

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

The audience, media channel, message and message speed are all important aspects of a mass communication system. But more important is the appeal of the message. Is the message useful to the audience but a loss to media owners or workers? Is it significant to media owners but not of any profit to the audience? Is the message in the public interest? Does it promote development? Questions about the communication situation of a message have remained due to their social significance. Media scholars, professional communicators and sociologists have endeavoured to proffer answers, judging from the numerous studies that have been carried out.

Women have been side-lined in political participation in Nigerian as far back as the colonial era. Scholars believe that the non-inclusion of women in political participation and decision making processes has been responsible for the exclusion of the interests of women in governance and development paradigms.

No doubt, gender disparity is glaring in Nigeria and many women are often hesitant to take active part in politics, not only because of the socio-cultural practices that poses great threat to them, but also because politics is such a male-dominated terrain and navigating its potential landmines could be fraught with uncertainty as well as hostility.

According to Irabor (2011, p.28) programme officer, Baobab for Women's Human

Rights:

The truth is, the number of women in political offices was actually experiencing an increase until the 2011 general elections. In the first republic, we had just one female senator – the late chief (Mrs.) Wuraola Esan... Mrs. Margaret Ekpo too won election into the House of Representatives. In the second republic, we had just one female Senator – Franca Afegbua. Then in the 1990s ... we had the

likes of Senator Florence Ita-Giwa. We had only three senators in 1999 and that increased to four in 2003, and to nine in 2007. But from the outcome of the 2011 elections, we now have only seven women in the senate.

It is obvious that a lot of factors are responsible for the low level of women participation in Nigerian politics. These include: discrimination by the men folk, men constituting a larger percentage of party members, social, cultural and religious attitudes of the people to politics which relegates women to the background, preference for male education as opposed to female education, lack of finance which discourages women from participating in politics, family responsibility, and threat of violence.

Women's involvement in politics at all levels and its coverage in the media is an area that makes the situation of communication messages a big issue. It appears that news about women is hardly news for many media houses in terms of coverage the women get and with regard to the amount of news content they access and consume. The preponderance of men in the news, and in many cases to the detriment of women, requires a re-examination. Nigeria has been selected as a case study for this re-examination, having exhibited the requisite characteristics – democratic regime, vibrant media, women advocacy, etc.

Women attempting to enter into politics in Nigeria face numerous obstacles. Those who have aspired to office must often deal with a lack of funds to run an effective campaign, a discriminative use of party zoning, low education and a slew of cultural and religious barriers. The marginalization of women in politics is certainly not new to Nigeria, having dated back to colonial times. In fact, women did not gain the right to vote until 1976.

Though there was improvement in the mobilization of women in the 2007 general elections but in Nigerian politics, sexism has become a major predicament. Women have been politically considered as an endangered species, and their low participation in Nigerian

government and politics is often associated with cultural, religious and economic constraints, and male chauvinism (Umechukwu, 2004).

The mass media provides perspectives, shape images of candidates and parties help highlight issues around which a campaign would develop, and define the unique atmosphere and areas of sensitivity with any particular campaign (Lang and Lang 1999). This research therefore seeks to find out how well Nigerian broadcast media covered women's participation in elections.

Elections can be a key element either in both conflict resolution and conflict escalation. Therefore, free and fair elections are essential for democracy consolidation and conflict prevention. The professionalism of media is crucial during election periods. To promote fair, safe and professional media election coverage, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) supports advocacy to encourage full, fair and efficient disclosure of information to journalists covering the elections; training to enhance professional election reporting; training on the safety of journalists and their right to work without threat; and the production and distribution of election guidelines reflecting principles of professional reporting during elections, journalists' rights, election processes and safety information, as well as briefing notes on international human rights law with emphasis on freedom of expression.

The background of this study looks into the role audience perception as well as their awareness of how the broadcast media, that is, radio and television handle the coverage of women's participation in politics.

There are other communication channels like television, interpersonal (rituals and festivals, gongs, drums), newspapers and magazines; these are channels of information dissemination. But in view of how effective these channels could be used in performing the role

of mobilizing women throughout the nation into mobilization in politics, its credibility is given to the broadcast media.

Obiakalusi Lynda et al (1991) in their research work stated that Nigerians political independence in 1960 had raised hopes of many that the nation was being set towards achieving a free and democratic society. In such a democratic society, it is expected that the broadcast media in particular should be the market place of political thought.

The mass media generally performed broad social functions to the audience and these functions are entertainment, information and education. Therefore, playing the same function, in terms of providing messages to its listeners while it is entertaining them thereby reminding its targeted audience (women) that they as empowered as well as their male counterparts.

Media as an information channel has continued to wax stronger as a medium of the people. Just like kristie person, executive director of the Cape Town, south Africa-based free play foundation posit that, broadcast media is the one tool that the greatest potential to reach the most people.

The media could be seen as a more possible agent of social and political mobilizing in the country in mobilizing women towards participating in politics. It is I the light of the above that this study seeks find out audience awareness and perception of broadcast media coverage of women's participation in electoral processes in Nigeria.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

Nature is believed to have allotted a sub-ordinate position for women and the Nigerian society appears to see women as such even in politics. Today, the phenomenon that women are meant to be seen and not heard has great influence on individual approach to feminism. Every attempt to involve them in major decision making organs of government in Nigeria is treated

with contempt. Even the press is believed to have contributed in the way people perceive women in a given society.

Although, there has been a steady increase in the number of women professionals over the past 20 years, most mainstream media coverage continues to rely on men as experts in various fields. Women in the news are more likely to be featured in stories about accident, natural disaster, or domestic violence than in stories about their professional abilities or expertise.

It is on this premise that this study undertakes an assessment on audience awareness and perception of broadcast media coverage of women's participation in electoral processes in Nigerian.

However, a lot of media broadcast are prejudiced while others are geared towards educating the society especially, African society, where it is frequently alleged that women are relegated to the background of the needs integrate. Well in all facets of life to enhance their social, political and economic development.

Having looked into records or listened to various national women who had participated in one time or the other in Nigeria politics and seeing how decreasingly the women post in the Nigeria political positions are being occupied by their male counterparts, the questions which could be drawn here are;

1. Will women in the state after being exposed to the media political messages gear more interest towards participating in the national politics?
2. Could their exposure to the media political messages activate them towards holding political post?
3. Could their exposure to the media political message expose them to political hatred?

The problem of this study therefore is what is the awareness and perception of broadcast media coverage of women's participation in electoral processes in Nigeria?

### **1.3 Objectives of Study**

The objective of this study will focus on the audience perception/awareness of the media in the dissemination of women's political participation, and;

- To evaluate the effectiveness of the broadcast media coverage of women's electoral process in Nigeria.
- To assess the level of penetration to the audience of messages of women's participation in electoral process from the broadcast media.
- To ascertain the extent to which women are covered by broadcast media.
- To examine whether the knowledge of women's participation in electoral process increased as a result of their exposure to the media programme.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

- How effective is the broadcast media coverage of women's electoral process in Nigeria?
- What is the level of penetration to the audience of messages of women's participation in electoral process from the broadcast media?
- What is the extent to which women are covered by broadcast media?
- Is the knowledge of women's participation in electoral process increased as a result of their exposure to the media programme?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study tried to identify some reasons behind government interest in ownership and control of media organizations. Added to this is a comparative analysis of the operational pattern

of both public and private media institutions with a view of isolating the impact of ownership in both cases.

While looking at the impact of government and media owned regulations on the press, Onwuka (1993) had this to say: "Beyond the facade of oppressive presslaws are the unwritten government and medial owners' policies that even abridgepress freedom more than what is containedin the statute books".

Consequently what may ordinarily be hot news may be "killed" by a particular medium due to one or a combination of these factors.

It tries to throw some light on the level of attention given to women in politics in Nigeria and how it can be improved focusing on the political participation of women as a way of empowering them.

The study is important because it will help to reshape the perception on individuals who hitherto bear a negative mindset towards women's participation in electoral process and the importance of promoting such.

This study will also educate the female gender, especially those in politics, on their rights and responsibilities in the society at large.

This work will also serve as a material for individual who would, in future, undertake similar topics for consultation sake as well as knowledge acquisition.

Finally, this study tries to underscore why government own and control media organization. It also serves to keep practicing journalists constantly conscious of the need to conform to media laws; broadcasting polices ethics and other general media guidelines.

## **1.6 Limitations of the Study**

Like most human endeavors, this study is not derived of limitation. Its result can therefore not be very conclusive. The whole truth is that, this is the researcher first attempt of some scientific study is in itself limiting factor.

Inadequate finance has also posed same limitations to the study. Another militating factor was the scarcity of materials for indebted findings.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

#### 2.1 Literature Review

Quite importantly, every academic discourse requires an input from what is already in existence. This is usually in the form of citations, where particular emphasis has been on how relevant this is with what is currently being studied. Therefore, it becomes imperative to say that human knowledge is undoubtedly an elevation of the construction of previous findings in which case the later acts as a foundational framework of the former.

This study, therefore, beams its focus on available works with bearings on issues such as;

- The Concept of Political Participation
- The State of the Media and Women
- Power of the Media over Minds
- Gender Differential and Gender Gap in Media Coverage of Nigerian Women
- The Inactive Participation of the Nigerian Woman in the Nigerian Political Sphere
- Factors Hindering Active Participation of Women in Nigerian Political Scene
- Theoretical Framework

#### **The Concept of Political Participation**

Political participation is an essential component that is required for ensuring the stability and legitimacy of every political system. Political participation is one of the fundamental ideas of a democratic society. It is critical for democracy because it involves a commitment to equal opportunity for men and women to develop their individual capacity (Agbaje, 1999). Anifowose (2004) defines political participation as those voluntary activities such as holding public and party office, attending election campaigns, voting and exposing oneself to political stimuli.

Political participation encompasses the involvement in decision making by which individuals acting singly or through group organisation attempt to influence decision making or alter the manner in which power may be distributed and the principles by which it may be exercised in a particular society. Participation involves taking part in an event or activity. In this article, participation refers to women whose activities and events, influenced the electoral process either directly or indirectly.

### **The State of the Media and Women**

The media in Nigeria has not given women the space they need either structurally within media administration or psychologically in the representation of women's images. Despite the early presence of women like Theresa Ogunbiyi, Lara Morel, etc. in the history of Nigerian media, despite their courage, their sophistication and intelligence, such women still found themselves shunted on to women's pages.

Therese Nweke (1989) says that a look at the statistics in the media shows that there is no woman in the approximately 100 chief executives of broadcasting stations which constitute the top management. There were only three female editors and one acting editor among the 300 journalists of the Daily Times, a quarter of whom are women. There are only 8 out of 127 of (the News Agency of Nigeria, NAN) journalists, none of whom occupies a senior management position after four years of the inception of NAN. Only one woman sits on the ten-member board of directors of the agency. In the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN), despite women being 35 per cent of the total workforce, of the six assistant directors in the senior management cadre, only one is a woman.

In the print media, the story is not much different though we now have two or three very visible women in top management positions. Still, what is their proportion, thinking statistically?

Women are usually not seen as news editors, chief sub-editors or editors. Only the very rare management will consider women to these posts and more likely in positions of assistantship. Yet it is the position of news editor, chief sub-editor and editor which can help and succeed in the reflection and projection of women's media, very importantly because news stories must pass through these officers to get to the masses, the people, 'the children'. A sexist news editor has the power to simply throw away the report, slant or suppress the news.

The structural oppression of women is one of the root causes of women's subordination in society. Women are constantly excluded from any, or effective, participation because they are absent from senior management positions and policy-making bodies. Conceiving of women in supportive and service roles only breeds structural asymmetry which then affects the art or science of government of the country, i.e. the policies of the society.

It is in recognition of the basic urgency of correcting structural discriminations that the U.N. General Assembly adopted, in 1979, a resolution approving the draft convention on discrimination against women. The articles of the draft include measures to be taken by member-nations to eliminate discrimination in various areas including political and public life; special attention was given to the rights of rural women and the elimination of stereotypes about women.

In 'The Forward-Looking Strategies' for the integration of women compiled at the Nairobi U.N. Women's Decade Conference of 1985, a special section is devoted to the role of communications in the struggle for the upliftment of women world-wide. Needless to say, the power of the media to make and unmake the image of women, to hasten or retard the progress of women in society cannot be denied or underestimated.

### **Power of the Media over Minds**

The power of the media over minds argues that the media needs to act responsibly in reporting women's issues, particularly now in the transition programme period when there is an undeniable national movement of women's awareness and a political period to commence soon in the second quarter.

At the moment, the press has created an atmosphere about women which is not exactly positive. The press seems to be reluctant to lend support to any attempt (superficial though they may be) to enhance the status of women (Sobowale 1989; Owens and Hunt 1985). The press will only be positive when glamorous and powerful women are involved and change has only been recent. The basic attitude to the women's movement is still disapproving.

The press pays much attention to negative issues about women. It is as if the news for women were 'the ugly, the unusual, the odd, the negative, the conflictual' and the disastrous.

The extent to which cases of apprehended female criminals are 'reported and sensationalized are unprecedented in the history of media activity (WIN 1985). More sympathetic media would want to get to the bottom of issues: how do the women get involved? What is the nature of their structural oppression here? Are they their own persons or agents? How can we protect such abused and misled women? Needless to say, our fearless press does not write on or expose either the root causes or the barons of the crime world in Nigeria.

The psychology behind such dehumanization of women through sensationalism, in my view, is that media practitioners decide from their own love of their mothers that women are saints, holy and perfect. The mother is, after all, the only female type (not the wife) who is respected and divinized in African culture. Once a woman falls from this grace of 'the mother as the perfect woman', the journalists go at her with virulence for disappointing them and shattering

their self-created icon. They make a straw woman and proceed to battle it. The truth of the matter is that women are neither saints nor devils; they are just human, capable of both good and evil. The question is: how does society contribute to their nature and behaviour?

Emphasis on the conflict among women characterizes reportage on women and their activities. An example is the election crisis of the NCWS in 1988. It is as if election crises are not politically or humanly permissible and expectable-in a human through women's organization. It is as if the mace was not broken in 1965 in the Western House of Assembly; as if Constituent Assembly 'wise men' were not fighting like cats and dogs in 1979 and only recently at Abuja; as if women like any other group are not going to have disagreements and conflicts.

Any objective analysis would show the political and human issues which produced those crises while the tactics of the women at the meeting were no different from the tactics of the men of the first and second republics. Nigerian women are also, after all, Nigerians, influenced by the life around them, hence characterized by the behaviour patterns and values of their community. Who, in any case, created the image that women are saints anyway? Women may commit less embezzlement in offices, but they also disagree among themselves. Yet the reportage on women by media is hardly given a historical, sociological or scientific analysis. The reportage is often simply a cover for derision.

The volume of positive coverage accorded their achievements is not only smaller but limited to only prominent women particularly in Southern media. Our Fourth Estate which constantly accuses women's organizations of being elitist itself covers only elite women. One can, in fact, list the four or five women who are written about and interviewed adnauseam in the Nigerian media. Is this laziness on the part of the media or a class attitude which makes the media interest them only in what the elite and the government are doing? What is the rural

person (man or woman) doing? Why is the rural person never covered, talked about or with, interviewed and brought into our national life? Why their opinions on national issues are never reflected? Why does the press reflect the tradition of the class-ridden British press which was the mother (or father?) of the Nigerian media?

Abounding in Nigeria are stereotypes of women who are promoted by the media. Contrary to women's contributions to production like farming, fishing, construction work and commerce; despite their proven mental abilities in school, women are still generally considered weak, irrational, passive and inferior and therefore not to be trusted in positions of authority. If Bola Ige and Richard Akinjide were women leaders who lost their tempers on TV as these gentlemen did in 1979, they would have been used to discredit women. If a woman leader wept as freely as Sam Mbakwe, she would certainly be out of office. Stereotypes of women are beginning to affect the consideration of women in the politics of the coming political phase.

### **Women in Politics**

A new political culture must be created which must see women's participation as normal, or just modern, since women's participation is in consonance with our traditional cultures and village organizations where the dual stratification of roles (political and social) was quite frequent (Okonjo 1988). Most village communities cannot think of organizing without consulting or including the women, while in our modern and Westernized planning and nation-building, we can.

The stereotypes which are beginning to affect the conception of women as political leaders and activists include the false assumptions that women cannot stand the rigours of politics, campaigns, the machinations and physical violence. Women who traditionally and still are facing the rigours of agricultural production, the hurly-burly of the market place, and the

customs posts and borders including the hardships of poverty, are believed to be incapable of facing the rigours of politics. Can this be honest? Such a disqualifying assumption is being made when women tour and participate in the violence of campaigns as entertainers, as entourage members of the women's wings of the parties, or as loyal wives of male candidates. Why can they not be candidates themselves? The issue is for

Nigerians to be conscientized to accept that women, having great endurance and managerial abilities, can face the rigours of politics while their physical safety as that of everyone else in politics, should be legally guaranteed. Women should be encouraged and supported to become executives of parties, get into the decision-making bodies of community organizations and go for candidacies. Women should not only be mobilizers for others and party entertainers.

Another question frequently asked is whether a woman can be president. This question is an unnecessary sensationalism at this point because having a woman president is not the most important factor in the integration of women into the political life of the nation.

The creation of a broad network of conscious and active women in politics is infinitely more important and primary. A woman president could then emerge from this broad context after the politicizing and educative involvement of the woman president herself through party work and community organization. The media, however, constantly ask this diversionary and irrelevant question, perhaps, to reduce the issue of women in politics to absurdity as usual.

This is not to say that it is absurd for a woman to be president, but being president is not necessarily the first and most necessary political step for women. If, however, we are asking if women have the administrative, intellectual and authoritative ability to be a president, the answer

is 'yes' for there are many women who can do as well, if not better, than some of our men who have been presidents and prime ministers.

### **Gender Differential and Gender Gap in Media Coverage of Nigerian Women**

This ancient way of thinking has significantly affected the participation of women in politics and her social visibility. Given the capacity of the media to offset societal norms and inspire salient conversation, however, the Nigerian news media has obliquely isolated the Nigerian women's. It is worthy of note that there has been a significant increase in the volume of women participation in politics in Nigeria since the country returned to democracy in 1999 (Ette, 2017), participation has broadened to constitutionally include women who decide to carry out their civic duty. The political positions occupied by women has increased, also, the number of policies which centres on women empowerment and their general well-being implemented by the government have significantly improved when compared to the conditions during the military regime. However, despite the significant level of increase in the political participation and awareness of the Nigerian woman, there is a still much work to be done when the comparison is drawn between women participation in politics and the domination of the political field by the men as is still experienced today (Nkechi, 1996).

Although, there exist no constitutional barrier to the increased participation of women in politics, in reality, there exists a clear societal barrier that hinders women participation. The increased clamour for better female representation at the decision-making arm of the government is hinged on the premise that since women constitute about half of the Nigerian populace, they should also constitute an equal representation in decision-making arm and governance of the country (Nwanebo & Odigbo, 2012). A normative argument that scholars like Dollar and Gatti (1999) had earlier substantiated by positing the interrelation between empowering women and

economic development. According to Nwanebo & Odigbo, the inclusion of women in the decision-making process, they argue, remains the only way to ensure the rights of women are protected, also the exploitive and discriminatory laws, which was intended to subjugate and berate women based on gender must be overturn (2012). Secondly, there is also the growing realization that everyone is has equal rights, with women having the same rights as men to contest and play a part in governance and in public life, a position that is backed by the Nigerian constitution in Section 40, 42 and 77 which states the following:

Section 40; Every person shall be entitled to assemble freely and associate with other persons, and in particular he may form or belong to any political party, trade union or any other association for the protection of his interests., (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria).

The section 40 above Right to peaceful assembly and association. While section 42(1) deals with Right to freedom from discrimination and states further that:

Section 42(1) A citizen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall not, by reason only that he is such a person be subjected to any form of discrimination. (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria).

Section 77 of the Constitution refers to who can participate in the elections and also states:

(2) Every citizen of Nigeria, who has attained the age of eighteen years residing in Nigeria at the time of the registration of voters for purposes of election to a legislative house, shall be entitled to be registered as a voter for that election (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria).

Although there has been a significant increase in the number of women vying for elective positions, this has not necessarily culminated to increased number of women in the decision-making arm of government, as the business of government is still dominated by men. The

Nigerian society, women in particular, despite making up almost 50 percent of the population cannot boast of an elected female governor, vice president or president despite the increasing clamour for increased women participation in active politics. This exclusion is traceable to specific factors which include media visibility, lack of financial incentives and almost non-existent political sponsors. What is obtainable within the Nigerian political space is that the financial weights are thrown behind men than they would to women. Nkoyo (2002) outlined the causalities of this exclusion as gender roles, patriarchy, women's conception of politics, and harsh cultural and societal laws that discriminate women.

This gender differential is also visible in inheritances as women are typically excluded primarily because they are women not because they are not part of the family. The Patriarchal nature of the Nigerian society is highly replicated in the Nigerian political scene, where the opportunities available to women are often defined by the men, limiting women to merely figure positions of "vice" or secretaries, not because they lack the prerequisite qualification needed, to be appointed into the decision-making helm, but because they are women, and the society has dictated that a woman must be under a man. Another Nigerian scholar, Ette (2017), maintained that the Nigerian media has undoubtedly played key roles in marginalizing female politicians by limiting their visibility and treating them as unserious contenders. According to her, the media's isolation of female politicians is carried out using 'relative absence' to reduce the chances of becoming recognizable. This Nigerian political exclusivity is detrimental to national cohesion, progress and development of the country (Ette, 2017).

### **The Inactive Participation of the Nigerian Woman in the Nigerian Political Sphere**

The Nigerian woman despite making up more than 50 percent of the general population (national population census, 2006) has continually been relegated to the back burner in the

Nigerian political sphere, despite increasing academic strides and career advancement which cuts across various fields of human endeavours. This exclusion is no thanks to the prevalent patriarchal nature of the Nigerian society, which is re-enforced by strong social, religious and traditional beliefs, which treats women mainly as inferior to the men, and are thus expected to walk in the shadow of the men, who are regarded as leaders despite having the same career, work experience and academic qualifications as her male counterparts.

The marginalization faced by women in the Nigerian political sphere can be largely tied to a dire lack of representation and active involvement in the decision-making process as regards their economic development and the advancement of social justice as concerning the issues of oppressive practices against women through decentralized institutions. The lack of representation on the major issues that make up the crux of the matter as regards women empowerment and financial limitations placed on the struggle for women empowerment has also become an obstacle to the active participation of women in the Nigerian political sphere.

A large number of political parties in Nigeria have very little or no available data that shows the accurate number of women who are actively involved, and this hampers the chances for women being granted tickets to emerge as the front-runner in the general elections. (Shamim and Kumari, 2002). This greatly affects any chances harboured the woman in the race for political power as the woman is caught in the storm of male egos who are greatly inclined towards a male counterparts, as it believed that a woman being the major nurturer in most Nigerian homes would be greatly time constrained to juggle motherhood and a political career as it requires lots of time outside the home, and she also would not to shoulder the enormous financial burden that characterizes the Nigerian political scene (Shayo, 2005).

This viewpoint is also supported by (Tripp, 2001) who posited that despite the progress made by women in the early 1990s on the issue of increased political representation of women, it has since not culminated in increased women appointment of women into politics. The huge financial burden associated with running for public office has become a tool used to discourage women from active competition for public seats against the male counterpart.

### **Factors Hindering Active Participation of Women in Nigerian Political Scene**

According to Okafor, Fagbemi and Hassan (2011), one of the factors militating against the active participation of women in politics is the Stereotypical constraints against women who strive to attain political and organizational leadership roles. These stereotypes range from the traditional gender roles that relegates the woman and the girl-child domestic and household duties and chores, often leaving these women mentally isolated to the point where their sense of career ambitions is replaced with societies expectations of them, which is often limited to household chores and reproduction, while the critical issues like governance and protecting of their rights should be left to the men.

Other factors that hinder the active participation of Nigerian women includes the abhorrent and oppressive socio-cultural practices, harmful widowhood practices, female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriages, and the purdah system. The Purdah system is practiced predominantly in the Muslim dominated Northern Nigeria, requiring that women are physical segregated and cover their bodies to conceal their skin and form. It is a religious and social practice of female seclusion. Many of these practices create socio-cultural barriers to the campaigns for women empowerment and stigmatization. Thus, the socio-cultural realities place a burden on women, which distracts her from the getting basic education or acquiring a professional career.

According to Aina, all these socio-cultural oppressions plaguing the woman creates the barrier that denies her access to information, formal education, which limits the probability of accessing wealth-creating assets, which includes land, capital (which includes loan facilities) labour, and ground-breaking skills needed in the pursuit of economic empowerment (2012). These constraints created by are also largely to be blamed for the poor participation of women in politics and governance.

Unarguably, the stigmatization of women as being lower in status when compared to her male counterpart is nationwide. The cultures of male supremacy which has roots in local traditions and folklore and has taken form and characterized by cultural and religious beliefs (Aina, 2012). A clear example of this is the belief in the Northern part of Nigeria that the girl child has no right to inherit properties or acquire one even if she had the means to and also has no business being in school and should be married off at puberty, while the male child is adequately educated and groomed for leadership position, the effect of this is that the playing field automatically becomes unfavourable for the woman, as she spends the rest of her life living under the dictates made by men who do not have her best interest at heart.

In the political setting, with women who have worked all their lives to carve a niche for themselves are often judged on the basis of their gender not on their ability as it is in other developed democracies. Whereas, in the Nigerian political climate, ambitious women who are often qualified for the job are more often than not relegated to the office of a secretary or a second in command, even in cases where they are better qualified and experienced than the chosen or appointed candidate, but are denied position just for the sole reason of being women. These pervasive gender biases have been engraved into the minds of generations of Nigerians

through the socio-cultural vices. Much of the instability and slow economic growth in society stems from these biases have also facilitated the gender discrimination.

Crime and corruption have also been identified as a limiting factor to the effective participation of women in politics; the superiority mentality exhibited by men in the elite class has exposed women to many injustices perpetrated on them just for the singular reason of being women. Gender-based corruption is also a limiting factor as women are forced to sleep with men as a form of payment or appreciation for things that a man would be handed to a man. This alters the balance of the political playing field, which eliminates all traces of neutrality and places the woman in a disadvantaged position.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

Agenda-setting theory, first developed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in their Chapel Hill study holds that the mass media set the agenda for public opinion by highlighting certain issues.

The agenda-setting theory states that the media (mainly the news media) determine the issues that the public consider as important by the pattern of news presentation. Thereby the issues focused upon by the media become the issues that the public accepts as important for attention and discussion.

The agenda setting role of the media is expected to explain the mode of operation of the print and broadcast media in Nigeria.

Agenda-setting, in its simplest form, holds that the media dictate what the people think about, not what the people think. It states that the agenda of the media were basically the agenda of the people.

The media set the agenda for what the people should think about, and the order of importance of these thoughts. The agenda-setting theory focuses on the cognitive, indirect effects of the mass media.

This theory has led mass communications researchers to study how media news coverage affects an issue's salience. However, the press does more than bring these issues to a level of political awareness among the public.

Agenda-setting means that the priorities of the press to some degree become the priorities of the public (Baran and Davis 2003).

The theory states that media content sets the agenda for public discussion. Thus, agenda setting illustrates the powerful influence of the media in shaping the public's view of what issues are important. The theory was first put forth by McCombs and Shaw (1972) who argue that although the media may not exactly tell us what to think, they may tell us what to think about. According to them, in choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position. Thus, once headlines, special news features, discussions, and expert opinions are focused on an issue in the media every day, the issue will continue to be a subject of discussion among the public.

This was the case with the female Speaker's corruption scandal in Nigeria. The story made the front page headlines everyday in a row from the day of the first report until the Speaker eventually relinquished her position. Similarly, special news features, discussions and expert opinions on the scam, were frequent stories in the media.

However, the coverage of the male Speaker corruption charge was not this sensational. The story made fewer headlines with few special news features on it. In fact, discussions and expert opinions on it were toned down. This correspondingly elicited limited public reaction. Thus, the male Speaker was not forced to vacate his seat as was the case with the female Speaker. Yet, at the expiration of his tenure as a Speaker, he was immediately arrested, detained and charged to court by the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC – the organ of government in charge of fighting financial crimes), for corrupt practices, while in office. The female Speaker, whose corruption case was sensationalized, had no case to answer with the Economic and Financial Crime Commission at the expiration of her tenure.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This is a framework or plan that is used as a guide in collecting and analyzing the data for a study (Baridam, 1995, p.49). It is also a model of proof that allows the researcher to draw inferences concerning caused relations among the variables under investigation.

The survey design was adopted for this research work. This is because the design deals with opinions and attitudes of people. Survey is a study of the characteristics of a sample through questioning that enables a researcher to make generalizations about his population of interest (Ohaja, 2003).

#### **3.2 Population of the Study**

The population constitutes the item which the researcher wishes to study, and about which he/she plans to generate. The population of this study involves residents of Auchi which is about 197,609 as at the last census in 2006 (Source: National Population Commission [www.population.gov.ng](http://www.population.gov.ng)), which will be 200,000 for precision reasons for the case of the study

#### **3.3 Sample Procedure**

The study adopted a purposive sampling method. This was due to the fact that the population of the study was not specific because of the wide variables of subjects in the population.

#### **3.4 Sample Size**

This was achieved by purposively selecting an adequate number from the total population to get a proper representation which was 200. This sample size of 200 was considered adequate

for the study because, according to scholars, a sample of 150 and above is adequate for a population of various categories of subject.

### **3.5 Validity of Instrument**

The research instrument used in this study were constructively reviewed, scrutinized and criticized by the supervisors and faulty areas were corrected.

### **3.6 Reliability of Instrument**

Reliability was addressed by making sure that research and investigative questions were consistent in measuring across all members of the targeted group delivered objectively and pre-tested as such. The principle is that the methodology used in arriving at the result can be reproduced exactly provided that the attitude of the target group did not change.

### **3.7 Method of Data Collection**

The research instruments used for this study were a set of questionnaire and personal interview. The questionnaire was constructed in simple sentences to elicit the views of the respondents. It was divided into two parts. Part one aimed at collecting personal data from the respondents, while part two was designed to collect information relating to the subject matter. The interview questions were also designed to elicit information on the palpable challenges television professionals face in the course of disseminating information. The researcher personally administered the instrument to the respondents but had some assistance in guiding the respondents and retrieving the questionnaire.

### **3.8 Method of Data Analysis and Discussion**

Data were presented in frequency distribution tables and analyzed, using descriptive statistics like simple percentages and approximations. The formula is given thus:

$$\frac{\text{Number of Respondents}}{\text{Total}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Data Presentation And Analysis

This part of the study presents the result indicating in the process. In data analysis, responses from respondents are converted to raw scores and to percentage. Some of the data are tabulated before the comments in respect of how they affect the study.

Overall responses rate for this survey stands at 100%. The percentage procedure of analysis is used for detailed result.

#### 4.1 Analysis of Respondents' Bio Data

**Table 1: Respondents' Age Distribution**

Age Range	Response	Percentage
18-35	72	36
36-55	98	49
56 and above	30	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

From the table above, 72(36%) of the respondents fall under age range 18-35, 98(49%) fall under age range 36-55, while 30(15%) of them fall under age range 56 and above.

**Table 2: Respondents' Education Qualification**

Education Qualification	Response	Percentage
ND	29	14.5
HND	48	24
BSC and above	123	61.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

From table 2 above, 29(14.5%) of the respondents have the ND qualification, 48(24%) have HND qualification, while 123(61.5%) are BSC and qualified even higher.

**Table 3: Respondents' Sex Distribution**

Sex	Response	Percentage
Male	116	58
Female	84	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

From table 3 above, the distribution of our respondents' sex says that 116(58%) are males, while 84(42%) are females.

**Table 4: Respondents' Status Distribution**

Status	Response	Percentage
Married	132	66
Single	68	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>100</b>

From table 4 above, it spells out the marital status of our respondents as 68 of them which make up for 34% are single, while 132 which make 66% are married.

#### 4.2 Presentation and Analysis of Psychographic Data Collected

**Table 5: Political Programs Encouraging Participation in Politics**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	177	88.5
No	23	11.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 above revealed that 177 of the respondents (88.5%) admit that they feel encouraged politically after these political programmes, while 23 of them (11.5%) declared that they are not in any way encouraged. However, most of the respondents are encouraged by the political programmes on the media.

**Table 6: Adequacy of Political Programmes in Dispelling Fears for Political Participation**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	162	81
No	38	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 6 reveals that 162(81%) of the respondents believe that the political programmes are adequate to dispel the fears they have as women in participating in politics meaning that these political programmes are actually effective in allaying whatever fears they have for participating in politics. Meanwhile 38(19%) women are of the opinion that the programmes are not adequate in dispelling their fears. This implies that political programmes coverage in fact dissipate women's fear of participating in politics.

**Table 7: Adequacy of Political Contents in Influencing Inhibitions Women May Have Towards Politics in the Future**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Adequate	123	61.5
Not adequate	38	19
Indifferent	39	19.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 7 above revealed the respondents view on the adequacy of political content in influencing inhibitions women may have towards politics in the future. The respondents had various answer to this question as it was an open-ended question. All responses were broken down into three as seen in the table above - Adequate, Not adequate and Indifferent. From the responses gotten, it showed that 39 individuals representing 19.5% of the 200 respondents did not have any response to the question and so were tagged with the response indifferent. However 38 of them which account for (19%) had responses that were tagged under the not adequate response. 123 out of the 200 respondents (61.5%) had responses that were tagged under Adequate. This outcome means that the political content is strong or effective enough in influencing later decisions that women might have towards participating in politics in future because most of the responses boils down to the content being adequate.

**Table 8: The Effectiveness of Programs in Mobilizing Women to Participate in Politics**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Very effective	107	61.5
Not effective	70	35
Indifferent	23	19.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

From table 8 above the response on the effectiveness of programs in mobilizing women to participate in politics is displayed. Majority of the respondents which amounts for 107(61.5%) respondent that such programmes are very effective, 70 of them which amount for (35%) see the programs as not effective, while the remaining 23 respondents which amount for 19.5% were indifferent on the response.

**Table 9: The Effectiveness of Programs in Mobilizing Women to Participate in Politics**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
High	57	28.5
Average	120	60
Low	23	11.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above displays response on the effectiveness of programs in mobilizing women to participate in politics. Majority of the respondents which make for 120(60%) see the effectiveness on an average level, 57 of them which make for (28.5%), while 23 of them which make for (11.5%) see the effectiveness of these programs as low.

**Table 10: Promotion of Women Political Participation by Media Coverage**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	77	38.5
No	57	28.5
Indifferent	66	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 10 above displays response on whether media coverage promotes women political participation. 77 of the respondents which amount for 38.5% affirm that the promotion by media coverage is positive, 57 of them which make for 28.5% do not agree that women political participation is being promoted by media coverage, while 66 of them which make up for 33% are indifferent on the issue.

### **4.3 Discussion of Findings**

Aside the responses from respondents on the topic of this study, other findings were made. The research did not just rely fully on the questionnaire as some observations were made by the researcher as this was put together with the questionnaire to come to a result.

One of the findings that were made is that though political programmes encourage political participation, there has not been any truly, realistic encouragement. This is based on the observation that was made. From time to time we see media messages on the importance of political participation but in the real world we do not see the needed encouragement especially

from major political individuals such as the candidates and incumbent office holders. If proper encouragement must be ensured, then the political big guns must ensure that their attitude is encouraging enough to encourage others.

Another finding that was made was is that the media cannot alone play the role of giving support to women when it comes to political participation. It is alright that the media is doing a good job, but their effort will be futile if the electorates and the electoral body alongside the government put forward a contributable support forward. The space for support should be widened by every particular political player because if we say we support women political participation and do not show it on electoral grounds, then there is no support at all.

Finally, on the perception of audience on the broadcast media coverage on women's participation in electoral process, they do not see the expected enthusiasm by the broadcast media. However, they give due credit and praise to the media for the work done so far, but they want the media to push forward and drag out political players that can broaden this support and ensure that the perception is improved positively.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 5.1 Summary

The aim of this study was to examine the perception and awareness of audience to the broadcast media coverage of women electoral participation.

This was done by drawing out a background of what women participation entails and how far it has come over years since the strong will of women to occupy top political posts. In the process of all these, the media which is actively involved was also brought in to see how well it has supported this gender section in their will and how audience feel about the way the story is being told by the media. It was pertinent to find out the extent to which the media has gone to create this awareness to audience and how the audiences see this coverage.

A proper empirical review was done on this study as several topics were looked into from previous work from various authors. Such as what political participation entails, the state of media and women, the gap in the coverage between men and women, factors hindering political participation of women and so on, the theoretical framework employed to back up the study was the agenda setting theory.

The study used the survey research methodology by purposively selecting a sample size of 200. Questionnaires were distributed to the sample size and responses were analysed and interpreted presented in table and simple percentages.

#### 5.2 Conclusion

Women's Participation in Nigerian politics is an issue of great importance. Women have been put at the background politically for years; this has engendered a consciousness of women under-representation in public life. Some of the problems responsible for this situation are

entrenched in the fears most women have, some of which borders on insecurity, lack of finances, inadequate political support and many more. This study showed that the intent of the Beijing Conference of 1995 which was to ensure that women have equal opportunities with men has to an extent been reached. There is positive indication from this study that broadcast media political coverage has indeed been effective in mobilizing women for political participation in Nigeria.

There is still more to be done in mobilizing women to participate in politics, emphasizing that no sex or gender is more important than the other because in politics, intellectual ability counts more than physical energy. The media must be fair and objective in reporting issues that affect women. It was in recognition of the power of the media to eliminate stereotype images of women and provide women with easier access to information that paragraph 206 of the 'Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women' called for 'the participation of women at all levels of communication policy and decision-making, in programmes design, implementation and monitoring'.

The Nigerian media can adopt this and help in realizing these nationally necessary objectives in their performance towards political periods to come.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study:

1. In the course of this research work, the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC formulated a new policy to encourage women to participate in politics, although this does not have a link with the data gathered but then it is still pertinent to this study. The implementation of this Gender policy by INEC would go a long way in accommodating women in different political positions, therefore this implementation should be carried out and more media attention must be created to create awareness about the existence of this new policy.

2. The Federal Government should encourage gender equality not only in political participation but in all walks of life by not only making laws and decrees but ensuring implementation
3. The broadcast media as a powerful agent of social mobilization should be utilized more to motivate and champion the course of women towards full political participation. To this end more media political programmes should be created as women are highly motivated to participating in politics through those used in this study.
4. It is the prerogative of the broadcast media to educate, inform and persuade. Premised on this knowledge, the media should be effectively engaged especially as a tool for Grassroots enlightenment. This will go a long way in changing the negative attitude most people have to women's participation in politics. It can also inspire and stimulate women to vie for elective positions and alleviate some of the fears inhibiting women's full political participation.
5. More efforts should be made on the part of government in curtailing election violence that erupts during political periods, as the fear of violence and insecurity is the major fear of women as regards political participation in this study.

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## Appendix I

Department of Mass Communication  
Auchi Polytechnic,  
P.M.B. 13,  
Auchi, Edo State  
2022

Dear Respondent,

I am a final year student of the above named department, conducting a research on **“An Assessment of Audience Perception of Broadcast Media Coverage of Womens’ Participation in Electoral Process in Nigeria”**. This is part of the requirement for the award of Higher National Diploma in Mass communication.

I humbly solicit your support by filling the questions below. Be assured that your answers will be treated with strictly confidentiality. The information supplied will be used strictly for the purpose of this study.

Thanks for your anticipated corporation.

Yours faithfully,

Garuba Jemilat

## Appendix II

### Questionnaire on Audience Perception of Broadcast Media Coverage of Women's Participation in Electoral Processes in Nigeria

Tick (✓) or fill as appropriate.

#### Section A: Bio data

1. Age:

(a) 18 – 35 (b) 36 – 55 (c) 56 and above

2. Educational qualification

(a) SSCE (b) B.Sc (c) others

3. Sex

(a) Male (b) Female

4. Marital Status

(a) Married (b) Single

#### Section B: Other Information

5. Does political programs encourage participation in politics?

(a) Yes (b) No

6. Are political programs adequate in dispelling fears for political participation?

(a) Yes (b) No

7. How adequate are political contents in influence in inhibitions women may have towards politics in the future?

(a) Adequate (b) Not adequate (c) Indifferent

8. How effective are programs in mobilizing women to participate in politics?

(a) Very effective (b) Not effective (c) Indifferent

9. How effective are programs in mobilizing women to participate in politics?

(a) Very effective      (b) Not effective      (c) Indifferent

10. Does media coverage promote women political participation?

(a) Yes      (b) No      (c) Indifferent