

# **WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT/ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS IN THE BENUE STATE COUNCIL FOR ARTS AND CULTURE**

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## **Abstract**

This study investigates the level of representation of women in management/administrative positions in the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture. Four research questions were formulated for the study. The findings revealed that, women are in the minority in management/administrative positions in the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture. The study reveals further that limited access to education, brain drain, and inadequate funding of the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture amongst others are the problems militating against the effective participations of women in management/administrative position in the council. The implications of these findings were discussed and necessary recommendations made.

## **Introduction**

The term 'culture' is complex and very difficult to define. Consequently, there exists a variety of definitions of culture. Conway (1995, p 2) defines culture as: 'A core of traditional ideas, practices and technology shared by a people.' Schaefer (1997, p 63) sees culture as:

The totality of learned, socially transmitted behaviour. It includes the ideas, values, customs and artifacts as well as the sail boats, comic books and birth control devices of a group of people.

From the foregoing definitions, it can be deduced that culture is the totality of the ways of life of a people. No wonder that the importance of culture has been acknowledged by all modern civilizations of the world.

The emergence of State Councils for Arts and Culture in Nigeria had its roots in the global reawakening of the importance of culture in the early 1970s especially amongst black communities of the world. This cultural reawakening brought about series of activities including inter-governmental conferences on cultural policies. The Nigeria Government in 1977 hosted the entire world to a festival of Arts and culture which was code named 'FESTAC 77.' This was a major step in the development of Arts and culture in Nigeria (Ligom, 2002, p.4). In addition, the Federal Government set up the National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC) and also made it mandatory for all states in Nigeria at that time to establish state Councils for Arts and Culture.

The primary objective of the councils for Arts and Culture was the presentation, promotion and preservation of the cultural heritage of each state within and outside the state.

The Benue State Council for Arts and Culture took off as the cultural unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and information in 1976 as a result of the creation of Benue State from the then Benue/Plateau State. Two years, the council was formally established by Edict No. 11 of 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1979 as autonomous parastatals under the Ministry of Information headed by a secretary who was answerable to the Commissioner of Information (Ligom, 2002, p.5).

## **Objectives of the Benue Council for Arts and Culture**

The objectives of the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture as spelt out in section 9 of the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture Edict No. 11 of 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1979, were to explore, promote, preserve, revive, develop and encourage arts and culture within and outside the state. The council therefore had the following responsibilities.

- a. The management, development, preservation and projection of the Benue State Arts and Culture in all its ramifications and with which it shall liaise with relevant agencies in order to get the state represented in any national arts and culture displays. It is worth

noting here that section 2 of the Benue State Council of Arts and Culture Edict No. 11 of 1<sup>st</sup> April 1979, defined term arts as including drama, dancing, drawing, painting, literature, music, poetry, sculpture and any other forms of arts.

- b. Powers to establish an Arts Gallery for the regular exhibition, preservation and study of the Benue State objects of arts which shall include paintings, carvings, pottery, women clothes, locally produced fishing materials, books, music and architectural drawings; and
- c. Powers to acquire or build an arts theatre in the state for regular cultural and dramatic performances.

### **Administrative Structure of the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture**

The administrative structure of the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture has undergone a lot changes over the years. At inception, the council was a parastatal under the Ministry of Information and Culture and thus had the Commissioner of Information exercising cabinet responsibilities over it (Ligom, 2002, p. 7). The Benue State military administrator at that time appointed a governing board of Directors to look into the affairs of the council. The executive director and a representative of the Ministry of Information were Board Members and the Secretary to the Council acted as the Secretary to the Board.

The management committee of the council had the Executive director as chairman and all the Heads of Department as members. The management committee took charge of the leadership and handling of activities of the council. In 1977, there were eight departments in the council namely: Performing arts, visual arts, literary arts, musicology, administration, accounts, commerce and technical.

1. **Performing Arts:** This Department was saddled with the responsibility of carrying out theatrical performances such as traditional festivals, cultural dances, drama and civic receptions. The department was subdivided into the drama and theatre unit, music and children's theatre and traditional sports. It was this department that housed the Benue State Performing Troupe.
2. **Visual Arts:** The department of visual arts was subdivided into the industrial design, fine arts and crafts, the gallery and exhibition units.
3. **Muscology:** This department was to operate a museum and archival section. Not much was achieved in this department for the reason of lack of personnel in the area and the absence of working materials.
4. **Literary Arts:** The literary arts department operated an arts and culture library where printed and published works on arts and culture were kept for use by staff of the council and any interested persons.
5. **Administration:** The head of the council's administration was the secretary who was answerable to the Commissioner and thus briefs the Commissioner on matters that he needed to know.
6. **Accounts Department:** This handled all the matters relating to the finances of the council.

In 1990, further reorganization of the council brought about the Department of Personnel Management, Finance and Supplies, Estate, Performing Arts, Visual Arts and the Research and Documentation Departments. The office of the Director was to house the Public Relations and Internal Audit Units which were also newly created. In 1994, the Department of Policy and Management was added to the already existing Departments.

Presently, the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture has a staff strength of ninety-eight (98) permanent and pensionable staff out of which only twenty nine (29) are female and sixty-nine (69) are male.

The question that readily comes to mind is, to what extent have women been represented in management/administrative positions in the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture?

### **State of the Problem**

The roles of Nigerian women like counterparts the world over have in most cases been domesticated despite international concerns on the equality of men and women. Women often provide supportive roles to men who are thought to be the only rational leaders of the society. The problem of this study is to investigate the level of representation of women in management/administrative positions in the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture and to find out the factors militating against the effective participation of women in the management of the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture.

### **Purpose of Study**

This study was designed to do the following:

1. To identify the administrative/managerial roles (if any) played by women in the management/administration of the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture.
2. To identify the problems encountered by women in the management of the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture.
3. To find out how such problems can be solved.

### **Research Questions**

1. To what extent have women been given equal opportunity in the administration/management of the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture?
2. What are the factors militating against the effective participation of women in the management of Benue State Council for Arts and Culture?
3. How can women be made to participate more effectively in the management of the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture?
4. To what extent does educational qualification account for low representation of women in the administration/management of the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture?

### **Significance of the Study**

Past governments have for sometime, attempted to formulate policies on gender equality in Nigeria. However, the various policies initiated are poorly implemented. Consequently, little is achieved in the area of gender equality in Nigeria. This study shall therefore, provide policy makers with a blue print on the attainment of gender equality in Nigeria. Through the recommendations, government may now have a theoretical base for formation of policies on gender equality. The study will also provide a reference point for subsequent studies in related fields.

### **Instruments for Data Collection**

Three research instruments were used for data collection. These were questionnaires, interviews and system documentation. The questionnaires designed and used for this study consisted of questions which dealt directly with the respondents' knowledge on the level of representation of women in management/administrative positions in the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture. Oral interviews were conducted and used as instruments for data collection. Focused group discussions and semi-structured interviews were also used. Information was also sought from books and journals in libraries and the internet regarding other works related to this study.

### **Validation of the Instrument**

A questionnaire was carefully designed and taken to experts in measurement and evaluation for validation. The questionnaire and the checklist used for the discussion with respondents were also thoroughly scrutinized by an expert in qualitative research. On the whole, sixty-four respondents were used high responses recorded.

### **Data Collection Technique**

Sixty-four questionnaires were distributed to both male/female staff of the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture by the researcher and collected back after they had filled.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

Simple percentages were used for analyzing the data collected.

### **Findings and Discussions**

The study showed that more males are appointed to management/administrative positions in the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture than females. Only two out of the seven management/administrative positions available in the Council are occupied by females. This situation is due to the fact that most female staff of the Council for Arts and Culture started work as dancers with very low

qualifications. Since they were not employed in management/administrative cadre, they end up not rising to high management/administrative positions. This is because education plays many roles in workers' lives and in addition to opening up employment opportunities; it also enhances women's access to the state and its institutions. This finding is consistent with the views of Soetan (2005, p.25) who rightly said that:

There is clear evidence of a positive relationship between women's educational attainments and their participation in the modern sector...the type of education she acquires will determine the type of job she gets.

It was also discovered that the population of male staff is far more than female staff in the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture. The council has a staff strength of ninety-eight (98) permanent and pensionable staff out of which only twenty-nine (29) are female and sixty-nine (69) are male. This finding also agrees with the findings of Moser (1998, p. 1789) that despite international concerns about the plight of women in the world, the role of most women are domesticated. They are placed in disadvantaged positions and remain insignificant in many areas. This means that more efforts must be geared towards equality.

This study further that the male staff are more educated than the female staff of the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture. This development is due to what is practiced in traditional African societies where the male children are sent to school leaving out the female children. This finding is in consonance with the views of UNIFEM (2004, p.13), that Nigeria is one of the nine countries with the highest number of illiterate population in the world and women constitute the larger percentage of the illiterate community in Nigeria. Tin's situation as described above, impacts negatively on women and makes it practically impossible for the existence of gender equality in the society. Gender inequality imposes large costs on the health and well being of men, women and children and affects their improve their lives. Soetan (2005, p. 1) opines that gender inequality is a major cause of poverty as societies with large scale persistent gender inequality have been associated with more poverty, malnutrition, illness and other depravities.

This study also found that the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture has been partially abandoned by the State Government. Since its inception, the finances of the councils have never enjoyed a boom (Li'gom, 2002, p. 4). This has narrowed the activities of councils to mainly dancing. The plans and proposals to set up outfits that will enhance the council's revenue are often defeated by lack of initial capital to start them. As a result of this development, highly educated women who have brought their experiences to work in the council, loose interest since they know they would no finances to run the council.

This study also discovered that the few highly educated women who should stay back to give meaningful contribution towards the development of Nigeria are migrating to other countries which can pay them better for their services. This trend is dangerous and capable of hampering the economic development of the country and must be arrested with alacrity.

**Table 1: Sex Distribution of Respondents**

| Sex    | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|--------|--------------------|------------|
| Male   | 38                 | 59.4       |
| Female | 26                 | 40.6       |
| Total  | 64                 | 100        |

**Table 2: The Population of Male Staff is more than Female Staff in the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture**

| Sex   | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|--------------------|------------|
| True  | 48                 | 75         |
| False | 16                 | 25         |
| Total | 64                 | 100        |

**Table 3 : Male Staff are more Educated than the Female Staff of the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture**

| Sex   | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|--------------------|------------|
| True  | 54                 | 84.4       |
| False | 10                 | 15.6       |
| Total | 64                 | 100        |

**Table 4: More Female are Appointed to Management/Administrative Positions than Male in the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture**

| Sex   | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-------|--------------------|------------|
| True  | 8                  | 12.5       |
| False | 56                 | 87.5       |
| Total | 64                 | 100        |

**Table 5: What do you think are the Factors Militating Against the Effective Participation of Women in Management/Administrative Positions in the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture**

| Responses                            | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Lack of adequate education           | 48                 | 75         |
| Over dependence on men by the female | 16                 | 25         |
| Total                                | 64                 | 100        |

**Table 6: In your Opinion, What can be done to Remedy the Situation in 5 Above?**

| Responses   | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---|--------------------|------------|
| Female staff should be encouraged to go to school                         | 24                 | 37.5       |
| Workshops/induction courses should be organized to enlighten female staff | 22                 | 34.4       |
| The government should emphasize girl-child education                      | 18                 | 28.1       |
| Total   | 64                 | 100        |

### **Recommendations**

1. Limited access to education: This paper is of the opinion that most Nigerian women are not adequately educated as a result; they are not able to get high profile jobs. Government at both Federal and State level should intensify their efforts towards improving access to education and training of women. Educational programmes such as the Universal Basic Education (UBE) and Education for All (EFA) are good but their implementation is poor. This makes the situation appear as though government is merely paying lip service to the problem of inadequate education for women.
2. On Brain drain: This paper laments the fact that educated women should stay back to give meaningful contribution towards the development of Nigeria are migrating to other countries which can pay them better for their services.-This trend is dangerous and capable of hampering the economics development of the country and should be arrested with alacrity.
3. On inadequate funding of the Council for Arts and Culture: There is great need for the adequate funding of the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture by the Benue State Government. This is because the promotion of the culture of a people is basically a public relations job and is thus capital intensive.

4. Government should emphasize girl-child education. The girl-child should be taught from childhood to be self-reliant. This is because over-reliance on men makes females to relax in the pursuit of their educational goals.
5. Well-educated female should be employed in the administrative/managerial cadre so that they can occupy administrative/managerial positions in the long run. The present practice of employing mostly low-educated female dancers for the dance troupe in the council should be discouraged.
6. This paper has established the fact that there is gender equality in Nigeria. The paper is of the opinion that government should seriously check this trend by embarking on intensive public enlightenment campaigns aimed at actualizing gender equality in Nigeria. When this is done, women will be challenged to aspire towards managerial positions like male counterparts.

### **Conclusion**

Lack of adequate education, brain drain and inadequate funding amongst others are some of the factors militating against the effective participation of women in management positions in the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture. It also accounts for why only two women are in administrative/managerial positions at the council. To arrest this trend, government should formulate and implement policies which will ensure that women are adequately educated. Women who are highly educated should be given viable jobs with good remuneration so that they don't run to better economies. Furthermore, the Benue State Council for Arts and Culture should be adequately funded so that experienced women in the field of arts will consider the council worth their attention.

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