The Mass Media, Gender Balance and Politics in Nigeria: An Assessment

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Abstract

This study argues that gender balance has been an issue of concern in Nigeria's nascent democracy since May 29, 1999. It further argues that it

seems the number of women in political positions in the country is insignificant compared to their male counterpart. In view of this situation, the media are supposed to be at the fore-front of the campaign for gender balance. The study, therefore, aims at ascertaining whether the media have succeeded in creating a smooth and equal playing field for both the male and female folks in Nigerian politics through aggressive campaigns on gender balance. Using agenda-setting theory, the study was able to highlight the role of the media in ensuring gender balance. The survey method was employed to elicit the opinion of the masses on how well the media have faired. A total of 446 respondents were sampled with questionnaire serving as an instrument of data collection. Data were presented and analysed in tables and simple percentages. The study found out that the media still has a long way to go in the campaign for gender equality as the much they have done is still insignificant considering the miles yet to be covered. It was, therefore, recommended that the media should devote more time in the campaign for gender balance and that women should change their mind-set politically and lay-off all forms of political apathy within them.

Key words: gender balance, mass media, politics, democracy and political development

Introduction

Political development in Nigeria has taken a centre stage in recent times. This is anchored on the fact that since May 29, 1999, the country has maintained a stable democratic dispensation. However, the political scene seemed to be predominantly dominated by the male folk as against the female counterparts in the country. This is not unconnected to the African system where the female folks are believed to have a second place in the family. They do not really take major decision in the planning at home; rather they are subordinates, who carry out the orders given by the head of the family. In this case the male folk.

This same belief has been transmitted into the political spheres of the country. Men are seen as individuals with better heads for leadership as against women. Hence most political positions are left at the mercy of men. Even when women are allowed to handle any political positions, they are usually given a second place either as vice-chairman, deputy governor, or other portfolios less sensitive.

In some cases, men find it very difficult to serve a woman as vice or deputy. Therefore, to please the situation, the men are given the positions while women are placed as sub-ordinate. In other situations where women are given the position of leadership, men that are placed under them do not allow them to perform effectively. They would want to dictate for the person at the helm of affairs.

Writing on the issue of alarming global gender inequality, Adegoreye (2004: 3) citing Dr Mansour Yousif Elagab, opines that "in terms of food alone, women globally produce half the world's food. Yet, they constitute 70% of the world's I.3 billion absolute poor". Adegoreye (2004: 3) further stated that "while women work two-thirds of the world's working hours, they own less than 1% of the world's property. Women globally still have only 36% of the total wage employment and only 1/3 of the share of national income. And that in spite of the fact that the last century saw only 24 women Heads of States or Government, nine presidents and fifteen Prime Ministers, the position of women has not changed a great deal in the overall context". That is why the former Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, as quoted by Adegoreye (2004: 3) once remarked that "if a handful of women go forward, become ministers and judges, you should not think that women's status has gone up". This particular statement to some extent is true, even if Gandhi had made it in a relative term. This is the main reason why Adegoreye (2004: 3) quipped about women in politics when he said "how can (women political participation be said to have changed) when a study conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 1994, showed that while 89.50% of parliamentarians were males, the participation of women in national parliament are on the average, a mere 10%".

Similarly, a statistical analysis adopted by Olatunde (2010: 29) from the 1st memorial lecture in honour of Prof Jadesola Akande OFR, by Gov, Babatunde Fashola in 2009 reveals a comprehensive record on women political participation and representation. The record as presented by the governor (April 2009) shows that "in 1999, there were only 12 women elected into the state assemblies against 978 men. In the senate, there were 3 female senators out of 109 senators selected that year. Also, 13 women were selected into the House of Representatives. By 2003, after the elections, the number of female parliamentarians had increased slightly. The number of women elected into the House of Assembly of various states increased to 39 against 951 men while 21 women won seats into the House of Representatives against 339 men. Also 4 women won seats in the Senate

from a total of 109 Senators, making 105 men. According to the statistical record, appointments into elective offices from 1999 shows that 833 persons were appointed with 86 of them women, indicating an average of about 11.9% women's participation and representation so far" (Olatunde, 2010: 28).

The records further show that a total of 7,160 candidates contested in April 2007 general elections. Out of the 25 candidates for the office of the president only one was a woman while five vied for the office of the vice president. Four hundred and seventy four (474) contested for the office of governors in the 36 states, 14 of them were women and 21 on the other hand contested for the deputy governor's seat. In the Senate of the 799 candidates only 59 were women. Also of the 2,343 contestants for seats in the House of Representatives, 150 were women while 358 women out of 5,649 candidates contested for seats in the State House of Assembly. After the election, available records show that 9 female senators won out of 109. There were no winners for the post of the governor; however, there were 5 deputy governors in Lagos State, Ogun State, Osun State, Imo State and Plateau State and the House of Representatives once had a female speaker. The speaker of the Ogun House of Assembly was once a woman (who was later impeached) and Lagos state has a woman as the deputy speaker. All together, there are 34 women members of the state Assemblies. According to the governor, this result shows a mere 2% increase from the 2003 elections (Statistical analysis adopted from the 1st memorial lecture in honour of Prof Jadesola Akande OFR, by Gov, Babatunde Fashola, 2009: Olatunde, 2010, p.29).

The above have shown women's position in the area of politics over a period of time. It gives one a sense of their level of access, presence and influence in the country's political history. Although, the pre-colonial era gave room for women participation and representation, the various changes along the way brought with it challenges for women inclusion and participation. Literatures have shown that women have faced and in many ways are still facing a lot of marginalisation in politics (Olatunde, 2010, p. 29). Today women are coming out more but their visibility and leadership opportunities are still negligible, the political and personal liberties of women are theoretically granted (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1985: 126 as cited by Olatunde, 2010, p. 29).

While at the federal level a lot can be said for Nigeria, we know that at the state, community and ethnic nationality levels, Nigeria shares with the rest of the world, albeit in different shades, most of the gender inequalities

highlighted in vivid descriptions and mind bugging statistics in several literatures. There is no doubt therefore that in spite of the considerable progress made in raising the awareness about the crucial role of women in national development, especially in the last two and a half decades (from the 1980s), a great deal more needs to be done in ensuing gender equality in all spheres (Adegoreye, 2004, p. 6).

The media, as an instrument for political mobilisation, are expected to be at the fore-front of promoting women participation in Nigerian politics, by projecting educative and informative programmes that would bring about gender balance in politics.

This study, therefore, aims at ascertaining whether the media have succeeded in creating a smooth and equal playing field for both the male and female folks in Nigerian politics through aggressive campaigns on gender balance, thereby, establishing a political system where gender balance is entrenched.

Statement of Problem

The issue of gender balance in Nigerian politics is a dream still far from the reach of the country's political culture. This is because all over the political environment of the country, the male counterpart still dominates to a large extent most political positions. Even in cases where it is obvious that women in that particular field of experience are more eligible for the position(s) in question, non professional reasons which are mostly politically engineered are brought to bear so as to shift such positions to the male folks. This situation has in most cases hindered political development in the country. And when political development has been affected, national development would be affected and democratic sustainability would be threatened.

On the other hand, the mass media form a social system which is tightly integrated with the whole of our political system. They champion political issues and ensure that the citizens get to know about the candidates contesting for a particular political position. The media equally champion campaigns on one man, one vote and go ahead to dissuade people from all forms of political malpractices.

It is important to note, therefore, that due to the high level of importance attached to gender balance, gender inequality in politics has attracted a lot of attention globally. This has given rise to serious attention been paid to gender inequality in Nigeria. The media as agents for mobilizing the

masses ought to be at the fore-front of the campaigns for gender balance both for governments and nongovernmental organisations (NGO's). But how effective they have been doing this remains uncertain.

Objectives of the study

This study, therefore, is built on the following objectives;

1. To examine the nature of political campaigns carried out by the mass media.
2. To find out whether gender balance is an issue of concern in such campaigns.
3. To examine the degree of prominence apportioned to gender balance or political campaigns..
4. To examine the future of women in the political system of the country?

Research questions

The study, therefore, is guided by the following questions;

1. What is the nature of the political campaigns carried out by the mass media?
2. Is gender balance an issue of concern in such campaigns?
3. What degree of prominence is apportioned to gender balance?
4. What future does the contemporary political system hold for women in the country?

Politics and Gender Inequality

Over the years, several studies have delved into the issue of politics and gender inequality. The magnitude of the studies available on this issue alludes to the fact that it is an issue of concern at global, regional, national even local level (Olatunde, 2010, p. 5). Olatunde citing the work of Randall (1987, p. ix) opines that "studies and debates have analyzed such issues as; 'women involvement in politics; the impact of politics on women; the politics of social position and the politics of Feminism' (2010, p. 5). In this study, Randall noted that much of these debates and studies generally lie within the boundaries of political science, centring on women's political participation.

Findings in this regard, however, have shown a great deal of under-representation for women and a lack of effective inclusion. The general argument is that despite the fact that women constitute half of the world population, they are mostly ignored when it comes to decisions that concern them; and that their presence in the political setting is not a fair representation of the percentage of women in the world (Badmus, 2006 as cited by Olatunde, 2010, p. 6). Along this line are arguments indicating that as of October 2006, the average percentage of women in lower or single houses of some 189 parliaments was 17%. In other words, women representation according to studies so far is still below the 30% minimum representation proposition in the policies on women. As can be expected, this have been classified as highly unfair and a lack of acknowledgment of a fundamental right of women (Tremblay 2007, p. 534, Olantunde, 2010, p. 6).

In his studies on "Democracy, Representation and Income: A comparative Analysis", in 2006, Monon Tremblay observes that democracy, representation and women are three Nations that everything opposes. He noted that in Ancient Greece, Cradle of the democratic experiment, democracy was rigorously exclusive. Theorists examining social contract and the sovereignty of the people, at best ignored women, and at worst foresaw their confinement to the private and family spheres. But today, representative democracy presented as ideal includes women-or at least those who do not think so keep quiet. Unfortunately, practice does not honour to this ideal; as of May 2006, the average percent of women in lower or single houses of some 180 parliaments is 16.8% (Tremblay, 2006, p.1)

Methodologically, Tremblay used both dependent and independent variables. The dependent variables split free countries in 2005 into two categories; those which have been free at least half of the time from 1972 to 2003, and those which are under that level.   The result of the study confirms a frequently given answer to a question often asked in the classroom: there is no one factor that can explain the dynamic that modulates women's access to parliament. Even in countries listed as free in the freedom House Gastil Index, and therefore showing a certain level of uniformity in terms of empirical democracies, there is never just one factor – even among the factors; working in concert in a statistical model to explain the obstacle that raced election (Trenblay, 2006, p. 18).

In his words, Tremblay concludes that "we must refrain from uniformly applying indicators to all countries, whose realities are, in fact, quite

divergent. The results presented here show that the explicative ability of indicators and regressions models varies according to each country's democratic experiment. Adding that, in countries where democracy has reigned for only a short time, voting system constitutes the most important factor in explaining the proportion of women parliamentarians, while in well-established democracies this explication is found in an egalitarian conception of gender roles. The relegation of the voting system to the background in established democracies makes it necessary, to nuance an idea that too many political scientists and feminist activists endorse and transmit without any critical evaluation: proportional representation favours the election of women and majority voting discourages it (Tremblay, 2006: 19).

Gender Balance and Godfatherism

Godfatherism is another problem area whenever the issue of gender balance is raised in Nigerian Politics. This is because men are always the favourite of the godfathers. The godfathers prefer to deal with the male folk, who they find more easy to influence and bind to an agreement. This situation makes it more difficult for women to come to an equal playing field with the male folk. Writing about godfatherism, Ebohon (2009:252) quoting Ekiyo (2004: 25) opines that "in contemporary Nigerian politics, the godfather performs certain services for his client with the aim of enriching himself and consolidating his political base at the expense of his client and the larger society"

It is important to note that godfatherism is not a modern phenomenon. It has an ancient origin and its modern usage has acquired political and commercial meaning... The practice of godfatherism has given it a latent structural status within the "black market system" of power that is not constitutionally recognised. Contemporary history, particular in the context of nascent democracy has shown that this system of power can engaged and overwhelms the state in the power game (Ebohon, 2009: 253).

The aforementioned statements are true considering the fact that most politicians without the necessary political ingredients fall back at sponsors in other to succeed politically. This is the reason why Ebohon (2009: 253) notes that "the nascent character of democracy with a weak lumped politicians who lack the resources; material and financial to organise elections, create space for retired soldiers, retired bureaucrats and businessmen who cannot feature in the nascent regime, to stay behind the scene and feature as "black market" political leaders... . It is within this context that we can capture and

rationalise the role of the godfathers in nascent democracy" (Ebohon, 2009: 253). Idowu (2004) as cited by (Ebohon, 2009: 254) has identified four typologies of godfatherism in Nigerian politics: ideological brand, ethnic/religious brand, the materialist brand and the brand of military godfatherism. According to him, these forms of godfatherism have in one time or another affected the political development of the country. This is because during elective periods, the godfathers would want their candidates to take over political powers thereby making the political atmosphere unbearable for the feeble minded. In most cases, those affected by the tensed political scene are the female folks, who by nature are created with a unique heart that cannot hold long the political tensions.

In the whole situation, the media are not really helping matters. The widespread ignorance and clientele status of the media in a corrupt renter system has given further leverage to the emergence of godfatherism. In contemporary Nigerian state, corruption is not just a social problem or evil, but has acquired the status of a mode of accumulation (Ebohon, 2009, p.260). Ebohon (2009, p. 260) went further to observe that: "Media players see in corruption, an opportunity to reap windfall accumulation through image laundry projects such a meteoric rise from relative obscurity to opulence by the widespread ignorance and truth distortion contract awarded by the godfathers to media homes".

Media Campaigns, Women and Elections in Nigeria

Several studies have brought to lime light the issue of the mass media serving as a veritable tool in projecting key national issues. In the words of Adegoke (2001, p.93), "in a fast moving world, facts cannot always speak for themselves. Unexplained facts can sometimes actually confuse and deceive. The reader (and listener) not only needs information but also needs analysis; he needs background events (information) in order to function as an effective citizen. The country needs effective mass media to give coverage to issues bordering on political communication, international relations and current national issues". Based on the aforementioned quotation, it means that there is need for the presence of the mass media in the campaign against gender inequality in the political sphere. This is because the media is a potent tool for greater mobilization of the masses.

In her study, Chinenye Nwabueze, in 2005, writing on the "Mass media and Community Mobilization for Development: An Analytical Approach" concludes that the mass media can serve as a potent tool for community

mobilization. According to her, the mass media are very vital to the mobilization of a large, heterogeneous people for any activity of interest to them and the society at large (for people to be expected to contribute their quote in the achievement of any developmental programme, they need not just to know about existence of such programmes but to be adequately informed about the nature of the programme (Nwabueze, 2005, p. 1).

Using the Agenda-sitting theory to drive home her argument, she opined that the proponent of this theory state that the amount of attention given to an issue in the press affects the level of important assigned to that issue by mass media audience. She concluded by saying, "Much as the mass media have been identified as potent channels for mobilizing the public for participatory community development communication to constantly keep them abreast with strategies to adopt in mobilizing people for development (Nwabueze, 2005, p.7).

The above study shows that the mass media is a potent tool in the actualization of a particular goal of national importance such as mobilization for development. This goes a long way to show the strength of the media in the society and the nature of roles it plays. Writing about the role of the media, Tejumaiye (2005, p.151) opines that "one of America's great philosophers and one of the most glamorous politicians of his time once said "……I know that all is well if I switch off my radio and television at bedtime and wake up the following morning with the early morning news. But, I know that all is not well, if at bedtime I switch off my radio and television and switch on the following morning without hearing anything from either my radio or television, or that I cannot even see the newspapers at the news stand. I will continue to be worried and ask myself, if the world is not being troubled with the absence of the mass media". This statement succinctly captured the significant role of the mass media in any body polity (Tejumaiye, 2005, p.151) especially in the campaign against gender inequality.

The issue of marginalization of Nigerian women from mainstream politics should be an issue constantly reported by the media with the view of projecting views that would favour gender equality. This is because when one considers the fact that Nigerian women account for 60% of its population, it is hard to believe the level of women's under-representation in the country's politics (Ajayi, 2007, Adu, 2008, p. 26). The gender audit provided by Abrola Akiyode-Afolabi and Lanre Arogundade based on the

2003 election and cited by Adu (2008, p. 26) shows that "although the number of women in national politics has increased since in dependence, there is still a considerably huge gap between the number of men and women in these positions". The following table shows the comparison between women representation in 1999 and 2008 election.

Table 1: Comparison of between Women Representatives in 1999 and 2008

S/N	Position	No available seats	No of women elected and % in 1999	No of women elected and % of total in 2003
1	Presidency	1	0%	0%
2	Senate	109	3 2.75%	3 2.75%
3	House of representative	360	12 3.33%	21 5.83%
4	Governorship	36	0%	0%
5	State Houses of Assembly	990	12 1.21%	38 3.84%

Source: Adu (2008: 27)

The above data shows that women are still immensely under-represented. It shows both the gap between men and women representation in electoral politics and the slow growth rate of women's presence in national politics (Adu, 2008, p.27).

The role of the media, therefore, should be to project the campaigns for the entrenchment of gender equality in the country with the view of ensuring political stability and quality governance or leadership.

Women as Instrument for Political Change

Right from creation, God has made it important to integrate women in the plans of creation. As Goke (2005) notes:

> From the dust of the earth, man, like the beast and the birds was created, according to the Bible. Women, on the other hand, was created from man (i.e. not from crude raw materials but from an already refined product), and for the specific purpose of being a helper in the fulfilment of God's policy directive to have dominion over all creatures of the earth (p. 20

As if to lend credence to the above assertion, the Administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR, gave a reasonable room for women to help power change in the political scenario.

The following list of women in the political spheres of the country as recorded by Wikipedia (2010) and NgEX (2010) will help drive home the point.

Table 2: Female Ministers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as at April 2010

Name of Minister	Ministry
Mrs. Fidelia Njeze	Federal Ministry of Aviation
Josephine Tapgun	Ministry of State - Ministry of Commerce & Industry
Prof. (Mrs) Ruqayyatu A. Rufai	Federal Ministry of Education
Prof. Dora Akunyili	Federal Ministry of Information and Communication
Mrs. Deizani Alison-Madueke	Ministry of Petroleum Resources
Iyom Josephine Anenih	Federal Ministry of Women Affairs

Sources: http:ngex.com/nigeria/govt/officials/ambassador.htm

Table 3: Female Nigerian Ambassadors

Bostwana	Mrs. Fatima Abubakar
Czech	Mrs. Julie Ayorinde
Gambia	Mrs. Mariam Mohammed
Ireland	Mrs. ME Ekong-Omaghomi
Netherlands	Prof. Mary Lar

Sources: http:ngex.com/nigeria/govt/officials/ambassador.htm

Female Nigerian Senators of the 6th, 5th and 4th National Assembly

The table below lists Nigerian Senators of the 6th, 5th National Assembly. The 6th National Assembly (2007-2011) was inaugurated on the 5th June, 2007. The Senate includes three senators from each of the 36 states, plus one minister for the federal capital Territory, Abuja. Of the 109 Senators, 26 were re-elected while 83 were elected for the first time. David Mark was appointed president of the Senate and Ike Ekweremadu deputy President.

Table 4: Female Members of the Senate of Nigeria in the 6th National Assembly (2007-2011)

State	Name
Abia	C Nkech Justina Nwaogu (PDP)
Adamawa	S. Grace Folashade Bent (PDP)
Nasarawa	N. Patricia Akwashiki (ANPP)
Niger	S. Zainab Abdulkadir Kure (PDP)
Ogun	C. Iyabo Obasanjo Bello (PDP)
Osun	E. Iyiola Omisore (PDP)
Taraba	S. Joel Danlami Ikenya (PDP)
Anambra	N. Joy Emodi (PDP) (annulled)
Bayelsa	E. Nimi Barigha-Amange (PDP)
Borno	N. Maina Maaji Lawan (ANPP)

Sources:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NigerianSenatorsofthe6thNationalAssembly"

Table 5: Members of the Senate of Nigeria in the 5th National Assembly (2003-2007)

State	Name
Adamawa	N. Iya Abubakar (PDP)
Ogun	W. Iyabo Anisulowo (PDP)
Ogun	N. Iyiola Omisore (PDP)
Cross River	S. Bassey Henshaw (PDP)

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NigerianSenatorsofthe5thNationalAssembly

Table 6: Members of the Senate of Nigeria in the 4th National Assembly (1999-2003)

State	Name
Adamawa	N. Iya Abubakar (PDP)
Borno	N. Maina Maaji Lawan (PDP)
Cross River	S. Florence Ita Giwa (ANPP)
Delta	S. Stella Omu (PDP)
Osun	N. Moji Akinfenwa (AD)
FCT	FCT Khairat Abdulrazaq-Gwadabe (PDP

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NigerianSenators of the 4th National Assembly''

Key Female Members of the National Assembly

Senator Iyiola Omisore	(Chairman)	Senate Committee on Health
Senator Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello	(Chairman)	Senate Committee on Environment
Senator Grace Bent	(Chairman)	Senate Committee on Banking/Insurance
Mrs. Nkechi Nwogu,	(Chairman)	Senate on Committee on Marine Transport
Senator Gbemi Saraki	(Chairman)	Senate Committee on National Planning
Mrs. Zainab Kure		Senate Committee on Women Affairs

Mrs. Uffot Ekaette	Senate Committee on Finance
Senator Joy Emordi	Senate Committee on National Intelligence
Senator Joel Dalami	Senate Committee on Establishment and Public Services

Patricia Etteh in 2007 was able to ascend to the position of the Speaker of the Federal House of Representation.

Theoretical Framework

 This study is anchored on a theory of mass communication called the agenda-setting theory. According to Izuogu (2009, p. 1), agenda- setting theory refers "to the media's capacity to cause an issue to be elevated in importance in the mind of the public through repeated focus or coverage". The theory has its roots in the age-long belief that the media posses the power to set the agenda and raise issues of public importance (Izuogu, 2009, p. 1).

Supporting the above statements, Anyadike (2009, p.37) opines that "the basic principle in the agenda-setting theory is the ability of the mass media to restructure the audience thinking and perception of events".

Izuogu (2009, p. 3) citing Littlejohn (1999: 3460) observes that;

> Considerable evidence has accumulated that editors and broadcasters play an important part in shaping our social reality as they go about their day-to-day task of choosing and displaying news… In short, the mass media may not be successful in telling us what to think but they are stunningly successful in telling us what to think about.

The implication of the above quotation is that the media through its news selection establish not only issues of public importance, but also determine how much importance to attach to a given issue. This, no doubt, is the role of the media, to bring to the attention of the public issues that are of tremendous importance, thereby eliciting some degree of sympathy or empathy from the masses or appealing to their intellect in order to win favourable advantage in their mind concerning topical issues.

The argument and relevance of this theory to the work under review is that the media can pick the issue of gender inequality and break it down in the minds of the people with the aim of highlighting the demerits and merits, so as to win the minds of the people towards gender equality and sound political system. This action can either be through comprehensive editorial writing, feature writing or interpretative news stories. While in television, it can come in form of documentary, panel discussion, phone in programmes and events coverage. In fact, countless approaches abound through which the media can pass the message across to the people.

Methodology

This study employed the survey research method. Survey method, according to Ohaja (2003, p. 11), "is a study of the characteristics of a sample through questioning that enables a researcher to make generalizations concerning his population of interest". She further added that "it is usually employed in studies of attitudinal and behavioural trends with the researcher seeking to uncover their demographic or psychographic underpinnings".

The population of this study, therefore, constitutes all post graduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) within the Nsukka Campus of the University. The choice of the post graduate students of the university is anchored on the fact their level of exposure and knowledge of the political terrain in the country is higher compared to the undergraduates and to some extent the common man on the street. The number of students in the post graduate study of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, as at the time this study was under investigation, 2009/2010 session, was 4,455 students. This data were made available by the admission department of the School of Post Graduate Studies.

For the sake of manageability of study, the sample adopted the statement of Ball and Gall (1971) as recorded by Uzoagulu (1998, p. 67) when he fathoms that "for population up to 1,000 use 20 percent; for 5,000 use 10 percent; for up to 10,000 use 5 percent", the researchers, therefore, made use of 10 percent of the population. In this case, 10 percent of the population is 10/100 * 4455/1 = 446. Therefore, a sample of 446 persons was studied in the course of this research. The researchers adopted the simple random sampling in order to arrive at the total number of sample earmarked.

The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. It was structured in both close and open ended format, in such a way that it was easily understood

by the respondents. Fifteen items questionnaire were administered on the respondents. The distribution of the questionnaire did not pose much difficulty because majority of the post graduate students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka reside in one giant structure within the campus and as such they were easily accessible. The hostel which has 159 rooms had copies of the questionnaire distributed to each of the rooms. Three copies were distributed to each of the rooms except for the final floor of the building where two copies each were distributed. A response window of three weeks was given to the respondents within which the researchers were constantly calling at the rooms of the respondents to collect completed copies. The rooms where the questionnaire has been collected were always marked on the record for reminder purposes.

Out of the 446 copies of the questionnaire distributed, only 430 were returned. This amounted to 96.4% return rate while 3.6% of the questionnaires were missing in the field. From the numbers returned, 10 copies of the questionnaire resulting to 2.3% were unusable while 420 copies resulting to 97.7% were used for the purpose of the study.

The instrument was face validated by two communication experts, who are senior lecturers from the department of Mass Communication of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Corrections and modifications were made in order to ensure that the instrument measured the variables intended. As for the reliability of the study, the researchers adopted the Kudder Richardson method for measuring internal consistency. At the end, the correlation coefficient of 0.98% was obtained. The formula for K-R21 is;

$$R = \frac{n}{n-1} \left[1 - \frac{\overline{x}(n-\overline{x})}{SD^2} \right]$$

As regards the technique of data analysis, the study used simple percentages and tabular presentations.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table: Sex of Respondents

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Male	190	45.2%
Female	230	54.8%
Total	420	100

From the analysis in table one, it is evident that 190 out of the total of 420 respondents, which constitute 45.2% were males, while 230 respondents which constitute 54.8% of the respondents were females. This showed that there were more females respondents than male within the sample studied.

Table 2: Exposure rate of respondents to mass media messages

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	420	100%
No	-	0%
Can't say	-	0%
Total	420	100

All the respondents from table 2 above agreed to have been exposed to mass media messages and campaigns that are politically motivated.

Table 3: Analysis the nature of the Political Campaign carried by the media

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Persuasive Messages full of promises	142	33.8%
Marginalized Campaigns	42	10 %
Information devoid of true details	69	19.5
Tribalized campaigns	82	19.5
Personality based	21	5%

Table 3: above expose the nature of political campaigns carried out by the media. From the table, 142 respondents amounting to 33.8% of the various views of the respondents opine that the messages are full of promises and very persuasive. Forty-two (10%) agreed that the message are marginalized, while 69 (16.4%) propose that the messages are devoid of true details. Eighty-two respondents amounting to 19.5% opine that the messages are tribalized, while 21 (5%) opine that the messages are personality based.

Table 4: Identifying messages on gender inequality

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	210	50%
No	181	43.%
Can't say	29	6.9%
Total	420	100

From the analysis in table 4, it is evident that 210 respondents amounting to 50% of the sampled population affirms that they view messages on gender inequality from the mass media. One hundred and Eighty – one respondents amounting to 43.1% are of the opinion that issues on gender inequality are not really reflected in the media messages they have received so far, while 29 (6.9%) respondents are of no comment.

Table 5: Showing the level of time devoted to messages on gender inequality

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Detailed coverage	-	-
Little coverage	152	36.2%
Insignificant coverage	73	17.4%
Can't say	195	46.4%
Total	420	100

Table 5 shows that 152 respondents representing 36.2% of the sample agree that little coverage was given the issue of gender inequality in the media. On the other hand, 75 (17.4%) respondents propose that the coverage was insignificant, while 195 (46.4%) were indifferent to the actual state of events.

Discussion of Findings

This study shows that 100 percent of the sample studied agreed to have been exposed to several media messages. Out of these respondents, 54.8% of them are female while 45.2% are male. From these respondents, 33.8% proposed

that the political messages in the mass media are very persuasive and full of promises, while 42 respondents amounting to 10% of the sample are of the view that the media messages that are political in nature contain marginalized campaigns which favour the male folk as against the female folk.

In table 4, 50% of the respondents agreed that they have been exposed to campaigns on gender inequality in the mass media. However, they observed in table 5 that the coverage was very little and in most cases insignificant. This means that the campaigns for now are not strong enough to engineer the required action that is desired to turn thing around.

Conclusion

A lot of developmental activities has take place in the country's nascent democracy. Parts of these developmental activities are the growing awareness for more participating in the political processes. Women have shown that they can be co-players in the country's growth and development, even though much opportunity has not been given to them. It is important, therefore, for the country to encourage the women to show increasing interest in the political process of the country. By so doing, they as mothers would be able to contribute their quota to the growth of politics in the country and make it less hazardous for interested parties.

Recommendations

Based on the findings in this study, the researchers recommend that the mass media as agents of change should devote more time in the campaign for gender balance in the political sphere. This will go a long way to help encourage women to aspire to take high political positions in the country.

Political parties and nongovernmental organizations should sponsor campaigns that will help conscientise women on the need to take up political positions with courage and help bring the required change. This campaign should include the knowledge that the constitution made provision for equal right to leadership positions for both male and female.

Government should make the political environment favourable for all and Sunday who want to contribute their quota politically. Women on their own should change their mind set politically and lay-off all forms of political apathy within them.

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