

Role of ABS Radio In promotion of Awareness of Women's Rights in Anambra State

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ABSTRACT

The fact that the rights of women are grossly infringed upon in parts of the world, including Nigeria and in Igbo land, means stating the obvious. Advocacy efforts of governments and agencies are not in doubt so it becomes necessary to find out the role the Anambra Broadcasting Service (ABS) radio, plays in the promotion of the rights of women in Anambra State. Survey research method was adopted to obtain and analyse information from people across the state. The population was drawn from the 21 Local Government Areas of Anambra State. The study adopted simple random sampling technique and drew a sample of 500 to whom copies of the questionnaire were distributed to, adopting the one on

one method. The research found that the ABS radio and its relevant programmes remain veritable means of informing and education the Anambra audience on the rights of women. The study recommends continuous use of ABS radio programs for that purpose. It advocates more content on areas such as girl-child education, early marriage and gender sensitivity in other areas including politics, access to wealth and jobs, inheritance. The work concludes with a hype on the role of ABS radio in the promotion of women's rights and recommends that more innovative programmes should be designed while urging governments, agencies, organizations and businesses to invest in sponsorship of such programmes.

Keywords: Role, ABS, Radio, Women, Rights.

INTRODUCTION

With the MDGs paving way for the SDGs, it is evident that the gains of these programmes and the successes recorded cannot yield the desired dividend if the women are not carried along. Having lived in the shackles of cultural relegation, efforts to educate women on their rights is continuous which the media have championed as part of its social responsibility.

Over the years, Nigeria has been a party to many international and regional conventions to discuss issues about women's rights. Some of the international treaties on women rights ratified by Nigeria include: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 29 July, 1995; International Covenant on

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 29 July, 1993; Optional Protocol on ICCPR concerning individual petition, Convention Against Torture and other cruel, inhuman or Degrading Treatment or punishment (CAT) 28 June, 2001; optional Protocol on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 22 November, 2004.

In spite of advancement in technology and advent of ICT, the radio remains a common mass medium. The effectiveness of the radio as a medium for education, information and entertainment cannot be overstretched due to its' numerous comparative advantages over other forms of mass media information dissemination. [1]. The radio cuts across the board

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reaching all segments of society. This has made the radio vital to spreading information on women especially, women's right as it has proved effective as a medium of mass communication.

[2] contends that in the past 30 years, the world has raised issues about gender equality and women empowerment but since it achieved nationhood, Nigeria has continued to wrestle with the issues of creating a fair, just and equitable political atmosphere for its multi-ethnicity. He however notes that the media in Nigeria seems to be in support of gender inequality because of their treatment of women which he says, are mostly ignored, denied or invisible; adding that when they do attain visibility, such is presented with biases and brought with negative stereotypes, being relegated to supportive positions.

In the views of [3] women are made invisible through the non-representation of their points of view or perspectives of the world. She raises the issue of mediated invisibility noting that even when women do achieve visibility in media content, the manner of their representation reflects the biases and assumptions of those who define the public and therefore media agenda.

Some scholars argue that even in the face Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the current Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), very little progress has been achieved with regard to gender parity in most aspects of human endeavour including the media. It is instructive, as one of the main agents of socialization, to consider the media as paramount in agenda setting as it can advance the course of gender, adopting sustained advocacy to address the patriarchal structures which engender male chauvinism.

The foregoing has necessitated this study to ascertain the extent to which the Anambra Broadcasting Service (ABS) Radio promotes awareness of Women's right as well as efforts to sustain and/or advance the cause.

Statement of the Problem

In a culture where women are faced with discrimination, prejudice, barrier, to all forms of advancement, the need for their

rights to be protected is obvious, following overt injustices in areas of education, politics, property rights, inheritance, weak economic base, violence, health care and even nutrition.

While struggling with the efforts at negotiating power and privilege, the Nigerian/Anambra women are coming to limelight as they swim against the tide to ascend the social, political and even economic ladder. Even with the vote against a Gender and Equal opportunity bill by Nigerian lawmakers on 15 March 2016, it is hoped that the negative practices against women will be addressed when this bill is revisited and given the treatment it deserves. The awareness and campaign for this bill should be championed by the media particularly, the radio.

Records indicate, that in Anambra state, in 2005, Governor Chris Ngige accented to the bill on malpractices against Widows and Widowers; women reproductive rights bill. In the last election, of the 30 legislative seats, women got 5. In the past 7 years, women have retained the speakership position in the state legislative chamber. This development seems encouraging but it is not known, if the people of the state understand what is required of them for the women to take their rightful positions in the scheme of things, also, it is not known the extent to which the media/radio station in the state carries out the function of advocacy on women's rights, hence, the need for this study. This study is focused on the audience of the programmes, "Women's World" and "NnokondiInyom" on ABS radio Awka and Onitsha.

The Anambra Broadcasting Service (ABS) is a public service broadcast outfit owned by the government of Anambra State, charged with the basic responsibility of community broadcasting. The organization operates two radio and TV stations both in Onitsha and Awka. With strong signals owing to state of the art digital equipment, the ABS radio is received clearly in all parts of Anambra State and beyond.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to direct this study:

1. What role does ABS radio play in the promotion of women's rights?
2. What is the relevance of the ABS programmes "Women's World" and "NnokondiInyom" to the advancement of Women's rights in Anambra State?
3. What are the challenges encountered by the ABS radio in

Women's Rights

The word "right" could have different meanings depending on the perspective of the person and/or usage [4]. The word basically is derived from a Latin word "rectus" which means that to which a person has a total and valid claim. [5] views rights as a special entitlement of a person which implies that only benefits to which one is entitled may be rights and not every benefit.

This word could be examined from the Western and African contexts. To the Western World beyond the definition, rights could be classified into civil, political, social, economic and cultural which are all needed to make for a better society for individuals. However, scholars like [6] argue that these compartments should not be rigid as they overlap since they exist within same society in which they are exercisable. The concept of rights in Africa differs widely from the Western World as the rights of the community takes precedence over individual rights. This may be partly because the African system upholds extended family system which encourages communal living. In the views of [7], many African cultures value the group in the spirit of one should never die alone, live alone, remain outside social networks unless one is a pariah, insane or the carrier of a dreaded contagious disease. Buttressing this fact, [8] avers that human rights in traditional African society are people's rights as against individual rights while freedom is seen as universal rather than personal.

Women's rights form part of the universal human rights. [9] defines women's rights as the human rights of women to emphasize the universality and indivisibility of all human rights and their full application to women as human

the promotion of women's rights in Anambra State?

Research Hypothesis

H₀: Exposure to "NnokoNdi Inyom" and "Women's World" on ABS radio has not increased awareness on women's rights.

H₁: Exposure to "NnokoNdi Inyom" and "Women's World" on ABS radio has increased awareness on women's rights.

CONCEPTUALDISCOURSE

beings. These rights include right to live free from violence, slavery and discrimination, to be educated, to own property, to vote and to earn a fair and equal wage. Women, according to [10], are said to be denied these rights in most parts of the world including Nigeria which amounts to an infringement of their fundamental human rights. [11] contend that women's rights are rights and entitlements obtained for women and girls worldwide and which formed the basis for the women's right movement in the nineteenth century and feminist movement during the 20th century.

Gender Discrimination in Nigeria

Efforts to repeal gender discriminatory practices in Nigeria have not succeeded because some of the laws or legislation to address gender discrimination run counter to customary and religious laws. Even when the law of the country and constitution prohibit such discrimination, it is still difficult as some states in the North have adopted Sharia law in some aspects of their dealings [12]. In spite of social advancement, the place of the woman in the typical Nigerian society has not really changed from an object meant to be seen and not heard. This result in gender imbalance which [13] notes is manifest in areas such as: education, health, property rights, violence, weak economic base, weak/poor political representation, and even gender preference.

In the views of [14] corroborated by [15], such discriminations are manifest in such areas as right to work, right to property and succession rights, widowhood practices, sexual offences, custody issues and even health issues. Education and emotional intelligence are said to be key in women empowerment which will assist the woman in knowing her right. To this

end, government should adopt laws and policies that would enhance the position of women in politics, economy and even socially. Several states in Nigeria have enacted laws to eradicate harmful practices (traditional and widowhood) against women. These are in tandem with international best practices and laws such as Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Such international instruments should be domesticated.

Successful implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and now Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially the MDGs which stress gender equality, will go a long way in solving gender discrimination.

Mass Media and Advocacy for Women's Rights

The radio, with its numerous advantages over other forms of mass communication has an important role in educating, informing and entertaining the masses especially on critical issues. The fact that it is more economical to use makes it a veritable tool to reach people in the rural areas. [16] notes that mass media remains

This study is hinged on the agenda-setting theory of Mass Communication. This theory posits that the media have the ability to elevate an issue and cause the people to focus on it. According to [18], "The basic principle of the Agenda-setting theory is the ability of the mass media to restructure the audience's thinking and perception of events". This implies the enormous impact of the media on the masses by what the media present to them. That is to say that the media tell the people what to think about [19]. This means that the media set public agenda.

The agenda setting theory has two assumptions: The media do not reflect reality, rather they filter it and media focus on some issues make the public to perceive those issue as more important than others. Thus when the media focus on issues of women's rights, it will be viewed by the audience as more important than other issues which the media has not given prominence.

This theory is considered adequate for this study since the media can apply

a veritable tool for community mobilization for development as it is pivot to the mobilization of a large, heterogeneous people for any activity of interest to them and society at large. He explains that for a people to be expected to contribute their quota in the achievement of any developmental programme, they need not just know about the existence of such programmes, but need to be adequately informed about the nature of the programme.

Advancing the role of the mass media in the promotion of women's rights, [17] observe that men have always outnumbered women in significant-speaking roles where only 20 to 35 percent characters are women, which play the supportive role. The media can create greater awareness on the rights of women which should be seen as fundamental and not linked to religion, race, etc. The media should also expose the violation of such rights, draw attention on those that need protection, while also urging the authorities to be alive to their responsibilities.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

various strategies through news and programmes to highlight issues of women's right so that they can begin to attract the attention they deserve.

Method of Study

Survey research method was adopted for this study to enable the researcher to cover a cross section of the population. [20] explains that since the cross section represents the population, it may be used for the study. Also, the views of [3] permits survey design to be used for the study as it focuses on people's opinions, attitudes, motivation and behavior.

The population of this study is the 21 L.G.As of Anambra State since the Anambra Broadcasting Service (ABS) radio is received in all parts of the state. Going by the 2006 census figure, the state has a population of forty million, one hundred and seventy-seven thousand, eight hundred and sixty-eight (4,177,868), with projected annual increase of 2.84 percent. By 2018, the state would be five million six hundred and two thousand and two hundred and sixty-eight (5,602,268).

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$4,17,868 \times 0.0284 = 118,651.4512$

$118,700 \times 12 = 1,424,400$

$1,424,402 + 4,177,868 = 5,602,268$

The spread by sex is:

Male - 2,840,084

Female - 2,762,184

Using Cochran's statistical formula and stratified sampling, a sample size of 400 respondents was drawn which is considered adequate as recommended by [20]. The sample was allocated to the groups based on an equitable division.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Out of the 400 copies of the questionnaire, 20 copies, accounting for 5% were disqualified, invalid or not

The questionnaire was used for this study so as to allow each respondent to answer same set of questions so as to eliminate bias. The questionnaire was tested using structural and statistical competence method while a pilot study was carried out for reliability. 400 questionnaire copies were self-administered based on availability so as to minimize sampling errors which could affect the final result.

returned, so the analysis is based on 380 copies which is 95%.

Table 1: Respondents' gender

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	190	50
Females	190	50
Total	380	100

The above table indicates that of the 380 respondents, 190 were males and 190 were females accounting for 50% in each.

Table 2: Respondents' age

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
18-25	60	16
26-35	70	18
36-45	90	24
46-55	90	24
56 and above	70	18
Total	380	100

The above table shows that out of the 380 respondents, 60(16%) are within the age range of 18-25; 70(18%) are within 26-35 years; 90(24%) are 36-45 years. Those within the age range of 46-55 are also 90

accounting for 24% while 70 respondents (18%) fall above 56 years. This is an indication that a majority of the respondents are in the active years.

Table 3: Respondents' religion

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christianity	330	87
Traditional religion	50	13
Islam	0	0
Total	380	100

Table 3 above shows that 330 (87%) of the respondents are Christians and 50(13%)

are traditionalists while no Muslim took part in the survey.

Table 4: Marital status of the respondents

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	200	52.6
Married	180	47.4
Total	380	100

Regarding marital status of the respondents, the table 4 above shows that 200 representing 52.6% are single while 180 accounting for 47.4% are married. This is an indication that a greater percentage of the respondents are single.

Table 5: Occupation of respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Students	180	47.4
Traders	50	13.2
Civil servants	80	21.0
Others	70	18.4
Total	380	100

Table 5 above shows that 180 (47.4%) of the respondents are students while 50 (13.2) are business men and women. 80(21.0%) are civil servants and 70 (18.4%) are from other varied occupations. So the majority of the respondents are students.

Table 6: Highest educational attainment of the respondents

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
SSCE	100	26.3
OND/NCE	80	21.1
HND/BSC	140	36.8
M.SC and above	60	15.8
None	-	-
Total	380	100

Table 6 above indicates that some respondents attained up to M.sc although holders of B.sc/HND are more - 140 (36.8%). This is followed by holders of SSCE who are 100 (26.3%).The next are people with NCE/OND who are 80 (21.1%) while M.sc and above are 60 (15.8%). This implies that all the respondents are educated and thus can understand the importance of media advocacy for women's rights.

Table 7: Respondents' opinion on the role of ABS in the promotion of women's rights

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Agree/strongly agree	300	79
Disagree	30	8
Undecided	50	13
Total	380	100

From the data above, 300 (79%) of respondents are of the opinion that ABS radio has a major role to play in the promotion of women's rights especially through the programmes "Women's World" and "NnokondiNyom". 30 respondents, accounting for 8%,disagree to the above position while 50 (13%) are not sure. This is an indication that ABS radio programmes are veritable tools for the dissemination of information on and the promotion of women's rights.

Table 8: Relevance of the two programmes to promotion and advancement of women's rights in Anambra State

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	200	53.0
Agree	100	26.0
Disagree	30	8.0
Undecided	50	13.0
Total	380	100

Table 8 above shows that 200 (53%) of the respondents strongly agree that the two programmes on ABS radio are relevant in advancing the cause of women's rights in Anambra State. 100(26%) respondents agree while 30 (8%) and 50 (13%) disagree

and are undecided respectively. This implies that the programmes "Women's World" and "NnokondiIyom" on ABS radio are effective in reaching the masses to educate them on women's rights.

Table 9:Challenges encountered by the ABS radio in the promotion of women's rights through "Women's World" and "NnokondiIyom"

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Management problems/ownership	100	26.3
Lack of sponsorship	130	34.2
Poor promotion of programmes	150	39.5
Total	380	100

Table 9 above shows that 100 (26.3%) respondents are of the opinion that management issues hamper the propagation of the programs, while 130

(34.2%) blame it on lack of sponsorship. Also, 150 (39.5%) respondents' opinion, which forms the majority, is that the programmes are not well promoted.

Table 10: Other challenges militating against these programmes

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Gender bias/stereotype	250	66
Religion/tradition	100	26
No response/invalid response	30	8
Total	380	100

Table 10 above indicates that 66%,250 of the respondents, believe that stereotype and gender bias are some of the challenges of the ABS in propagating knowledge on women's rights in Anambra State. 26% of the respondents, accounting for 100, opine that religious and traditional beliefs are serious challenges while 30 respondents (8%) have responses that are invalid.

Research Hypothesis

The only research hypothesis for this study was tested using the weighted mean method or likert scale since it was the opinion of the respondents that gave rise to the data being analyzed. Value from the formulated hypothesis was matched against the decision value of 3.0 in order to either accept the null hypothesis H_0 or reject it and accept the alternative H_1

Table 11: Effect of ABS radio programs on awareness of women’s rights

Question		Response					Total	Mean value X
ABS radio programmes have educated its audience on the rights of women	Code	SA=5	A=4	UD=3	D=2	SD=1	15	<u>1610</u> 380
	Frequency	200	100	50	30		380	
	Code value result	1000	400	150	60		1610	=4.236
	Percentage	52.60	26.30	13.20	7.90		100	=4.24

From the table 11 above, it shows that the extent of agreement is more than one third of the respondents, precisely at 52.6% as against disagreement at 26.3%. This implies that the ABS radio programmes “Women’s World” and “NnokondiInyom” have succeeded in educating the people on the rights of women thereby succeeding in the propagation and advancement of women’s rights in Anambra State.

The determined mean value X was 4.24 which is more than the decision point value of 3.0; hence, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted, since $4.24 > 3.0$. This means that the ABS radio programmes - “Women’s World” and “NnokondiInyom” - have created awareness on the rights of women among listeners in Anambra State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The finding of this study as evident in table 8 show that a majority of the respondents either strongly agree (200,53%) or agree (100:26%) to the fact that the ABS radio programmes precisely “Women’s World” and “NnokoNdiInyom” play an effective role in the advancement of the cause of women’s right in Anambra State. This position is in tandem with one of the roles of the media which is education. This also answers the first research question which seeks to ascertain the role the radio plays in promotion of women’s rights. This agrees with the view of [15] that the mass media have been identified as a potent channel for mobilizing the public for participatory community development communication to constantly keep them informed of strategies to adopt in mobilizing people for development. It also agrees with the agenda setting theory on which this study is anchored. Realizing the fact that the media tells the people what to think about as against what to think, this study has proven that by highlighting the necessary issues in the media it gives the people the topics to think about and to discuss in line with the views of [18] that the agenda-setting role of the media will keep the public abreast of important issues and

happenings in the society and the world at large and also influence the prominence of those issues. The opinions point to the fact that the two programmes are relevant to the issues in question. On the challenges to these programmes, the following were identified in a descending order of hierarchy: poor promotion of the programmes, lack of sponsorship and ownership or management influence. Other challenges noted are gender bias and stereotype, and religion and traditional beliefs. This agrees with [9] who submits that media coverage of gender issues in Nigeria depicts an inglorious image of women’s exclusion or marginalization and that rather than give a fair and balanced report of issues from women’s and men’s angles, the news media exclude women’s voices or portray them as objects who do not have opinion as it relates to issues in society. The challenges relating to religion and tradition are glaring in the Anambra society which makes it difficult for some women to appear on radio programmes to discuss their plight. [13] note that women are being treated as second class citizens and as the sole property of the male folk, which deprives them of the opportunity

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to adequately air their views on national issues in the community.

Suffice it to say that as much as these programs on ABS radio seem to be blazing the trail in a bid to educate and inform

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This work has taken a look at the effort of the Anambra Broadcasting Service radio at propagating women's rights using some of its programs "Nnokondilyom" in Igbo and "Women's World" in English. The findings show that the radio is believed to be a veritable tool in achieving that aim and that the programs examined enjoy a great deal of listenership through which the people are educated on women's rights. The research however noted some of the challenges that hinder the smooth operation of the ABS programs. This work has shown how important the radio can be in effective dissemination of information that can aid promotion of women's right. Even with the obvious challenges along the way, the advantages of the programs in the efforts to highlight women's rights are seen. It is hereby recommended that:

the people on women's right so as to be able to advance the course, there are hurdles along the way to achieving that aim.

1. ABS radio should create time for programs parade so that people will know about "Nnokondilyom" and "Women's World".
2. The programs should delve deeper into other women's rights areas such as education of the girl-child, early and forced marriage, equality in jobs, and earnings.
3. They should expedite action on weak economic base and women empowerment as well as implementation of inheritance rights.
4. Efforts should be made to highlight political representation and eschew religion or traditional practices in taking decisions at public sphere.
5. Management of ABS should make sponsorship conditions attractive so that clients can afford it.

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