**CHAPTER THREE**

**THE STUDY AREA AND RESEARCH PROCEDURE**

**3.1.1 Historical Background of Benue State**

Benue State, located in east-central Nigeria, has a rich historical background that dates back to the colonial era and the subsequent reorganization of Nigeria's administrative regions and states.

**Pre-Colonial Era and Early 20th Century:** The present geographical entity now known as Benue State was initially known as Benue province until 1918, when it adopted its name from one of its dominant geographical features, the River Benue. The territory was initially known as Munshi Province until 1918 when the name of its dominant geographical feature, the River Benue, was adopted.

**Colonial Era and Administrative Reorganization:** Following the amalgamation of Nigeria by the British, Nigeria was divided into four regions: West, North, East, and Middle belt. On May 5, 1967, the structure of the federation of Nigeria was divided into twelve administrative states, and Benue was merged together as Benue-Plateau State. On February 3, 1976, Benue State was created out of the defunct Benue-Plateau as an administrative unit, as part of a reorganization that increased the number of states in the country from 13 to 19. In 1991, the boundaries of Benue State were adjusted with the creation of Kogi State.

**Geography and Demographics:** Benue State is located in the north-central geopolitical zone of Nigeria and is divided into twenty-three local government areas, including Ado, Agatu, Apa, Buruku, Gboko, Guma, Gwer-East, Gwer-West, Katsina-Ala, Konshisha, Kwande, Logo, Makurdi, Obi, Ogbadibo, Ohimini, Oju, Okpokwu, Otukpo, Tarka, Ukum, Ushongo, and Vandeikya. The state is inhabited by the Tiv (the largest ethnic group in the state), the Idoma, and a number of smaller groups, all of whom are mainly agricultural peoples, cultivating various crops as cash crops and staple foods.

**State Capital and International Boundaries:** The state capital, Makurdi, was established in the early twenties and gained prominence in 1927 when it became the headquarters of the then Benue Province. It became the capital of Benue State in 1976. Benue State shares boundaries with six other states: Nassarawa to the North, Taraba to the East, Kogi and Enugu states to the West, and Ebonyi and Cross-River states to the South. It also shares an international boundary with the Republic of Cameroon on the Southeast.

**3.1.2 The political structure**

Benue State in Nigeria is characterized by its administrative divisions, governance, and political dynamics;

**Administrative Divisions**: Benue State is divided into twenty-three local government areas, which include; Ado, Agatu, Apa, Buruku, Gboko, Guma, GwerEast, GwerWest, Katsina-Ala, Konshisha, Kwande, Logo, Makurdi, Obi, Ogbadibo, Ohimini, Oju, Okpokwu, Otukpo, Tarka, Ukum, Ushongo, and Vandeikya.Each of these local government areas has its own administrative and political structure, with elected officials responsible for local governance and development initiatives.

**Governance and Political Leadership:** The state is governed by an elected governor and a House of Assembly, following the democratic system established in Nigeria after the transition from military rule to civilian government in 1999. The current governor of Benue State is Rev. Fr. Dr. Hyacinth Iormem Alia, who assumed office in May 2023 after being elected as the governor of the state. The political landscape in Benue State has been marked by political developments and power struggles, with various political parties and stakeholders vying for control and influence within the state.

**Political Parties and Elections:** Benue State, like other states in Nigeria, has a multi-party political system, with various political parties participating in elections at the state and local levels. Elections in the state, including gubernatorial elections, are conducted through the plurality voting system, and the state has been the site of significant political contests and electoral processes.

**Local Economy and Development Focus**: The political structure of Benue State is closely linked to its economic and development priorities, with a focus on agriculture and food security. The state is often referred to as the "Food Basket of Nigeria," highlighting its emphasis on increasing food supply through large-scale mechanized farming. The state's political leadership plays a crucial role in promoting investment, peace, and security, as well as in harnessing the abundant natural and human resources for sustainable development.

**3.1.3 The Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in Benue State**

The Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in Benue State has indeed been instrumental in promoting the welfare of women, children, and the less privileged in the state, particularly disabled persons. The ministry was established out of the need for a government organ dedicated to directly engaging with families for the growth and development of a strong and healthy society. It began as the Benue State Commission department in the office of the secretary to the Benue State Government in 1990 and later evolved into a full-fledged Ministry in 1997.

The ministry's objectives include promoting the general welfare of women and enhancing their ability to realize their full potentials in various fields of human endeavors, providing an enabling environment for the maximum and holistic development of the potentials of the state's children, and promoting a multi-sectorial program synergy for the realization and enhancement of the survival, development, protection, and participation rights of children in Nigeria.

The Ministry of Women Affairs in Benue States has played a significant role in promoting gender equality, social development, and empowerment from 2017 to 2022. Here's a summary of the key information about the ministry during this period:

**Establishment and Evolution**: The Benue State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development was created to address the need for a government organ dedicated to fostering the growth and development of a strong and healthy society through direct engagement with families. It started as the Benue State Commission department in the office of the Secretary to the Benue State Government in 1990 and became a full-fledged ministry in 1997.

**Key Responsibilities and Initiatives**: The ministry supervises the rehabilitation board directly and provides social services and amenities to the people, thereby generating revenue for the Benue State Government. It is actively involved in the promotion of gender equality through mobilization and empowerment programs, implementing initiatives to sensitize and mobilize the general public on sensitive issues in collaboration with other agencies.

**Leadership and Governance**: The ministry is led by appointed officials responsible for overseeing its various programs and initiatives, with a focus on promoting civic, political, social, and economic participation of women and coordinating and monitoring women's programs. The leadership of the ministry is instrumental in providing technical and financial support to women non-governmental organizations, especially the National Council of Women Societies, and reviewing substantive and procedural laws that affect women.

**Development Focus and Collaborations**: The ministry's activities are geared towards promoting the development of women and children in Benue State, aligning with the broader national and international efforts to advance gender equality and social empowerment.

**3.1.5 Staff Strength of Ministry of Women Affairs in Benue State**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| DEPARTMENT | SENIOR STAFF | JUNIOR STAFF | **TOTAL** |
| 1. Child Development | 18 | 4 | **22** |
| 2. Social Welfare | 15 | 5 | **20** |
| 3. Rehabilitation | 14 | 3 | **17** |
| 4. Women Affairs | 15 | 5 | **20** |
| 5. Administration | 17 | 4 | **21** |
| **TOTAL** | **79** | **21** | **100** |

SOURCE; research work 2023

The Ministry of women affairs in Benue State made up of five (5) departments. The staff in the above ministry are 100 in numbers, 79 senior staff and 21 junior staff. The population of staff comprises of the entire staff of the above ministry. These departments are handled by well trained and professionally skilled workers and are employed and posted to the ministry by civil service commission of Benue State.

**3.1.6(1) Vision of the Ministry**

The vision of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in Benue State is to create a strong and healthy society by directly engaging with families and promoting the welfare of women, children, and the less privileged. The ministry aims to provide social services and amenities to the people, thereby generating revenue for the Benue State Government. Additionally, it focuses on the promotion of gender equality through mobilization and empowerment programs, implementing initiatives to sensitize and mobilize the general public on sensitive issues in collaboration with other agencies.

The vision encompasses a commitment to fostering a society where women, children, and the less privileged are empowered, supported, and provided with the necessary resources for their holistic development. This aligns with the broader national and international efforts to advance gender equality and social empowerment.

**3; 1.6(2) Mandate**

The mandate of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in Benue State encompasses several key responsibilities and initiatives. These include:

1. Provision of Scholarships for Underprivileged Children: The ministry is vested with the improvement of social conditions of the elderly and less privileged persons in the society, focusing on the relief of psychosocial distress/stress in individuals, families, and communities at large. It also provides scholarships for underprivileged children in Benue State.
2. Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS Activities: The ministry has a specific mandate to mainstream HIV/AIDS activities into other sectors of the organization. This involves being a sensitive stakeholder on preventive measures and providing care and support to Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC).
3. Social Welfare Initiatives: The ministry handles generic cases such as family cases, kindred cases, juvenile cases, and more, indicating a broad mandate to address various social welfare issues within the state.
4. Policy Formulation and Gender Equality: The ministry advises the government on gender and children issues, initiates policy guidelines, and leads the process of gender equality and mainstreaming at both the national and international levels.

**3.1.7 Research Procedure**

According to Howell (2013), research procedure is a mean or mode of data collection or sometimes, how a specific result is to be calculated. It is the design process for carrying out research or the development of a procedure and is not in itself an instrument, or method, or procedure for doing things (Industrial Research Institute 2010 cited in Nwanolue et al 2018). The research procedure or methodology is the general research strategy that outlines the way in which research is to be undertaken and, among other things, identifies, the methods to be used in it. Research methodology also refers to a discussion of the underlying reasoning why particular methods were used. Research methodology describes the rationale for application of specific procedures or techniques used to select, and analyze information applied to understanding the research problem, thereby, allowing the reader to critically evaluate a study’s over all validity and reliability (Kallet, 2004; University of Southern Carolina, 2016). Bar, A. (2010) conceptualized methodology as a process that involves the forming of concepts and hypotheses, constructed of theories and theoretical framework as well as sampling procedures

**3.1.8 Research Design**

Cooper and Schindler (2001) cited in Nwanolue et al (2018) described research design as blue print for fulfilling research objectives and answering questions. Research designs are deliberately and specifically conceived and executed to bring empirical evidence to bear on research problem (Oche,E.S 2008). To Denzin and Lincoln (1994), research design describes a flexible set of guideline that connects theoretical paradigms to strategies of enquiry and methods of collecting empirical materials. It provides the procedural outline for the conduct of any given investigation. In other words, research design acquaints the researcher with the potential problems in the execution of the study.

**3.9(1) Methods of Data Collection**

For the purpose of this study, documentary method were used or adopted. Documentary method relies on secondary sources of data, therefore can be classified under indirect methods. It can also be classified under qualitative methods. Documentary method involves extraction of information or data from already existing works, and therefore not generated indirect responses to an investigator’s stimulus. Therefore, the secondary sources of data which this study relied on were; textbooks, journal articles, newspapers etc. The study also made extensive use of materials from internet that contain information on the topic under investigation. The study also adopted primary source of data collection.

**3.9(2) Population of the Study**

The urgent population of the study comprises basically all number of use out the Minisry of Women Affairs and Social Development Benue State. The population of the study covered all the Staff of the above Ministry. It comprises of 79 senior staff and 21 junior staff which sum up to 100 staff in the Ministry.

**3.9(3) Sampling Techniques and sampling size**

A Sample is a small group of elements drawn through a definite procedure from a specialized population. A sampling technique is a plan specifying how elements will be drawn from the population. According to Obasi (1999), a sampling technique is where every member of the Ministry has equal and independent chance of being selected a sample to be studied. This study adopted simple random technique because of its simplicity to understand its wide applicability as every member of the Ministry has equal chance of being selected without any special classification or groupings. This implies that no specific characteristics are adopted to the respondents being selected. Therefore any number can be picked for interview administration using Nwanas Sampling size formula which states that for few hundred of a 305 or more sample with suffice; If many hundreds, a 20% sample will do. If a few thousands, a 10% sample we do; and if several thousands, a 5% or less sample will be representative of the population. The study further reduces the sample size to a size that can accommodate the instruction for data collection adopted.

Hence in this study, 100 will be regarded as man hundred and a 20% or less will be adopted. 20% of 100 = 20

From the above estimation, it has been determined that the sample size frame or size the study is = 20. However, the purposive sampling technique was employed to select the elements in the frame as indicated. Thus the study respondents were picked from 4 departments covering both junior and senior staff of Ministry of Women Affairs Benue State.

**3.9(4) Reliability of instrument**

The accomplishment of any research ardently lies on the reliability and validity of its facts of gathering instruments. Reliability refer to as instrument used to produce equal result credibility, dependably and constantly over time when utilized to the identical pattern (Good and Heart, 1952). Therefore, in order to ensure that the unit are reliable and pave the way for accurate trying out of hypothesis of the research which will in turn allow the dependable and goal deduction, inferences and conclusions, internal consistency approach are correctly adopted. This was done using cross- checking the data alongside other sources of data collection and ensuring that the information and figures collected from different sources mentioned formerly are correct and would remain the identical if the collection is repeated over and over again.

To as well make sure that instruments have excessive reliability, test and re-test approach used to be utilized and the questionnaires are structurally developed a simple, concise and difficult manner so as to permit effortless appreciation of the questions by means of the respondents and to make sure consistency in their answers.

**3.9(5) Validity of the Instrument**

Validity is the appropriateness of an instrument in measuring what it is intended to measure. Hour (2000) mentioned that validity is the degree in which a researcher’s instrument have the motive for which it was constructed. The researcher ensured the validity of the instrument by verifying that the constant material contains such as the question in interviews provided the wished records for the research topic developed in a simple term by avoiding the technical jargons for easy understanding and additionally ensure that the instruments are logically and systematically arranged.

**3.9(6) Methods of data analysis**

This study adopted a deductive approach of the qualitative data analysis techniques which including interview guide and schedule. This is because the responses from the field interview and secondary data material gathered were utilized to methodically and accurately support the theory and hypothesis of the study. The tables and percentages were also used in the presentation and analysis of this work. The research work being qualitative study, data from secondary source and hypothesis were used to analyze the findings. This is because the data was collected using an interview guide to answer the hypotheses of gender sensitivity and national development the study case of ministry of women affairs in Benue State. The interview would help them express themselves and also give us suggestions on possible way improving the policies as regards to gender sensitivity and national development.