



## PERCEPTION OF THE INFLUENCE OF TELEVISION BROADCAST'S IN THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE AMONG WOMEN IN MBAITOLI LOCAL GOVERNMENT, IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

The study examined Mbaitoli women perception of the influence of television broadcast's in the campaign against discrimination and violence among them. The study was hinged on selective perception theory. Survey research method was used for this study. A sample size of 384 was drawn from the population of 151,225 using Australian calculator. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Findings revealed that the level of awareness of the campaign against discrimination and violence among women based on their exposure to television broadcast is minimal at 50% and that television broadcast's in the campaign against discrimination and violence against women were perceived to be unsatisfactory at 46.1%. In essence the finding indicated that exposure to television broadcasts do not significantly influence women's participation in the campaign against discrimination and violence among them at 44%. Therefore, it was recommended that Government, Non-governmental agencies and television broadcasters should ensure that campaigns against discrimination and violence against women are designed, packaged and disseminated on regular basis so as to create the much desired awareness that is required in the eradication of this ugly menace.

**Keywords:** Broadcasts, Campaign, Discrimination, Influence, Perception, Television, and Violence.

## Introduction

Women form the bulk of the Nigerian population. They play varying roles both at home and work. Yet, their contribution and role in the socio-economic sector have largely been ignored. Rather women have been consistently placed in particular gender roles (Sambe, 2015). Gender-based violence is perhaps one of the most terrifying illustrations of inequality between male and female. Women are more at risk from violence than men in all sectors of the society. This is because of the differential access to prestige, power, control of material resources, freedom to obtain knowledge and other basic needs of life among the genders. Violence against women is entrenched in the family, institutionalized by the social structure and driven by patriarchal arrangement, or class/gender stratification. For all these, women are perpetually constrained and placed at disadvantage (Angya, 2005, cited in Ezeocha & Mojaye, 2011). Violence against women is a human rights scandal that cannot be justified by political, religious, or cultural claims. A global culture of discrimination against women allows violence to occur daily and with impunity. Thus, at least one of every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her life time (Amnestyusa.org cited in Ezeocha & Mojaye, 2011).

To this effect, the media believed to be the most powerful instruments that can influence our values beliefs, attitudes, thoughts and behaviours; sometimes consciously and at other times unconsciously, reinforce negatively personal, societal and cultural precepts regarding women. The worst of all is the issue of violence, which the media continue to treat as family affair that should be dealt with inside the home. The impact of these media may be particularly salient in the case of norms about women and their gender roles because this is an area in which the lives of rural viewers differ greatly from those depicted on popular shows (Sambe, 2015). Johnson (2001) observes that in certain Indian villages after the introduction of television, men in homes with television sets tended to help their wives with more house-holds chores than those without television set.

Television broadcast can affect the behaviour of those exposed to its messages. It plays important and often taken for granted roles in the daily lives of viewers because it is a story teller; it tells stories to most people most of the time. It is the wholesale distributor of images and forms the mainstream of our popular culture. Television is the nation's most common and constant learning environment. It both selectively mirrors and leads society, and some believe that television can affect behavioural patterns in the different strata of the society. The medium has the ability to make the viewers replicate actions they got exposed to either in part or whole (Adani, 2005 & Aririguzoh, 2015). That is why television has become a very strong medium in eradicating discrimination and violence against women in Mbaitoli Local Government Area, Imo State. This desire explains why the current study is stimulated by an interest in establishing how television broadcast can be used in the eradication of discrimination and violence against women.

## Statement of the Problem

Television like every other media of mass communication informs, educates and entertains. Beyond these functions, it also persuades and mobilizes. It has the capacity to create awareness and knowledge about issues. The knowledge of this, will help in attitudinal change of the audience. It is evident, that a key issue in the eradication of discrimination against women accurate information. Hence, tackling discrimination and violence against women requires effective communication strategies. It appears that television broadcasts' do not seem to have reasonably ameliorated the high rate of discrimination and violence among women in the State. The implication is that television broadcasts' may not have been appropriate in this regard. It is based on the above, that this

investigated the influence of television broadcast' on women attitude towards the campaign against discrimination and violence against them.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of this study were to:

1. Ascertain the level of awareness of the campaigns against discrimination and violence among women in Mbaitoli based on their exposure to television broadcasts'.
2. Find out how women in Mbaitoli perceive television broadcasts' on the campaigns against discrimination and violence among them.
3. Examine whether women exposure to television broadcasts' influence women attitude towards the campaign against discrimination and violence among them.

### **The Media, Discrimination and Violence against Women**

Television broadcasts can affect the behaviour of those exposed to its messages. Adani (2005) cited in Aririguzoh (2015, p.141) expounds that television plays important, often taken for granted, roles in the daily lives of viewers because "it is a story teller; it tells stories to most people most of the time. It is the wholesale distributor of images and forms the mainstream of our popular culture. Television is the nation's most common and constant learning environment. It both selectively mirrors and leads society, and some believe that television can affect behavioural patterns in the different social strata.

The power of television lies in its pictorial competences. Good pictures catch the attention of the eyes. Television incredible power lies in its tremendous impact on our lives, and its power of sight and sound. The pervasiveness of television in our everyday lives cannot be denied. Television is part of the popular culture (Bittner, 1989, cited in Aririguzoh, 2015). Newcomb (1974) cited in Aririguzoh maintained that television keeps people at home and offer friends and family members the chance to share and consider what they have just watched. Furthermore, adequate information by the mass media has aided the women to fight for their cause. The mass media, though good (broadcast) programmes and featurized news on violence against women has re-awakened the zeal and enthusiasm of the women to fight their cause. The media does not only report issues of violence against women but tries to show how these can be tackled. For instance female circumcision which has adverse effect on the sexual nature and lifespan of women was/ and still being fought by the mass media. In most part of the country today, female circumcision is almost a forgotten issue. Nicholson (1995) cited in Fab-Ukozor (2014) has this to say:

The media occupy an increasingly central place in the lives of women and men all over the world much of our knowledge of the world comes from the media, as well as our notion of self, so that our idea of who we are as female and male is influenced by value laden messages in mediating events and issues, television, film, video games, and other media are involves in selecting, constructing, and reinforces the priorities and values of those who create the messages and own the means of disseminations.

This was due to the mass enumeration and in depth analysis of the implication and problems with female circumcision. The communication campaigns against female circumcision were also targeted at opinion leaders who in turn informed their subjects of such implications and problems.

## Empirical Studies

Ezeocha, and Mojaye, (2011) examined mass media influence on discrimination and violence against women in Delta State, Nigeria. The researchers found that there are many cases of violence against women in Delta State and the mass media exposed women to numerous discriminatory practices. It also revealed that there is increasing awareness through the mass media on sensitization of women to claim their rightful position in all ramifications.

In relations to this, Usadolo and Gwanya (2012) investigated children's view about their understanding of television violence. Findings revealed that younger participants in the study showed that they believe television violence is real as opposed to older ones. The children's views about the wrestling is real as opposed to mainly young girls of older ages. Regarding their favourite characters, the female participants prefer characters who are funny, nice and with good personality. Boys on the other hand prefer characters with actions and full of energy finally, the finding revealed that the children would imitate their favourite characters based on their discernment of what is good. The researchers concluded that children are able to make critical judgment of television character behaviours.

Again, Agbo and Chukwuma (2015) x-rayed audience assessment of the Nigeria Television Authority's contributions towards the eradication of child trafficking in South-East, Nigeria. Findings indicated that the residents of South-East Nigeria are to a large extent exposed to NTA's programmes and reports on child trafficking; NTA's reports and programmes on child trafficking have to a little extent, raised the knowledge of most respondents and majority of the respondents believe that NTA's programmes and reports are not persuasive enough to discourage the practice of child trafficking in South-East Nigeria.

Similarly, Nwammuo (2015) examined the views of women on press coverage of rape cases in Nigeria: A misrepresentation or an under-representation? The finding revealed that respondents view press coverage of rape cases as "under-representation" and not "mis-representation". This is based on the cited newspapers which contain few rape cases which were mostly buried in inside pages.

In corroboration to this, Egbo (2014) in a study on the evaluation of newspaper coverage of sexual violence against women and children in selected Nigerian newspaper. It was found that Nigerian newspapers do not give prominence to sexual violence stories. This they have done by not placing them on the front pages, newspapers do not frequently report sexual violence, the selected newspaper do not amplify utilize features in presenting sexual violence stories. Doing that could entails analyzing the facts of the stories and injecting emotion slant scent to precipitate public outcry against the problem.

Asemah, Edegoh and Ogwo (2013) examined "employing the mass media for the promotion of human rights in Nigeria". And concluded that the place of the mass media in the promotion of human rights in any given society cannot be overemphasized; the mass media generally, can be used to bring about positive attitudinal change in the individuals. The paper found that the Nigerian populace does not enjoy these rights are still trampled upon in most cases. More so, the paper identifies that the mass media have not really been effective in the promotion of human rights in Nigeria.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study was anchored on selective perception theory. According to Black and Bryant (1995), is the tendency for people to adapt to media messages to fit their own preferences. Uwakwe (2010) observed that perception can be influenced by a myriad of psychological factors, including predisposition based on past experience, cultural expectations, motivation models, and attitudes. These factors are cable of making individuals to perceive, process, and interpret media messages subjectively or from the perception of the other party in the process, to misperceive and misinterpret messages thereby reducing the potential for sharing meaning in any useful way. This implies that how people understand or interpret mass media messages is important in deciding their responses to the messages and the influence of the messages. Okunna (1994, p.174) opines that “it is well known that when people are exposed to mass communication messages, they tend to interpret them to suit their already existing attitudes, preconceptions, or predisposition. Therefore selective perception is the process by which individuals perceive what they want to perceive in media messages while ignoring opposing viewpoints. People tend to “see things” based on their particular frame of reference. Selective perception is the process by which we select, categorize, and analyze stimuli (media messages) from our environment to create meaningful experiences while blocking out messages that contradict our beliefs and expectations. This is why Uzochukwu (2015, p.284), observes that the media play a significant role in forming people’s attitude and behaviour. This assertion agrees with Asemah, Nwammuo, and Nkwam-Uwaoma (2017, p. 65) who posited that “people in distinct psychological characters see media content in different ways”, and that this depends on factors such as age, values, family, opinions etc. Ndolo (2006, p.36) puts it this way: “who we are determines how we perceive people, issues and events”.

## **Research Method**

The survey research approach was used for this study. In this research method the researchers’ select a sample of respondents from a population and administers a standardized questionnaire to Mbaitoli women’s to ascertain their views, opinions, feelings and thoughts on the effect of television in eradicating discrimination and violence among them. Owuamalam (2012, p.103) posits that survey enables the researcher to deal with the characteristics of the chosen set of people whose opinion, behaviour and attitudes are essential for the collection of information, required by the study”. The projected population is 151,225 which is an estimated population for this study. It is from this population that sample size of 384 was drawn and calculated using Australian online calculator. The cluster sampling technique was used in the study. Mbaitoli Local Government Area was divided into 12 wards. This means that there were 12 of such clusters. Four of these wards were picked from the 12 wards based on the selection process below. The systematic sampling method was used to select the four wards to be sampled. This meant that every 3<sup>rd</sup> ward from the first one was picked until the desired four wards were completed. The picked wards were Afara/Eziama;Ogbaku; Orodo A; Amaike Mbieri and Ubomiri. Non-proportionate sampling technique was used to allocate 96 copies to each of the selected wards. Closed-ended questionnaire was used to elicit data from various respondents. The reliability test conducted showed that the instrument was consistent.

## **Analysis**

Out of the three hundred and fifty-four (384) copies that were administered, 378 copies were found usable while the remaining 6 were not used.

**Table 1: Respondents viewership of television programmes**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	281	74%
No	74	20%
Can't say	23	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100%</b>

Analysis in table indicates that a good number of the respondents were ardent viewers of television programmes. The implication is that directly or indirectly they have good access to television.

**Table 2: Respondents view on their level of awareness of the campaign against discrimination and violence among women based on their exposure to television programmes**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
High	95	25%
Minimal	191	50%
Low	19	5%
Not at all	73	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the analysis above, shows that majority of the respondents level of awareness of the campaign against discrimination and violence among them based on their exposure to television programmes is minimal. The implication is that a good number of women do not pay attention or care to watch TV programmes that are meant to curtail this menace.

**Table 3: Respondents view on how they perceive television programmes on discrimination and violence against women**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfactory	71	18.7%
Satisfactory	55	14.6%
Unsatisfactory	174	46.1%
Can't say	78	20.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100%</b>

The analysis in the table above indicates that television programmes on discrimination and violence against women are unsatisfactory. It means that television stations have not been fully utilized in the campaign against discrimination against women.

**Table 4: Respondents view on whether exposure to television programmes influence their participation towards the campaign against discrimination and violence among them**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	91	24%
No	166	44%
Can't say	121	32.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100%</b>

From the analysis in above, it is believed that exposure to television programmes do not influence their engagement in the campaign against discrimination and violence among them.

### **Discussion of Findings**

In responding to the research question stated above table 1 and 2 were relied upon. The finding revealed that majority of the respondents' level of awareness of the campaign against discrimination and violence among them based on their exposure to television programmes is minimal at 50%. This is because majority of the respondents at 74% watch television programmes. This is because majority of women who are housewives are mostly heavy viewers of television. It is believed that a good number of the respondents who own television sets do not watch television programmes regularly. This means that exposure to television programmes among the women in Mbaitoli is low. This finding is supported by the agenda setting theory.

In answering the above stated research question, table 3 was relied upon. The finding revealed that 46.1% or majority of the respondents believed that television programmes on the discrimination and violence against women are unsatisfactory. It means that opinions, thoughts and feelings held by the respondents were informed by their exposure to television programmes that have to deal with discrimination and violence against women.

In responding to this, table 4 was used to answer the research question stated above. The finding indicated that exposure to television programmes do not influence women engagement towards the campaign against discrimination and violence among women at 44%. Although, most women are of the campaign against discrimination and violence among them but were reluctant to comply because of certain factors.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, it was therefore concluded that the continuous neglect and in adequate television reportage of discrimination and violence against women with consequent effect of low level of awareness among women in Mbaitoli has made television an unsatisfactory medium towards the campaign on the eradication of discrimination and violence against women. The resultant effect is that

television broadcasts' have failed to influence women's complying to resist discrimination and violence against them.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made:

1. Women should endeavour to make out time to watch television programmes especially campaigns against discrimination and violence among women. This is because through exposure to such programmes they can be fully aware of their rights and responsibilities.
2. There is need for Government and Non Governmental Agencies to sponsor media campaigns and programmes on television stations that are aimed at eradicating discrimination and violence against women. It is believed that such programmes will raised the much desired awareness among women.
3. Gender based television stations should be established to foster the campaigns on violence and discrimination against women and other related issues.

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