



**ROLES OF NIGERIAN WOMEN TRUST FUND ON WOMEN'S POLITICAL  
REPRESENTATION IN IMO STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

**By**

**DESTINY EWURU CHINAZO**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

**November 2022**

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to God Almighty for his numerous blessings, gift of life and protection all throughout my time of study. I my friends and family members who have been a sources encouragement and support all throughout this time.



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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**November 2022**

**Chairman : Associate Professor Ku Hasnita Ku Samsu, PhD**  
**Faculty : Human Ecology**

The current research tends to examine the challenges and effectiveness of Nigerian Women Trust Fund strategies on women's political representation in the Imo State House of Assembly as well as explore how these strategies can increase women's political representation in the Imo state House of Assembly. A qualitative case study approach was used, and the informants were selected using purposive sampling, and the inclusion criteria were experience, ability, and comprehension. The eleven informants were interviewed, drawn from top management and administrative members of the Nigerian Women Trust Fund, academics, grassroots women, and present and past members of the Imo State House of Assembly, while thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. The research found that the strategies used by the Nigerian Women Trust Fund included ensuring quota representation of women in the state house assembly, mobilization, provision of financial support, support of grassroots organizations that have the interest of women, as well as advocacy through domestic lobbying and awareness. The research also found that Nigerian Women Trust Fund has impacted women's lives through political mentorship, capacity-building program, financial support, and importantly, creating women's rights awareness even though the socio-economic/political challenges hinder the effective political representation of women in the Imo state House of Assembly. Besides, political violence and lack of education remain significant challenges to NWTF's quest for women's political representation. Finally, the study provided valuable insight into the role of the Nigerian Women Trust Fund and strategies that can be adopted by the NGOs to ensure adequate women's political representation.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**PERANAN TABUNG AMANAH WANITA NIGERIA (NWTF) TERHADAP  
PERWAKILAN POLITIK WANITA DALAM DEWAN UNDANGAN NEGERI  
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Penyelidikan semasa cenderung untuk meneliti cabaran dan keberkesanan strategi Tabung Amanah Wanita Nigeria ke atas perwakilan politik wanita di Dewan Undangan Negeri Imo di samping meninjau bagaimana strategi tersebut dapat meningkatkan perwakilan politik wanita di Dewan Undangan Negeri Imo. Pendekatan kajian kes kualitatif telah digunakan, dan informan telah dipilih menggunakan persampelan bertujuan, kriteria inklusif ialah pengalaman, kebolehan, dan pemahaman. Sebelas informan telah ditemubual yang terdiri daripada pihak pengurusan tertinggi dan ahli pentadbiran Tabung Amanah Wanita Nigeria, ahli akademik, wanita di peringkat akar umbi, dan ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri Imo yang terkini dan yang lampau, manakala analisis tematik telah digunakan untuk menganalisis data.

Kajian mendapati bahawa strategi yang digunakan oleh Tabung Amanah Wanita Nigeria adalah termasuk memastikan kuota perwakilan wanita dalam dewan undangan negeri, mobilisasi, peruntukan bantuan kewangan, bantuan organisasi akar umbi yang mempunyai kepentingan untuk wanita, di samping penyokongan melalui pelobian dan kesedaran domestik. Kajian ini juga mendapati bahawa Tabung Amanah Wanita Nigeria telah memberi kesan kepada kehidupan wanita melalui bimbingan politik, program pembangunan kapasiti, bantuan kewangan, dan yang paling penting, pembinaan kesedaran hak wanita. Walaupun cabaran sosio-ekonomi/politik menghalang perwakilan politik wanita yang efektif di Dewan Undangan Negeri Imo, Selain itu, keganasan politik dan kekurangan pendidikan kekal sebagai cabaran penting kepada usaha NWTF untuk mendapatkan perwakilan politik wanita. Akhir sekali, kajian itu memberikan pandangan yang berharga tentang peranan Tabung Amanah Wanita Nigeria dan strategi yang boleh diguna pakai oleh NGO untuk memastikan perwakilan politik wanita yang mencukupi

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDC	Constitutional Drafting Committee
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
COWAN	Women Association of Nigeria
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
MWASD	Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development
NCCC	National Consultative and Coordinating Committee
NCWS	National Council of Women Society
NCWS	National Council of Women Society
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NWTF	Nigerian Women Trust Fund
PDP	Peoples Democratic Party
PLAC	Policy and Legal Advice Center (PLAC)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SGF	Secretary to the Government
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
WIC	Women's Informational Center

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This study introduces the background of the study follows the problem statement and the research questions. The main objective of this research is to examine the role of Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTF) in women representation in Imo state House of Assembly in Nigeria. The chapter also discussed the significance, scope and limitation and definition of terms.

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

The low level of women's representation in politics and governance has been a major concern on the global level (Agbude, 2011). Equal access to both gender in political representation is considered to be very important in a democratic society (Abubakar, 2015). This is because it encourages political development and fairness. Political representation is one of the elements that distinguish democracy from other types of government (Abubakar, 2015). Political representation is at the heart of democracy practice anywhere in the world. Political representation of women in the electoral process involves much more than voting, it drives from freedom to speak out, assembly, and associate, the ability to take part in the conduct of public affairs, the opportunity to register as a candidate, to campaign for political position, to be elected and hold political office at all the levels of the government (Abubakar, 2015). The wider representation of the people the more legitimate a democratic government is guaranteed (Agbude, 2011). As a political system, democracy has been endorsed by scholars as well as policymakers as the most ideal system of government in the modern world and as an instrument of change.

According to Alice (2017) although women are represented in political leadership their participation has fallen short of the 30% minimum gender quota recommendation by the United Nations. Muthoni (2017) also explained that in 2015, only 43 countries had reached or surpassed this target for parliamentary representation: 70 countries had less than 15% women in the lower or single houses of national parliaments, with no women representation in five countries. Civil society has made a significant contribution to promoting women's political participation in society. Their attribution is notable in Mexico, the USA, Indonesia, Kenya, and Myanmar. In Indonesia, for instance, CSOs were central in the building of the women's movement which resulted in the institutionalization of a 30% electoral quota (Alice, 2017).

The study carried out by Orji, Orji, and Agbanyim (2018) shows that the last two decades have seen a great ascent in women's political representation around the globe, with the worldwide normal in the offer of women in national parliaments multiplying during that time, and all districts gaining significant ground towards the objective of 30 percent women representation in basic leadership. Their research further finds that while the rate of increase in the political representation of women has been quick in Africa with four of the world's best 10 nations, as far as a lot of single or lower place of parliament, being

Sub-Saharan African nations (Rwanda, Seychelles, Senegal, and South Africa), Nigeria has accomplished little advancement in such manner. (Orji et al., 2018). According to Orji et al., (2018), no place in the world has the rate of increase in the political representation of women been as quick as in Sub-Saharan Africa. As of 1995, no African nation had over 30 percent women representation in their respective houses of parliament, however by 2015, twelve nations have elected over 30 percent of women to such positions, such as five elected over 40 percent; while one (Rwanda) had over 60 percent (IPU, 2015). Since 2003, Rwanda has kept up the record as the nation with the most astounding women representation in the house of assembly and government in the continent, outperforming the other nations (Tripp, 2003). Four of the world's best 10 nations, regarding women's representation in parliament, are in Sub-Saharan Africa: Rwanda, Seychelles, Senegal, and South Africa (Orji et al., 2018).

Argued that religion and social-cultural practices, lack of finance, and political party discrimination are the most reason women do not take an active part in politics. While Thanikodi and Sugirtha (2007) stated that the barriers to women's political representation are founding prevailing social and economic regimes, as well as in existing political structures. Arowolo and Aluko (2010) mentioned that some of the factors that have contributed to the second-fiddle role women are playing in political activities are identified as a function of the natural status of a woman while others are man-made and deliberately designed. In recent times democracy and development have made it possible for women representation in political activities. Caroline Beer (2009) argues that long-term democracy together with women's suffrage should provide new opportunities for women to promote their interests through mobilization and elections. She also states that women's participation should be included as an important component of democracy.

To achieve greater women's political representation, civil society needs to do more to encourage women globally and in particular Nigeria, civil society organizations such as the Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTF) came about. Civil society organizations (CSO) such as Nigerian Women Trust Fund served as an agent of change in a democratic society such as Nigeria and have contributed significantly to encouraging women's participation in politics in the country at large and particularly in Imo state, Nigeria. The rate of women's representation in politics has not been encouraging in the past years especially in the Imo state house of assembly, despite the effort to change the trend by many civil society organizations such as Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTF). Thus, it becomes imperative to look at women's challenges that have contributed to their low level of political representation. Thus it is against this backdrop the current research will assess the role Nigerian Women Trust Fund on the political representation of women in the Imo state House of Assembly.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

The consequence of the low level or weak representation of women's participation in politics in Imo state has over the years shown in the non-women-friendly policy decisions and implementation, non-discussion of issues that concern the women in the state house of assembly, the neglect of women related issues in the state and the



exclusion of the women fox in the overall political decision and actions of the government.

The level of women's political representation as it related to the United Nation's standard which is a 35% minimum gender quota has not been met over the years in the Imo state house of assembling. The low number of women's political representation in the Imo state House of Assembly is also disturbing as it is far less than the standard recommended by the UN. The level of women's political representation in the Imo state House of Assembly falls short of the 35% minimum gender quota recommendation by the United Nations (Arowolo & Aluko, 2010). Available statistics show that women's political representation in the Imo state assembly is not more than four (4) in number out of 27 house members any political dispersion, indicating the worst women's political representation in Nigeria (Agbalajobi, 2010). This alarming low level of women's political representation prompted Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NWTF) to ensure greater and positive improvement in the Imo state house of assembly as established in 2011 to promote greater women's political representation.

The Act establishing the Nigerian Women Trust Fund was to enhance and promote political representation in the country and Imo state in particular. Thus, the NWTF attempts to encourage greater women's political representation in the Imo state House of assembly and to change the present undeniable low representation of women fox in Imo state politics. But, these programs of the non-governmental organization have been described as tokenism because they not have been able to set a specific task of ensuring greater women's political representation, especially in the state of house assembly.

Other Non-Governmental Organizations in Nigeria which hitherto concentrated much effort on women's political-economic empowerment such as the Country Women Association of Nigeria (COWAN) and National Council of Women Society (NCWS), and the National Council of Women Society (NCWS) (Arum & Alaba, 2017). These measures have not been able to transform the number of women contesting for women state house of assembly elective positions of decision-making (Nelson 2012). But the Nigerian Women Trust Fund was remarkably different from other non-governmental organizations because its objective was to mobilize support for women and to clamor for the 30% quota guaranteed by the affirmative action policy, especially in the state house of assembly (Nelson 2012).).

**Table 1 : Political Representation of Women in Imo State House of Assembly**

Imo State House of Assembly (Elected Member)	Year Began	No of Seats	No of Women / Percentage	Date of Last Election	Term
	1999	27	0 / 0 %	February	4years
	2003	27	0 / 0 %	February	4years
	2007	27	1 / 3.7 %	March	4years
	2011	27	2 / 7.4 %	1 April,	4years
	2015	27	2 / 7.4 %	March	4years
	2019	27	2 / 7.4 %	23 <sup>rd</sup> March	4years

(Source: INEC 2019)

The table above shows the Imo state House of Assembly election from 1999 to 2019. The table shows that since 1999 the number of women represented in the assembly has not gone beyond 4 over 27 of the entire members needed in the assembly of Imo state. The table shows that in 1999 and 2003 no women made it to the state house of assembly, the table equally shows that 2 women were elected in 2007, 2 women in 2011, 2 women in the 2015 general elections, and 2 in the 2019 general elections. The table goes to show that the political representation of women in the Imo state house of assembly has been unstable over the years and has remained low for years in some cases zero percent was recorded which prompted the need for the current research. Despite, the UN recommendation of 35 percent women's political representation and having women as the largest number of registered voters in the state. It is also important to state that the basic right, and freedom in the state especially for women is very limited, meaning the right and freedom of women fox in the state is at their lowest.

Despite the Nigerian Women Trust Fund's efforts to increase women's political representation in the Imo state house of the assembly, little progress has been made toward this goal. However, Animasaun (2008) focuses on the necessity of reforming the country's electoral system in order to accommodate more women, while Gberevbie (2013) typically focuses on civil society and the improvement of democratic governance as a whole. Similarly to this, Isumonah (2004) was more concerned with the need for participatory democracy. It is rare to find a study on the challenges women face and the role that the Nigerian Women Trust Fund's strategies play in increasing women's political representation in the Imo state House of Assembly.

The current research tends to examine the role of the Nigerian Trust Fund on women's political representation in the Imo State House of Assembly

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. What are the strategies of the Nigerian Women Trust Fund towards women's political representation in Imo State House of Assembly works?
2. How does the Nigerian Women Trust Fund impact women's political representation in the Imo State House of Assembly?
3. What are the challenges of the Nigerian Women Trust Fund in ensuring an increase in women's political representation in Imo State House of Assembly?

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

1. To identify the strategies of the Nigerian Women Trust Fund towards women's political representation in Imo State House of Assembly works
2. To examine the impacts of Nigerian Women Trust Fund on women's political representation in Imo State House of Assembly

3. To investigate the challenges of Nigerian Women Trust Fund in ensuring an increase in women's political representation in Imo State House of Assembly

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The need to study women's representation in the Imo state house of assembly and strategies adopted by major civil society organizations such as the Nigerian Women Trust Fund cannot be overemphasized. This is particularly important given the growing trend of low women's political representation in the Imo state house of assembly since the return to democratic practice in 1999 to date. The research aimed to contribute significantly to the body of knowledge as it regards Nigerian Women Trust Fund which aims at strategizing ways women can be greater represented in Nigerian and Imo state in particular.

The current research would be significant to policymakers who are important stakeholders in ensuring greater representation of women in politics, hence the research findings would be a great benefit to them. Similarly, policymakers would benefit from these research findings because insight would provide into the circumstances and experiences of the women in Imo state, with particular reference to strategies adopted by the Nigerian Women Trust Fund for greater representation of women in the statehouse of assembly. The current research would provide vital insight for policymakers which subsequently pave for necessary amendments that would ensure greater representation of women in the Imo state house of assembly.

Furthermore, at the practical level, the current research would provide meaningful contributions that would strengthen the strategies adopted and used by the Nigerian Women Trust Fund for more women's representation in the Imo state house of assembly. Also, the current would provide a credible and concrete examination of the strategies of the Nigerian Women Trust Fund with the view of providing an improvement in the organization for better performance of their obligations. Finally, the findings of the current research would be shared with critical stakeholders such as the Nigerian Women Trust Fund members themselves, members of the Imo state house of assembly, and the members of the public. And the research findings would become a very essential tool that could further perfect Nigerian Women Trust Fund strategies for the overall improvement of women's political representation in the Imo state house of assembly.

### **1.6 Scope and Limitation**

Furthermore, the study is time-bound that is the research is limited to 1999-2019. The reason is that democracy returned to Nigeria in 1999, after a long period of military rule, and after over twenty years of the existence of democratic practice and elections in the Imo state House of Assembly over these years, the level of women's representation in the statehouse remains very low which calls for concerns. Thus, the current research restricts itself to the effectiveness of the strategies of the Nigerian Women Trust Fund in mitigating this situation in the Imo State House of Assembly. Hence, the findings of this

study would be specific to the context of Nigerian Women Trust Fund strategies in ensuring greater women representation in Imo state House of Assembly which may not have general application to other states or settings because findings in qualitative research are limited by their sample, delimitation and cultural view of the research area. However, since the knowledge gained in a certain situation can be promptly transferred to a situation of similar concern, the researcher would thoroughly provide a vivid description of the issue and context of the research to help other future researchers (Merriam, 2009).

## **1.7 Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of being definite, the core idea of the topic of this research was acknowledged and described.

### **1.7.1 Political Representation**

Political representation according to Pitkin (1967) as making present again, is the action of making the collective citizens of the country has a voice, perspectives, and opinions on the public policy process of the nation right from the agenda settings right to implementation and feedback. While Dovi (2018) was of the view that political representation happens when political actors or players advocate, speak out, act in the political arena, and symbolize. In the context of the current research political representation means especially as it applies to women greater and increases representation using the United Nations standards of at least 35 percent.

### **1.7.2 Political Participation**

According to Damilola (2010), political participation here entails various variables of participation but voting in elections, contesting elective [public] offices. Okolie (2004:53) perceives political participation as “freedom of expression, association, right to free flow of communication, right to influence decision process and the right to social justice, health services, better working condition and opportunity for the franchise”. Kivoi (2014) defines political participation as participation in political campaigns and debates, attending strategy meetings of political parties, voting during decision-making. In a nutshell and in the context of the current research political participation is a process by which citizens take an active part in political activities by getting involved in voting, decision making, and political campaign especially the women of Imo state Nigeria.

### **1.7.3 Civil Society Organization**

Civil society is an open and inclusive network of overlapping, sub-cultural publics having fluid temporal, social, and substantive boundaries. Harry (2012) defines civil society organization as an association of sub-groups, or combination of a religious organization, ethnic groups, and political groups, trade union that has a common interest

of advancing the society. While Brysk (2000) sees it as human activity outside the market and the state, non-government organizations, people's organizations, trade unions, co-operatives, human right group, women associations, youth clubs, the media, neighborhood or community-based coalition, religious group academics and research institutions, grass root movement and organization of indigenous people. Bernhard (2008) stated that the critical component of creating civil society was the establishment of legal boundaries that protect the existence of an independent public space from the existence of state power, and then the ability of organizations within it to influence the exercise of power. And in the context of the current research civil society is that organization with a common motive to represent the voice of the general public, for them to be able to defend the right of a common man there is a need for these societies to be independent, transparent, accountable and autonomous.

#### **1.7.4 Nigerian Women Trust Fund**

According to Opara (2015), the Nigerian Women's Trust Fund is a non-governmental organization founded in 2011 committee to ensuring greater women representation in the politics of Nigerian. Nigerian Women's Trust Fund just like other civil society organizations emerged as a result of the decline in the number of women holding esteem political and social positions in the country Nigeria, the body aims at addressing gender equality by "increasing representation of women in Nigerian governance at all levels". And in the context of the current research, Nigerian Women Trust Fund is a civil society organization committed to increasing women's political representation in the Imo state House of Assembly through its laydown strategies.

#### **1.8 Organization of the Study**

This study used a conventional method of research design which involves five chapters only. The first chapter covers the background of the study, problem statement, research questions, research objectives, research significance, the scope of the study, limitation of the study, definition of terms, and the organization of the thesis. The second chapter presents the literature review which includes the theoretical framework of the study and the review of the related and relevant literature. The third chapter covers methodology, which includes research design, the location of the study area, study population, sampling of the study, research participants, data collection, analysis of the data, validity, and reliability, and ethical consideration. The fourth chapter was dedicated to the interpretation of data and analysis. While the fifth which is the last chapter provides a summary, conclusion, and various implications of the study as well as recommendation. Bibliography and appendix of the study will follow.

## 1.9 Summary

This chapter provided a general account of the study being reported in this thesis. It began with the background of the study which gives a detailed account of what led to the women's representation in the house of assembly and subsequent Nigerian Women Trust Fund. It provided the problem statement as it relates to the low level of women representation in the Imo state house of assembly over the years. This was followed by research objectives, the scope, and limitation of the study, and the significance of the current research. Finally, relevant terms were defined as well as the organization of the study leading to the next chapter which reviews relevant literature related to the study.



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