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# THE ROLE OF THE BROADCAST MEDIA IN THE CAMPAIGN FOR POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN ENUGU STATE

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## Abstract

*This study focused on the role of radio in the campaign for Political Empowerment of women in Enugu State. The researchers used survey research method for the collection of quantitative data. The population of the study was 2,098,744 women living in Enugu State, Nigeria. Wimmer and Dominic online sample size calculator was used to draw a manageable sample size of 413. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire. The result of the study showed that 82.9% of the respondents have received information on radio about women political empowerment campaigns, 77.5% think that the campaigns about women political engagement in Nigeria is very important; but surprisingly, 82.1% of the respondents said that they have not contested for any political position in the state which shows there is a poor influence of the campaigns on the attitude and practice of women towards politics. Therefore, the study recommends that government should build more women empowerment centres for consistent education, training of women and handling of complains and victims of violence against women in politics.*

**Keywords:** Role. Broadcast Media, Campaigns, Political Empowerment, Women

## Introduction

Over the years, the relationship of women, politics, media institutions and media content has become a major issue of concern in so many media and gender discourses. A general consensus among these discourses is that in practice, the form of relationship which exists between them is such that neither can exist independent of the other. However, in exploring this relationship the pertinent questions are whether the media are molders or reflectors of social structures or whether they are agents of social change or re-enforcers of the status quo.

The news media as observed by Ross (2002) constitute an independent fourth estate through which the polity gains insight and information about local, national and international affairs and where, through the diligent ministrations of the journalists, the government of the day is held accountable.

The fourth branch of government is what we today call the Fourth Estate of the Realm (Ndolo, 2011). In his quest to find out if the Fourth Estate of the Realm is performing its watchdog function as stipulated in Agbanu (2013); this communication scholar asked: Is this fourth estate Real or Imagined?. For clarity sake, Ndolo stated that the fourth Estate is real when the press gave expertise and transparent diligence in the coverage of both the 2003 and 2007 elections and continue to do so in subsequent elections.

Nwokeafor (2015) mentioned that the impacts of mass media was strongly exemplified during the May 2015 general elections in Nigeria. According to him, the media used various campaign strategies to attract the attention of the electorates in making one choice against the other.

As gender issues and women's political and economic empowerment take the centre stage on the global arena, Nigeria appears intent on maintaining its position at the bottom of the ladder of women's political empowerment (Nwankwor & Nkereuwen, 2019). They also explained that women's rate of participation in formal decision making in Nigeria remain one of the lowest on the continent

and across the world with women occupying an abysmal 5.6 per cent (86 out of 1534) of all elective positions at both national and subnational levels.

The 2019 election was expected to be the sixth quadrennial elections since the end of military rule and the beginning of the country's transition to democratic governance in 1999 (Mukum, 2019). Mahmood Yakubu in Mukum (2019) explained that the election was later postponed in order to conduct free, fair, and credible elections. What remains deeply in doubt, however, is how inclusive this progress has been and, in particular to what extent women have benefitted from the democratic dividend of equality and fairness (Juliana & Ruth, 2020).

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

There are reasons to believe that African women, especially in Nigeria are exploited and marginalized in practically every sphere of administration and gender has been the silent weapon used to marginalize and suppress their growth in politics (Reddock, 2000). Despite the fact that women constitute about 50% of the total population, they are discriminated against in the political process (Onyenwere, 2017). The marginalization of Nigerian women is more visible in the democratization processes because the quality of democracy has declined over the past few years and it stands as a threat to women's development in the country (Democracy Dialogue Report, 2018). The present national assembly in Nigeria has an appallingly low average of 5.5% of women in house of representatives and 5.8% in house of senate (United Nation, 2019).

This limited conception of the political relevance of women is responsible for their political marginalization. Women in Nigeria constitute almost half of the entire country's population and in spite of this numerical strength, they have been recognized as clappers, voters, cheerers and supporters singing and dancing during electioneering campaigns in Nigeria and it is pertinent to note that democracy will not work in Nigeria political system if this number of the population is marginalized (Damilola, 2009). While it is important to increase the number of women in public offices, it begs the question about the role of the broadcast media in the campaign for political empowerment of women in Nigeria and particularly, Enugu state. Has the broadcast media fared well in its roles for gender balancing campaign? This study therefore, seeks to find out the roles of the broadcast media in the campaign for political empowerment of women in Enugu state, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The major purpose of this study is to ascertain the role of the broadcast media in the campaign for political empowerment of women in Enugu state.

Other specific objectives of this study include to:

1. Ascertain the extent to which women in Enugu State, Nigeria are aware of broadcast media political empowerment campaigns.
2. Examine women's level of knowledge about broadcast media political empowerment campaigns.
3. Establish the ways in which broadcast media political empowerment campaigns influences women's attitude towards politics.
4. Examine how women's level of knowledge on broadcast media political empowerment campaigns influences their practices.

### **Empirical Review**

#### **Overview: Radio and Women Participation in Politics**

The need for adequate participation of the citizens in virtually all political activities cannot be overemphasized. Politics, no doubt, thrives on the altar of effective participation of all eligible citizens which involves both men and women. Karl (2010, p.13) asserts that;

No nation's political system can make any appreciable progress without the active involvement of the masses. The citizens must be effectively involved in virtually all the processes to make the political system better and stronger which will herald good governance in the nation.

The import from Karl's statement above indicates that the bedrock of a better and stronger political system is the effective participation of the masses in politics. This amongst others includes participation in electoral campaigns and voting in elections. Just as indicated earlier, both men and women are required to actively participate to make the process a huge success.

One of the tools deployed to herald effective political participation in almost all nations of the world is radio. Radio is a mass medium used to disseminate messages to large and diversified audience simultaneously. The portability and affordability of radio place it above other forms of the mass media, especially in the area of political mobilization. In the U.S, France and many other countries of the world, the potency of radio in actualizing effective political participation have been tested. Bill, (2013) in his study of the use of radio in the 2012 general elections in the U.S found that radio was effectively utilized to mobilize the citizens to participate in the election. In line with Bill's finding, Asamoah (2013) in his study of elections in France found that radio has been a major player in the mobilization of the citizens for active and efficient political participation. Ekeanyanwu (2015) in his findings confirmed that there is a synergy between the media and politics. This link is strong as many democracies all over the globe see the media as instruments of political mobilization and sensitization. He also added that the mass media play a pivotal role in the society or social system and that is why no known government can do without the mass media.

Okoli in 2003 conducted a study on the use of radio in mobilizing women for political participation in Nigeria. In the study, selected women from the six geopolitical zones of the country were surveyed. Findings from the study revealed that 84% of the women actually got many political messages from their radio sets but did not participate in any political activity while only 16% of the women got involved in voting, electoral campaigns and other political activities.

The above finding by Okoli raises an important question, how clear and persuasive were the political messages disseminated to the people? This is very important because it is not all about just packaging anything and disseminating it to the masses. The message must first of all be very clear and understandable; it must as well be very convincing in such manner that the target audience will be compelled to respond appropriately. Lucas (2012, P.4) asserts that "political messages, just like other kinds of messages, must be very clear and persuasive in nature to effectively lure the audience to give the desired reaction. Nobody will respond to what does not move him".

As far back as 1999, Ahmed conducted a study on the use of radio in mobilizing women in Northern Nigeria for political participation. 300 women were picked from the three geopolitical zones in northern Nigeria. The study showed that women participation in the election was moderate in northern Nigeria as 66% of the women did not participate in the election. Only 34% of them voted in the election.

The two studies by Okoli and Ahmed are also obvious attestations to the level of political apathy amongst Nigerian women. Both studies revealed that most of the women did not participate in the political activities of the 2003 and 1999 elections in Nigeria. This is despite the massive use of radio to mobilize the women.

Kalu also conducted a study on the role of radio in mobilizing women for political participation in the 2007 general elections in the South-East Region of Nigeria. The study adopted the survey research method where both questionnaire and oral interview guide were used as measuring instruments. Using a sample of 296 women in Abia, Enugu and Imo States, it was discovered that despite heavy radio messages, women participation in politics was however moderate. In line with this study, Kalu also conducted another study to find out how radio was used to mobilize women in the 2011 general elections. Using the same scope and methodology, Kalu found that the level of participation amongst South-East women in the 2011 general elections was higher than their participation in every other election in Nigeria. He stated that women did not just participate in only voting, they equally contested for elective positions which most of them won.

A study conducted by Isa (2011) on the use of the mass media in the mobilization of women for participation in the 2011 general elections in Nigeria showed that the women actively participated in the elections. The study showed that the awareness level amongst the women was very high as a result of intense media campaigns for increased women participation in politics. Amongst the entire mass media, it was revealed that the women got most of the political messages from the radio. This

implies that radio played very significant role in the mobilization of women for participation in the 2011 general elections. Even though some scholars have come to contend that This implies that radio played very significant role in the mobilization of women for participation in the 2011 general elections. Even though some scholars have come to contend that there are other avenues one can gain knowledge apart from the media, available evidence shows that the media especially the radio dominates other sources of knowledge (Umeh 2012, p. 22). This is because the radio has many advantages over other media. It is portable, cheaper to operate and breaks the triple barrier of language, time and distance. Supporting the claims of Umeh, Okafor (2004) revealed that radio was effectively used to mobilize the women for participation in the 2003 elections.

Nwammou (2012) concluded after "analyzing the usefulness of radio in disseminating political information to rural women in Nigeria" that: Radio is a medium of communication which surpasses the barriers posed by illiteracy, poverty and accessibility in reaching the people who reside in rural areas.

In spite of all these, the level of political participation amongst Nigerian women is increasingly low. Most Nigerian women see politics as a man's activity. Some equally see it as a dirty and dangerous activity meant for some people alone. In trying to encourage adequate women participation in politics, the radio has been effectively deployed. The question here is how effective has the radio been in mobilizing the Nigerian women for effective political participation?

### **Empirical Focus on Political participation of Women**

In Nigeria, women have continuously stayed away from political activities in the country. In virtually all the political activities in the country, you rarely see reasonable number of women participate in them. Apart from not contesting for political offices which is often the case, these women rarely participate in voting in elections (Ogbu, 2011).

In a study conducted by Ganiyu (2007) on the level of women participation in the 2007 general elections in Oyo State, it was found that out of the 394 women sampled, only 38% actually participated in the election. It was further discovered that the remaining 72% did not even have voter's card. In another study on rural women awareness and participation in the 2011 general elections in Taraba State conducted by Adeleye (2015) showed that out of the 263 respondents, only 21% participated in the elections. The study also found that the awareness level was poor amongst the rural women in Taraba State.

Agu (2015) conducted a study on the mass media and Abia State women participation in the 2011 general elections. Women from the three senatorial zones of the state were sampled. In the end, the study showed that though women participated in the elections, the participation was however low, as only 42% of the women used for the study participated in the elections.

Timi (2011) did a study on which he evaluated the level of women participation in the 2011 general elections in Delta State. Priority attention was given to women in the rural communities of the state. The study revealed that only 31% of the rural women participated in the elections. It was amazing to discover that 69% of these women did not have voter's card, indicating that they did not equally participate in the INEC voter's card registration exercise.

Olufemi (2011) carried out a survey to ascertain the level of Yobe State women participation in the 2011 general elections. In conducting this study, Olufemi sampled 371 Yobe State women on the subject matter. Revelations from the study showed that the women's participation was rather low as only 29% of the total respondents indicated that they voted in the elections.

From the studies reviewed above, it is very correct to assert here that Nigeria has experienced low performance in terms of women participation in politics. This poor level of women participation in politics no doubt, may have been occasioned by some militating factors. The critical question here is, what are the factors militating against Nigerian women participation in politics?

Adeniyi (2015) conducted a study on the possible impediments to effective women participation in politics in Sokoto State and found that most of the women were ignorant of what politics is all about. This therefore, implies that knowledge of politics was a cardinal factor militating against effective Sokoto State women participation in politics. It was in line with this finding that Adeniyi recommended an aggressive political awareness campaign in the state targeted to specifically enrich the knowledge of Sokoto State women on the issue of politics.

Another study in this regard was conducted by Njoku in (2012) using survey research method, it was discovered that the women have not been actively involved in political activities in the state. It was further discovered that loss of confidence in the political system was a major impediment to women participation in politics. This implies that the negative and unacceptable activities of politicians have made the women to lose interest in participating in political activities in the state. It was based on this that Njoku recommended confidence building as the way out of the issue of non-participation of Abia State women in political activities.

Okeke (2010) from his study showed that rigging, ballot snatching and assassination of perceived enemies are major impediments to effective women participation in politics in Rivers State. From this finding, it is obvious that the women's non participation in politics stems from their fear of being assassinated. This is apart from the other identified militating factors such as rigging of elections and snatching of ballot boxes. These wicked actions have no doubt, compelled Rivers State women to stay away from political activities in the state.

Another study conducted by Hassan and Danjuma (2013) showed that the dangerous way the men play politics scares the women away from participating. The women indicated factors such as intimidation, snatching of ballots, rigging of elections and assassination of politicians as their major fears of engaging in politics.

The study of Hassan et al., (2013) corroborated that of Okeke (2010) and Njoku (2012). They all affirmed through their studies that some limiting factors compelled women not to participate in political activities in the various study areas. In all these studies, one cardinal factor limiting the effective women participation in politics is the factor of assassination. There is no doubt about the fact that so many politicians have lost their lives in their quest to participate in politics. This, according to studies, have immensely contributed to the level of political apathy amongst women in the country.

This research work added that APC 2018 National Convention in Abuja was an attestation or confirmation of the above findings as the delegates clashed and the convention turned violent despite high security. (See Appendix I)

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was anchored on Attitude-Change Theory. This theory is considered suitable to this study because it helps to draw more light into the theme of this study.

### **Attitude-Change Theory**

The Attitude Change Theory was developed from propaganda theories in the 1930s during World War II (Baran & Davis 2012: 175). The theory explains that there are pre-existing attitudes, whether biological or psychological which have to be changed if selected messages must have any effect on the target audience. Again, it explains that these pre-existing attitudes are core and therefore stand as barriers to effective penetration of messages for desired change. Thus an intellectual and emotional strategy of communication will influence change if properly channelled to do so. Change in evaluations and perceptions of an individual's predispositions will take place if the required modification favours his expectations, if it is tied to someone he admires, or if it is bound to be beneficial to him (Wood, 2000).

In the political participation of women in Enugu State, possible barriers to knowledge acquisition, positive attitude and practice of campaign messages may include psychological, emotional and physical. Psychological when the people find it difficult to comprehend the barriers to political issues and face the challenges, due to predisposition, value system or cultural beliefs. Physical, when facilities and financial capacity are not available, or, are limited. Emotional, when the fear of being condemned overrides the need for being politically empowered. For the political media campaign messages to effectively enhance knowledge, herald positive attitude and ultimately engender the desired behaviour towards the political empowerment of women, the media messages must therefore be structured in such a manner that these obstacles to effective communication are surmounted which will consequently herald the desired change among the people

### Research Methodology

The research design considered apt for this study was survey. This was because the nature of the study required that the researcher solicits audience responses in order to determine the level of participation of women in political activities, political level of awareness and knowledge level among women in Enugu State and how that has influenced their attitude and practices. A well designed questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data, which answered the research questions raised earlier.

The Population of the study was the entire women in Enugu State who reside in the 17 local government areas in the State from which a representative sample was drawn. According to National Bureau of Statistics, 2012, it has a population projection of 3,796,684, with 1,697,640 males and 2,098,744 females. Therefore, the population of this study is 2,098,744 women residing in Enugu state.

In this segment, the researcher opted for the selection of a manageable and representative sample size because of the largeness of the population (2,098,744). A sample of 384 was drawn using online sample size calculator advanced by Wimmer and Dominick (2013) with confidence level of 95% and confidence interval of 5.0%. The sample size was divided across the three political zones in the state (that is, Enugu North, Enugu East and Enugu West according to the strength of their population).

The probability sampling technique was employed in the study, with particular reference to the multi stage sampling technique. This technique requires that at each stage of sampling, two or more techniques can be employed. Thus two major techniques were employed: the cluster sampling and the simple random sampling techniques

### Data Presentation and Analysis

In this section, quantitative data generated using questionnaire were presented in tables using simple percentage and frequency distribution. The data were also presented in line with the research questions. Out of the 413 copies of the questionnaire administered, 09 were not returned while 404 were properly filled and returned. Therefore, the researcher analysed the returned 404 copies

**Table 1: Respondents who have Radio**

Do you have Radio?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	333	82.4	82.4	82.4
No	36	8.9	8.9	91.3
Can't say	35	8.7	8.7	100.0
Total	404	100.0	100.0	-

**Table 2: Respondents who listen to women's political empowerment campaigns on radio**

Do you listen to women's political empowerment campaigns on radio?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	335	82.9	82.9	82.9
No	35	8.7	8.7	91.6
Can't say	34	8.4	8.4	100.0
Total	404	100.0	100.0	-

**Table 3: Respondents thought about women's political empowerment campaigns?**

What do you think about women's political empowerment campaigns?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very important	313	77.5	77.5	77.5
Important	46	11.4	11.4	88.9
Not Important	3	.7	.7	89.6
Can't say	42	10.4	10.4	100.0
Total	404	100.0	100.0	

**Table 4: Respondents who have contested for any political position**

Have you ever contested for any political position?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	40	9.9	9.9	9.9
No	332	82.1	82.1	92
Can't say	32	8	8	100
Total	404	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5: Respondents' likely factors of hindrance into political participations**

What are the likely factors of hindrance into political participations?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Religious and Cultural belief	76	18.8	18.8	100.0
Family belief	141	34.99	34.99	
Political violence	187	46.3	46.3	81.2
Total	404	100.0	100.0	

Note: Political violence includes: Assassination, kidnapping, rigging, and ballot snatching and fighting.

### Discussion of Findings

The data presented in table 2 indicated that 335 (82.9%) have received information on radio about women political empowerment campaigns, 35 (8.7%) have not, while 34 (8.4%) can't say. This means that majority of the respondents used in the study had high level of awareness about broadcast media political empowerment campaigns.

The finding is supported by Okafor, (2004), Isa (2011) and Umeh (2011). Their studies showed that the awareness level amongst the women was very high as a result of intense media campaigns for increased women participation in politics. For this reason, radio is being termed by many communication scholars as the medium for the marginalized and voiceless.

The information presented in table 3 on the respondents thought about women's political empowerment campaigns indicated that 313 (77.5%) think that the campaigns about women political engagement in Nigeria is very important; 46 (11.4%) think they are important, 3 (.7%) think it is not important, 42 (10.4%) can't say. This showed that the respondents' level of knowledge about broadcast media political empowerment campaigns is high.

This study is an attempt to find out how broadcast media political empowerment campaigns have influenced the attitude of women in Enugu state, Nigeria towards politics, the findings in table 4 indicated that (82%) have not contested for any political positions. This means that majority of the respondents used in this study have poor attitude towards politics despite high level of awareness and knowledge about broadcast media political empowerment campaigns. This is a worrisome situation especially when most of the respondents (77.5%) as presented in table 3 agreed that women's political participation and representation is very important. From all indications, women in Enugu state, Nigeria are not marching words with action when it comes to political empowerment of women.

The study of Agu (2015) highlights the above findings as the study proved that though women participated in the 2011 general elections, the participation was however low, as only 42% of the women used for the study participated in the elections. Timi (2011) also discovered that 69% of women did not have voter's card indicating that they did not equally participate in the INEC voter's card registration exercise. Revelations from Olufemi (2011) showed that the women's participation in the election was rather low as only 29% of the total respondents indicated that they voted in the elections.

When trying to find out the factors limiting women in Enugu state, Nigeria from being active participants and representatives in political matters, data presented in table 5 revealed that 187 (46.3%) of respondents said that the fear of being assassinated or even be killed override everything as far as political activities are concerned in Nigeria. Also see appendix 1 for a confirmation of their fear. This implies that the majority of the respondents agreed that political violence is a major factor hindering their participation and full engagement in politics as women in Africa with African background.

The study of Hassan et al., (2013) corroborated that of Okeke (2010) and Njoku (2012). They all affirmed through their studies that some limiting factors compelled women not to participate in political activities in the various study areas. In all these studies, one cardinal factor limiting the effective women participation in politics is the factor of assassination.

## **Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **Summary of findings**

At the end of the analysis, various findings were made, which include:

1. It was discovered that majority of the respondents were aware of women's broadcast media political empowerment campaigns and have received information from their preferred medium on women political empowerment. This means that majority of the respondents used in the study had high level of awareness about women's broadcast media political empowerment campaigns and majority (82.9%) received the information through the radio.
2. The result revealed that (77.5%) of the respondents said that women political empowerment campaigns is very important, indicating a positive response and good knowledge level towards women political empowerment campaigns.
3. It was found that most of the respondents (82.1%) have not contested for any political position, which implies that the extent of the influence on attitude and practice is low despite high level of awareness and knowledge of broadcast media political empowerment campaigns.
4. In trying to find out what hinders them from developing interest in political matters, (46.3%) of the respondents agreed that political violence is a major hindrance and setback to women's political participation.

### **Conclusion**

This wraps up the study as well as make recommendations that can be used to improve women's attitude towards politics. The major goal of this study was to get the views of the respondents on the role of the broadcast media in campaigns for political empowerment of women in Enugu state. The major assumption of this study was that women are being marginalized in different levels of governance in Enugu State, leading to poor attitude towards politics. But upon our findings, we conclude that it is more accurate to say that women in Enugu state are less interested in political matters because of the way and manner political activities are being carried out.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are considered relevant in view of the aforementioned findings and conclusions.

1. There is need to raise awareness on women's media political empowerment campaigns. The media and those working in media houses need to be re-oriented about gender issues and as such, be more gender sensitive while reporting news stories and by so doing, reduce the incidence of gender imbalance in media contents.
2. Testimonial campaigns should also be used by the media as is the case with WTO Director, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo Iwuala, Mrs. Oby Ezekwesili, late Prof. Dora Akunyili, etc.
3. Strong advocacy mechanism must be put in place for urgent need to increase broadcast media campaigns on political empowerment of women, involving women in the rural areas and women with low educational qualifications.
5. Government should expand and build more women empowerment centres for consistent education and training of women towards self-sufficiency and political and financial independence.
6. Government should also create procedures for registering and handling complaints through new or existing state agencies, including police stations, electoral authorities or gender equality offices, designate a state agency to serve as a primary point of contact for victims of violence against women in politics and their families.
7. There is need to combat political violence against women and government must conduct awareness – raising campaigns directed at parties and voters to highlight the problem through broadcast media, posters, websites, tweets and online videos.
8. Women must also learn to support themselves. Women should learn to form a formidable group, use their numerical strength to conquer the barrier.
9. Most importantly, government should ensure that all policies are executed or implemented.

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#### Appendix i

#### Delegate Clash at APC National Convention



Source: Channels Television, June 23, 2018  
Source: [www.channelstv.com](http://www.channelstv.com), 2018.