

**THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF NON-
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS TO
WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:**

A Case Study of National Council of Women
Societies, NCWS, Nigeria

BY

AHMED RAKIYA (MRS)

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**BEING A THESIS SUBMITTED TO POST GRADUATE SCHOOL,
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(MPA).**

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DECLARATION

I Ahmed Rakiya (Mrs) do here by declare that, this thesis is original and a product of my research findings. It has never been submitted to Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria or any other institution of higher learning for the award of any degree.

All materials used have been duly acknowledged.

Ahmed Rakiya (Mrs)

Date

CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled:- “The contribution of Non-governmental organisation to women empowerment: A case study of National council of Women societies NCWS Nigeria” written by Ahmed Rakiya under the guidance of a post graduate committee and approved by its members, has been submitted and accepted by the post graduate school of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria as meeting the requirement for the award of the degree of Masters of Public Administration (MPA) its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

Dr. A.A. Anyebe
Chairman, committee

Date

Dr. S.B. Abdulkarim
Member Committee

Date

Dr. A.A. Anyebe
Head of Department

Date

Dean Post Graduate School

Prof. J.U. Umoh

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late sister and father, may God grant them “Aljanna Firdausi” Amen.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Thanks and glory to God whose power, working in me has done infinitely more than I ever asked or imagined peace be upon his prophet Muhammad (S.A.W).

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ABSTRACT

In the past, women were sidelined in the world dominated by men. But in the recent time women have come into positive focus to fight the domineering tendency of men folk.

In view of this, women all over the world form themselves into strong organisations to uplift the living standard of their women folk and to participate in national development. This is done by assisting women in both the urban and rural areas to plan their roles as homemakers and nation builders.

In view of this the National Council of Women Society NCWS was established as an umbrella organisation for the empowerment of all Nigerian women as homemakers and nation builders both in the rural and urban area; whether literate or illiterate. The NCWS in recent time has been accused of being urbane and elite oriented in all its activities as such diverting from its major role as a body umbrella for all Nigerian women.

This study is aimed at examining this facts whether it is true or not. In doing this the survey method was utilised, questionnaire distributed to 120 respondents selected through random sampling. Interview was granted also to some officials of NCWS. Also publications of the council and other relevant document of the organisation were used as secondary data.

This study reveals that the activities of the council is urban based and elite oriented, the government patronage also do not allowed the council to take appropriate measures against their activities. These were nothing but jamburies which is of little help to any

measures that is detrimental to the well being of the women benefit to the less privileged Nigerian women they claim to serve.

The researcher, however recommends that, the NCWS in Nigeria should move be to grass root oriented, they should ensure that they work or create avenue an independent sources of fund so that they would not rely on government patronage for their source of money. This would make them independent of government control and manipulation.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

All over the world, non governmental organisations were continually increased and gathering momentum in their activities. As the world continues to emphasise the issue of good government and globalised democratic setting, these non governmental organisations were largely seen as an important agent of limiting authoritarian governments, strengthening popular empowerment, reducing political in accountability and improving quality of public government and reducing fluctuation of market prices.

These non governmental organisations are free associations of individuals or group of people who share common interests and ideals or identical objectives; they are mostly independent of the government, but in some cases, they attract government patronage or assistance. The organisation is influenced in some ways by the institutions of government. The government may have an indirect impact on the organisation either through the creation or the enforcement of legislation that regulates their behaviours by supporting and promoting its activities or by offering it a wide range of advisory services. The formation of most the non governmental organisations have been chiefly motivated by man's concern for others caring, for this need and services of humanity. These motivation might be economical, political, social and cultural issues. The non governmental organisations varies in structures, roles and activities. Their motivations can be religious, cultural gender or political sentiment.

Among the non governmental organisations is the National Council of Women Societies (NCWS), Nigeria. This organisation was founded in 1958 with the aim of bringing into being throughout Nigeria, federation of non political women's organisation to assist

women in towns and villages with important roles as home makers and nation builders. It seeks to create among their members an awareness of being a good citizen. The extent at which the National Council of Women Societies (NCWS) has performed these roles would form the bed-rock of this study.

In the recent, time women all over the world have come into positive focus. This trend was as a result of a realisation of what the world might have been missing by not involving them positively. According to Orucha (2003), the progress and development of any nation is the woman in that societies.” Thus, women represents a tool for positive change, depending on how they are treated and the level of opportunity given to them to actualise their potentials. This declaration in 1978 by the United Nations Organisation at the international year for women as well as the decade for women, are the organisation’s contributions towards the emancipation of women.

However, in Nigeria, in spite of the misconception arising from traditional and religious beliefs in the role and place of women in the society, a study of our history shows a lot of achievements of Nigerian women in the social, economic & political sectors. This was manifested during colonial days, when in 1929, Aba women revolted against the British Colonialists for taxing women, this uprising later brought the evolution of autonomy in local government administration in the country.

Nigerian women, in their local domains, also played significant roles, as they are playing today. For instance, the Association of Daughters in Igboland has been record in the book of history, “They do not only settled internal disputes in the villages of their birth, but also settle dispute between their villages of birth and the ones into which they are married.

They deliberate on issues affecting their communities and their decisions were binding and respected by others". This part of the measures is required for economic stability.

1.1 STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

Since political independence in 1960, misrule, arbitrariness and corruption have characterised governance in Nigeria. Since colonial rule, several civil society organisations have emerged to champion societal cause against the autocratic state or to defend the collective interests of their members (Barkan, Mc Nurthy and Ayeni 1991; 475-780).

With globalisation and its visible characteristics such as universalisation of institutions, practices and structures, civil society organisations in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa received increased impetus. As such, several civil society organisations with specific political aspirations and role emerged. Their goals were essentially political and they attempt to limit the state power impinges on transparent and accountability.

In Nigeria, some civil societies (gender-related inclusive) have been playing pivotal role in enhancing state performance, transparency and accountability in government. Other civil societies (gender-related inclusive) have more or less become extension of state power. Some have also become collaborative with the state in the marginalisation of interests they claim to serve. In this process authoritarian and non-performing governments bolstered.

One of these civil societies which in gender centered is women's civil society organisations. Garba (1997: 256), Omololy, (1997) provides a typology of women civil organisations in Nigeria. They are autochrious and heterochtorious women's organisations.

Igba (1982) and Afigbo (1996: 539-57) record the existence of women's organisations during the colonial period, which provided a forum for the articulation of women's interest. Those include the Iyalode Societies and the Abeokuta Women's Union (AWU) in Western

Nigeria. Nwabiola Movement, Southern Ngwa Women's Association etc. In the East, superficially, these women interest organisations appeared strictly social and economic, but the underlying motives for their organisation and certain actions are political. The women's organisations in their various communities organised themselves to resist the political order, which has threatened their existence in the political and economy of their community.

Mba (1982), Olojede (1995), Shettima (1997). Toyo (1997), Salihu (1997), examine the dominant women's groups in contemporary Nigeria. These includes the National Council of Women's Societies (NCWS), Women in Nigeria (WIN), Mba (1982: 165) notes that NCWS and its progenitors Nigerian Women's Union (NWU), federation of Nigerian Women's Societies (FNWS), were among the first women's civil societies. They gave expression to women's interests, which had struggle or been given expression or represented. They also applied pressure in obtaining public hearing. The activities and pressure of NWU and FNWS contributed largely to the enfranchisement of Women in South-eastern and south – western Nigerian. The movements were active and vocal in articulating women's problems through mass mobilisation. The association's leadership was very conscious of the special role of women, the importance of women to the society and the assertion of their rights vis-à-vis men.

The national council of women societies (NCWS) in Nigeria was founded with the aim of protecting and enhancing women interests and rights in general. There has been growing criticism by many opinion leaders and scholars the credibility of NCWS to performing this functions. Toyo (1997), Pereira (1997) discusses the progressive alignment and collaboration of NCWS with the political class in the marginalization of women in Nigeria. The authors opined that the regular received of subventions from government

contributed to the warm relationship between NCWS and the governors and this led to subsequent loss of autonomy of NCWS. According to these scholars NCWS became a mouth organ for the government and the dominant male interest against women's interest reflected in the explanation of one of its key officials (Pereira, 1997):

“There is no need... for a woman to be liberated from a man, the man owns the government. There is a need for women to fully participate in government but we need some level of understanding. We (the NCWS) are not there to take away what they have but we are here to assist them in doing WHATEVER they do better”

As such, if a woman's movement is to be guided by such philosophy, what benefits can be derived by the generality of women in the civil society who are oppressed by negative socio-cultural practices? This is a question that begs for an answer.

This development has caused a lot of discontents among members of these groups. Shettima (1995), Iman (1997), Salihu (1997) discuss the emergence of parallel women's interest organisations who do not share NCWS's patronizing approach. Among the emergent parallel women's interest organisations was Women in Nigeria (WIN). WIN was established in 1982. It drew its inspirations from a leftist ideology, which identifies the pressure nature of class and gender dynamics as being responsible for the marginalisation of Nigerian women. The autonomous character of WIN has enabled the organisation to develop its own ideological position to locate women's participation in political development within the control needs for fundamental social change in general, aims at eradicating the class and gender basis of exploitation (Pereira, 1997; 8-12).

Toyo (1997:7) examines the lack of consensus among women's organisations even for seemingly similar interests or objectives. This, problems remain a major set back for women's organisations in influencing policies in favour of Nigerian women. She also cautions that the existence of women's civil society organisation like NCWS, is not a guarantee for a strong civil society, as several women's organisations are steeped in vitriche internal conflicts thereby impeding actions which may portend positive changes for their beneficiaries. Their major problem constitute a major to NCWS in achieving its major policy objectives. Toyo (1997; 7) suggests that for women organisations, especially NCWS to make any impact on our policy process, they would need to network among themselves and build coalitions.

This study attempts to examines this problems and the extends to which NCWS have empowered women, and enhanced good governance in Nigeria.

1.2 AIMS OF STUDY

The major objectives of this study is to examine the role and contributions of NCWS to women empowerment in Nigeria. Specific objectives of the study includes:

1. To examine the nature and effectiveness of NCWS. (i.e. Structure, funds and activities).
2. To identify the major problems or constraints of the NCWS and the factors responsible for such problems.
3. To examine the extent or effects of this problems on the effectiveness of the organisation.
4. To make suggestions for improvement.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Everywhere in the world, women have always been considered inferior to men. Women have been marginalised economically, politically, culturally and socially. As such, women interest organisation have continually mobilize themselves to fight against this gender bias.

The utility of this study lies its ability to throw more light on women interests groups or organisations in Nigeria vis-à-vis, their potentials for enhancing popular participation and possible strategies for strengthening them as agent of change for improving government for the ultimate benefit of their members.

This study is of significant because of the conflicting assumption on the role of National Council of Women Societies (NCWS) Nigeria in protecting and enhancing women interests and empowerment. This believed would come out with a lot of fact about NCWS and it will also widen out horizon on their activities, their encounter with the state over governance issues, expecting issues that affects women, their strategies and their impacts on government policy as it affects its members.

The research would also be of a great significant to other parallel women organisation as the researcher believes, the findings would settle several scores that is among these women interests organisations. It would also be of benefit to the Nigerian government in terms of policy making on gender bias issues.

1.4 HYPOTHESES

The following hypothesis are adopted for the purpose of this study.

- I. That NCWS is an elite and urban based in detrimental rather than for the rural women.
- II. That alignment and collaboration of NCWS with the government or political class contributed to the loss of autonomy by NCWS.
- III. Lack of consensus among the NCWS has been a major set back to the organization in achieving its objectives.

1.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to the analysis of NCWS. The major reason for this choice is, firstly, the NCWS is about the oldest women's civil society in Nigeria since after independence and it is also a government recognised umbrella for non-governmental women's organisation comprising of other civil women's societies. It also has a history of relationship with government. And finally, it has a wider coverage in terms of its member, patronage and activities as such, NCWS serves as a special focus point in terms of its capacity to influence government policy in favour of women interest and at the same time, empowering them.

Some of the limitations involves time, finances, study coverage, data materials and sport from the NCWS officials and members.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve our stated objectives and to test these hypotheses employed for this study. The survey design is adopted.

1.6.1 SOURCE OF DATA

Both the Primary and Secondary data source were used in this research work. Secondary data: These are source got through the examination of books related to civil society, women organisations, publications and documents of NCWS, Ministry of Women Affairs, National Women Centre, relevant magazines, Newspapers and other government publications etc.

(a) Primary source of data: These source of data was sourced through the use of questionnaire and interview. The interview was conducted on some of the officials of NCWS in their Headquarters in Abuja and some opinion women leaders.

The questionnaire method of eliciting data was used to ensure that respondents responded more objectively. This is due to the fact that questionnaire ensure greater impersonately as well as sufficient time to respond.

Both open and close ended questions patterns would be used, because the close-ended questions restrict respondent to the extent of the questions, while the open ended question allow the respondent to offer his/her response without restriction. This gives the respondent the chance to include all what she considered necessary in her answer to the question.

1.6.2 POPULATION AND SAMPLE SIZE

The total population of this study includes all the members of National Council of Women societies (NCWS) Nigeria and the officials of (NCWS) Headquarter, Abuja.

Stratified sampling and random sampling method were adopted. For the purpose of the study. 90 members of all class were randomly selected as sample size. While 30 officials of NCWS were randomly selected as sample size making the total size 120.

This sample size is considered representative of the entire population for making inferences and generalisation on this total population.

In collecting the questionnaire distributed, 85 member respondent responded while 5 decline. Also only 25 out of the thirty selected officials also responds to the questionnaire while 5 decline.

1.6.3 STATISTICAL TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS

Simple statistical tools was adopted or used. As such, tables, frequencies and percentages were used for the analysis of data collected.

1.7 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS AND NOTES

NGO: These are non governmental organizations, free associations of individuals or groups of people who share common interest, ideas or identical objectives. Mostly independent of the government.

NCWS: Is among the non governmental organization which means the National Council of Women Society it's the umbrella organization for women which was founded in 1958. With the aim of helping both rural and urban women throughout the federation.

Empowerment: Means to delegate a legal power or right of participation in all the national issues, both politically, socially and economically as a citizen with full autonomy.

ELITE: Means the few who are considered socially superior to the rest in a group or society, political class or the ruling class, they actually have the power or the means of been superior than others.

Alignment: That means to share or join with others to do something which is not suppose to be, due to selfish interest.

Consensus: That means to join heads together in a group, consider the view and interest of every member and work as a family without any bias.

Autonomy: Having full right and privilege of doing things as a national citizen, human with it own law and independent of self government.

Liberation: That means to be equal to men in whatever they do, that means to change the status of women entirely.

Patronage: Means the financial help given by heads or government, to support project and programmes for the public.

WIN: Is another women organization non as Women in Nigiera, a non governmental organization which was later on being affiliated with the NCWS.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter civil society is regarded as an elusive concept White, (1994) or an idea, civil society has achieved relevance in the rising wave of the globalised democratic project. Civil society is largely seen as an important agent for limiting authoritarian governments, strengthening popular empowerment, reducing the socially anarchical and unsettling effects of market forces, enforcing political accountability and improving the quality of public governance.

The second aspect of it touch at related literature review on civil society organization, classification of civil society, roles and activities of civil society, nature and objectives of civil society and women civil organizations. Lastly the structural functionalism theory was used as a theoretical frame work, in other to identify the true picture of the NCWS, its structure, nature, objectives and functions.

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Diamond (1994: 15) for example claims that the pluralistic and market oriented nature of civil society organisations makes it incompatible with religious, ethnic, revolutionary organisation that seek to monopolize a functional or political space in society. Diamond goes on to state that civil society must respect the state and pluralism, as a new violence to quality as civil society. Civil society is seen more or less as a corollary of liberal democracy. Prevailing liberal notions of civil society are tied to a commitment to liberal democracy. It is assumed that all societies regardless of their society political context or a destined to be liberal democratic. The growth of civil society is viewed via liberal democratic processes.

Characteristics of an associational life that are deemed supportive of liberal democratic views are considered as the realm of civil society.

Others have also defined civil society as the public sphere, the social space that is distinct from the state and resistant to the hegemony. It is explained as comprising the various non-governmental organisations. Human rights groups, cooperatives, unions, media, religious assemblages, professional associations etc through which individuals collectively and voluntarily carry out their social enterprises. Such associations often exist in dynamic tension with the state (Shaw and Smith, 1996: 250-151).

In the same state-civil society dichotomy, Fatton (1995: 67) argues that civil society represents a counterweight to state power. In reality, a sharp dichotomy between state and society does not exist. The concept of civil society needs to be disengaged from its incorporation into the liberal way of state-society relations, where state and civil society are juxtaposed as separate and conflicting spheres (Beckman 1998: 46-61). It regimented societal features into separate spheres at the expense of an understanding of the way in which they are mutually and jointly constituted.

In the context of this study, civil society could be defined as an intermediate realm situated between the state and household. It is populated by organized groups or associations, which enjoy some autonomy in relation with the state and were formed voluntarily by members of society to protect or extend their interests and identities. In this definition, civil society is made up of such institutions professional groups, human rights groups etc.

CLASSIFICATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Research output on civil society organisations in Africa was produced a classification of civil society organisations Agbaje, (1990) Diamond, 1994; Chazan, (1992). Civil society organisations are distinguished as:

- i. Interest groups i.e. trade unions, professional and business groups.
- ii. Organisations based on kinship, ethnicity, culture and religion.
- iii. Organisations with specific political aspirations and roles
- iv. Organisations with occasional political roles and aspirations. Shaw and Smith

(1996: 252) categorized civil society organisations in the following way:

- (a) Local versus National, International, regional and local
- (b) Specific sector or rural sector
- (c) Advocacy, communications, educational, welfare and or production oriented;
- (d) Democratic or not in structure;
- (e) Primarily related to development issues or project;
- (f) Part of a broader civil society coalition or not;
- (g) Instant or long established civil society;
- (h) Political orientation – conservative, mainstream, neutral and / or progressive;
- (i) Antagonistic, cooperative or dependent relations with governments and / or transitional organisations.

In the schematic provided by Ekeh (1992) civil society can be classified into four groupings. They are:

- i. Civil associations (i.e. trade unions, student unions, mass media etc)
- ii. Deviant civil associations (e.g. secret societies, fundamentalist religious movements)
- iii. Primordial public associations (ethnic associations)
- iv. Indigenous development associations e.g. farmers and traditional women's union.

The varied schemas discussed above, show some overlap. With respect to functional categorization, it is possible to extend the groups without end. This categorization assist us in systematizing the discussion on civil society organisations.

ROLES AND ACTIVITIES OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The roles and activities of civil society organisations also vary. They include the representation of interest of specific groups in relation to government and other sectors of the society. It also includes the mobilisation of the social actors to increase their consciousness and impact, the regulation, ramitoring of state performance, the behaviours and actions of public officials. Finally, it includes the developmental or social action role to improve the well being of their own constituencies or groups.

NATURE AND OBJECTIVE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society organisations vary in the nature and range of objectives. Some civil society organisations have clear objectives while others have sporadic or momentary objectives. Some civil society organisations seek to influence broad political, social structures and processes. Others may be concerned with influencing economic circumstances of their constituencies by stimulating certain actions or activities, which improve the well-being of vulnerable groups. Certain civil society organisations may also improve the conditions of other social groups beyond their own personal membership. Narrow civil

society organisations may be concerned with more limited goals seeking to maximize the parochial interests of their members without concern for other groups.

WOMEN CIVIL ORGANISATIONS

Garba (1997: 256), Omololu (1997) provides typology of women's civil organisations in Nigeria. They are autoctorious and heterochtorious women's organizations. The autoctorious organisations are further classified into four; professional/occupational women's groups, activists women groups; research driven women's group, and religious women's groups.

The heterochtorious women's organisations are chapters of international women's organisations. Most of the ideas, activities and strategies of the heterochtorious women's organisations are often imported. They are therefore of less likely to be enduring tools for the empowerment of Nigerian women. The classification provided by Garba and Omololu appears incomplete. The classification excludes ethnic women's groups, which also provide, forum for the articulation of women's economic, and social interests from their areas of origin.

Omolulu (1997: 74) examines the character of women's organisations. He notes that some women's organisations represent broader revolve around parochial interests. Similarly, women's organisations are structured and operated to endure or even survive from one generation to another while some were established to achieve immediate goals for self Gratification.

Several studies on women's movement show that there exist differences in ideologies and strategies among women's interest organisations Boles, (1979); Freeman, (1974); Morgan, (1972, 1974); O' Connor, (1980); Sapiro, (1998); Mba, (1982); Toyo, (1997);

Pareira, (1997); Imokhuede, (1992). On the ideological level, some women's organisations are based on ideas primarily derived from traditions of liberal individualistic thought, while others are from socialist theory.

Increasing number of feminists are also attempting to question the liberal and socialist ideologies. They are wrenching themselves from the context of these ideologies developed within and reflective of gender – stratified societies in an effort to find new ways of understanding and responding to women's interests Rich, (1975, 1978); Editors of Question Feminists. (1980; 3-22).

With respect to strategies, eight major strategies are commonly used by women's organisations. One is conventional pressure techniques including legal action, lobbying, electoral participation and contact with public officials and the press. A second type is the use of non-conventional pressure technique; including symbolic political action, protest and demonstrations and from time to time violence. A third strategy is consciousness – raising or activities designed towards intra- group mobilization, or the development of knowledge about women and gender stratification. The fourth strategy is the establishment of alternative institutions to provide services solely to women on health, transportation, banking, protection, legal aid, publishing and education. These institutions are established to meet the special needs of women not taken care of by the male dominant organisations. A fifth strategy is separation, or the establishment of groups, institutions and networks whose objective is to provide self – centered services to communities and to prevent the replacement of goals, which may be hijacked by male institutions or non-feminist ideology. The sixth strategy is called the caucus organisation. They are subset of women within occupational, organisational and political institutions.

These groups tend to restrict themselves to the specific concerns of women within the organisations. The seventh strategy is the establishment of coalitions with other women's groups to emphasize shared women's interests and submerging profound differences for common goals. The final strategy is the internal congresses of women's groups with extension in other countries. Women have established many international organisations. Specifically for the purpose of discussing and solving problems of women's political status and social roles.

Mba (1982), Afigbo (1996: 539-57) records the existence of women's organisations during the colonial period, which provided a forum for the articulation of women's interest. These includes the Iyalode societies and the Abeokuta Women Union (AWU) In western Nigeria, Nwabiola Movement, Southern Ngwa Women's Association etc in eastern Nigeria. Superficially, these women's interest organisations appear strictly social and economic; but underlying motives for organisation and action are political. The women's organisation in their various communities organised themselves to resist the political economy of their communities.

Mba (1982), Olojede (1995), Shettima (1997), examine the dominant women's interest groups in contemporary Nigeria. These include the National Council of Women's Societies (NCWS) Women In Nigeria (WIN). Mba (1892; 165) notes that NCWS and its progenitors, Nigerian Women's Union (NWU), Federation of Nigerian Women's Societies (FNWS), were among the first women civil societies. They gave expression to women's interests, which had hitherto not been given expression or represented. They also applied pressure in obtaining public hearing. The activities and pressure of NWU and FNWS contributed largely to the enfranchisement of women in south – eastern and south western

Nigeria. These movements were active and vocal in articulating women's problems through mass mobilisation. The association's leadership was very consciousness of the special role of women, the importance of women to the society and the assertion of their rights vis-à-vis men.

Toyo and Pareira (1997) discussed the progressive alignment and collaboration of NCWS with political class in the marginalization of women in Nigeria. The authors opined that the regular received of subventions from government contributed to the warm relationship between NCWS and political class which resulted the subsequent loss of autonomy of NCWS. According to these scholars NCWS became a mouth organ for the government and the dominant male interests against women's interests as reflected in the explanation of one of its key official Pereira, (1997).

On women's rights, Effah (1996: 24) is assessing women's rights in Nigeria noted that Nigeria is yet to put in place structures that would ensure women's rights are not violated. She opined that issues like violence against women in all forms take a high toll in Nigeria today. The violation ranges from disallowing women to stand as societies for suspects, prohibiting women from right of bailing, denial of rights of inheritance and property, basic education and employment, curtailing of political rights, i.e. participation in formulation of government policy. Etc.

This writer however disagreed with the last item an the violation which is the denial of women participation in formulation of government policy, observed that there is no any law that deter or stop any women in an election. Many women are today in the legislation in both making of law and formulation of politicise of the government.

With regard to the problems identified by Effah she recommend that as a way of promoting women's rights, structures and systems detrimental to women must be change, reforms at all level of national laws and policies are needed, culture and tradition affecting women's rights should be downplayed, laws ensuring rights of women need to be enforced and practicalise.

Gyoh (1996, 185) Umaru (1996: 25), Obi (1996: 25) noted that infringement on women's rights dated back to childhood, however, they observed that the issue of inheritance as in Nigeria constitute a major problem of abuse of women's right which should be addressed specially.

Nana (1996: 30-31) pointed out some of the persistent attitudes and practices that are traditional to the African Society. These include among others, genital mutilation, widowhood practices, inheritance rights, early marriage and teenage pregnancies. All these attitude and practice according to the author impede on the rights of women. She however, recommend that women should be made or enlightened on these cultural abuse and to reject such practices, using grassroots women NGO's and CBOs that would serve as advocates, and also provide legal support for challenging such practices.

In conclusion the issue of women and health, Ejembi (1996: 58) observed that women constitute a greater percentage of the poor in the society, hence they are mostly affected by the health related problems. Rapid urbanisation is also associated with certain problems like inadequate water supply, lack of proper sewage disposal, electricity shortage etc. women due to their multiple roles which enhance their contact with the home and home-related health risks are more prone to than men.

According to her, women belong to the poorest group in the society, they are not empowered to create avenues of redressing most of the habitat related health problems. Hunduse (1996: 54) more education should be directed to rural women to enable them improve on problems associated with shelter and health particularly by NCWS and other women NGOs and CBOs, she observed that the economic depression which has greatly affected women's economic empowerment was another issue that required serious attention if habitant –related health matters were to be improve upon, if really the NCWS is out for the rural women.

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, the structural – functionalism theory would be used to analyse the concept of civil society in which the national council of women's societies, NCWS is one. Civil society is defined as an intermediate realm situated between the state and the house hold. It is populated by organised groups or associations, which enjoys some autonomy in relation with the state and are formed voluntarily by members of the society to protect or extend their interest and identities.

This theory, the researcher believe will explain the foundation of this study, by examining the structure of the NCWS and their functions.

STRUCTURAL – FUNCTIONALISM

This theory simply attempts to examine structures that exist in a given political system and to identify their function. Unlike in Biology where function is taken to mean the task which a particular organ performs for the body, in the social sciences, it does not just

perform its own functions as a unit but it is affected by the entire structural functioning of the system.

In identifying which structure performs what the model ascertains some functions contribute to the adaptation and adjustment within the system and which among the functional structures is dysfunctional.

From the above there are two ways of identifying how the structures in the system function. The first is manifest function which are acts intended. The second is latent function which are acts or designs not intended. According to Westby (1970: 98) “In structural functional analysis, one determines the important structures and then attempt to trace the functions of these structures or when one notes certain actions and traces then back to the structures producing them, without being wedded in advance to a particular conjunction between certain structures and certain functions.”

Therefore, according to further analysis of the model, once one knows the function of an institution one would know why it survives. It is on this basis that Robert Merton has developed the model beyond its original conception by Talcott Parson. In Merton’s formulation of political machine, he noted that structural functionalism consist of promising orientation where within the social system individuals and groups make various demands which should be satisfied. The operation of governmental machinery is seen as a political machine intended to satisfy various sectors of the system or provide alternatives for personal advancement.

Gabriel Almond has also categorised structural functionalism into two, political and governmental. Political function include political socialisation, political recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation and, political communication. While governmental

functions include rule making, rule application and rule adjudication. It is by this categorisation that the manifest and latent functions of the structured functionalism are realised.

This theory is of important to the subject of this study since, the civil society is a structure in the political system. Though civil society is one structure in the political system, they vary in forms, roles and activities. They also vary in nature and objective. (read more on this, in Section 1.1 of this chapter).

Just as stated earlier, civil society is made up of institutions as community development associations; women's groups, professional groups, human right group etc. But our major concern here would be the women groups in which we are looking at the institution called the National Council of Women's Societies, NCWS Nigeria.

The study would not only examine the structure of NCWS, but also how it perform its function as a unit and how these functions is affected by the entire functioning of this system.

This NCWS is a non-political organisation or institution engaged in economic and political activities with the ultimate aim of affecting the political life of the country through women.

This is done by assisting women economically in order to improve their standard of living. This economic emancipation, the organisation believed, would enable women to participate meaningfully in governance. At the political level, the NCWS are involve in activities geared to promote good governance. Political mobilisation activities are carried out through training of women on leadership skills, democracy and good governance.

As Marton's noted that structural – functionalism consist of promising orientation where within the social system individuals and groups make various demands which should be satisfied. The NCWS is out to empower women and bringing changes in women's lives. They do this by influencing governmental policies in their favour and even participating in the governance to drive in their points and demands, since according to the theory, the operation of governmental machinery is seem as a political machine intended to satisfy, various sectors of the system or provide alternatives for personal advancement.

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CHAPTER THREE

OPERATION AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF NCWS

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In the history of building the Nigerian nation, the contributions of Nigerian women is immense. The National Council of Women's Societies, NCWS in particular has always been the vanguard of this struggle. Its colossal campaigns as 'The Voice of Nigerian Women' cannot be overemphasised.

Therefore, this chapter focused on the history of National Council of Women's Societies, the genesis of the organisation and what led to the its birth. The section would also look at those great Women behind the birth of NCWS.

The second section would look at the operation of the NCWS vis-à-vis its activities, functions, objectives and vision.

The last section of this chapter will focus on the organisational structure of NCWS. That is the structure on ground to carryout its activities and functions in order to achieve its desire objectives. This will be done by looking at Monarchical arrangement of offices, and the functions of this office.

3.1 HISTORY OF NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN SOCIETIES NCWS

The vision and inspiration behind the birth of the National Council of Women Societies, Nigeria, came from a wide variety of initiatives. However, the rising action that led to the 1953 genesis can be traced to the turn of the century when a new crop of articulate, well-educated Nigerian women acquired the awareness to realise the age long truth that the group is more effective than the individual in any struggle.

In this group belonged women to whom exposure had given the wisdom of knowing the fact that a battle is best fought and won where the collective is employed.

These pioneer women infused action into various women's organisations which in turn present their various platforms for the struggle of the independence as well as the emancipation of Nigerians. In a short time, a number of women organisations emerged, each presenting a different agenda and promoting its own cause, as far as its members were specially concerned. There was no encompassing organisation that could offer a joint platform for the co-ordination of the cause of women's emancipation. This is not to say that the various organisations were irrelevant, because they became the matrix upon which the eventual structure of the NCWS was built.

From 1900, the city of Lagos and later Ibadan and Abeokuta began to play a pioneer roles in the dawn for a new feminine social and political awareness. Also women groups continue to emerge in the south east, Midwest and some part of the north such as the Birom, Tiv and Idoma of the then Benue – Plateau. The Hausa – Fulani dominated north was excluded in these activities. Culture and religion were the major factors for these, especially the tenets of Islamic religion which was the major religion of the majority of Northerners. As such, the Christian dominated area of the north were those involved in women activities. It was the founding in 1964, sixty-four years from 1900, of the Jam'iyyar Matan Arewa or Northern Women's Association.

The 1920's were remarkably years of political development in Nigeria. Many political organisations were formed to counter the Acts of British Imperialists and advocate for the disengagement of government from the country's administration. Although, these activities were ostensibly all – men shows, evidence abounded that the women's too were not left

behind in the struggle. The women's own struggle was not only political, but social in outlook. The women were also fighting for own social independence and freedom from limitations placed on them in several areas of human endeavours. Then, the likes of Mrs. Obasa and other women from all walks of life when there was a need to demonstrate the disapproval of any colonial government policy that would affect women and children or the entire society. On several occasions, Mrs. Obasa and other would lead delegations of women such as market women, church women, ethnic women associations, to march to the colonial government house or offices to press their demands.

Besides demonstrating against anti-women legislation, the women also had annual exhibitions of arts and handicrafts at their popular Glover Memorial Hall as a way of developing and recognising the talents of women. Most of these women leaders had, by virtue of their visits overseas have seen how the promotion of arts and handicraft could be used by women groups to obtain financial and economic independence. To the Nigeria women, this exhibition was a way of promoting the women's ingenuity and in the process, winning for patron's especially from among the foreign and Nigerian elite of Lagos who were then great connoisseurs of arts

Beside the art exhibitions, there was also a health, education exhibitions done under the supervision of the late Dr. Ladipo Oluwole, then a Prominent Lagos physician. By the time the women of Lagos were blazing the trail of activism, the women of the east were quickly following behind. A good example of rising femine awareness east in the 1926s was the now famous 1929 Aba Women Tax Riot, when a radical effort by market women and the colonial officers resulted in a bloody clash that left several women died or injured.

The 1920's, therefore, was a decade of strong inspiration for the women which eventually brought the NCWS to life. The 1930s and the 1940s saw the intensification of the activities struggles with the advent of such women as the unforgettable Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome Kuty, in Abeokuta and Chief Margaret Ekpo in East.

The efforts of these women, Mrs. Ransome Kuti in particular, would mark the first serious attempt to organise women vociferous groups whose pre-occupation would strongly go beyond the quest for addressing issues affecting women only; and touch on all areas of human needs for men, women and children alike.

The activities of these women constitute a strong impact on the formulation of the associations that eventually form the core of the original members as many of the founders of NCWS were either groomed in Abeokuta or had been there on several occasions. In fact, two of the past President, Lady Kofo Ademola and Chief Ronke Doherty are either of Abeokuta origin or were married there.

In the 1938s, Mrs. Ransome Kuti started by informally bringing together women in groups of three and four to discuss the problem affecting their immediate environment, especially their homes. As it were, women's argument soon became issue-oriented and their grievances centred on such social issues as, problems of the shortages or rise in prices of some commodities. Social celebration such as national anniversaries, the plight of young women who were just entering a phase of domestic responsibility the newly weds or of what they called "problem ladies" ends of course, also subjects such as home economic, home politics and home sociology were taught, these groups was mainly elite based.

Some of these groups graduated or metamorphosed into serious organisations. For instance, the women discussion group initiated by Mrs. Ransome Kuti became the

association known as Egba Women's Union (EWU). Mrs. Kuti soon spread wings beyond Abeokuta as she eventually effect the transformation of the EWU to the Nigerian Women's Union and to quote Professor Wole Soyinka (1988 25) whose Mother was a member of this group.

“The movement of the Ohikaba began over cups of Aba and sandwiches to resolve the problem of newly weds who lacked the necessary social graces, was becoming popular nation – wide. And it became all tangle up of the more to put an end to the rule of white men in the country”.

By the late 1940's and the early 1950s, the activities of women like Mrs. Kuti and Mrs. Ekpo had produced many followers, and from among these would emerge a set of women in the western Nigeria whose organisations, inspired by the Nationalist Movement would form the core of the premier organisation that brought to life the NCWS in 1958. among them was Mrs. Adekogbe who found an association called Women's Movement of Nigeria (WMN) which was later changed to the Nigerian Council's of Women (NCW) an association that nearly bore the same name and acronym as the eventual National Council of Women's Societies (NCWS).

Despite the struggles of these mentioned pioneers, they soon realised that even of the threshold of independent, there are still nagging vestiges of discrimination and a host of other deprivations against women.

The problems of women bounded in the nation, in the year preceding the founding of the NCWS, it was not difficult to see women being deprived of just about everything than convention considered should be exclusively for men. The enlightenment of the above

mention women, therefore opened their eyes and minds to the need to co-ordinate and actualise the struggle for the freedom and empowerment of women in their own way.

The 1950s was thus a decade of great pro-women welfare initiatives. It was a time the women organisation led by Chief Ayo Bello, Mrs. Comfort Dikko among others in Kaduna were busy trying to grapple with the immense problem of breaking into the heart of Northern Women. These group of brave women were however undaunted by the fact that religion and culture, two vital and truly potent institutions in the north, were yet solid, massive obstacles on their way. They were however able to break a considerable new ground in the middle belt areas.

By 1957, the entirety of western region had become so full of these women activities that the ministry of social welfare began to get in undaunted with their demand. The western region minister in charge of social welfare at this time was His Royal Highness, the late Oba C.B. Akran, while paramount ruler (Amolujuwa) of Badagry. Battling of Oba Akran was the fact that though most of these women organisations had virtually the same goal.

Much as the ministry was willing to meet the individual needs of these organisations, the minister was of the opinion that a more concerted approach to the presentation of proposals to government and representation of women in International and National Affairs would create a more organised and streamlined government response to the need of the women. Besides, it would make the voices of the women stronger when they gave impression of general consensus and not individual initiatives. In essence, the minister saw the prospects of a national, unified organisation speaking on behalf of all the societies and acting as a sole representative of the women in their bilateral relationship with government as being favourable.

The high point of Oba Akran wish was sometimes in the last quarter of 1957 when the women were planning to attend an international women conference under the auspices of the International Council of Women, (ICW). As was the practice in previous situations, the women again besieged the ministry to demand support, mostly financial, for the trips and there was the tendency to inundate the ministry with papers for processing. This, Oba Akran convened a meeting of all the Women organisations in the western region and advised the women to form an umbrella organisation through which they would always join forces to approach government, promising the women the full support of his ministry and proper response to the women's demands if the women chose to head his call.

According to Lady Ademola, ex-president and one of the pioneer of the meeting with the minister, the realisation that the idea of unification was brought by a man, for that matter, tended to make any laugh for obvious reasons. The revolution, she says, "had prompted people to say; so it was a man who founded the organisation after all, but we waved these inspirations aside and went ahead to plan the modalities for the actualisation of the national umbrella" like Lady Ademola, another founding Mother would not be bothered by the said insinuation on each opportunity, they were always ready to acknowledge this fact proudly. "In deed, it was obvious that some of us had been nursing the minister's idea before the overture; says Chief Mrs. Ronke Doherty, one of the pioneers and fourth National President. "Many have desired of the various societies to attempt and see with or cultivate the same vision by forming a council for these societies because we believed the saying that a forest is made by a collection of trees". However, there was no one to really give a strong voice before the Minister who definitely had the convenience of government in mind when making that historic suggestion.

Motivated by this development, and further inspired by the realisation that, with the Minister's expressed interest, the might of the government was behind them, the leaders of the various women organisations and their member's called a preliminary meeting in March 1958, to discuss the organisation of the yet unnamed umbrella body. As expected, this idea, howbeit lofty in vision and innovative in concept, was bound to face initial logistics and attendant difficulties. However, the logistics problem was not the design of the elite in the "Onikabas" to coerce them into converging to support or provide impetus to some interior motives.

The decision at the first meeting was to embark on an immediate research mission to work out a proper agenda for the take off of the organisation. Also at the meeting, the aims and objectives of the organisation was designed and documented as follows:

1. To establish an umbrella organisation that would co-ordinate the activities of the many organisations and to serve as a federation of non-political, non-governmental, non-profit women organisations.
2. To create unity and unanimity among women.
3. To act as formidable mouthpiece for the various organisations and defender of their rights.
4. To assist women in towns and villages in their important roles as home – makers and the nation's mothers.
5. to create among its members an understanding of the tenets of good citizenship (NSCWS documents).

At the first meeting at Ibadan, new organisation was named National Council of Women Societies according to the procedure in other nations and according to the

organisation understanding of the workings of the international council of women. ICW, an organisation founded in 1888 to serve intentionally, the same purposes that led to the founding of the National Council of Women's Societies (NCWS) in Nigeria.

In July, 1959, at the conference of the ICW held in Montreal, Canada, and attended by the leaders of the NCWS, Nigeria, Mrs. Elizabeth Adekogbe fully gave up the place of her organisation, the Nigerian council of women, NCW, to the National Council of Women Societies NCWS, Nigeria, having been affiliated to the ICW, not as a national organisation, but as an individual organisation.

Having set the gathering on a sound footing in Ibadan and after several meetings, the Ibadan council now decided to reach out to Lagos. On the decision to do a National launching in Lagos, Lady Ademola Says: "After several meetings in Ibadan, we realised that we had to be in Lagos and meet with the people because Lagos was still the headquarters of the colonial government" (NCWS document). The maiden conference of the NCWS took place after much publicity at the Headquarters of the Girls Guide Association in Obatende, Lagos in the first week of November 1958. Before then Lady Ademola and others from all the regions of Nigeria were chosen to work out modalities for this maiden.

Being the first time the idea of having a National body for women was coming to fruition on a large scale, the turnout was outstanding. At this conference, Lady Kofo Ademola was elected as the first President of the council. Among the first patrons were Lady Flora Azikiwe, Lady Oyinkan Abayomi, Chief Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome Kuti and Chief Mrs. Margaret Ekpo.

The first major task of the national council was as daunting as the task of the founding. That is the immensity of reaching out to the northern women. The efforts of Chief

Mrs. Ayo Bello and her band of pioneers in Kaduna had been impressive but there was still considerable work to be done. The fact remains that most of the northern members were Christians the inability, yet, to make membership fully extend to the women of the Muslim Faith was still a stumbling block and it appeared that those who dismissed the council as a “Christian” organisation might be having their justification.

As such, the council, at the Lagos meeting decided to make breaking through in the north a top priority. The premature approach to realising this objective was the setting up of a committee to work out the modalities of making the more. The committee was made up of the National president and the elected presidents of the three regions who also serve as national vice president.

A hierarchy team was worked out by the committee to serve as the guide for the executive council in its trips to the region. According to the plan, it would be the responsibility of the pioneer executive council to pick up the gauntlet and bear the responsibility of having to attempt to reach out to the hitherto unknown terrain. The long way that the exaction, including the regional president should reach out of all the regions to sell out the NCWS agenda’s as progressions.

To handle the question of the not so warm reception of the council in the north, the council decide to follow up on the pioneering efforts of Chief Mrs. Ayo Bello, Mrs. Zakari, Mrs. Dikko, Mrs. Shehu and others, by taking the bull by the horn and approaching the mother regional premier, the legendary Sardauna once again with their lofty goals. Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello was the living symbol of the essence of northerners. He was in his own words, a proud, but not arrogant, believer in the pious adherence to the tenets of the culture and religion of the North by the people. Nevertheless, he was nationalist to the core and he

never closed his eyes against what he was convinced was in the best interest of the nation collective.

Having studied this quality, the council executive decided to invoke the passion of nationalism in the patriot that he was. In July, 1959 an appointment was booked with the premier and, contrary to the opinion that the principal obstacle to the emancipation of women was the Sardauna, the man's response as was earlier accounted by Chief Mrs. Ayo Bello was again positive as it were, if the eventual incorporation of the women was late in coming, the blame should be put on the long process of change that normally accompanied the transition from convention to the dictates of time and modernity. Lady Ademola, the first National President recalling the experiment of the national executive's tour collaborate this assertion; "In this north, the NCWS had an initial difficulty. This was because most of the women were this time not so keen about being part of the NCWS. In fact, if any strong interest was shown it was by the women of the middle belt and pockets of educated ones mainly Yoruba women of the Ilorin-Lokoja provinces and the Tiv, Idoma, and Birom in the old Benua – Plateau. This is one reason why the First Regional President from the North was Chief Ayo Bello, A Yoruba. Assisted by another Yoruba, Chief Mrs. Olafimihan however, a general facilitator of the eventual full incorporation of the northern region women was the Sardauna of Sokoto and Premier of the northern region, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello. The Sardauna was very inspiring"

A series of report in the Daily times between July and December 1958 also buttress Lady Ademola's point and in an official gazette of the Mother regional government documenting one of the meetings of the NCWS with the Sardauna was credited with this statement:

“It is now becoming clear that the goals of the members of the NCWS was far from anything contrary to the tenets of our faith. I found nothing subversive about their activities and I think it will be in the best interest of the women of northern Nigeria to identify with the council without prejudice to their religious belief”.

With the advise of the premier, the effort of the council began to pay off with the influx of members and the upsurge of numerous organisations willing to join. However, there were still strong vestiges of distrust this has been overcome now, in that, the northern women are presently participating fully in the activities of NCWS. The last national president from 1995 – 1997 was Mrs. Amina E. Sambo from Kano State.

Having made its modest achievement in the north, the council also approached the west and the east. Successful attempts were made between 1958-1959 to get the government of both region drive interest in the activities of the council this was demonstrated by the fact that the wives of the premier, Mrs. Fadera Akintola of Western region and Adanma Okpara of the eastern region to fully identified with the women by attending NCWS functions sending their representatives.

The establishment of the women council with successive government became vital to the further entrancements of the council in its fast solidifying foundation. Cultivation of confidence was employed to the council advantage as the NCWS were involved in the activities and programmes towards the unfolding history of Nigeria. Independence from Britain in 1960.

Despite all odds, especially, the stupendous odds pioneers of NCWS has gone through, especially in a society long steeped and embedded in the male superiority, women is for the kitchen prejudice. The National council has continued to battle with co-ordinating and

organising women in the battle and sustain itself and its ideal. Although, many of the women were themselves conscious or unconscious allies or a better of men in the limitation placed against women advancement we will now at the end of this study, highlight the battle and the extent to which the council promise of inception to ensure that society, politically and economically, the Nigerian women as mothers of the nation are empowered.

3.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF NCWS

The council was founded with the aim of bringing into being, throughout Nigeria, a federation of non-political women's organisation to assist women in towns and villages in their important roles as home makers and nation builders. It seeks to create among its members and awareness of good citizenship. Other objectives include:

- (a) To promote the welfare and progress (economic and social) of women, laying special emphasis on education and training.
- (b) To awaken and encourage in women, the realisation of their responsibilities to the community.
- (c) To ensure by every legal means that women are given opportunity to play their parts as full responsible members of the community.
- (d) To encourage the affiliation of all non-political women organisation in Nigeria.
- (e) To foster co-operation with other national and international bodies with similar aims (NCWS Document).

3.3 FUNCTIONS OF NCWS

In order to achieve those objectives, the NCWS perform the following functions.

- (a) Provides a platform for formulating and disseminating women's opinions and ideas.
- (b) Deals with requests and petitions from member organisations for social reform or other requests by making representation to the government and appropriate bodies.
- (c) Sends delegates and/or representative to and receive delegates from national and international organisations, meeting and conferences.
- (d) Publishes newsletter and other publication which the council may think necessary.
- (e) Hold congress and/or national delegate convention at which all members societies will be represented and election of officers conducted. (NCWS Document).

3.4 NATURE OF THE COUNCIL AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH MEMBER ORGANISATION

The council is a non-political, non-religious, and non profit voluntarily organisation.

The council has incorporated trustees pursuant to section 673 of the companies and allied matters degree No. 1 of 1990 laws of the federation. All properties belonging to the council are vested in the incorporated trustee of the council for the use and the benefit of the council

B. Membership – Any organisation, irrespective of numerical strength many join the council and become a member organisation.

C. Politics – The council is non-political members urged be interest themselves in all civil affairs. Partisan politics within the council is not allowed. Also any member who is in

partisan politics shall not hold an office on the governing body of the council – However, women are encourage to fully involve in development and decision making.

D. Finance – Some of its revenue comes from annual dues for state branches and member organisations. The rest of the council’s income is derived through fund raising, a modest government subvention and grants from philanthropist, both and international.

All council activities are executed voluntary, only office are paid salaries.

E. Services – The relationship between the council and member organisations is on reciprocal service and support.

Member organisation and associate members may be called upon to work on local or national issues. In turn, they have the council’s services, help and advice. Directing and co-ordinating the activities of the state branches, and its member organisation as a continuous function of the council at the Headquarters.

The council is an umbrella, a bridge for liking the women of Nigeria irrespective of creed, tribe or class, a platform for disseminating women’s opinions and a liaison between the women and the government. In short, it is the voice of the women in Nigeria.

3.5 PROGRAMMES OF NCWS

The council programmes include:

- i. Celebration of international women’s day. Family in Nigeria.
- ii. Training in civil responsibilities
- iii. Leadership training
- iv. Health and educational programmes
- v. Adult education and vocational training.
- vi. Welfare services in hospitals and prisons.

- vii. Initiations improvement in social services.
- viii. Family planning, guidance and counselling.
- ix. Participating in national and international conferences, seminars and workshops
- x. Exchange visits with women from other countries.
- xi. Establishing of day –care centres and nursery schools
- xii. Involved in programmes to combat drug trafficking and abuse
- xiii. Promotion of women’s handicrafts on economic scale, activities to improve the economic status of women
- xiv. Promotion of women in education, agriculture and cooperative societies.
- xv. Promotion of activities on environment and habitat
- xvi. Creation of awareness in the causes consequences and treatment of vesico vaginal fistula (VVF) in Nigeria.
- xvii. Training of Nigerian doctors to upgrade their skills in VVF repair.
- xviii. Provision of VVF theatres and rehabilitation centre for patients
- xix. Promotion of peace both local and international.

3.6 STANDING COMMITTEES

In order to achieve its activities and programmes, the council constituted various standing committees. They include:

- (1) Task force on political awareness
- (2) Population
- (3) Lobbying
- (4) Fund raising
- (5) Mass media

- (6) Projects
- (7) Women in co-operatives
- (8) International relation
- (9) Women and employment
- (10) Youths
- (11) Hospitality
- (12) child and family
- (13) Home economics
- (14) Economics
- (15) Social welfare
- (16) Membership
- (17) Health
- (18) Migration
- (19) Law and status of women

3.7 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF NCWS

NCWS consisted of the national body, state branches local government branches and member organisations and individual members.

- The national body comprises of all the state branches, including Abuja and the National bodies and individual organisations.
- The state branches of NCWS is made of all local governments branches and individual members.
- Local government braches comprises of all women's organisations including local organisations of national organisations. It also comprises of individual members.

The member organisation also have their individual organisation ranging from national to local governments branches without prejudice to the recognitions of individuals as personal members.

3.8 ADMINISTRATIVE ORGAN OF NCWS

The highest policy making body or organ of NCWS is the National Executive Council (NEC), periodically elected. The council runs the affairs of NCWS of the National Level.

The National Executive Council is made up of

1. National President, the three Vice President, National Secretary and National Treasurer.
2. Presidents and secretaries of state braches
3. Presidents of National Women's NGOs
4. Chairmen of standing committees

Running the affairs of the state branches is the state branch council which is regularly elected. It comprises:

2. Branch officers such as state president, state secretary, etc.
3. President and secretaries of local government branches
4. Chairman of state standing committees.

The local government branches are run by the local government executive made up of

1. Local government officers
2. Chairman of local government standing committees

Meetings are held at the national, state and local government levels.

At the national level, there is the Biannual convention, quarterly meeting of the NCWS and Headquarters meeting (when necessary). The Biannual convention provides a forum for all members of NCWS to deliberate on present and future directions of NCWS.

At the state level, we have the state biannual conferences quarterly state executive council meeting and the monthly branch meetings.

At the local branches, there is the monthly branch meetings of member organisations and individual members and the quarterly local government executive council meetings.

It should be noted however, that emergency meeting are held at all the levels to discuss urgent issues when necessary.

The election, swearing in, tenure and activities of all these executives are determined by the constitution of the national council of women's societies, Nigeria. This constitution is strictly employed in arriving at all decisions of the society. The national executive committee operates, from the National Headquarters in Abuja.

Also on the issue of accountability and prudence on the issue of finance. The financial management structure of the NCWS makes the idea of prudence and accountability relatively easy. This is because of the checks and balance, in the council's financial bureaucracy. There is no monopoly of accounts operations. At the national level, there are three signatures to the council's account, namely the president, the secretary and the treasurer. Before this hierarchical handling of account signing however, expenditure has to go through the financial secretary who prepares the voucher, the executive director who makes the requisition and the book-keeper who records every transaction. All income are into appropriate NCWS accounts while details of payments are recorded at the back of every teller. A copy of the teller is also made available to the treasurer.

3.9 ELECTION OF OFFICIALS

At the national level, elections are held during each biannual convention which is rotated among the states of the Nigerian federation. As stipulated by the council's constitution, national officers retain their posts for a minimum of two years and a four year maximum. To go the four year distances, an officer has to seek re-election at the end of the first two – year tenure. Elections are similarly held at the state and local government levels. Accredited delegates, drawn equally from all the states, local government and organisation are eligible to vote. The elections are conducted by secret ballot.

END NOTES

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CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSES OF DATA

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION

This chapter is devoted to presenting relevant data, both primary and secondary data to test the three relevant hypotheses formulated as a guide to this study. Data were presented in tables and analyses according to the questions ask. Questionnaires were administered to some officials and members of NCWS (i.e. member of women societies under NCWS) and also some non-member of NCWS, interview was also conducted with some of the officials of NCWS and women in Nigeria (WIN) a parallel women organisation of NCWS.

In administering the questionnaire, 90 members of NCWS were randomly selected. 85 members responded and filled the questionnaire while 5 decline to fill the questionnaire. Some of those that decline insists that they don't want to be dragged into any hussles again

Out of the 30 questionnaires given to official, only 5 were not returned. As such 110 questionnaires were duly filled and returned by the members and officials of NCWS.

The researcher decides not to administer questionnaire to the members and officials of Women in Nigeria (WIN) because of the intensity of distrust, antagonism between them and NCWS, if they are given any questionnaire to filled especially the one regarding the activities of NCWS. However, some officials of WIN in their Headquarter in Abuja were interviewed.

In this chapter, the hypotheses formulated for the purpose of this study were tested simultaneously using relevant data. This was done by presenting and analysing through tables, frequencies, and percentages.

Finally a summary of the findings from the data analyses were presented in this chapter.

4.1 PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA ACCORDING TO THE HYPOTHESES

In this section, relevant data would be presented and analysed to test the three hypotheses for the purpose of this study, entitled “Women Empowerment in Nigeria; A Case study of National Council of Women Societies NCWS in Nigeria”. The hypotheses are:

4.1.1 TEST OF HYPOTHESIS ONE

NCWS is elite and urban based in detrimental rather than for rural women.

The targeted group

S/NO	TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	Elite women	30	27
2.	Rural women	20	18
3.	All women	60	55
	Total	110	100

Source: The survey

In view of the motion of a world controlled by the men and the cultural bias against women. NCWS emerged as a forefront of the struggle to the emancipation of Nigerian Women.

The table above shows that the NCWS is out to emancipate and empower all categories of women.

NCWS reaching the targeted group

S/N	TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	YES	40	26
2.	NO	70	64
3.	I don't know	-	-
	Total	110	100

Source: The Survey

The NCWS was established for the general emancipation of all women including the rural women, elite women. As such every women interest has the right to represented. The council is to ensure that all women interest are protected not withstanding the class and status of such women. This form the basis of the question whether all categories of women are reached in the activities and programmes of the council.

Table show that majority, of the respondent believes that all categories of women are not reached. In other worlds, the interest of all the women are not carried alone. This brings us to the next question.

Category of women reach

S/NO	TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	Elite women	72	65
2.	Rural women	38	35
	Total	110	100

Source: The Survey

Just as we have said earlier, the NCWS is out to protect the interest of all the Nigerian women, but the table shows that there is the tendency of elitism by the national council's of women society. Further interview conducted by the researcher reveals that most of the activities and programmes are urban based and that the council was even hijacked by the wives of rich men and those in government.

Instead of facing squarely the problems of the ordinary Nigerian women, they are pre-occupied more with personal aggrandisement and other egoistic tendencies.

The women believe that most rural women are being excluded in the activities and management of the affairs of the council.

An interviewed with some exco official of the NCWS, who believed that the NCWS has done enough to protect the interest of rural women. One of the Pioneer official interviewed believed that the involvement of highly placed, as leaders of the council should not necessarily be seen as an attempt by the elite to hijack the council. Rather it was a natural condition in the successful take-off of social movements that a few advantaged persons had to provide the necessary leadership which eventually highlights the fire of social change through the involvement of the majority.

Another official of NCWS interviewed also disagree with the motion of elitism. She argues that the work of the council requires intellectual, expert handling because is profound multifarious and national outlook and it is very taxing. The co-ordinators must know the pro and con's of feminist activism and, in an advanced world, it would not be easy for illiterate market or rural women to organise women, analyse socio-economic and political events in modern parlance and then know the technical way to tackle problems or present problems to the policy makers. The so-called elite are more educationally, qualified to co-ordinate those

things and that is why the leadership of the National Council has always been exclusion of practice and not necessary in principle to educated women and specialists.

In conclusion, the elite could be part of the well-to-do class, their presence was desirable. It is possibly for one to subscribe to this opinion. If one consider the fact that the NCWS standing committees set up to handle salient, highly technical matters cannot but be constituted by highly educated women. For instance, the standing committees on education, population, mass media, international relations, economics, healthy, migration, law and the status of women, VVF (Vesico Vaginal Fistaula), editorial and host of other highly modernised and specialised committees. The composition of these, given their technical tenure of reference cannot but be limited to those well experienced and well tutored in the relevant professions. And those are ‘elite’ in their own rights.

In another interviewed with Nimi Thom Manuel, Erstwith National Publicity Secretary of the NCWS, she see the allegations of elitism as “idle”. She argue that it is wrong to accuse the leadership of NCWS of been elitist, to her the leaders may be well educated or financially blessed but they have the roots of an achievements in the great struggles of the founding mothers and all other women who over the years have struggle to make life easier for the Nigerian women – As the offsprings of their initiatives, therefore, our membership of the council if somebody like me can be called an ‘elite’ – is a reciprocation of the good turns of the pioneers. And we however failed them. It is easy to see the pains we have endured to better the lot of the ordinary Nigerian women. Our overtures to the rural women, our initiatives among the market women and the ever prominent presence ordinary. Even illiterate – women in our programmes and activities are concrete examples of the liberal tendencies of the leadership of the council over the years”.

To Mrs Emily Aig –Imoukhuede, an Ex President of NCWS, the involvement of highly placed women had greatly favoured the National Council. In international conference those Nigerian women were attentively listened to Imagiru a conference where Lady Ademola, the first Nigerian female graduate of Oxford University and wife of the first indigenous Chief of Justice of the Federation had to speak. Her speeches were considered the speeches of a woman with wide horizon, a woman who knew the depth of women's needs and knew what she was saying when it had to do with comparing the women of Nigeria with the rest of the world or making the latter corner to the end of the former. To her, NCWS has been blessed, over the years, with articulate women who had the best interest of all the women of Nigerian in mind.

Mrs. Emily Aig – Imoukhuede further contended that rather than being elitist, NCWS was only being pragmatist, she birated the women of Nigeria, WIN who in various avenue have accused NCWS of tending towards 'elitism'. To her the women organisations were approaching the same distinction in destination boats. "We are grassroots based and evidences abound".

Interviewed another former president, Mrs. Hilda Adefarasan, the council cannot dispense with the elite. Many of the market women were not literate. They need people to speak to them in the language of government, people who are versed in politics, in medicine, in business and in diplomacy to present their interest. If these people rise to the front, it is by virtue of their roles and responsibility to the ordinary women and not because of any desire to lord over those women who know their rights.

Lady Ademola another former Ex-President of NCWS in another interview has an interesting anecdote about the council tendency to reach out the grassroots. It centres on the exploits of Madam Chris Boyo and her dogged effort ensure that the ordinary women were involved in the activities of the council. According to Lady Ademola, it was the policy of the council to rotate the representation of any foreign programme or trip. At this time, it was the turn of the mid-west and, to our surprise, an illiterate village women was chosen by Madam Boyo, their mid-west Regional President, to accompany the National President on the foreign trip. We expected Chris Boyo to have chosen somebody else so we were surprised. But the bafflement turned out to become pleasant. The chosen women had a wonderful time she enjoined herself – though people made a lot of fuss about her, that served as a positive precedence for the good things to come as more and more local women were chosen to represent the council.

Lady Ademola believed that the flamboyance of some leaders should not be seen as necessary deviation from the ideas of the council. She says “We were certainly never elites in our behaviour in our days – and I believe that the impression of elitism today issued from sheer understanding of the NCWS. We may be women who had not reached the high echelons of the society – this is not crime. But we never forgot the grassroots because a majority of the women of the nation came from the grassroots and are still there. I can remember that the National Executive Council in the early days delegated Madam Chris Boyo of the then mid-west to go right to the grassroots. Indeed this was started in the mid-west. She travelled to the rural areas – I think that programme was more or less version of the better life for rural women. Since then we have never abandoned the less-privileged ones.

To the official defenders of the NCWS, the accusation of elitism was men ‘Playing down to the gallery’ to them , it is in record that all the best NCWS leaders in the past had one time or the other been involved in the leadership of the country. It is to their credit that despite their being in government, their loyalty to the women of Nigeria, ordinary or highly placed, was never in doubt. In mind was such ladies as Late Dr (Mrs) Abimbola Awoliyi second National President and personal physician of one of the wives of the Late Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Nigeria’s first Prime Minister, Chief Mrs Kofo who was the third national president while still serving as this Lagos State Commissioner for Health. Her nickname of “The African Nightingale” many believe came about, not as a result of her being a government official but solely as a member of a series of voluntary organisation especially, the NCWS. The same applies to Chief (Mrs) Ronke Doherty, Mrs. Pratt’s successor who was at various times commissioner first in the old western state and later in Ogun State. See Appendix 4.1 for further details.

Perhaps the first NCWS leader who was not having any connection with government of the time of her stewardship was justice Ifeyinwa Nzeako. And since then, it is obvious that the elected President Dr. Bolere Kete by Nwakeaforr were not in government. Nevertheless, despite the connections of the first four leaders, the women’s loyalty to the NCWS was never in doubt, and so the involvement of the so-called ‘elite’ did not necessary mean that the council by principle tenders towards elitism. A way of proving this assertion was the idea of going to National Convention or other NCWS functions in some very cheap, specially textured NCWS uniform bearing the logo and motto of the council.

The officials of women In Nigeria (WIN) a parallel and close rival of NCWS are more critical on the issue of elitism, asked about their organisation leadership was deviating

to elitism. They see the leaders becoming as an instrument of upper class and elite women use to bargain with the state, powerful and wealthy men for the interest of its leaders only the cited background of some of its past leaders which since the 1986 as been an allies of the ruling class. For example, Hilda Adefarasin comes from the Lagos bourgeoisie, and during her tenure as President of NCWS was involved in her image, urban, elitist and upper class. Under her successor, Emily Aig – Imoukhuede a programatist of Edo Origin, the NCWS moved closer to government, thus severely undermining its non – governmental organisation (NGO) statue. Presently according to them, NCWS has completed its retrogression to absolute reaction.

From the discussion so far and despite the reason or defence given so far by those who see the hijacking of the leadership as elite and the activities of NCWS as urban as desirable. We can deduce that these called elites are only out to protect their interest. Since they are wives to some of this powerful elites especially those in government, they would always strive to protect the interest of their husband as well as ensure that the status which favour them is maintain. To the determent women, would constitute the majority of women in Nigeria. With this we accept the first hypotheses that the NCWS is an elite and urban based women organisation in detriment rather than for the rural women.

4.1.2 TEST OF HYPOTHESES TWO

In testing the first hypotheses, we have established that NCWS especially its leadership has deviate to elitism. The study find out that wives of state officials dominated the leadership of NCWS till 1990's. Lady Kofo Ademola (1958-1964) is the wife of the indigenous Chief Justice of the federation then. Chief Mrs Ronke Doherty, National President (1976-1980) is the wife of a former speaker of old western state. Mrs Hilda

Adefarasan (1984-1988) is the wife of the late Chief Judge of Lagos State. So many believes that the consideration ideology is due to the elitist compositor of its leadership.

NCWS situation as stated earlier is explicitly reflected in the explanation of one of its key official (Periera, 1997).

There is no need For a woman to be liberated from a man, the man own the government. There is a need for women to fully participate in government but we need some level of understanding, we (The NCWS) we are not there to take away what they have, but we re here to assist them in doing WHATEVER they do better.

The statement above to my understanding implies that whatever the government does whether good or bad, right or wrong, legitimate our illegitimate the NCWS and its leadership as far as they were concern are in support. This leads us to formulation of the second hypotheses of this study that say “That the alignment and collaboration of NCWS with the government or political class contributed to the lose of autonomy by NCWS”.

In testing this hypotheses, data were collected. The autensity of NCWS as an NGO and level of its relationship with the government.

NCWS is NGO

S/N	TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGES
1.	YES	68	62
2.	NO	34	31
3.	NONE	8	7
	TOTAL	110	100

Source: The Survey

The national council's of women societies has indicate by inequity of the restudies in the Table.

NCWS a non political organization

S/N	TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGES
1	YES	68	62
2	NO	34	31
	NONE	8	7
	TOTAL	110	100

Source: The survey.

For an organisation to be called non-political organisation it members must not be involved or play party politics. The organisation must not be seeing or heard campaign not its member card carrying member of any political parties. In other words its member cut across all political parties.

The national council's of women societies (NCWS) in Nigeria is not an exception as indicated by the responses in tables. 4.2.2.2 Majority of the respondent represents by 80% agree that NCWS is non-political or non- partisan organisation.

Members or your official in serving government

S/N	TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	YES	60	55
2.	NO	50	45
3.	TOTAL	110	100

Source: The Survey

Members to serve as member of the ruling class.

S/N	TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	YES	40	36
2.	NO	70	64
	TOTAL	110	100

Source: The Survey

The researcher further asked if NCWS constitution allowed or permit individual members to serve the government. In other words, their member allowed to be appointed into any position of government and serving presently or in position of government presently.

The responses shows that members are allowed to serve in position of any government and it shows that presently members of NCWS are serving in the government presently.

Society's interest known to the government through

S/N	TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	Lobbying	75	68
2.	Confrontation	10	9
3.	All	25	23
	Total	110	100

Source: The Survey

For Any non-organisation to effectively protect and pursue, protect and promote the interest of its members. It has to ensure that it pursue it, this can be done through many ways or method. Some might be or pursue their interest in a radical or hard-line approach while others follow the soft-way or conservative approach. This depends on how such civil society could effectively achieve its goals, through such approach.

The NCWS is not an exception, as a non governmental organisation and can not operate in isolation; as such it has to relate in one way or the other with the government to achieve its objectives. The table above shows that NCWS. Use diplomatic lobbying to get what it want or to make its point known to government.

The posture or approach by NCWS was been by many, especially, Women In Nigeria (WIN). In WIN article, NCWS was criticise that it tends to be too soft too frequently on government whenever the latter's programmes or policies tended to be reactionary. Most critics believe that since some members of NCWS has their husbands or close relations or associates in high position, they were wary of tampering with their source of livelihood and so could not speak out where they should.

An interviewed with some of the officials of NCWS, they debunk these claims, WIN according to them, the councils hands were often tied by its own constitution and decades long policy – its non-political, non-governmental status. Form its founding, the council has been guided by the tendency not to middle in politics and its belief in dialogue rather than confrontation. To majority of the respondents, a non-governmental, non-political organisation has no reason to into opposition with government because that, to them, amounts to partisanship.

Ifeyinwa Nzeako, Ex National President of the council in her opinion believes. In politics, it is either you are for or against the government or party in power. For NGOs, you are always neutral. The NCWS has over the years strived to keep its non-partisan policy and if it is found in the corridors of power, it is to press for the betterment of Nigerian women in particular and the entire nation as a whole”.

While supporting justice Nzeako views, Chief Mrs Ayo Bello, one of founding Mothers of NCWS further elaborate that “it is easy for young, radical women and other critics to see the council’s moderate policies as reactionary” She says, this is because most young radicals believes that nothing can be achieved from a government unless it is confronted. But from its fording, the NCWS members, most of them patriots, have believed that the hard-line often yields no good results. Since we are mediators, the preed of neutrality and diplomacy are to us harbingers of good results.

To them, the NCWS should not be limited by political situations. It should be allowed to develop its full potentials and take advantaged of the good qualities of a particular government so long as it is of benefit to the Nigerian women. There is always the tacit acceptance of the nation that a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that is non political has no reason to go into confrontation with a government. All it could do, they content, is encourage the government, when wrong, to take the path of righteousness. Somehow, this approach, rather than be inimical to the true progress of the coined has helped it and kept it from any unhealthy relationship with succeeding authorities over the years. The presence of the councils as mediator during the turbulence of those years has dept many governments sane and hay at delicate times helped douse what could have been on alt consumers fire on this soul of the nation.

The logic of the argument therefore is that rather than toe the hard-line way, the council believes in the tactical approach when lobbying the authorities for anything be it the quest for a change of policy, financial assistance or other matters relevant to its aspirations. The council believes that the success of any lobby depends in the presentation. To the officials, any confrontational approach would not and never met with an open ear. The trick has always been proper reshalling of the council's points, the presentation of a good position paper telling the government of the rational beyond its demands and the prospects. Accompanying its demands is also a detailed evidences of its in ability to handle the project independently. With this approach, NCWS believes that since the government cannot dispense with, programmes which are inevitably relevant as a kind of relief from many of government's responsibilities, it (government) would always respond favourably to the lobby.

But then, the success of most NCWS lobbies did not came on a platter of gold. According to Adefarasin, corroborated by her predecessor, handy Ademola, chief rars Ronke Doherty, Justice Ifeyinwa Nzoako, and rars Amina Sambo, The lobbying process needed perseverance. We lobby. Everybody all the way without having to go out of our dignifies ways, it is like the used legal lobby at this National Assembly when a bill is to be passed. We never bribed to find our ways. We needn't, we have got enough weight to open ears at all levels:

But the success of a lobby is one thing, the provision of the optimum needs of the women is another. The neville as we can see is having an unholy affair with the government per two rigor reasons, one is finance and the other to protect individual official self interest. The federal, state, and local Government in various measures support NCWS financially and

provides office space for them in government boldness. At the national level, the federal Government provides mammal subvention for NCWS. It also receives financial assistance from federal government in its special projects such as building of their national Headquarters in Abuja. Chief (Mrs) Ronke Doherty a former president of NCWS revealed that the contribution of the organisation's Lagos headquarters was build through donation from government among other sources. (Ojewus, 1996, 243) public officials were often lobbied by NCWS for financial assistance. In arms instance NCWS had to consult a former minister for social Development (rar Amadike) in may 1980 for financial assistance to enable the association build a befitting headquarters.

This phenomenon has contributed to the warm relationship between the government and NCWS. It has also influenced NCWS in maintaining silence or diplomacy in confronting the government on critical national issues such as JUNE 12 election, validation of self-succession of General Sani Abacha, and the frequencies and perpetual increment of the price of petroleum product under Obasanjo regimes.

NCWS position to the annulment of June 12 1993 presidential election was characterised by silence the self succession of General Sani Abacha, which was resisted by WIN was acquired by NCWS. NCWS actively supported the self success of the late dictator. NCWS through its president then. Mrs Zainab Ra'aina publicly made a case for Abacha is continue (community,1998:10)

NCWS support for the undemocratic regime of Abacha, is further elaborated in its media campaigns against the sanctions by the international community, in 1999. while all progressive and societies were clamouring for sanctures to weaken Abacha's administration and force it on its knees, the organisation was more or less Abacha's mouth against sanction

NCWS responded to the fact- finding united Nations mission in Nigeria in March, 1996 which recommended against sanctions in Nigeria on the grounds that it would be poor and unhelpful and the progress towards positive improvement in the socio-political situation. The NCWS unambiguously supported the position of this group and sent a message of no sanction to the international community for the following reasons among others. (voice of women, 1996:)

- (j) economic sanctions do not affect the elites of the society but the poor. 70% of these who live below poverty line in countries like Nigeria are women who bear the brunt of poverty.
- (ii) About 30% of households in Nigeria are female-headed households and the number is increasing. Sanctions are therefore not considered by NCWS (the umbrella women organisation) as appropriate in the interest of Nigeria women. NCWS goes on to effect to the international community to support Abacha administration and encourage its completion of the transition program.

While the organisation in its campaign against sanctions in the interest of women, its 'real interests' are suspected given its close relations with successive governments which are most times anti people. Another recent area in which NCWS maintained silence until, now or today is on this issue of increment in the price of petroleum product which became a high trend in Obasanjo regime. The Nigeria labour congress and others have always come-out to protect against these increments without the NCWS making comment, Despite the supposed effect of this increment on the Nigeria women the NCWS has kept its silence as if it does not bother them. This silence also constitutes to the removal of metals with any government of the day whether good or bad.

Given this situation, it is very unlikely for NCWS to pursue autonomous positions or present strong opposition to government on significant political issue, such as political accordantly and human rights. At best when government is perceived wrong on issues of government, NCWS has often adopted diplomacy able to the people.

“Justice Nzeake former national president of NCWS, and the present electoral president, Dr Kolabe justified the position of NCWS. They explained that the diplomatic disposition of NCWS is based on its states as a non-government organisation that is non-political, and therefore has no reason to confront government but to encourage government to mend it ways when wrong. It is believed that this approach has kept NCWS from unhealthy relationship with successive governments.

It can not be doubted that the diplomatic strategy has its practical utility to ears the organisation to government. It also makes it possible for the organisation to receive and find for its multi-varied social, economic and political projects for the benefits of women. Its comprehension lies in the fact that the association may unwittingly be promoting tyrannical governments. Such oppressive governments may enjoy a false sense of security an deserved legitimacy from a significant civil society organisation.

The ‘diplomatic strategy’ of NCWS is a clear department from its progenitors-market women’s union in the East, Abeokuta women’s union in the west, Nigerian women’s union and federation of women societies. The effort of Aba market women’s union in the East, Abeokuta women’s union in the West were serious political attempt not only to address issues affecting women alone but to critical areas of government such as popular participation, land question, taxation, e.t.c.

With the discussion so far, we can conclude that this NCWS diplomatic strategies' was an unholy one with every successive government of the day. Because of the favour both financially and otherwise they often got from any successive government of the day they caution is patronise these government for their selfish interest and to the determine the women interest they desire to protect and the pitas of the general populace. As such they become a toothless building? And also loosing their authority as a civil society organisation. View of this, second hypotheses that the alignment and collaboration of NCWS with the government or political class contributed to loss of autonomy of NCWS is correct.

4.1.3 TEST OF HYPOTHESES THREE

So far, we have succeeded in assessing two different odds mutilating against the progress of NCWS which made many critics to see it as an 'unpatriotic organisation these are the issue of the cornel and tending towards elites and the unholy romance the council has with successive regimes, even the trances regime.

The next focus is internal by nature as it scares NCWS relationship with its affined members. This lends us to the Revelation of the third hypotheses that "lack of consensus among the afflicted societies of NCWS is a major set back to the society.

Consensus here means carrying along every member society in all area aspect of the activities of NCWS. Since that is in policy initiation, policy making and policy implementation. The input of every member is important and desirable in every process of decision making.

Lack of consensus here means, there is conflict of interest among the various societies that make up NCWS since NCWS not and can not operate in isolation. The input of all the societies are desired.

Be that as it may be, in testing this hypotheses, we would look at the individual interest of these society, whether they are in conflict with the interest of the individual societies that made up NCWS. If they were what were the areas of conflicts and what were the major reasons for these conflicts. Then as such, the effect is the last thing to assess on NCWS and find the possible solutions to these conflicts.

Interest of NCWS differ from other member

S/N	TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	YES	20	19
2.	NO	90	82
	TOTAL	110	100

Source: The Survey

NCWS engages in economic and political activities with the ultimate aim of affecting the political and economical life of the country through women. NCWS major interest is to assist every woman. Economically to improve their living conditions. NCWS believed that economic emancipation of women would enable them participate meaningfully in government. As such, the major aim of NCWS is to improve and the protect the interest of women, socially, politically and economically.

NCWS is a secular organisation, different from religious, it is open to women and men, so it is quite different from religious women’s civil societies such as the Federation of Muslim Women’s (FOMWAN), the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) etc. it is also unlike professional or occupational associations, like the Market Women’s Association or the society of Women Accountants of Nigeria (SWAN) as its membership covers all categories of women.

Their interest is the same as NCWS. Only in drawing membership they differ.

S/N	TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	YES	60	55
2.	NO	50	45
	TOTAL	110	100

Source: The Survey

NCWS is an amalgamation of women's organisation. Philanthropic, religious, cultural and professional. The amalgamated women's organisations believe that their organisational interest be better pursue and promoted if they are member of NCWS. They also believed that they will benefit from government programme, like defunct better life for rural women, FEAP and Present NAPEP. Then also believe that they would get government recognitions.

Since these affiliated women organisations see NCWS as a mother organisation, it is pertinent that this affiliation would be of immense benefit to them. As such, the various and diversities interest of these affiliated women organisations should be considered in any project and programmes of NCWS.

The contribution of these affiliated women organisation would be of immense material and human resources for the achievement of NCWS programmes.

The researcher ask the respondents if the interest can made paramount in decision making, and programs implementation. Majority of the respondents represented by 45% have the opinion that their interest were not considered.

Further interview reveals that the leaderships of NCWS often pursue their personal and selfish interest in detrimental rather than for the interest of the majority member organisations.

Relationship b/w NCWS and member societies

S/N	TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	Cordial	40	36
2.	Not Cordial	63	58
3.	Indifferent	7	6
	Total	110	100

Source: The Survey

The researcher went to confirm the present relationship between NCWS and members associations. The table above indicates that the relationship is not cordial some of the respondent believes that the relation is cordial, while 10 feel indifferent. But majority of the respondent has the opinion that the relationship is not cordial.

This relationship has further resulted to many conflicts, between these affiliated organisation members, individual member and NCWS.

Crisis in NCWS

S/N	TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	Inter-personal conflict	10	9
2.	Inter-group conflict	35	32
3.	Inter-group conflict	50	14
4.	All	50	45
	Total	110	100

Source: The Survey

As stated in table 4.2.3.5, for organisation as large and diversified as the NCWS, the issues of conflict can not be unexpected. These conflict occurs in various ways and manners.

It might be intral-personal conflict, that is when one person is torn between two issues within himself or herself. The second is inter-personal. Conflict in which is between two different persons. The third is intral group conflict which is the conflict among a group of persons. The fourth which is the last is inter-group conflict which occurs when there is a disagreement between two separate groups or bodies.

Among the legion of conflicts the council has, the intral-group conflict appeared to dominate as clearly indicated in table 4.2.3.6

Further interview reveals that occasional internal squabble and misunderstanding has continuous to be a major conflict the council has to be contend with. Mrs. Emily Aig Imoukhuede, Ex-President has a view of these moments of hardship. “There were explosive situations, there were situation that went as far as the court of law were occasional threats of legal action. But thank God that were able to put everything down. Because of misinterpretation and misunderstanding, we would have been prescribed but Thank God, we overcome those obstacles and were waxed stronger”.

An example of such potentially explosive situation was the misunderstanding that greeted the 15th Bennial Convention and the National Executive Election between late June and early July 1995 in Abuja.

To many, the crisis looked like it was going to break the myth of the council’s apart at last and, judging by the way it was played by the press, everything seemed to be heading for the rocks, but then in its over three decade long tradition of success against odds, the council rose above the storm. The ability of the new Executive Council to flock together and organise the Nigerian Women and successfully attend the fourth world women conference in

Beijing, China was a testimony of the council's ability to manage its crisis and emerge stronger.

However, the conflict to some members has cause a series set-back as on many occasion, it appear difficult for the council to arrive at consensus on important and crucial matters. They believed the council can do better or be better without any problem of ensuring from elections. In the words of Mrs Aig Imoukhuede, I looked forward to a time when the occasional rancour emanating from executive elections, especially presidential ones would be no more, to exercise more sportsmanship and understand the feel that the NCWS is a voluntary, non-profit organisation and that, the prestige inherent in the post of President notwithstanding, the ultimate goals should be the service of Nigerian Women in Unity”

Another example of conflict, is implementation of VVF Project which became a source of conflict between NEC members of NCWS on one hand, and former chairperson of the standing committee on VVF, Mrs. Amina Sambo, who later become the President of NCWS.

This degenerated into allegations and evouter allegations of misappropriation of Ford Foundation's Fund.

This constant conflicts has generated into NCWS member identifying themselves with different camp. The NCWS could not speak with one voice, on important issue of benefit to them and election seem as a battle.

From the foregoing discussion so far, we can conclude that these hypotheses is also right. Lack of consensus among the NCWS has create a major set back to the council in acquiring it objectives.

END NOTES

Amina Sambo (2002) Giant Strides of the National Council of Women Societies, Nigeria under the leadership of Amina Sambo. 1995-1998, Gwagwalada, Abuja. 33 Book Publishing.

Sola Ojewusi (1998) Speaking for Nigeria.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 SUMMARY

In the recent time, women all over the world have come to positive focus. This trend was as a result of a realisation of what the world might have been missing by not involving them positively. One of the interest, progress and development of any nation is the women in that society. Thus, women represent a tool for positive change, depending on the way they are treated and the opportunity offered to them to actualise their potentialities. The declaration of 1975 by the women as well as the decade for women, organisation's contribution towards the emancipation of women.

However, in Nigeria, in spite of misconceptions arising from traditional and religion on the role and place of women in the society, a study of woman history shows a catalogue of achievements of Nigerian women in the socio-economic and political sectors. Thus in colonial days, (1929), Aba Women revolted against the British Colonialists forces, this uprising later brought the evolution of autonomy in local government administration Nigerian women, in their local domains, also played significant roles, as they have play today. For instance, the association of daughters in Igboland has been record in history. They do not only settled internal disputes in the villages of their birth, but also between their villages of birth and ones into which they are married. They deliberated on issues affecting their communities and their decisions were binding and respected being part of the measures required for economic stability.

No doubt, existence of these types of traditional women networks helped early nationalists like Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome Kuti and Mrs. Margaret Ekpo to mobilisation and

agitation against colonialism. The social crusade continued in 1958 when, through their will and determination the women formed the National Council of Women's Societies NCWS which formerly started in the western region and later became national; a non-political women's organisation whose sole responsibility of mobilising women groups with set objectives aimed at self-actualisation today, the council has branches all over Nigeria. The council is over three decade of establishment, and despite all odds it has continue to strike to promote and protect the interest of Nigerian women.

The first chapter looked at the background of the study, it identified NCWS as a non-governmental and non-political organisation established in 1958. it is an umbrella organisation for all women organisation. NCWS has more than thirty affiliated women societies. Major problem of the organisation were identified, among which tending toward elitism or urban in outlook, problem of romancing with government, and finally on the issues of lack of consensus among the societies. Hypotheses were formulated and simple data gathering and analysis instrument were utilize to test the hypotheses.

In reviewing relevant literature, the study define the concept of civil society, as an intermediate realm situated between the state and household. It emanate in form of organised individuals and groups or association voluntarily to protect and promote the interest of their members and it also enjoys a relative autonomy in relation with the state.

Civil societies were classified into community development associations, professional groups, cultural groups, women groups etc. their roles and activities depends or is related to the nature and objectives of that particular civil organisation.

The study further examines women civil organisations which is the major focus of this study. It identify two type of women civil organisation, autochthonous and

heterochonous women's organisation. Autochthonous women groups was further classified into professional/occupational women's groups, activist women's groups, research driven women's groups, religious women's groups and ethnic women's groups. The heterochthonous woman's groups are chapter of international women's groups which were often imported.

The study noted the character of these women's organisation, some have broader women's interest while others, revolve round poinchial interest. Some are also structure and operated, to endure from generation to generation while others were established to achieve an immediate goal. These women groups also differ in ideologies and strategies. Some are conservatives or liberal while some are radical.

The structural-functionalism theory was used as a foundation upon which this work is built. Structural functionalism attempts to examine structures in a given political system and identify it functions. It examines the function of a particular structure (a unit) and how it affect or is affected by the entire structural functioning of the system.

Chapter three gives an overview on the historical background of National Council's of Women's Societies. NCWS, in Nigeria, its objectives, functions, motives as well as its relationship with member organisations. The study also examine it programs and activities vis-à-vis its organisation and structure.

In chapter four, data collected through questionnaire, interview and other secondary source were presented and analyse to test the formulated hypotheses of this study. To collect the primary data, questionnaires were distributed and interview were conducted on a sample population of officials and members of NCWS.

The study revealed that NCWS since inception has come up to an age, but now its programmes and activities is more favourable to the elites and urban women, rather than the illiterate and rural women who constitutes the majority.

The study also reveals that the council's romance with government because they receive finance from the government and most of the Ex-President of NCWS are wife of political or government officials. So they tend not to pursue issue that might affect the status-quo.

The study finally reveals that the conflict among the members and groups that made up the National Council's of Women's Societies leads to lack of consensus among the individual and member societies.

5.1 CONCLUSION

Among the various types of civil society is the women groups. There are also different types of women civil organisations. They differ in ideas, area of activities and strategies.

Women organisations has been existing since the colonial period to articulate women interest. Their major interest then looks social and economic, but their underlying motive for organisation and action are political. In that they organised themselves in their various communities to fight and resist the political order that threatening their communities.

In contemporary Nigeria, there are so many of these women organisation. They gave expression to women interest that are not exposed before. These movements or organisation were more active and vocal in articulating women problems and interest through mass mobilization, lobbying and their leaders were very conscious of the special role of women and their importance to the society.

National Council's of Women Societies later emerges as an umbrella organisation to articulate all women organisation interest. The first leaders are well educated, experience and wives of prominent government' officials. Some of them were also government officials.

The study found out that women rights are still been violated in all forms and manners. Women are disallowed to bail a suspect, denied of right of inheritance and property, basic education and employment etc. other Cultural practices that impedes on women right includes genital mutilation, widowhood practices, child bearing and teenage pregnancy.

Also, since women constitute a greater percentage of the poor in the society, they are more affected by socio-economic, health related problems, like poor housing, inadequate health services, inadequate water supply, lack of proper sewage disposal, etc. Because of their multiple roles which enhance their contact at homes and health risk are more prone to them than men.

The National Council of Women's Societies in Nigeria as stated earlier emerged as a forefront of the struggle for women emancipation, economically, socially, culturally, and politically. There constituency cover all categories of women in the rural and urban areas. It also covers the illiterate and literate women.

The study reveals that the NCWS is tending towards elitism its leadership is being hijacked or becoming an instrument of upper class. These elite women bargain with the political, powerful and wealthy men for their own selfish interest.

The study also reveals that some of this elite or leaders of NCWS are wives of powerful government officials. These women care more for themselves and their urban based colleagues and their activities are tailored to suit their interest.

Since most of the NCWS leaders were elites, the study reveals that the council has been hijacked by the government and the political class.

The study reveals that NCWS is a non-government and non-political organisation. But member are allowed to be involve in politics – That means members are allowed and encourage to contest in any election.

Another reason, for NCWS alignment with any successive government of the day is on the issue of finance. The study reveals that NCWS has often benefited from government largesse. The federal government provides annual subvention for them. The phenomenon has contributed to worm relationship between the NCWS and the government. It also influences NCWS in maintaining silence or diplomacy in confronting government on critical national issues that affect their members and the generality as a whole.

The NCWS is no longer a mouth-piece of the women but an advocate for government policies and programme whether good or bad. As such the NCWS as a non-governmental organisation has lost its authority.

The study further reveals that there often conflicts between men of NCWS. The conflict is most rampant during election into the National Executive council and the national president election.

There is also conflict between NCWS leadership and members society.

Three conflicts has lead to lack of consensus among NCWS on important issues associating, and this problem reveals has become a major set-back to the organisation in achieving her objectives.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the importance of NCWS to women empowerment and the development of the country, the researcher hopes that the recommendation advanced would be considered to make NCWS more vibrant and efficient in achieving her objectives.

1. That NCWS should be more grassroots oriented. Most of the grassroots women NGOs should be utilize or involve.
2. The NCWS should strive to see that, promoting women rights, structures and systems detrimental to women are change.
3. cultures and tradition affecting women's right should be discouraged and downplayed – woman should be enlightened on these cultural abuse and to reject such practices, using grassroots women NGOS.
4. NCWS should ensure or serve as advocates and also provides legal support for challenging such practices.
5. NCWS and its affiliate NGOs should work together in creation gender awareness at the grassroots.
6. There should be sustained nationwide environmental awareness and education campaigns to sensitize the public, especially women on implications of environmental pollution and housing problems.
7. Women should be encourage to take up housing related professionals.
8. Since the NCWS is an umbrella organisation for all women organisations. Its activities should be more broad so as woman can benefit no matter the educational status, religion, occupation/profession and culture.

9. NCWS should ensure that rural women participate more in whatever programme that is been organise.
10. Affiliated members association in the rural areas should be involve in policy making and implementation.
11. Since NCWS is heterogeneous in nature, the leaders and officials need to consider this in whatever programme or decision.
12. The leaders or officials of NCWS should be trained on the management of NCWS as a large umbrella woman organisations considering its vast and heterogeneous structure.
13. Intra-groups relation within the affiliate network of NGO's in the NCWS should be enhance.
14. The linkages between NCWS nation-state branches should be enhance and improve to ensure a better and harmonies relationship.
15. The NCWS officials and leaders should be trained on conflict resolution strategy to reduce frequent conflict and to enhance their effectiveness in women development programmes of local and grassroots level.
16. Since election into the National Executive council and National President has continue to constitutes a case or conflict, the positive can be zone to the different geo-political zones per term.

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