose duty is to make laws, control the activities of the executive and safeguard the collective interest of the society. Anyaegbunam (2000) define legislature as the role of making, revising, amending and repealing laws for the wellbeing of its citizenry it represents. Lafenwa (2009) defines legislature as people chosen by election to represent the constituent units and control government.

Okoosi- Simbine (2010) asserts that legislature is law-making, and policy influencing body in the democratic political system. The law makers can be described in the site of sovereignty, the expression on the will of the people. This is derived from the people and should be exercise according to the will of the people they represent. Bogdanor (1991) affirms that legislature is derived from a claim that its members are representative of the political community, and decisions are collectively made according to complex procedures. The state of the legislature has been identified as the strongest predictors on the survival of every democratic development (Okoosi-Simbine, 2010). The centrality of the legislature is captured by Awotokun (1998) when he asserts that legislature is the pivot of modern democratic systems. Edosa & Azelama (1995) states that

legislatures vary in design, structure, organisation, operational procedures, and selection process as well as sizes, tenure of office and nature of meetings.

The legislature is an assemblage of the representatives of the people elected under a legal framework to make laws for the good health of the society. It is also defined as "the institutional body responsible for making laws for a nation and one through which the collective will of the people or part of it is articulated, expressed and implemented" (Okoosi-Simbine, 2010, p.1). The legislature controls through legislation all economic, social and political activities of the nation. It also scrutinizes the policies of the Executive and provides the framework for the judiciary to operate.

In light of the foregoing, we cannot talk about democracy in any meaningful form or manner without the legislature. Indeed, the legislature is at the very heart of any democratic arrangement or what scholars often refer to as "representative governance". The significance of the legislature as one of the strong pillars of democratic governance (the others being the Executive and Judiciary), can therefore, be discerned from Abraham Lincoln's classical definition of democracy during the Gettysburg Address of 1863, as "government of the people, by the people and for the people" (Remy, 1994, p.31-34). Central to this definition is the existence of the representatives of the people due to the technical impossibility of all the people ruling and carrying on the business of government, at the same time, as was the original thinking in the famous Greek City States of old. (Lowi, Ginsberg, Shepsle, 2008, p. 117-128).

Baldwin (1989, p.20) categorized legislatures according to their capacity to influence policy. Consequently, the four types of legislatures can be identified: - policy – making legislatures (active legislatures) - policy – influencing legislatures (reactive legislatures) - legislatures with minimal

or marginal policy effect - legislatures with no real policy effect or "rubber-stamp" legislatures. Of these categorization, the Nigerian legislatures be they at the National, State or Local Government Council levels are supposedly that of policy-making legislatures which enjoy significant level of autonomy and cannot only amend or reject measures brought forward by the executive, but can substitute for its policy of its own.

However, there are more to legislatures than either formulating policies or influencing the formulation of policies. This is because indeed, a wide-range of functions – some intended and some unintended, can be identified. In the Nigerian context, these functions can be looked upon from the backdrop of its powers and responsibilities. These can be classified into three:

a. Expressed powers – as stated in the constitution

b. Implied powers – arising from extension of the constitution

c. Assumed powers – arising from constitutional lacuna "Consensus building".

In Nigeria, a presidential republic with a bi-cameral National Assembly consisting of a Senate with 109 members, and a House of Representatives with 360 members, as well as thirty-six State Assemblies and 774 Local Council Legislatures, the legislature has powers and responsibilities enshrined in the statutes especially the constitution through which it can ensure public service accountability.

The influential position of the legislature is expressed by section 4 of the amended 1999 Nigerian Constitution which deals elaborately with legislative powers, enables this arm of government to formulate and express the will of the people through legislation. Specifically, the legislative function as provided in the 1999 Constitution includes the following, among others: (a) Law

making and policy formulation functions (b) Oversight functions (c) Investigative functions (d) Amendment of the constitution and laws (e) Control of the administration or executive (f) Representative or constituency (g) Determination and control of finance (watchdog of public funds).

One of the most important functions of the legislature that is the concern of this work is the check it provides on the other arms of government (Executive and Judiciary) in pursuance of the doctrine of the doctrine of check and balances. Thus, for purposes of ensuring accountability in the public service, the legislature acts as an active supervisor or "watchdog" of the activities of the other arms of government as provided in sections 88 and 89 of the 1999 constitution for the National Assembly and sections 128 and 129 for States Houses of Assembly.

Loewenberg (1995, p.736) conceptualizes legislatures as "assemblies of elected representatives from geographically defined constituencies, with law-making functions in the governmental process." In the same vein, Jewell (1997, p.172) identified two features that distinguish legislatures from other branches of government. According to him, "they'' (legislatures) have formal authority to pass laws, which are implemented and interpreted by the executive and judicial branches and their members normally are elected to represent various elements in the population."
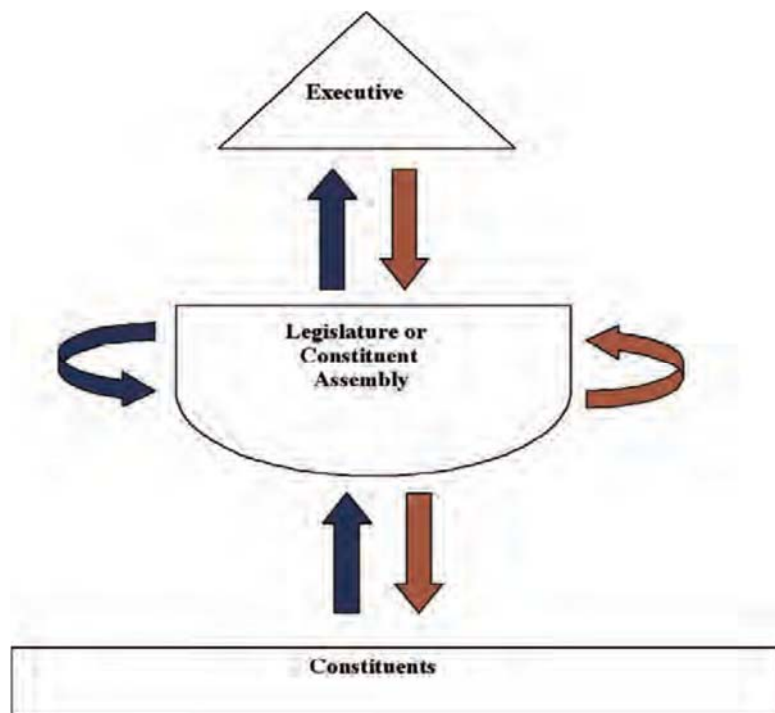
Fig.1: Legislative Linkage

Source: Nichil *et al.* (2006), Strengthening the Legislative in Conflict Management

It is significant to note that legislatures vary in terms of composition, structure and role, from one democracy to another. It is important to note that despite this close affinity and the close emphasis of law making echoed by most analyst as the principal function of the legislature, the term still faces complex definitional problems as our knowledge about legislatures has become more sophisticated. For instance, it was discovered that legislators in some of these systems had little or no role in law making. It was in consideration of this variation that Mazey (1979, p. 3) defines the legislature thus: "I think of a legislature as predominantly elected body of people that act collegially and have at least the formal but not necessarily the exclusive powers to enact laws binding on all members of a specific geo-political entity." Mazey's thinking is reinforced by the

fact that some laws enacted by the legislature are in truly professional sense, delegated. Despite the complexities in definition, this study adopts the definitional model which sees the legislature as a body of people (whether elected or otherwise) who have the powers to make laws which are binding on all members of a society, state or country (Ojo 1993, p. 1). The adoption of this definitional model stems from the fact that the legislature in Nigeria has the exclusive power of law-making. Granted that the executive branch and its agencies are privy to proposing legislations, but in the final analysis, the responsibility of overhauling and passing such laws is the exclusive duty of the legislature.

The Nigeria's Presidential Constitution, for the purpose of promoting transparency and accountability in the public service, vests on the legislature the power over appropriation and control of public funds. It is for this obvious reason that the legislature is described as the "watchdog of public funds". In this capacity, it exercises its power to audit public finances as well as the power of investigation into the affairs of government departments or public officers in order to scrutinize the use of such funds for purpose of accountability. The constitutional functions of the legislature with regards to control over public funds for purpose of accountability include among others:

i.   Pre and post-appropriation control

ii.   Authorization of expenditure from the consolidated revenue funds

iii. Its role in the auditing of public accounts

iv.   Directing or causing to be directed, investigations into "the conduct of affairs of any person, authority, ministry or government department charged or intended to be charged

with the duty of or responsibility for disbursing or administering moneys appropriated by the legislature.

In a bicameral arrangement as is the case in Nigeria, two legislative chambers exist in a country; one chamber seems to dominate the other. Nwabueze and Mueller (1985) noted that when they viewed that there exist some forms of dominance of one chamber to the other in some legislation, term of office, size of the constituencies represented. However, they intricate rules adopted usually harmonize the legislative function of the two chambers (upper and lower chamber). Edosa and Azelama (1995) assert that bicameral legislative is common in federal states that stem from the imperative of one house to protect the interests of minority groups in such states. Nigeria operates in a federally bicameral arrangement on the dictates of 1954 Lyttleton Constitution. The House of Senate (Upper House) and House of Representatives (Lower House) jointly called National Assembly of Nigeria. The two chambers act as a check on other arms of government; such checks are minimal because the major policy demand debate is on party affiliations rather than national interest (Edosa & Azelama, 1995).

This arrangement enhance passage of law and gives opportunity for division of labour between the two houses (Okoosi-Simbine, 2010). In addition, bicameral legislature provides an opportunity for wider representation of various interests groups in a country from one democracy to the other. Nwabuzor and Muller (1985) notes that such factors like presiding officer, order of business, legislative process, legislative committee, intra-party discipline manner of debate consideration account differently among countries. Nwabuzor and Muller (1985) assert that countries that operate short-term tenure for legislature do so because the representatives reflect on the betterment

of public preference in respect of government policy. The long-term tenure ensures the stability of national interests which has no changing public opinion.

Good Governance: Good governance is characterized by participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, equity, inclusiveness, effectiveness, efficiency and accountability. According to Doornbos (2001:94) state that good governance is used to invite judgment about how the country concerned was being governed: it enabled the raising of evaluative question about proper procedures, transparency, quality and process of decision making, and other such matters. In fact, it differentiates the actual self-understanding of the ruling groups from their real causal contribution to the prosperity or misery of their subjects (Chabal & Simbine, 2000). Actually, for Eyinla (2000:22), good governance means accountability, security of human rights and civil liberties, devolution of powers and respect for local autonomy, which all constitute a challenge to democratic regimes. Moreover, good governance has been linked to 'the extent which a government is perceived and accepted as legitimate, committed to improving the public welfare and responsive to the needs of its citizens, competent to assure law and order and deliver public services, able to create an enabling policy environment for productive activities; and equitable in its conduct" (Landell-Mill and Seragelden, 2000:17).

The World Bank defines governance as a means where power is exercised in the management of country's economic and social resources for development and good governance for sound development management (Potter, 2000). It encompasses a broad sphere of public sector management; accountability and legal framework for reforms; information and technology; legitimacy of government; competence of governments to formulate appropriate policies, make timely decisions; implement them effectively and deliver services (Potter 2000:379). Good

governance is pivot to a successful democratization and development. The basic tenets of good governance must be well institutionalized and internalized, in the management of resources; the goal of development is assured. Davis (2003:1) assert that an exercise for the management of national socio-economic development in an environment devoid of rancor, ill will, strife, struggle and disdain. It is a sine qua non to achieve oriented goal with an overriding need to frontier the welfare of government to the governed. Good governance in Nigeria entails stability as the propensity for political and economic plurality to enhance electorates' choice.

2.1.6 Functions of the Legislature

Legislation functions are the primary and the most crucial role of the legislature (Edosa & Azelama, 1995). Laski (1992), states that the responsibility for passing laws and lay down the general rules to enhance good governance for state. These laws may originate as private members bills, or they may originate from the executive branch (Benjamin, 2010). Awotokun (1998), opine that laws made by the legislature must be in the interest of the general populace with the expectation of modifying peoples' behaviour and response towards a given situation, be of good quality and self-sustaining. Abonyi (2006) assert that bills is examined and passed through various stages, and in the process this could be altered by addition or deletion. However, the inputs of the legislature is the attitude of the executive and other factors such as concessions to the opposition and other groups against some aspects of proposed laws greatly reduced the legislative powers to a mere deliberative assembly. Heywood (2007) stated that the twentieth century witnesses a progressive weakening of legislation power in the form of a decline of legislatures. This situation had reduced many legislative assemblies to mere "talking shops" that do little more than rubber-stamp decisions that have effectively been made elsewhere.

Oversight: The oversight function is a major component of the activities of modern legislature irrespective of the form of government in practice. NDI (2000), states that the function of oversight is to wield enormous powers in governance by executive arms. Saliu and Muhammad (2010) indicate that legislative body takes active role in understanding and monitoring the performance of the executive arm and its agencies. It is described as surveillance on the activities of the executive arm. The legislature oversees government affairs and holds the person responsible for any actions and omissions (Fashagba, 2009). Adebayo (1986) reveals that legislative oversight cross-check the executive by examining the activities of some chief executive, ministries, department and agencies of government.

The commonwealth parliamentary association (2002) assert that the principle behind the legislative oversight ensure that public policy is administered in accordance with the legislative intent. The legislative function does not end only on the passage of bills but to follow the activity linked to lawmaking. It is the responsibility of the legislature to ensure that such laws are being implemented effectively. The representative looks diligently in all the affairs of government, the eyes and voice to the will of its constituents (Simmons, 2002). The oversight function of the legislature exists as a corollary to the law-making process for instance the legislature controls the executive in financial behaviour and appointments of key officials such as ambassadors, ministers/commissioners amongst others. Lafenwa and Gberevbie (2007) assert that effective legislature in governance enhances transparency, accountability, efficiency and fidelity in government.

Representation: representation is the central role of the legislature; the complexity of modern administration has made it impossible for the people to run the affairs of the state as it was in the

early Greek City-States (Awotokun, 1998). Legislative institution is a mechanism in which the population, special interests and diverse territory are represented and guaranteed at the scheme of things. Edosa and Azelama (1995) argued that representative function provides a platform where citizens and different group is opportune to have a say in governance.

This gives different groups in a society or groups the opportunity to articulate and advance their interests and concerns. Roberts (2002) states that representation play dual roles. First, they represent their people to government, and second, they represent government in their constituency. Saliu and Muhammad (2010), states that the fulcrum of a legislature articulate and aggregate diverse interests of the represented constituencies into the policy process. The functions of representation enhances the legitimacy of public policy, reduces alienation and reduce estrangement between government and the governed to enhance stability in the system (Edosa & Azelama, 1995).

Financial Function: involves an authorization of expenditure for government. Sanyal (2009) states that all government expenditure needs to be scrutinised and sanctioned by the legislature, this can be done at annual budget process. Lafenwa and Gberevbie (2007) assert legislative function as a catalyst for sustainable democratic governance. The legislature involves in the control of public expenditure and taxation and fund management to better the life of the entire citizens.

Committee Function: Heywood (2007) sees committee functions as the power houses of the legislature; they examine legislative measures in detail. The committees oversee bills and financial demands of the government, and issues relating to ministries and financial function of the government as it concerns auditing (Edigheji, 2006). The legislative committees' functions

carry out the investigative power of the legislature. The standing committees of the legislature are divided and utilized for exigency purpose, this is appointed in response to a particular development on ad hoc situation (Fashagba, 2010).

The legislature is the people's branch with the purpose of expressing the will of the people. The instruments and opportunities of the chief executive is responsible for managing the machinery of government, inter-state diplomacy, budget development and this veto power makes the chief executive an advantage over the legislature and hence continues to exert the executive dominance (Rosenthal et.al., 2003).

Burnell (2003) states that legislature experience secular decline, unable to arrest the accumulation of executive power driven by global financial, economic and political forces. Ray (2004) asserts that legislatures have declined in respect of powers in relation to the executive power of governments. Adebo (1988) revealed that the legislators in Nigeria's 2nd republic spent part of their tenure on the issues of accommodation, comfort and salaries for members and threatened to boycott sittings indefinitely if their demand for luxury were not met by the government (Fashaga, 2010).

2.1.7 Rivers State House of Assembly Membership

The legislative authority in Rivers State is the Rivers State House of Assembly, which is made up of elected representatives from all constituencies of the state. It was first inaugurated in 1979 as a unicameral legislature with 32 members elected into 32 state constituencies. Its functions at the state level are relative to those of the National Assembly at the federal level, creating laws for the good governance of the state, as well as acting as a check and balance on the powers and actions of the state's Chief Executive. The House of Assembly consists three times the total number of

seats which the state has in the House of Representatives. It has always been a male-dominated assembly as captured in table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Gender Representation in Rivers State House of Assembly

Election year	No. of seats	Men	% Men	Women	% Women
2003-2007	32	30	93.7	2	6.3
2007-2011	32	28	87.5	4	12.5
2011-2015	32	28	87.5	4	12.5
2015-2019	32	31	96.8	1	3.2
2019-2023	32	31	96.8	1	3.2

Source: Authors Compilation from national dailies.

It is clearly from table 2.1 above that there is a low representation of women in the Rivers State House of Assembly in the period 2003-2023.

Table 2.2: List of Former Speakers of the Rivers State House of Assembly

Ezekwem Stephen	Ahoada II
Chibuike Amaechi	Ikwerre
Tonye Harry	Degema
Otelemaba Amachree	Asari-Toru I
Ikuinyi O. Ibani	Andoni
Adams Dabotorudima	Okrika

Table 2.2 above clearly shows that since 1999, no woman has assumed the office of the speaker of the Rivers State House of Assembly, ditto for deputy speaker and leader of the house.

2.2 Theoretical   Review

The Twenty four (24) years since the return to democratic rule, there's still growing concern over low representation of women in both elective and appointive positions. The results from the recent National Assembly polls leaves much to be desired as the number of women representation in the

10th National Assembly will be less than those in the current 9th Assembly. Women constitute over half of the population of the world and contribute in vital ways to societal development generally. Despite the roles of women during election, women are still being excluded, marginalized and underrepresented in political realms and other sectors of the society, due to some cultural stereotypes, abuse of religion, traditional practices and patriarchal societal structures.

Accordingly, current statistics show that women constitute only 11.2 percent of the membership in both chambers of the 9th National Assembly, with seven females in the Senate and 11 in the House of Representatives. Out of the total 479 members of the federal parliament, only 19 were originally female members in the two chambers. The female Senators include, Oluremi Tinubu, Stella Oduah, Uche Ekwunife, Betty Apiafi, Eyakenyi Akon, Aishatu Dahiru, and Abiodun Olujimi.

Similarly, In the House of Representatives, there are the Deputy Majority Whip, Nkeiruka Onyejeocha (APC/Abia); Beni Lar (PDP/Plateau), Lynda Ikpeazu (PDP/Anambra), Khadijat Abba-Ibrahim (APC/Yobe), Zainab Gimba (APC/Borno), Blessing Onuh (APC/Benue), Boma Goodhead (PDP/Rivers), Aisha Dukku (APC/Gombe), Adewunmi Onanuga (APC/Ogun), Omowumi Ogunlola (APC/Ekiti), Tolulope Akande-Shadipe (APC/Oyo), Taiwo Oluga (APC/Osun) and Miriam Onuoha (APC/Imo). (This day, June 13th 2023). Existing data indicates that out of the 988 state assembly seats across the federation, only 48 women representing 4.85% were elected in 21 of the 36 states (Daily Trust, Saturday, 25 Mar 2023). Evidence also shows that Rivers State is one of the 15 states without female legislator in subnational parliament.

Therefore, the analysis of the 10th National Assembly election results showed a general decline in female representations in the National Assembly. 378 women ran for various seats in the just concluded Senate and House of Representatives elections, but only 17 were successful. This puts women's representation in the 10th Assembly at 3.62%, although there are Senatorial Districts and Federal Constituencies areas where supplementary elections are to be held in the weeks to come.

Consequently, the National Gender Policy (NGP) recommended 35 percent affirmative action and sought for a more inclusive representation of women with at least 35% of both elective political and appointive public service positions respectively. In 2020, female lawmakers in the Senate and the House of Representatives stepped up the push for greater representation of women in politics and other sectors of the society. This could be achieve through getting the 35 per cent affirmative action, which entails appointive positions for women to ensure inclusivity, must not be merely on paper as sign by Nigeria. Similarly, WIPF, a non-partisan forum for women used for addressing women's marginalization in politics and decision-making, was seeking the implementation of the 35 per cent Affirmative Action in appointments of women into public office. In Nigeria, the extant National Gender Policy (NGP) recommended 35% affirmative action instead and sought a more inclusive representation of women with at least 35% of both elective political and appointive public service positions respectively. However, the re-introduction of democratic governance has witnessed once again an increase in women's political participation both in elective and appointive offices in Nigeria (Igbokwe, 2013).

This is consistent with feminist perspective of gender equality, the major argument was based on the ideological implication of female subordination over the centuries. Also, there have been a high superior prevalence of male status across time, space and social circumstances that are beyond

denial especially in Nigerian Political System. For instance, Nigeria politics is mainly considered for the men and even political representation and government appointment, women hold few key position. Therefore, the pervasiveness of male dominance is the absolute aim of analyzing gender differences. The question that arises in respect of gender politics is that "how can the apparent universal subordination of female be reconciled with equality in Nigeria, with the strong traditional background. Thus, Inequality theory explains the difference between men and women which is inescapable, amongst race, class, culture and tradition irrespective of being developed or underdeveloped. Therefore, sex is the biological difference between men and women while gender is the social construction of sexes considering race, politics, social, economic, culture and traditional background. This cultures and traditions vary from place to place and from culture to culture. These cultures that are learned change with time within and between cultures.

Following this sex distinction between male and female, some advanced societies (Western and North American societies) have tried to narrow down the gender gap by empowering females, reviewing laws to enhance development. However, in developing countries like Nigeria, the distinction still persists and would always be there owing to some factors such as tradition, culture, religion and political system that exist. The question everyone would want to ask is that why Nigeria is still lacking behind to comprehend culture and tradition to reduce the wide gender gap between men and women in respect of their representative in governance. This can be achieved through the process of empowerment to enhance their full participation in government. The fact that men are stronger sex to resist extreme hash conditions makes them dominant irrespective of sex division. Complex cultural societies are built up by institution that keeps men at a dominant position. This make the female sex constantly relegated at the background.

Empowerment perspective is also significant in explaining the issue of women representation in governance, which advocate that all citizens should have the same opportunity to participate in political affairs regardless of gender, race and other identities. Therefore the entry of women into political institutions is an issue of equality. For a healthy political system and welfare of the people, it is crucial that women must come forward and perform a vital role in political activities in the country, led to more opportunities to participate in the political process will enhance their economic and organizational capacities to become self-sufficient and self-reliant to accomplished the desired goals in any political system. Thus their participation in the political process is crucial for strengthening the democratic traditions. Since women are globally under-represented at all levels of governance in relation to their share of the population (IDEA 2006), there is an enormous demand for more representation of women in political bodies and their political participation is now a major objective throughout the global women's movement. Different women's groups and international organizations have demanded for actions and positive steps to upsurge women's political representation through affirmative actions of 35%.

2.3 Empirical Review

There have been a lot of empirical studies on the legislature in Nigeria and the globe. All research findings show the importance of the legislature in the sustenance of democracy and smooth functioning of the society. But very few point to the gender imbalance in the constitutive make up. Some of them are reviewed below.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union, IPU (2022) carried out a study on women political empowerment in Nigeria and found that the only 8 out of the 109 Senators in Nigeria were women as at the 2019 election. This figure represents a disparity of 7.34 per cent to the 92.66 per cent for the males. For

the House of Representatives, women were 13 compared to 30 men. This disparity accounted for a ratio of 3.63 per cent to the 96.37 per cent for men. These figure are well below the global average of 26.1 per cent women in parliament. This implies that Nigeria is still lagging behind in the implementation of the Beijing declaration and the 35 per cent affirmative action.

The IPU then called for the adoption of special measures in the implementation of correct representation of women in political decision making in the country. Some of the strategies averred included special election quotas for women, human rights education, and the enforcement of gender equality policy by the government.

The United Nations have consistently berated the country for not creating enough opportunity for women to aspire into political offices. The World Bank has also been on the case of low women representation in Nigeria for decades now but it only remains to be seen what the 2023 political electioneering season will produce. As Aderemi and Akanji (2022) puts it:

> Africa is faced with a multiplicity of crises, but contrary to what is generally believed the legislatures have been at the centre of efforts to address them. In doing this, however, they have had to deal with many issues that limit their capacity. The executive branch of government in Africa has consistently attempted to, and in some case, with success, whittle down the powers and relevance of legislatures during emergency situations. We, therefore, conclude that legislative oversight and scrutiny and the capacity to hold the executive accountable will almost be nonexistent where the

> legislature is not proactive, inventive and determined to stay
>
> afloat in times of emergency, p. 5.

Nikhil Dutta et al (2006) "*Strengthening Legislatures for Conflict Management in Fragile States*" they stated that: The legislature, as the representative body of government, has the potential to be an extremely effective institution for conflict management. Legislatures are the guarantors of pluralism and can play a significant role to ensure the proper workings of government while protecting the interests of minorities (Taylor 2005, p. 105) or disenfranchised groups. Stakeholders can transfer their grievances from the battlefield to the political sphere, and power-sharing mechanisms can be adopted to bring all segments of society into the political framework (Sisk 2001, p. 789).

In addition, stakeholders can pursue compromises and participate in making difficult decisions on contentious issues of national. We recognize, however, that legislatures operate in a broader system of political incentives and disincentives. Individual legislators will naturally give greater credence to activities that further their own political positioning. Attaining the right political incentive system is crucial to ensuring legislators perform their key roles in constituency outreach and balancing local and national concerns. A system that skews these political incentives can descend into extreme clienteles or a patrimonial structure that overrides the independence of individual legislators. Legislatures do not automatically take on the role of conflict management. They too can become instruments of majoritarian oppression of the minority by passing legislation to marginalize the opposition (Smilov, 2005, p.10).

Legislatures, precisely because they are representative of plural societies, can embody the social cleavages that drive a conflict. Particularly in situations of extreme subservience to the executive, they can exacerbate these social divisions and become part of the underlying causes of conflict.

Properly functioning legislatures are, however, less likely to be captured by conflict-inducing interests. Legislatures that effectively perform the three functions of representation, lawmaking, and oversight have the greatest potential to effect meaningful conflict management and peace building measures and policy through the legislative and committee processes in the legislature. Finally, an effective legislature can exercise oversight over the executive, acting as a check on an authority, if unfettered, could ignore or abuse minority interests.

Okechukwu (2014) in *The Role of National Assembly in Conflict Resolution: A Case of Anti-Subsidy Strikes of 2012* states that, the legislature has added the responsibility of conflict mediation and resolution to its numerous functions. The legislature has established an enviable record of performance in this area. The legislature controls through legislation all economic, social and political activities of the nation. It also scrutinizes the policies of the Executive and provides the framework for the judiciary to operate. In light of the foregoing, we cannot talk about democracy in any meaningful form or manner without the legislature. Indeed, the legislature is at the very heart of any democratic arrangement or what scholars often refer to as "representative governance". The significance of the legislature as one of the strong pillars of democratic governance (the others being the Executive and Judiciary), can therefore, be discerned from Abraham Lincoln's classical definition of democracy during the Gettysburg Address of 1863, as "government of the people, by the people and for the people" (Remy, 1994, p.31-34).

Central to this definition is the existence of the representatives of the people due to the technical impossibility of all the people ruling and carrying on the business of government, at the same time, as was the original thinking in the famous Greek City States of old. (Lowi, Ginsberg, Shepsle, 2008, p.117).

Mbah (2007) carried out a study on the 'rancorous' relationship between Obasanjo's Presidency and the National Assembly from 1999 to 2006. The basic argument was that recent attention to executive-legislative relations had tended to focus on the perceived adverse impact of conflict between the executive and the legislature. A variety of viewpoints were expressed both about conflict and cooperation. The extant literature suggested that one or the other dominates, and benefits or liabilities result from either. Writers see conflict between the two branches as the unavoidable teething problems of the nascent democracy.

The study found that the rancorous relationship between the Executive and the National Assembly were based on personal interest and personality clashes and constitutional ambiguities in the 1999 constitution concerning the powers of the two organs. The article also examines the theoretical insight to this problem and comes to the conclusion that since Nigerian state came into existence albeit as peripheral variant of monopoly capitalism, this state shows all the interventionist character in addition to its unique form especially its underdevelopment and dependence, its authoritarianism and its low autonomy. These situations have made the relationship between the two leading branches of government conflictive in nature.

The study concluded that good governance requires structured and harmonious interaction between the executive and the National Assembly at all points where their responsibilities meet. These interactive responsibilities meet at three main areas- legislative functions, scheduled appointments and oversight functions. With regard to legislative functions, the most critical area of interaction as well as the area that has generated a lot of conflict between the two branches of government is the budget exercise. The legislature sees the most important of their functions as

being consigned by the law of the land to the work of appropriating funds and overseeing how these funds are used.

Mbah (2007) also contended that the modern Nigerian state is the heir as well as the legacy of the British colonial rule. As such, the present Nigerian governing class lacks the economic base for effective governance and depends on the state power for capital accumulation. They are therefore parasitic in nature. And because they are parasitic, there is a very serious struggle for state power and those who have acquired it use for personal goals. There is therefore very serious struggle and competition within those who have acquired the state power for capital accumulation, and the present rancorous executive-legislative relations in Nigeria can be situated in this context.

He averred further that unless the governing class makes serious and genuine efforts to achieve economic power through industrialization before assuming political power, it will be very difficult for executive-legislative conflict to abate. The state power will ever remain very attractive and competitive since it solely provides quick economic rewards for those who have acquired it.

2.4 Gaps in the Knowledge

The review of extant literature indicates that Nigeria is Africa's most populous and the world's seventh most populous country. It also shows that the total projected population for 2021 was 211,493,324, with women constituting 49.99 percent while men constitute 50.01 percent". Evidence point to the fact that in-spite the fact that the percentage of women occupying legislative positions stands at 42.4% globally (Inter-Parliamentary Union, IPU; 2019), women representation remains very poor. Out of 193 countries surveyed by the IPU (2019), Nigeria occupies the 181st position in the world ranking of women parliamentary representation. Existing literature thus, analyzes women representation on either national scale or hinged on states as a case study.

However, the gap lies with lack of scholarly work on women representation in the River State House of Assembly. This study therefore x-rayed women representation in the Rivers State House of Assembly in other to bring to the fore factors impeding effective women participation and representation in government.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the Gender Schema theory in an attempt to carve a theoretical grounding for the study. This theory was propounded by Dr. Sandra Bem of the Cornel University in the late 1970s. The theory postulates that every society prescribes roles for both the men and women based on their sex, and adults unwittingly anticipate this allocation in the socialization of their children whether consciously or unconsciously, (Bem, 1981). Schema, according to Bem (1981), is defined as a process in which what is perceived is a product of the interaction between the incoming information and the perceiver's pre-existing belief.

Nigeria as a country with varying cultures has specific roles allocated to men and women respectively. For example, women are seen as house wives that should stay at home and cater for the home and the children from their marriage while the man is seen as the bread winner that must be out there to ensure that every provision is made for the up-keep of the family. Similarly, from birth women are consciously or subconsciously raised with the belief that as young girls they have a role to support and respect their fathers and brothers. Thus, when it comes to issues of rights and entitlements, their brothers come first. With this and other role allocations, whenever each sex does a role that was originally not prescribed for such sex, it is often viewed as an anathema.

According to Bolich (2007), the gender schema theory offers the possibility of raising gender consciousness by helping people to see not only how weighty and pervasive gender distinctions

are but to see how gratuitous it is. Gender roles are allocated to individuals by virtue of their sex. Idyorough (2005), distinguishes gender roles from sex roles like carrying pregnancies, breast feeding among others which are naturally assigned. He contends that gender issues are those that reveal the power relations between the males and the females.

Udoudo, Arugu and Ikems (2016), aver that in many cultures in Nigeria, it is unacceptable for the woman to smoke cigarette or for a male to wear ear rings. They note that as a form of social communication, advertising is influenced by the various elements of the originating culture. These cultural values determine the various meanings that people derive from advert messages. Therefore, in a multi-cultural setting like Nigeria, advertisers have to be sensitive to the different cultural settings, religions, behaviours and languages.

The theory proposes that the singularity of sex typing derives, in part, from gender-based schematic processing, from a generalized readiness to process information on the basis of the sex-linked associations that constitute the gender schema (Cantor and Mischel, 1979). Furthermore, the theory states that sex typing results from the fact that the self-concept itself gets assimilated to the gender schema. Several studies are described which demonstrate that sex-typed individuals do, in fact, have a greater readiness to process information including information about the self in terms of the gender schema. A schema is a cognitive structure, a network of associations that organizes and guides an individual's perception. A schema functions as an anticipatory structure, a readiness to search for and to assimilate incoming information in schema-relevant terms.

The gender schema becomes a prescriptive standard or guide to how roles are being assigned or conferred in the society on the basis of sex (Kagan, 1964; Kohlberg, 1966), and self-esteem becomes its hostage. Here, then, enters an internalized motivational factor that prompts the

individual to regulate his or her behavior so that it imitates the culture's definitions of maleness and femaleness. And that sex-typed behavior, in turn, further reinforces the gender-based differentiation of the self-concept through the individual's observation of his or her own behavior (Bem, 1972).

By assigning roles and self-esteem based on sex or gender, the society creates a structure that regulates expectations from both sexes and tends to limit them to the cultural expectations therefrom. These structures are further reinforced through the creation of laws for such society and all members of the society subscribe to obeying such laws as a sign of their membership of the society.

The schema concept has been a heuristically valuable, if ill-defined, concept within psychology. The gender schema is currently at a comparable level of conceptual maturity. Although it is likely that much of the information in the gender schema consists of fuzzy sets organized around male and female prototypes (Cantor & Mischel, 1979; Rosch, 1975), the theory does not explicitly commit itself with respect to the exact nature or structure of the gender schema.

Therefore, queering or questioning the level of women representation in the parliament of House of Assembly in contradistinction to their role in national development, becomes relevant to the gender schema theory because the theory helps explain the root of such level of representation. This is because the schema within a given society can be seen as the organizing framework, a structure and context for processing information. The theory proposed that gender based violence or schemas develop during childhood through relationships with gender-based schematic processing. The sex-typing selectively filter for corroborating experience such that the schemas are extended and elaborated throughout the individual's life-time. At the cognitive level, the

schema is believed to be maintained by magnifying information that confirms the schema, and negating or minimizing information that is inconsistent with the schema.

Also, these schema are used for the transmission of cultural heritage from generation to generation and this is one of the cardinal functions of the media. They also serve as a bastion for social judgment in a given society. The media does not operate in a vacuum but its operations are tied to the socio-political, socio-cultural, socio-economic and socio-religious dictates of the society.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discussed the research procedure adopted by the researcher in conducting this study. It defined how data and information were gathered to address the research questions raised. The major components of a research methodology according to Popoola (2011) include research design, the population of the study, sampling procedure, sample size, research instruments, validity and reliability of research instrument and method of data analysis. The adequacy and suitability of the methodology plays a central role in the acceptability of the research findings. Hence, the research methodology adopted in this study is discussed in the following subheadings: research design, population of the study, sampling procedure, sample size, research instrument, method of data collection, and data analysis technique.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted the quantitative research design which uses a combination of primary and secondary sources of data to improve the reliability and validity of data. Quantitative research design is suitable especially when applied to a larger population and gathering of quantifiable data, qualitative methods provide descriptive data to stated research problems (Eyisi, 2016). The choice of a quantitative methodology is based on the complex nature of gender within the context of Nigeria and how it is influenced by other societal factors that include culture, religion, education, etc. Similar, this method can assist in understanding the reciprocal processes through which assumptions about gender are made and how these become institutionalized and part of broader structures of society including democratic institutions.

Both primary and secondary data were also used in the study. Primary data were collected using a questionnaire, while secondary data were sourced from journals, publications of the Rules and Business Committee and Tables Department of the Rivers State House of Assembly, books, newspapers, government records and publications, other online resources, etc. The use of questionnaire was due to their practicability, scalability and ease of analysis while in-depth interviews were used to generate deeper and richer insights.

The purposive sampling technique was adopted for this study. This non-random technique does not require underlying theories or a set number of informants. It implies that "a researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of their knowledge or experience" (Bernard,2002: 33). Using this method, legislators and staff of the Rivers State House of Assembly were targeted.

3.2   Population of the study

This section shows the population of this study and the number of questionnaires that will be administered to respondents. According Varden Bergh and Katz (1999), Population is a group of people from which a sample can be selected from for the purpose of conducting research. Therefore, a population is the total collection of elements from which inference is drawn. Thus, for the purpose of this study, research population consists Nigerians in Port Harcourt municipal area council and Obio-Akpor local government area. The total population of the FCT is 1005904 (National Census 2006). This target population does not exclude legislators serving in the Rivers State House of Assembly, parliamentary staff, legislative aides, civil society organizations (CSOs) and visitors to the parliament.

The likert scales rating was used to elicit information from the respondents, whereby they were required to score their opinion using the scale of strongly agreed (SA) Agreed (A), undecided (UD) strongly disagreed (SD) and disagreed (D). Z test of mean was Z test formula: Zt = ZRanks X Frequency Total Responses (n)

3.3   Sample and sampling procedure

The purposive sampling technique was adopted for this study. This non-random technique does not require underlying theories or a set number of informants. It implies that "a researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of their knowledge or experience" (Bernard,2002: 33). Using this method, legislators and staff of the Rivers State House of Assembly were targeted.

3.4 Sample Size

A sample is a fraction, a representative or a sub-group of the population of a study. It can also be seen as a manageable section of a population which has similar characteristics. The sample is the elements making up the population that is actually studied and a generalization made on the population.

The study adopted Taro Yamane's formula to determine the appropriate sample for the study. The formula:

Where:

N = Population Size of 1,791,287

 Probability of type 1 error or level of significance

The study scientifically draws 1000 respondents as the sample size that will address the questionnaires in this study.

3.5   Instrument for Data collection

The study used questionnaires as instrument of data collection (primary source). The choice of these instrument is deliberate because the study desires much of primary data. 1000 questionnaires were administered in each of the 2 local government areas selected using purposive sampling method. Secondary data was also sourced from books, articles, journals, newspapers and other published and unpublished materials. Data was analyzed using content analysis.

3.6   Validity and Reliability

Questionnaire is a reliable instruments of data collection because it present peoples account of any issue being studied.

3.7 Sources of Data

This study requires an interplay of both primary and secondary sources of data.

Primary data

Primary data is sourced through the use of questionnaires and structured interviews, and the desk review of relevant documents of the Rivers State House of Assembly.

Secondary data

This comprises of data that were sourced from books, journal articles, newspapers, magazines etc.

3.8 Method of Data Collection

Data for this study were obtained through the use of questionnaires, and documents such as newspapers, magazines, reports, etc.

3.9 Data Analysis Technique

The simple percentage was adopted as the technique of data analysis used in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter it is important to note that there are 990 State Houses of Assembly seats in Nigeria. How many of them are occupied by women? In 1999, there were only 12 representing 1.2% in 2003, the number increased to 38(3.8%), in 2007 the figure was 52(5.3%), in 2011 the number is 62(6.3%). In 2015 the number stood at 55(5.5 %) and in 2019 the number plummeted to 40(4.0%).

YEAR	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE %
1999	12	1.2
2003	38	3.8
2007	52	5.3
2011	62	6.3
2015	55	5.5
2019	40	4.1

Table 8.Source: compiled by author form Kareem, K. (2021), #ChartoftheDay: Number of Women in Elective Positions in Nigeria 1999-2015. https://www.dataphyte.com/latest-reports/gender/chartoftheday-number-of-women-in-elective-positions-in-nigeria-1999-2015/, etc.

The figures shown above indicate without equivocation that a lot still needs to be done to give women more access and visibility to participate actively in politics. Available statistics revealed that overall political representation in government of Nigeria is less than 7 percent (Agbalajobi, 2010). This shows that Nigeria has not attained 30 percent affirmative as prescribed by the Beijing Platform of Action.

Women form 49.4 per cent of Nigeria's population, according to data from the National Bureau of statistics. However, female political representation in the 2019 elections was negligible relative to the approximately half of the population they constitute, with 2,970 women on the electoral ballot, representing only 11.36 per cent of nominated candidates.

The terms "Sex" and "Gender" are frequently misunderstood by certain scholars. The biological differences between women and men are referred to as sex. It is set in stone and cannot be altered. Gender, on the other hand, refers to the socially constructed roles, attitudes, activities, and characteristics that a society believes. It is usually used to determine the cultural and social difference between men and women. Gender roles are expectations of how males and females should behave, what attitudes they should have, what activities they should do and etc. according to their culture (Witt, 2016). In order to analyze gender issues, data must be disaggregated by sex. Gender statistics include sex disaggregated data, which is an essential.

4.1 Response Rate

Out of the 1000 administered questionnaires only 954 were returned fully filled. Hence the response rate is 95.4%. This is significantly high and gives us a good sample to conduct our research.

4.2 Analysis of Demographic Information

Demographic analysis is the study of a population-based on factors such as age, race, and sex. We therefore analyzed the data collected based on these demographic information. The first we considered is sex.

4.2.1   Distribution of respondents by Sex

55.56 Per cent of the respondent where male while 44.4% were female. This show that based on sex the men where in the majority.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Female	424	44.4
Male	530	55.56
Total	954	100

Source: Field Survey May, 2022

4.2.2 **Distribution of Respondents by Age**

Based on age classification of the data collected, it is clear that the young people are in the majority among the respondents. The highest age range is the 18-28 years age group with 57.78% while the least is the elderly group with 6.67%.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age Group	Total	Percentage
18-28	551	57.78
29-38	211	22.22
39-48	127	13.33
60 - above	65	6.67
Total	954	100

Table 10. Source: Field Survey May, 2022

4.2.3 **Distribution of respondent by marital status**

This is important as it exposes the level of awareness of Nigerian (based on age groupings) about the gender compositions of the River State House of Assembly.

Table 4.4: Distribution of respondent by marital status

Marital Status	Total	
	Frequency	Percentage
Single	430	45.08
Married	513	53.77
Divorced	11	1.15
Total	954	100

Table 11.Source: Field Survey May, 2022

Table 4.4 above is relevant to the study as it indicates the marital status of respondents and how marital composition influence people's perception about gender parity in the public space

4.2.4 Distribution of Respondent by Educational Qualification

Formal education is the most effective medium through which a nation can achieve its aspirations in the socio-economic and political realms of human development (Psacharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985). The researcher sought to determine the academic qualifications of the respondents and found that majority of the respondents are secondary school certificate holders with 563 respondents representing 59.0%. This was followed by tertiary education with 269 (28.19%). However, 122 (12.8%) of the respondents had only primary education.

Table 4.5: Distribution of Respondents by Educational Qualification

| Academic Qualification	Total	
	Frequency	Percentage
Tertiary	269	28.19
Secondary	563	59.01
Primary	122	12.8
Total	954	100

Source: Field Survey May, 2022

The researcher ensured a state-wide spread of respondents by ensuring that questionnaires were administered to the three senatorial districts that make the state. Data from the field indicates that Rivers South East senatorial zone has the highest number of respondents with 371 (38.88%) and closely followed by Rivers East with 319 (33.45%) while Rivers West has the least number of respondents with 264 (27.67%).

4.2.5 Distribution of respondent by Senatorial Zones

Table 4.6:

Senatorial District	Male		Female		Total	
	f	%	f	%	F	%
Rivers East	198	37.35	121	28.53	319	33.45
Rivers West	115	21.69	149	35.15	264	27.67
Rivers South East	217	40.96	154	36.32	371	38.88
Total	954	100	424	100	954	100

Source: Field Survey May, 2022
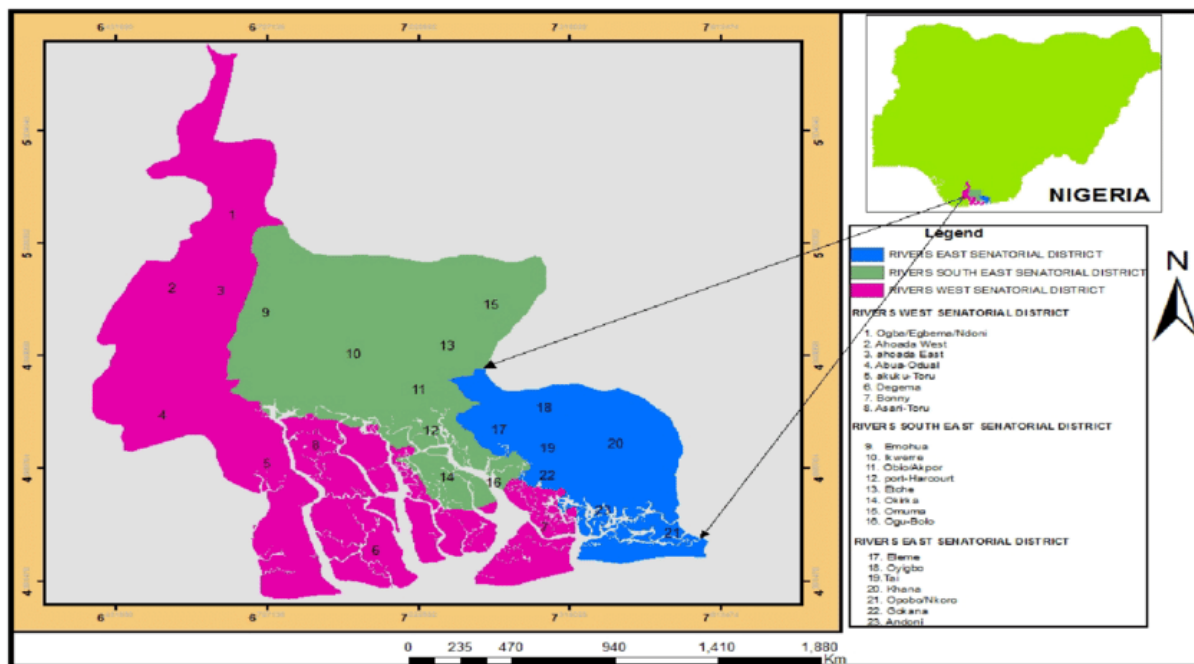
Source: Field Survey May, 2022

4.2.6 Distribution of respondent by occupation

Occupation	Responses	
	Frequency	Percentage
Civil Servant	198	20.75
Trading	250	26.21
Farming	184	19.28
Fishing	73	7.65
Artisans	170	17.82
Students	39	4.08
Legislators	22	2.30
Other Professionals	18	1.91
TOTAL	954	100

Source: Field Survey May, 2022

The result of the field survey also indicates that there were more traders among the respondents with 250 (26.21%). Closely followed by civil servants a total of 198 civil servants representing 29.75% responded to the questionnaires. Farmers formed the third highest group with 184 (19.28%) while artisans formed the fourth highest group with 170 (17.82%).

4.3.   Data Analysis

Examination of the level of women representation in the Rivers State House of Assembly;

To understand the level of women representation in the Rivers State House of Assembly, respondents were asked whether they are aware of women representation in Rivers State politics. While 724 (representing 76.0%) of the respondents stated that they are aware that women representation in the state house of assembly, 30 (3.1%) indicated that they are not aware. The remaining 200 respondents were undecided in their answer (20.9%).

Table 4.8: Are you aware of the level of women representation in the Rivers State House of Assembly?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	724	76.0
No	30	3.1
Undecided	200	20.9
Total	954	100

Source: Field Survey, February, 2023.

Respondents were further asked to indicate the level of women representation in the Rivers State House of Assembly. Whereas, 524 (54.9%) rated it very low, 350 (36.7%) are of the view that women representation in the state house of assembly is low (thus, a total of 874 respondents, representing 91.6% rated it low), a total of 6 (0.6%) respondents rated high/ very high. However, 7.8% of the respondents were undecided.

Table 4.9: What is the level of women representation in the Rivers State House of Assembly?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very low	524	54.9
Low	350	36.7
Undecided	74	7.8
High	5	0.5
Very High	1	0.1
Total	954	100

Source: Field Survey, February, 2023.

Respondents were further asked whether women poor representation in the state house of assembly is out of discrimination or not. Table 4.9 reveals that, 77.8% of the respondents agree that low women representation is a form of discrimination (35.6% strongly agreed while 42.2% agreed), 33.3% agree, 11.1% strongly disagreed. While 5.6% of the respondents disagree, 5.5% were not sure of the view.

Table 4.9: Is women poor representation in the state house of assembly is out of discrimination?

Responses	Strongly agree		Agree		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not sure		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
The poor representation of women in the Rivers State House of Assembly is out of discrimination against the women. Source: field survey, February, 2023	340	35.6	403	42.2	106	11.1	53	5.6	52	5.5	954	100

4.3.1. Understand some Dynamics and Peculiar Motivators of Women Underrepresentation in the Rivers House of Assembly.

Table 4.10: Respondents' Views on the Factors Hindering Women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly.

Responses	Strongly agree		Agree		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not sure		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
(a)Political Violence hinders women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly	340	35.6	403	42.2	106	11.1	53	5.6	52	5.5	954	100
(b)Low level of education	318	33.3	318	33.3	159	16.7	74	7.8	85	8.9	954	100

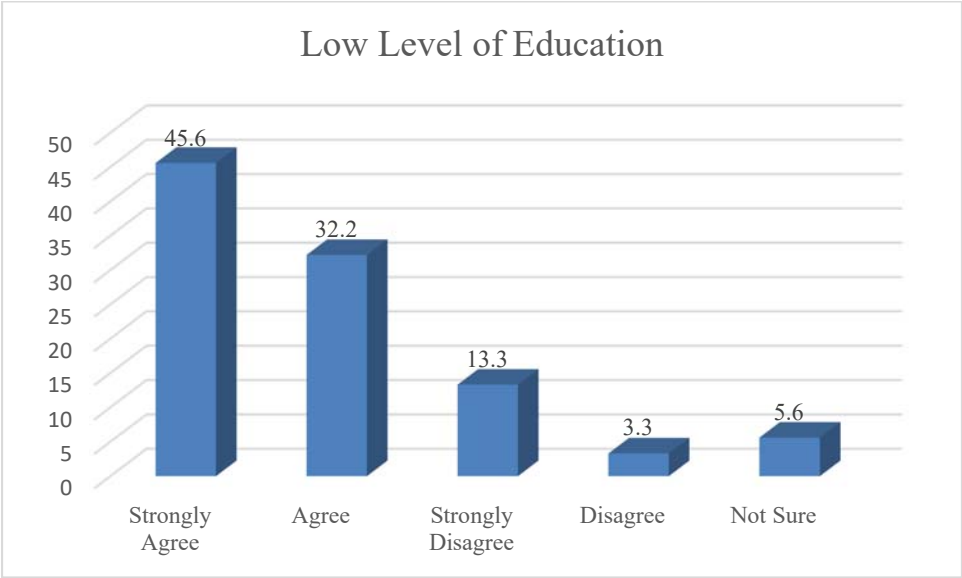| Statement												
hinders women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly												
(c)Socio-cultural beliefs hinder women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly	435	45.6	307	32.2	127	13.3	32	3.3	53	5.6	954	100
(d)Reproductive role hinders women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly	392	41.1	350	36.7	106	11.1	42	4.4	53	5.6	954	100
(e) High rate of poverty among women hinders their representation in Rivers State House of Assembly	424	44.4	265	27.8	159	16.7	53	5.6	52	5.5	954	100
(f) Religious beliefs hinders women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly	318	33.3	318	33.3	106	11.1	106	11.1	106	11.1	954	100

Source: Field Survey February, 2023

Table 4.10 above shows that 35.6% of the respondents strongly agree that political violence hinders women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly, 42.2% agree, 11.1% strongly disagree, while 5.6% disagree, only 5.6% were not sure of the view.

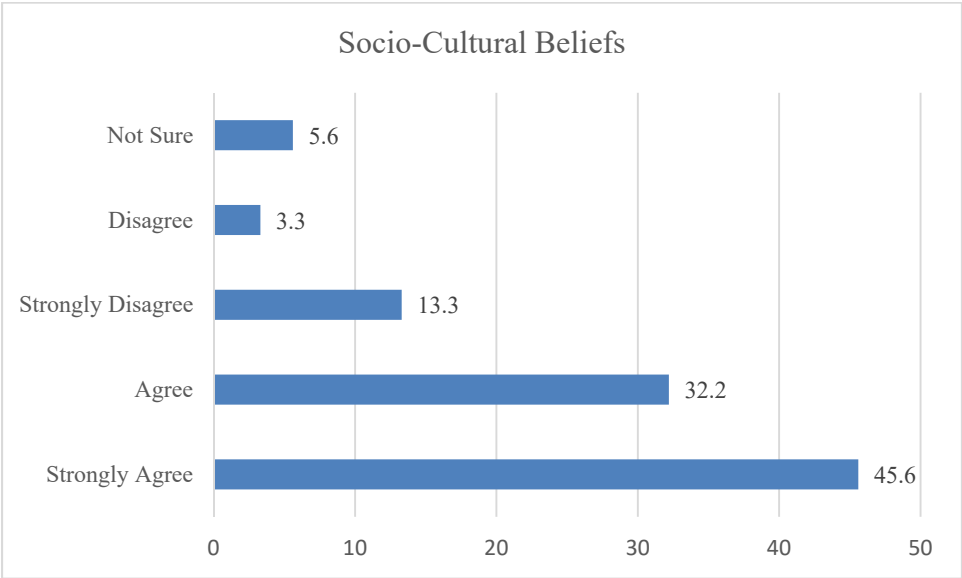## Political Violence
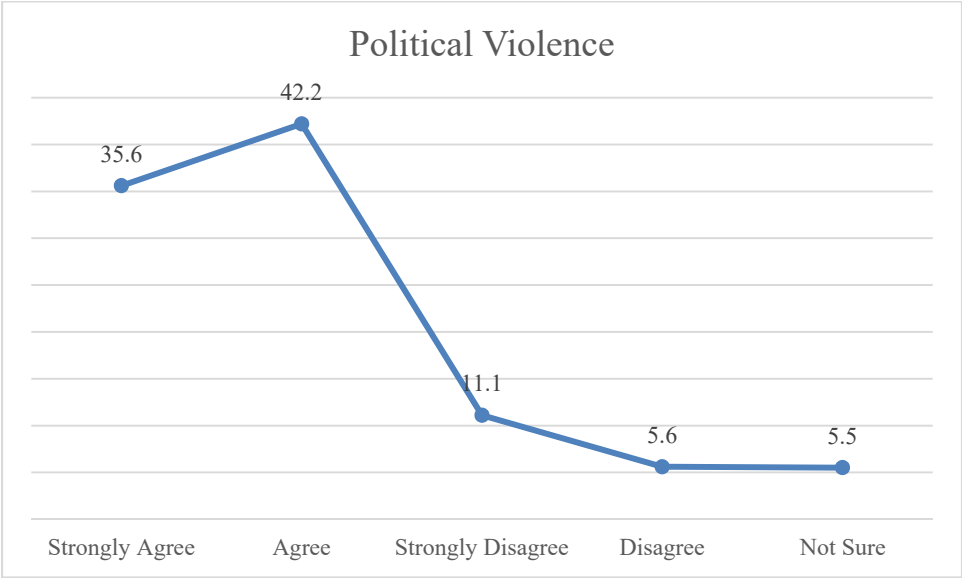
Source: Field Survey February, 2023

Table 4.10 further shows that low level of education hinders women women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly, 33.3% strongly agree, and the same 33.3% agreed, 16.7% strongly disagree. Only7.8% disagree and the remaining 8.9% were not sure.

Low Level of Education

| Category	Value
Strongly Agree	45.6
Agree	32.2
Strongly Disagree	13.3
Disagree	3.3
Not Sure	5.6

Source: Field Survey February, 2023

Data as captured in table 4.10 also revealed that 45.6% of the respondents strongly agree with the view that socio-cultural beliefs such as patriarchy hinder women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly, 32.2% agree (bringing the total percentage of those who agreed with the assertion to 77.6%). However, 13.3% strongly disagree, 3.3% disagree while 5.6% were not sure of the view.

Source: Field Survey February, 2023

The table also shows that 41.1% strongly agreed that reproductive role hinders women's political participation, 36.7% agree (77.8% in total agreed with the statement). 11.1% strongly disagree while 4.4% disagree, only 6.7% were not sure of this view.

Reproductive Role
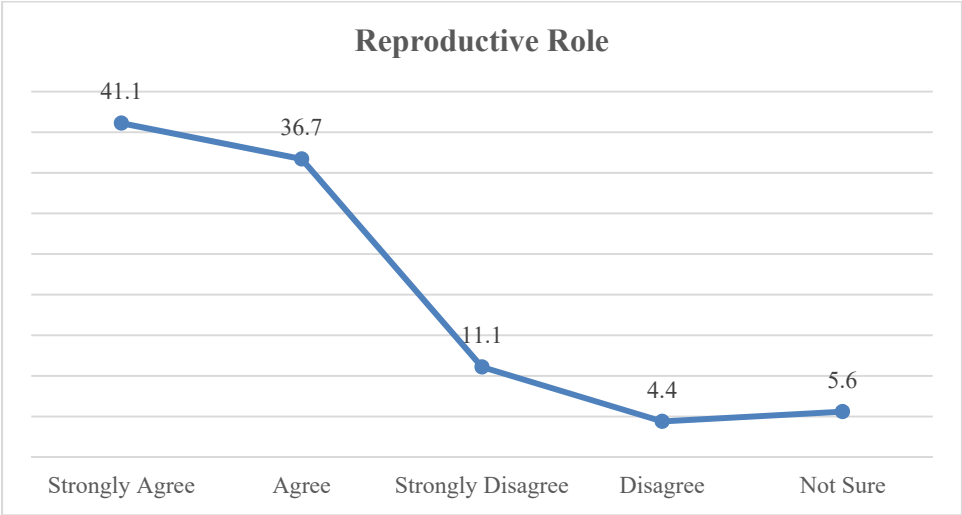
Source: Field Survey February, 2023

The table above shows that poverty is also a factor that hinders women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly, as 44.4% strongly agree, 27.8% agree (74.2% in total agreed). However, 16.7% strongly disagree, 5.6% disagree while 5.5% were not sure of this view.
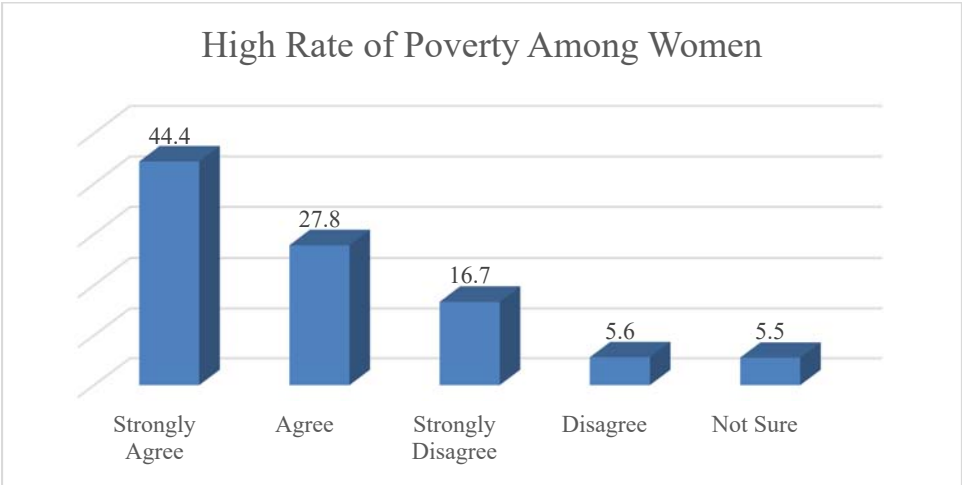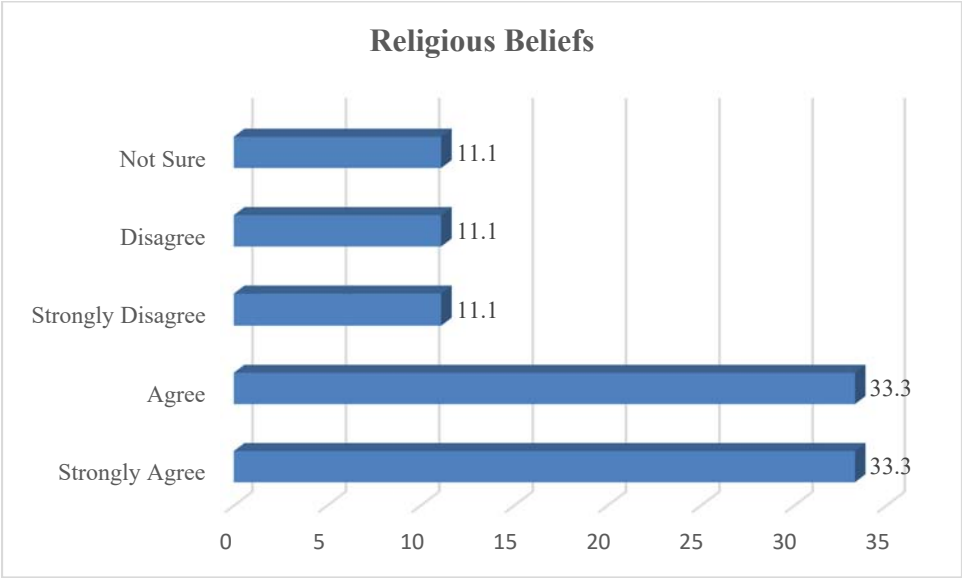
High Rate of Poverty Among Women

Table 4.10 further shows that, 60(33.3%) strongly agree and the same 33.3% agree that religious belief hinders women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly. 11.1% strongly disagree and at the same time agree, also this same 11.1% were not sure of the view.

Religious Beliefs

Category	Value
Not Sure	11.1
Disagree	11.1
Strongly Disagree	11.1
Agree	33.3
Strongly Agree	33.3

Source: Field Survey February, 2023

Existing literature shows that in many African states, politics is marred by violence, persecution, intimidation and torture. While both genders are victims of this, it presents particular barriers to women's engagement and political participation. According to the United Nations (2015) an Afrobarometer survey showed that women feel "a sense of vulnerability to political intimidation and violence". The Afrobarometer survey further showed that in Guinea, for instance, 64% of women say they are very concerned about political intimidation. The effects of war continue for years after the fighting ends. While entire communities suffer the impact of armed conflict, women and girls are often the first to lose their rights to education, to political participation and to livelihoods, among other rights being bluntly violated.

According to George (Citation2019) women's ability to engage politically both within and beyond the voting booth - particularly as community organisers and elected officials - is often shaped by norms that drive wider social structures. Fundamental to the constraints that women face is an entrenched patriarchal system in which family control and decision-making powers are in the hands of males. Traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes – especially as regards women's roles and status in society—remain strong, particularly in rural areas (Sadie, 2005). Traditional roles and the division of labour are still clearly gendered. Social norms that make it more difficult for women to leave their traditionally domestic roles for more public roles outside of the home (Kangas et al., Citation2015). Women's gender identity is still predominantly conceived of as being domestic in nature, and continues to act as a barrier to women's entry into formal politics.

The low numbers of women in elective political positions in Rivers state is glaring when we place them in context. Gonzalez (2013) quoting the survey conducted by the American University, Washington DC in 2001 reveals that the problem with women in politics does not lie merely in the presumption that women are burdened with family responsibilities but rather because there is a cultural idea for women to harmonize the role of "working women" with quintessential housewife. This desire to achieve a balance illuminates the complexity in choices faced by women, inapplicable to men. Again the survey carried out by the American University in 2011 as quoted by Pearson (2013) reveals that belief in political qualification provides the largest platform for the absence of women in politics, the study indicates that men are 60% more likely than women to believe that they are very qualified to run for office.

Several studies show that female interest in politics has increased, while their political involvement remains stagnant. The root of the problem according to Gonzalez (2013) does not necessarily relate

to a lack of interest rather a lack of ambition to carry out political candidacy in a politically male-dominated world. In contrast to this view, Nebousa (2009) in his survey on women underrepresentation concludes that inspite of the numerous international laws that exist, women still are not recognized and given the right to participate in politics like their male counterparts. In line with this view, Chuku (2009) believes that although there has been an increase in the number of women in legislative bodies. His research indicated that African women continued to be underrepresented in all structures of power and decision making.

Somewhat surprisingly from the reviewed literature 2 opposing answers emerged as to why few women are in elective political offices. The opinions are; women are not discriminated against rather they have consistently refused to present themselves for such positions due to childcare, household affairs, lack of confidence and so on. Secondly, women are being marginalized and discriminated against in a male dominated society, it is against this background that this research is conceived. This survey sought to address the perception of Rivers indigenes in women underrepresentation into elective positions in Rivers state.

4.3.2 Ascertain how these motivators of women under-representation hindered women activities in Rivers

The study further sought to ascertain the how these identified factors hinder women representation in the River State House of Assembly and found that these factors engender a situation whereby women are relegated to child bearing, raising and supporting family, becoming mere party supporters and shy away from party leaders, and they become afraid of political violence and intimidation. This is very true as 77.8% of the respondents agreed with these assertions. While

66.6% agreed with fact that women become mere voters who are not ready to contest for elective offices.

Table 4.11: How do the identified factors that hinder effective women representation manifest in Rivers State?

Responses	Strongly agree		Agree		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not sure		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Relegating them to child bearing and family care	340	35.6	403	42.2	106	11.1	53	5.6	52	5.5	954	100
They vote instead of contesting to avoid harassments	318	33.3	318	33.3	159	16.7	74	7.8	85	8.9	954	100
They become party supporters and shy away from party leaders.	435	45.6	307	32.2	127	13.3	32	3.3	53	5.6	954	100
They are afraid of political violence.	392	41.1	350	36.7	106	11.1	42	4.4	53	5.6	954	100

Source: Field survey, February 2023.

4.3.3 Evaluate how such factors have impacted the development of the State

The study further sought to evaluate how these factors impact the development of Rivers State. According to Okoli (2021), women play very important roles in the development of any human society. He stated that they play the role of mothers, caretakers in family affairs, farmers, educators, entrepreneurs, teachers, leaders, etc. It is historical that women play significant roles in societal development and ensure the stability, progress, and long-term development of states (Usman, 2020). They play important role in decision-making at home and by extension in the larger society. According Idike, Okeke and Ugodulunwa (2020) many women that have assumed leadership positions in the legislature, executive and the judiciary left indelible marks of

achievements and contributions to national development. They also added women have also made invaluable contributions to developments of their various states in Nigeria. However, when they are poorly represented in government especially in the parliament, the opportunity for them to contribute to the stability and economic development of the state. The volatility experienced in the state legislature under the Rt. Hon. Rotimi Amaechi's regime was fostered by the poor representation of women in the assembly. Women are builders and passionate about development but when they are shut out of public offices, their contribution is limited.

4.3.4   Proffer measures that can encourage women's representation in the Rivers State House of Assembly

Respondents' views on the measures that can encourage women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly were sought. Among the options provided their responses indicates that 74.2% of the respondents agreed with the assertion that *government should implement policies that encourage women representation in Rivers State House of Assembly* and indeed the entire governance structure of the state. Whereas only 16.7% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, 11.1% were undecided. A total of 88.8% of the respondents supported the statement that *women advocacy organisations and groups should organize sensitization programmes that encourage active women participation in politics* as a way of increasing women representation in the state house of assembly. This leaves only 5.6% of the respondents disagreeing with the statement while a paltry 5.6% were undecided.

Responses	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Total

	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
(a)Government should implement policies that encourage women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly	529	55.5	159	18.7	105	11.1	56	5.6	105	11.1	954	100
(b)Women Advocacy organizations should organize sensitization programmes that encourage women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly	737	77.7	105	11.1	56	5.6	-	-	56	5.6	954	100
(c)Non-governmental bodies should embark on aggressive public sensitization to let the public understand the importance of active women participation in politics in the state	212	22.2	421	44.12	56	5.88	265	27.8	-	-	954	100
(d)Religious leaders should encourage women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly	688	72.2	159	16.7		5.6	-	-		5.5	954	100
(e) Women themselves should express confidence by participating fully in representation in Rivers State House of Assembly	740	77.7	54	5.6	54	5.6	54	5.6	52	5.5	954	100

Source: Field Survey May 2022

Similarly, 66.3% of the respondents agreed that *non-governmental bodies should embark on aggressive public sensitization to let the public understand the importance of active women participation in politics in the state* as a portent measure to boost women representation in state legislative assembly. However, 33.6% of the respondents disagreed with this assertion. Also 88.9% of the respondents agreed that *religious leaders should encourage women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly through their sermons.* Consequently, only 5.6% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, while 5.5 were not sure of their decision on the statement. Also, 83.3% of the respondents supported that *women should express confidence and support themselves by participating fully in competitive elections into Rivers State House of Assembly.* 11.1 disagreed while 5.5 were undecided on the statement.

4.4   Discussion of Findings

Examine the level of women representation in the Rivers State House of Assembly;

In an attempt to understand the level of women representation in the Rivers State House of Assembly, enquired about peoples awareness of women representation in Rivers State politics and found that 76.0% of the respondents are aware of the poor women representation in the state house of assembly, while 30 (3.1%) indicated that they are not aware. Respondents were further asked to indicate the level of women representation in the Rivers State House of Assembly. Whereas, 524 (54.9%) rated it very low, 350 (36.7%) are of the view that women representation in the state house of assembly is low (thus, a total of 874 respondents, representing 91.6% rated it low), a total of 6 (0.6%) respondents rated high/ very high. However, 7.8% of the respondents were undecided. This means that absolute majority (91.6%) rated women representation in the state house of assembly low. The study also found that the poor women representation in the Rivers State House of Assembly is a mark of discrimination against women by their male folk. This is because when respondents were asked whether women poor representation in the state house of assembly is out of discrimination or not, 4.9 reveals that, 77.8% of the respondents agreed that low women representation is a form of discrimination (35.6% strongly agreed while 42.2% agreed).

4.4.1 Understand some dynamics and peculiar motivators of women underrepresentation in the Rivers House of Assembly.

To address this objective, the study found that that political violence and the reproductive role of women are the two major factors that hinder women political participation in Rivers State. Table 4.10 shows that 41.1% strongly agreed that reproductive role hinders women's political participation, 36.7% agree (77.8% in total agreed with the statement). 11.1% strongly disagree while 4.4% disagree, only 6.7% were not sure of this view. 35.6% of the respondents strongly agree that political violence hinders women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly, 42.2% agree, 11.1% strongly disagree, while 5.6% disagree, only 5.6% were not sure of the view.

Table 4.10 further shows that low level of education hinders women women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly, 33.3% strongly agree, and the same 33.3% agreed, 16.7% strongly disagree. Only7.8% disagree and the remaining 8.9% were not sure. Data as captured in table 4.10 also revealed that 45.6% of the respondents strongly agree with the view that socio-cultural beliefs such as patriarchy hinder women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly, 32.2% agree (bringing the total percentage of those who agreed with the assertion to 77.6%). However, 13.3% strongly disagree, 3.3% disagree while 5.6% were not sure of the view.

The table above shows that poverty is also a factor that hinders women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly, as 44.4% strongly agree, 27.8% agree (74.2% in total agreed). However, 16.7% strongly disagree, 5.6% disagree while 5.5% were not sure of this view. Table 4.10 further shows that, 60(33.3%) strongly agree and the same 33.3% agree that religious belief hinders

women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly. 11.1% strongly disagree and at the same time agree, also this same 11.1% were not sure of the view.

In many African states, politics is marred by violence, persecution, intimidation and torture. While both genders are victims of this, it presents particular barriers to women's engagement and political participation. According to the United Nations (2015) an Afrobarometer survey showed that women feel "a sense of vulnerability to political intimidation and violence". The Afrobarometer survey further showed that in Guinea, for instance, 64% of women say they are very concerned about political intimidation. The effects of war continue for years after the fighting ends. While entire communities suffer the impact of armed conflict, women and girls are often the first to lose their rights to education, to political participation and to livelihoods, among other rights being bluntly violated.

According to George (2019) women's ability to engage politically both within and beyond the voting booth - particularly as community organizers and elected officials - is often shaped by norms that drive wider social structures. Fundamental to the constraints that women face is an entrenched patriarchal system in which family control and decision-making powers are in the hands of males. Traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes – especially as regards women's roles and status in society-remain strong, particularly in rural areas (Sadie, 2005). Traditional roles and the division of labour are still clearly gendered. Social norms that make it more difficult for women to leave their traditionally domestic roles for more public roles outside of the home (Kangas et al., 2015). Women's gender identity is still predominantly conceived of as being domestic in nature, and continues to act as a barrier to women's entry into formal politics.

4.4.2 Ascertain the how these motivators of women under-representation hindered women activities in Rivers

The study further sought to ascertain the how these identified factors hinder women representation in the River State House of Assembly and found that these factors engender a situation whereby women are relegated to child bearing, raising and supporting family, becoming mere party supporters and shy away from party leaders, and they become afraid of political violence and intimidation. This is very true as 77.8% of the respondents agreed with these assertions. While 66.6% agreed with fact that women become mere voters who are not ready to contest for elective offices.

4.4.3 Evaluate how such factors have impacted the development of the State

The study further sought to evaluate how these factors impact the development of Rivers State. According to Okoli (2021), women play very important roles in the development of any human society. He stated that they play the role of mothers, caretakers in family affairs, farmers, educators, entrepreneurs, teachers, leaders, etc. It is historical that women play significant roles in societal development and ensure the stability, progress, and long-term development of states (Usman, 2020). They play important role in decision-making at home and by extension in the larger society. According Idike, Okeke and Ugodulunwa (2020) many women that have assumed leadership positions in the legislature, executive and the judiciary left indelible marks of achievements and contributions to national development. They also added women have also made invaluable contributions to developments of their various states in Nigeria. However, when they are poorly represented in government especially in the parliament, the opportunity for them to contribute to the stability and economic development of the state. The volatility experienced in the

state legislature under the Rt. Hon. Rotimi Amaechi's regime was fostered by the poor representation of women in the assembly. Women are builders and passionate about development but when they are shut out of public offices, their contribution is limited.

4.4.4 Proffer measures that can encourage women's representation in the Rivers State House of Assembly

Respondents' views on the measures that can encourage women's representation in Rivers State House of Assembly were sought. Among the options provided their responses indicates that 74.2% of the respondents agreed with the assertion that *government should implement policies that encourage women representation in Rivers State House of Assembly* and indeed the entire governance structure of the state. Whereas only 16.7% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, 11.1% were undecided. A total of 88.8% of the respondents supported the statement that *women advocacy organizations and groups should organize sensitization programmes that encourage active women participation in politics* as a way of increasing women representation in the state house of assembly. This leaves only 5.6% of the respondents disagreeing with the statement while a paltry 5.6% were undecided.

Similarly, 66.3% of the respondents agreed that *non-governmental bodies should embark on aggressive public sensitization to let the public understand the importance of active women participation in politics in the state* as a portent measure to boost women representation in state legislative assembly. However, 33.6% of the respondents disagreed with this assertion. Also 88.9% of the respondents agreed that *religious leaders should encourage women's representation in*

Rivers State House of Assembly through their sermons. Consequently, only 5.6% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, while 5.5 were not sure of their decision on the statement. Also, 83.3% of the respondents supported that *women should express confidence and support themselves by participating fully in competitive elections into Rivers State House of Assembly.* 11.1 disagreed while 5.5 were undecided on the statement.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Women constitute almost half of Nigeria's population yet they are marginalized in politics as their male folk continues to dominate the polity. It is a well-known fact that women all over the world are catalysts for development and change; yet in the study of twentieth century Nigeria political history, the role of women has tended to be regarded as insignificant.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The Study found that women are under-represented in the Rivers State House of Assembly (RSHA) since the introduction of democracy, as only two (2) female law makers were in the assembly between 2003-2007,the period of 2007-2011 and 2011-2015 respectively produced four (4) female members each while 2015-2019 and 2019-2023 , recorded one (1) female legislator each.

The study also found that factors such as political violence, educational factors, socio-cultural beliefs, the reproductive role of women, high rate of poverty, and religious beliefs constitute impediments to women representation in the RSHA.

These factors according to the findings relegate women to child-bearing and family care , voters instead of actors / candidates to avoid embarrassment, become party supporters and shy away from party leadership and politics.

5.2 Conclusion

This study took a critical look at the relationship between women representation in Rivers State House of Assembly (politics in general) and found that though women plays important role in in political socialization and culture, they have remained represented. The number of women elected to public offices in Rivers State did not increase significantly after the 2019 general election, analyses by this study have shown. This is because Rivers women have encountered a number of problems while venturing into politics. There is large scale socio-cultural discrimination from the men folk, both in choosing, voting for candidates and in allocating political offices. More often than not, men constitute a larger percentage of the party membership and this tends to affect women when it comes to selecting or choosing candidates for elections. Since men are usually the majority in the political party setup, they tend to dominate the party hierarchy and are therefore at advantage in influencing the party's internal politics and who emerges party candidates for elective offices.

5.3 Recommendation

Based on the subsisting analysis and findings and in tandem with the research objectives, the following recommendations are made:

There should be a strict adhere to the 35 percent affirmative action as enshrined in the National Gender Policy of 2006 not just in appointive positions but also in elective offices. Thus, Rivers State must respect Nigeria's commitment to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) especially goal number 5 which is targeted at achieving gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in all spheres of the society.

There should be a legislation compelling political parties to reserve at least 35 percent of their tickets for elective positions in all the Rivers States executive and legislature for women. This is to encourage women politicians to vie for elective offices. This will also help reduce the rate of violence and insincerity being unleashed on women by their male-folks as well as reduce women marginalization and the suppression of women political interest by the male counterpart in the state.

The Rivers State Ministry of Information and Culture and the various political parties should embark on an aggressive campaign or sensitization through radio and television jingles and talk-shows to disabuse the mind of Rivers People of the prevailing wrong notion that women in politics are prostitutes, stubborn and disrespectful. This will also boost the morale and confidence of women to run for political office especially legislative seats.

The She-for-She movement should be domesticated in Rivers State by influential women in the education, business and political spheres of state to encourage girls and women to take destinies

in their own hands. She for She ensures that wealthy and influential women encourage young girls in school and women in both the labor market and politics, thereby ensuring the retention of women in not just the labor market and girls in schools but also place women in vantage positions in politics by employing their wealth and population to achieve this purpose. The idea behind She-for-She is to empower girls and women to take their lives into their own hands and reach their full potential through stable income and access to education and above all achieve increased women representation in government.

Through she-for-she women will be able to pull resources together and galvanize support for women politicians to wrestle political power from their male fork in the state. This entails the formation of women clique within the political sphere to fight the cause of women in Rivers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aaron, K. K. (2004). *Science in Social Relations*. Port Harcourt; Kemuela Publications.

Abonyi, N. (2005): *Intergovernmental Relations in a Democratic Federation.* Enugu: John Jacob's Classic Publishers Ltd.

Aderemi, A. & Akanji, O. O. (2022), African Legislature in Social Emergencies: Challenges and Outcomes. The Theory and Practice of Legislation, vol.10:2. Pp.113-116. DOI: 10.1080/20508840.2022.2107825

Agbalajobi, D. T. (2010), Women participation and the Political Process in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 4: 75-82.

Akiyode-Afolabi, A. & Arogundade, L. (2003), *Gender Audit-2003 Election and Issues in Women's Political Participation in Nigeria.* Lagos: Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre.

Allah-Mensah, B. (2004), The Gender Dimension of the 1996 Elections: Its Implications for Democratic Consolidation. In Ayee JRA (Eds), The 1996 General Elections and Democratic Consolidation in Ghana, Department of Political Science, University of Ghana, Legon: Accra.

Ama, C. A. (2004), *Women and Democracy in Nigeria*. Uzorka Publications, Port Harcourt.

Andeweg, R. B. & Thomassen, J. A. (2005), "Modes of Political Representation: Toward a new typology," Legislative Studies Quarterly, 30(4): 507–528.

Anifowose, R. & Enemuo, F. (2001), *Elements of politics*. Lagos: Malthouss Press Limited.

Anthony, E. (2016), *The Legislature in conflict Management.* Scholars' press, Germany

Awotokun, A. (1998), "Legislative, Executive and Judicial Duties in Sustaining Democracy: A Theoretical Discourse in Nigeria". *Indian Socio-Legal Journal*. Vol. XXIV (1-2).

Ayabam, A. T. & Ngara, C. O. (2013), Women in Politics and Decision-Making in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects. *Eur. Journal Business Social Sci.* 2: 47-58.

Ayeni, M. A. & Ajibogun, A. G. (2013), Gender issues and democracy: The Nigeria experience. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 2(1), 117–127.

Adediji, B. (Ed.), Deeper insights into Nigeria's public administration (pp. 422–448). AuthorHouse.

Bachtiger, A. & Landwehr, C. (2018), Democracy in the twenty-first century: Toward new models of democratic governance. https://items.ssrc.org/democracy-papers/democracy-in-thetwenty-first-century-toward-new-models-of-democratic-governance/ accessed 14th December, 2022

Badejo, B. T. (2013). Overcoming gender inequality in Nigeria. In Adediji, B. (Ed.), Deeper insights into Nigeria's public administration (pp. 422–448). Author House.

Ballington, J. & Karam, A. (Eds.). (2005), *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*. Sweden: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

Barkan, J. D. (2009), *Legislative power in emerging African democracies*. USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers, pp: 1-8.

Beer, C. (2009), Democracy and gender equality. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 44(3), 212–227.

Bego, I. (2014), Accessing power in new democracies: The appointment of female ministers in post-communist Europe. *Political Research Quarterly*, 67(2), 347–360

Benjamin, S. (2010), "National Assembly: The Limit of Party politics In Legislative Process." *Nigeria Journal of Legislative Affairs,* Vol. 3 (1& 2), 44 – 72.

Bernard, B. (2017), Philosophy of Mathematical Knowledge, https://iep.utm.edu/bernard-bolzano-mathematics/

Bluwey, G. K. (1998), State Organizations in the Transition to Constitutional Democracy. In Kwame NA (Ed), Transition to Democracy, Accra, Ghana: Freedom Publications.

Burgess, H. & Burgess, G. M. (1997), Encyclopedia of Conflict Resolution, ABC Clio: Santa Barbara.

Chaabal, C. & Simbine, A. (2000), "Citizen's Disposition towards Governance and Democratic Rule in Nigeria" *NISER Monograph Series,* No. 15.

Charlesworth, J. C. (1968), Contemporary Political Analysis. The Free Press, New York.

Coleman, S. (2022), Direct Representation Towards Conversational Democracy https://www.ippr.org/publications/direct-representationtowards-a-conversational-democracy accessed 18th May,2022.

Colher, A. M., Miller, B. C. & Stone, H. S. (1989), Montesquieu: The Spirit of the Law. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Miller, D., Coleman, J., Connolly, W. & Ryan, A. (1991), The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought, Wiley-Blackwell Publishers

Davies, A. E. (2004), "The Role of the Legislature in Fostering an Efficient System of Public Finance" in Fageigbesi (eds.) *Fiscal Federalism*. CEMA/ACBE.

Devlin, C., & Elgie, R. (2008), The Effect of Increased Women's Representation in Parliament: The Case of Rwanda. *Parliamentary Affairs,* 61(2), 237-254. https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsn007

Dim, E. E., & Asomah, J. Y. (2019), Socio-demographic Predictors of Political participation among women in Nigeria: Insights from Afrobarometer 2015 Data. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 20(2), 91-105.

Edigheji, O. (2006), "Political Representation in Africa: Towards a Conceptual Framework" *African Development*. Vol. XXXI, (3), 93 -119.

Egobueze, A. (2017), The organs of government and the application of the doctrine of separation of powers in conflict management in Nigeria. *Nsukka, University of Nigeria Journal of Political Economy*, Vol 10, No. 1, 2017 ISSN 0794-2532, pp. 123 - 139

Emakhu, I. J. (2013), The Nature and Prevalence of Violence against Women in Nigeria. 1st Annual International Interdisciplinary Conference, AIIC 2013, Azores: Portugal, pp: 775-784.

Eme, O. I. & Onyishi, A. (2011), The Challenges of Insecurity in Nigeria: a Thematic Exposition. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Res Business Res* 3.

Esidene, C. E. (2009), The Nigerian politics, Women Rights and the Challenges of the Affirmative Action: A Historical Periscoping. *Journal Law Diplomacy* 6.

Esidene, C. E. (2012), Consolidating Democratic Governance in Nigeria: Analysis and Suggestions. London, United Kingdom, *Afr Journal Social Sci.* 2.

European Union Report on 2019 Elections (2019) Nigeria Final Report General Elections April 2019.

Fashagba, J. (2010), "Legislative Oversight under the Nigerian Presidential System." *The Journal of Legislative Studies.* Vol. 15, Issue 4.

FGN (1999). Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Abuja: Government Press.

Fraser, N. (2003), Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation. In N. Fraser & A. Honneth (Eds.), *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political Philosophical Exchange.* London: Verso.

Held, D. (1993), Prospects for Democracy, United Kingdom: Keula Publications,

Henry, A. (2004), Politics and Government in Nigeria. Port Harcourt; Amethist and Coleagues Publishers.

Heywood, A. (2007), "*Politics*". New York: Palgrove Pub

Hoffman, R. J. S. & Levack, P. (eds) Burke's Politics: selected writings and speeches of Edmund Burke on Reforms, Revolution and War, Alfred A Knopf, New York (1949) 116.

Igwe, R. & Odike, E. (2009), *Social Change and Economic Organizations in Nigeria*. Chadik Press Alakahia, Port Harcourt.

Igwe, R. (2008), *Contemporary Issues in Social Studies*. Qtadik Press Alakahia, Port Harcourt.

Inyang, B. T. (2001), *Harmonizing Human Resources Management Practice in the Public and Private Sector.* Calabari: MERB business Centre.

Izah, P. P. (2013), Legislative Oversight and Democracy in Developing Countries. Paper for ECOWAS-P on Security Challenges and Political Instability in West Africa held in Dakar-Senegal.

Lafenwa, S. & Gberevbie, D. (2007), "Legislative Oversight and Cost of Governance in Nigeria" in Akpotor, A. et.al. (eds) *Cost of Governance in Nigeria. An Evaluative Analysis.* Ekpoma: Ambrose Ali University Publishing House.

Lawless, J. L. & Fox, L. R. (2001), Men rule: the continued under representation of women in U.S. Politics. http://www.utexas.edu/worlduni/state accessed on 20th May 2022

Luka, R. C. (2011), Women and Political Participation in Nigeria: The Imperative of Empowerment. *J Social Sci Public Policy* 3: 24-37.

Mathew, H. J. C. (2003), *Democracy and Civil Society in Nigeria*. Ibadam: spectrum Books Ltd.

Weber, M. (1947), The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation, translated by A. M. Henderson and T. Parsons, (1947) 676-678.

Murdock, G. P. (1949) *Social Structure*. The MacMillan Company, New York.

National Bureau of Statistics https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/ Accessed 23 December, 2022

Nwankwo, N. (1996), *Gender Equality in Nigerian Politics*. Lagos: Deutchetz Publishers.

Ogbogu, C. O. (2012), The Role of Women in Politics and in the Sustenance of Democracy in Nigeria. *International Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, 3(18), 182–191.

Ogunyinka, V. (2019), Nigeria has lowest rate of women's legislative participation in Sub-Saharan Africa—IRI/NDI. https://www.vanguardngr.com/2019/06/nigeria-has-lowest-rateof-womens-legislative-participation-in-sub-saharan-africa-%e2%80%95-iri-ndi/ Accessed 23 May 2022

Okafor, E. E., Akinwale, A. A., & Doyin-Hassan, A. (2007), Feminization of underdevelopment in Nigeria: Some theoretical issues. *The Anthropologist*, 9(3), 237–245

Okeke, G. M. (2015), Women participation in politics in Nigeria: A democratic imperative. *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities,* 1(4), 391–399.

Okeoma, J. P. O. (2017), Nigerian culture: A barrier to the career progress of women in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Human Resource Management*, 5(5), 1-11

Okome, M. (1996), A Sapped Democracy: The Political Economy of the Structural Adjustment Program and the Democratic Transition in Nigeria, 1983-1995. PhD Dissertation, Columbia University, 1996

Okoosi-Simbine, A. T. (2007), Assessing the Role of the Legislature in a Democracy: A Case Study of Oyo State House of Assembly. Nigeria Institute of Social and Economic Research, NISER Monograph Series.

Okunna, C. S. (2002), Gender and communication in Nigeria: Is this the twenty-first century? A paper delivered at the Department of Mass Communication, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria.

Oladimefi, B. (2004), *Comparative Politics today*. Ibadan: A World view Nearson Publishers.

Onwuzirike, E. (2003), The Status of Women in the Traditional Niger Delta Society. In Ejituwu NC, Gabriel AOI (Eds), *Women in Nigerian History: The Rivers and Bayelsa Elections in Nigeria.*

Pelizzo, R. & Stapenhurst, R. (2004), Legislatures and Oversight: A Note in Quadernidi Scienza Political.

Pitkin, H. (2022), 'Hobbes, Concept of Representation II'. American Political Science Association, (1964) 914 www.jstor.org accessed 17th May

Pitkin, H. F. (1967), the Concept of Representation, Berkeley: University of California.

Plotke, D. (1997), Representation is democracy. Constellations,

Potter, D. (2000), "Democratization, Good Governance and Development" in Allen, T. and Thomas, A. (eds.) *Poverty and Development into the 21st Century*, UK: Oxford University Press.

Ray, S. (2004), *Modern Comparative Politics. Approaches, Methods and Issues*. New Delhi: Prentice-Hall Private Ltd.

Remi, A. & Francis,s E. (2008), *Elements of politics.* Sting publishers*,* Yaba Lagos

Roberts, F. (2002), "Performance Evaluation of the New Democracy" in Ajakaiye, D. (eds.), *Meeting the Challenges of Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria*. Ibadan: NISER.

Saliu, H. & Muhammad, A. (2010), "Exploring the Parliament". *Nigeria Journal of Legislative Affairs,* Vol. 3 No. 1& 2,73 – 89.

Scott, J. & Marshall, G. (2009), *A Dictionary of Sociology*. Oxford, Oxford University Press

Toromade, S. (2018). Nigeria ends 2018 with 90.8 million people living in extreme poverty. https://www.pulse.ng/news/local/nigeria-ends-2018-with-908-million-people-living-inextreme-poverty/nljxqtj .Accessed 23 May 2022

Tremblay, M. (Ed.) (2008), Women and Legislative Representation Electoral Systems, Political Parties, and Sex Quotas (1 ed.): Palgrave Macmillan US.

Ugal, G. A. (1992), *Role of Non-Governmental grassroots agencies in rural development. 'The experiences of Gross Rivers State of Nigerian*. Ibadan: NISER.

Volcic, Z. (2008), *Media, identity and gender: Tracking feminist media and journalism Theories and methodologies*. McGraw Hill Book Co.
Williams, H. O. (1993), The role of the State in Industrial relations and Public Policy in Nigeria. A paper presented at the course organized by National Union of Banks, Lagos: University of Lagos Quest House.

World Bank Report 2014 https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/20093

Yesufu, T. M. (2000), *The Human Factor in National Development*. Benin City: University of Benin Press and Spectrum Books Ltd.