

Indigenous Communication and Women Politics in Ado-Odo Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The relevance of women in the society and in politics cannot be undermined. Indigenous communication offers opportunities for local participation in development efforts. Its channel allows the local people to communicate among themselves and with development professionals, using forms with which they are familiar. This study therefore sought to explore the possibility of indigenous communication playing the role of facilitating women's participation in politics. Survey design was used as the research method. Questionnaire and interview were the tools of data collection. 394 copies of the questionnaire were useful for data analysis out of the 400 copies administered. Percentages and chi Square were used for data analysis. Also, 6 interviewees were purposively selected. The findings therefore revealed that a higher percentage of respondents (60.2%) are of the view that indigenous communication provides them knowledge on election activities. The result further revealed that only 10% of the respondents have ever contested for elective positions. The study therefore recommends, among others that elected women should come together, regardless of their political party affiliation, to work on issues of common concern to women. Women's caucuses can also be focal points for training, communication, and other logistic support to women parliamentarians. This group can make women more effective, individually as legislators, and collectively in order to act on women's issues.

Keywords: *Indigenous communication, perception, participation, politics, women*

Introduction

According to Oyesomi and Okorie (2013), effective communication which operates in a society through the mass media cannot operate in isolation; it has to operate with the society so as to reflect the needs of the people. Many of the initial assumptions that the media had enormous potential to inform the poor, rural and illiterate people about ways to act on information to

improve their lives have been challenged (Hedebro, 1992). Wilbur Schramm, one of the most influential communication scholars, admits:

I should have been more skeptical about the applicability of the Western model of development. I should have paid more attention to the problem of integrating mass media with local activity. Above all, I should have given more thought than I did to the social requirements and uncertainties of development and in particular to the cultural differences that make development almost necessarily different, culture to culture, country to country (Mante, 1999, p.221).

Attempts to address these concerns have led to an approach to development communication characterised by an emphasis on self-reliance, grassroots participation and productive use of local resources. Indigenous communication, as defined by Obeng (1992), seems to fit this new approach. It is embedded in the culture and still exists as a vital mode of communication in many parts of the world, presenting a certain degree of continuity. Indigenous communication modes include drama, dance and story-telling, etc.

Several of the advantages of indigenous communication have been identified by Obeng (1992, p.30):

They have credibility, particularly among rural populations, that modern media often lack. Press, radio, television and cinema are often “alien and elitist in outlook,” and those at the periphery of modern life tend to identify them with the centres of power. They employ the idiom of the people and are readily intelligible to them. Even the poorest have access to indigenous media, whereas radio and television may be beyond their means and newspapers beyond their comprehension. Indigenous media demand active participation in the communication process- the audience is involved rather than passive.

Indigenous communication aims at the transmission of entertainment, news, persuasion, announcements, and social exchanges. It is an aspect of culture that should be respected by people. It is the means by which culture and the indigenous knowledge embedded in it is preserved, handed down, and shared. Research has quite often shown that most farmers, both male and female, do not learn about new technologies through the media or the extension services, but rather do so from their friends and neighbours or through their own experiments. Indigenous communication enjoys high credibility status because it is familiar and controlled locally. Local

audiences are often sceptical of externally-controlled mass media, viewing them merely as government propaganda. Indigenous communication has a much wider audience, as it can reach those who do not read or write. It is therefore, crucial for exchange of information with those (people) who are out of the reach of external channels (Agunga, 1997).

Statement of the problem

Indigenous communication offers opportunities for local participation in development efforts. Its channel allows the local people to communicate among themselves and with development professionals, using forms with which they are familiar. In most local communities in Nigeria, electricity is in short supply and sometimes, the technology of reception is not readily available. If and where available, the content of the media may not facilitate women's participation in politics. Adeyokunnu (2006) posits that the use of radio and television for participation of women in politics in the rural areas has not been effective as many women do not even have access to the media. The relevance of women in the society and in politics cannot be undermined. Thus, this study explores the possibility of indigenous communication playing the role of facilitating women's participation in politics, since they are available and well established in rural communities. Besides, it would be necessary to examine whether indigenous communication forms give women knowledge on political activities and if this will have any influence in galvanising women, who have been hitherto indifferent or reluctant to participate in political activities at the local level. The most important characteristic of communication interaction is the facilitation of feedback and this is best provided by interactive media. Accessibility, availability, affordability and feedback are crucial for popular participation. Thus this study sought to investigate the perception of women on the role that indigenous communication holds for mobilising women to participate in politics. This study focuses on the potentials and motivation that exposure to indigenous communication has on women in contesting for elective positions.

Based on the above, the objectives of this study were to:

1. find out women's perception on the role of indigenous communication in politics
2. investigate if indigenous communication gives women knowledge on political activities;
3. determine if exposure to indigenous communication motivate women to contest for elective political offices

The research questions this study sought to answer were:

1. How do women perceive the role of indigenous communication in politics
2. In what way(s) does indigenous communication provide women with knowledge on political activities?
3. Does exposure to indigenous communication motivate women to contest for elective political offices?

The hypotheses formulated and tested for this study are as follows:

1. Exposure indigenous communication does not determine the participation of women in politics
2. There is no significant relationship between exposure to politics through indigenous communication and women's knowledge of political activities
3. There is no significant relationship between exposure to politics through indigenous communication and motivation of women to contest for elective political offices.

Literature review

The Concept of Political Participation

Political participation is an essential component for ensuring the stability and legitimacy of every political system. Political participation is one of the fundamental ideas of a democratic society. It is the sine qua non of 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 offices, attending election campaigns, voting and exposing oneself to political stimuli. Lewu (2005) however, defines political participation as a variety of ways in which people try to exercise influence over the political process.

This 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. Political participation, as one of the tenets of democracy, is found to be liberal and unrestrictive. Subscribing to this, Okolie (2004, p.53) perceives political participation as “freedom of expression, association, right to free flow of communication, right to influence decision process and the right to social justice, health services, better working condition and opportunity for franchise”. Political participation is one of the key ingredients of democracy

in its real sense. Taking the conceptualisation of democracy by Larry (1999, p.15) into cognisance, democracy provides the equal opportunity platform for political participation and fairness in such competition, thus: a system of government that meets three essential conditions: meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and groups, especially political parties, for all effective of government power, at regular intervals and excluding the use of force; a highly inclusive level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies, at least through regular and fair election, such that no major (adult) social group is excluded; and a level of civil and political liberties, freedom to form and join organizations sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation.

Nigerian Women: A Profile

Nigerian women have indeed come a long way as far as politics and leadership are concerned. They have proved their mettle when given the opportunity to play any role. There is no doubt that the present Fourth Republic remains their shining glory, taking into account their exploits in the political terrain. It is assumed that women globally, especially those in public offices, are architects of change. In the present Nigerian democratic dispensation, there are many women whose names have become household names due to their roles in politics and leadership (Oyesomi, 2013).

A number of Nigerian women, particularly from the Igbo and Yoruba ethnic groups, have made their mark in different fields, and there is ample evidence today that women can make a lot of difference in governance. The achievements of Prof. Dora Akunyili, the NAFDAC icon, then the Minister of Information, the former Minister of External Affairs/Finance and Current World Bank's Managing Director for Africa, Asia, Europe and Central Asia, Dr. (Mrs). Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, has been given accolades and celebrated for her leading role in rescuing many countries including Nigeria, from their economic woes. Oby Ezekwesili, former Minister of Education, now the World Bank Vice President for Africa at the bank's headquarters in Washington DC; Amina Ibrahim of the Millennium Development Goals fame; Senior Special Adviser to the President on the MDGs. Prof. Grace Alele Williams was the first Nigerian woman to obtain a Ph.D and was also the first Nigerian female Vice Chancellor (University of Benin 1985-1991). These women who have, among others, distinguished themselves as women of substance seem to have had a tutorial from other women's exploits in the past. Such women include the woman activist, late Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome Kuti who was the first Nigerian lady to drive a car in Nigeria, Retired Major

General Aderonke Kale, a medical doctor by profession who worked in the Nigerian Army Medical Corps and was the highest ranking female officer in the Nigerian Army; Margaret Ekpo who was at the forefront of the famous Aba Women's riot of 1929 and Nike Omowore Agunbiade who was the first female Deputy Speaker of a State Assembly during the Third Republic. She later contested for Osun state governorship election in the present Fourth Republic. All these women have made a name in politics and leadership positions and have become role models for the young girls of contemporary Nigeria.

Women and Politics

Politics is very important in every society. It is a system of administration that ensures that there is orderliness and development in society. It ensures that human, natural and economic resources are managed by few people who are versed in the act of governance, on behalf of the generality of the people. These are of course positions of responsibility that confer on the holders, certain rights, authorities and privileges above their peers, who willy-nilly, have to submit themselves to the authorities of the politicians. In order to take care of all human interests, the two genders are supposed to be fully engaged in politics. This is not the case in Nigeria where the political arena is largely dominated by the male gender, often to the detriment of the female. The result is a “malevolent” militarization of politics in Nigeria.

Political participation is an essential component of ensuring the stability and legitimacy of every political system (Oyesomi, 2011). Participation in politics refers to different ways in which people exercise their rights over the political process. It is seen as a means to an end, where the end may be referred to as political leadership. The concept of participation lies in the culture of democracy. The first principle of democracy adopted by the Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Cairo, 16th September 1997, is stated as being:

a universally recognized ideal as well as a goal, which is based on common values shared by peoples throughout the world community irrespective of cultural, political, social and economic differences. It is thus a basic right of citizenship to be exercised under conditions of freedom, equality, transparency and responsibility, with due respect for the plurality of views, and the interest of the polity.

This concept affords all human beings the right to share in the decision making processes that affect their lives and that of their community. This

right was affirmed by the establishment of the Commission on the Status of Women (to promote women's political and economic rights) by the United Nations in 1946. The year 1952 saw the adoption of the Convention on Political Rights of Women worldwide, and in 1967, the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was endorsed. This convention is upheld by national, regional and international legal instruments that concern children and women, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the child. It also includes the National Policy on Women (NPW), adopted by the Federal Government of Nigeria in July 2000. With the ratification of CEDAW in 1985, Nigeria undertook to work towards the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and girls in all fields, whether political, economic, social or cultural. However, since the adoption of this policy by the government, very little improvement in the exercise of women's rights has been witnessed. The Beijing Conference of 1995 on women articulated some areas considered crucial to the empowerment of women. These include poverty, education, health-care, violence against women, effects of conflict on women, power-sharing and decision-making mechanisms to promote the advancement of women, management of natural resources and the environment, and the girl child.

At the fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, governments emphasized that "women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for justice or democracy, but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the perspective of women at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved." The platform for action defined two strategic objectives: (a) ensure women's equal access to and full participation in all power structures and decision-making; and (b) increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership. The Beijing Platform for Action made concrete plans to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures as one of its strategic objectives. It also affirms the need to increase women's capacity to participate in leadership and decision-making processes and bodies. One of the key initiatives in the on-going process was the Security Council Resolution 1325, which urged member states to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict (UN, 2000As/1325).

On the African continent, the First Regional Conference on the Integration of Women Development was held in Nouakchott, Mauritania in 1977. The second Regional Conference on women took place in Lusaka, Zambia in 1979. The third Conference (1984) was held in Arusha, Tanzania, while the fourth Conference was held in Abuja, Nigeria in 1989. The 1989 conference adopted a declaration on participatory development with the theme “The Role of Women in Africa in the 1990s”. In Dakar, Senegal, the fifth Regional Conference prepared the Agenda on African issues in 1995, preparatory to the Beijing platform. In 1994, the Pan- African Women’s Liberation Organisation (AWLO) was established by the 7th Pan African Congress in Kampala, Uganda. At the National level in Nigeria, several conferences, workshops and organisations have been initiated to foster women’s political participation and gender sensitization.

Effectiveness of Indigenous Communication in Politics

Indigenous communication forms such as festivals, traditional institutions, folklore, drama, music, songs, dance, drums, and poetry amongst others are dominant sources of entertainment, and they inform and reform social, moral and human values of their societies. They also help in curbing inter-tribal wars and conflicts among communities; promote peace, understanding, team-spirit and brotherhood among mankind. To the rural people, the use of traditional communication to immensely popularize certain government policies whether economic, ideological, cultural or educational is in tandem with their ways of life. This is done particularly through dramatic performances (Oyesomi, 2013).

It is important to note that the traditional media system is people-oriented. The failure of modern media experts to grasp this fact accounts for the seeming failure of modern communication practices as used especially for development in Africa, when a majority of the people are considered (Balogun, 1985). Indigenous communication is therefore effective for political activities because it facilitates feedback and it makes people to communicate with each other using channels they are familiar with and have access to.

Theoretical framework

Democratic-Participant Media Theory

This theory advocates media support for cultural pluralism at the grass-roots level. Media are to be used to stimulate and empower pluralistic groups. It calls for development of innovative “small” media that can be directly controlled by group members. In other words, the existing bureaucracy,

commercialisation and professional hegemony in media system should be broken down to allow for guarantee easy media access to all potential users and consumers. The theory reflects disappointment with Libertarian and Social Responsibility theories for failing to deliver social benefits expected of them. It condemns the commercialisation and monopolisation of privately owned media and the concentration and bureaucratisation of government owned media. It also criticises the public media for being too elitist, too susceptible to the whims and caprices of the government, too rigid and too slavish to professional ideals at the expense of social responsibility. It therefore, calls for greater attention of the media to the needs, interests and aspirations of the receiver in a political society. It calls for pluralism in the place of monopolisation, decentralisation and localisation in the place of centralism. It is of the view that media conglomerates be replaced or mixed with small-scale media enterprises. It also calls for “horizontal” in place of top-down communication to ensure feedback and complete communication circuit. A democratic polity involves the decentralisation of power in a way that the affairs of the local people are managed by means of their positive participation. It implies the extension of democracy at the grass-roots level in view of the fact that the people’s participation, in this study, women’s participation signifies the constitution of a democratic government not merely at the top but also at the foundation level of the political system. The rationale behind the concept is to involve women as in the case of this research work in local planning, decision making and to participate in politics even as candidates for elective offices for proper implementation of policies and programmes.

Method

In Ado-Odo/Ota Local Government, there are four zonal districts. These are: Sango, Ota, Ado-Odo, Igbesa. Through random sampling, Ota was selected. Ilogbo and Iju communities were randomly selected. The population for this study comprised women aged 18 and above in the two selected communities in Ado-Odo Ota Local Government. Six (6) purposively selected participants took part in the interview in the two communities. The quantitative data were presented in tables and analyzed, using percentages and chi-square. Mean and standard deviation were used for ranking of the perception of women on the role of indigenous communication in politics. The qualitative data, on the other hand, were transcribed and analyzed, adopting the constant comparative technique and thematic approach.

Results

Research questions

Table 1: Indigenous communication that influence women to participate in politics

Forms of indigenous communication	Percentage
Political groups/meetings	46.6%
Family network	6.2%
Political symbols	20.6%
Language	18.6%
Neighbourhood Networks	8.0%
Total	100% n=394

Table 1 shows the different forms of Indigenous communication that encourage women to participate in politics. The results show that political meetings/groups influence to participate in politics. The least adopted indigenous communication for politics among women is family networks. This is quite surprising because it is expected that family members should encourage themselves on political activities especially during elections on the candidate to vote for.

In an interview, a youth leader in Iju community said, Indigenous communication, especially political groups influence women to participate in politics. Indigenous communication influences women's participation in politics in so many ways, these include identification of political parties, encouraging women to register as voters, to register as party members and as voters. Indigenous communication influences women's participation in

politics, especially to register as voters and to know political parties available in the country.

Table 2: Respondents perception on the role of Indigenous communication in politics by ranking

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking
A woman has cultural rights to participate in politics in my community	3.1703	.38966	12 th
On the basis of political competence, my community rates men over women	3.3148	.46475	10 th
Political parties in my community are dominated by men and this encourages women to participate in politics	3.5742	.49478	5 th
The religious heritage in my community encourages women to participate in politics	3.5806	.49377	4 th
In my community, the place of a woman is not at home,; she is permitted to participate in politics	3.0968	.49021	13 th
In my community, a woman who contests for political position is seen as someone who is either independent or not submissive	2.7910	.44043	14 th
Political symbols made me to know about the importance of participation in politics	3.6000	.48190	3 rd
My attendance of political meetings influenced my participation in politics	3.7084	.51629	1st
I got convinced to participate in politics through the drama/play I watched	3.2374	.45480	11th
The dance/festival in my community encouraged me to participate in politics	3.4348	.50381	8 th
The friendship network in my community influenced my participation in politics	3.3226	.49200	9 th
The different forms of indigenous communication made me to voluntarily join a `political party	3.5084	.51552	6 th
The different forms of indigenous communication made me to encourage other people to join a `political party	3.4955	.50030	7 th
I have so much information on political activities through indigenous communication	3.6077	.48857	2 nd

By ranking, in table 2, the results show that women are convinced to participate in politics mainly because of their attendance at political meetings. This shows that attendance at political meetings goes a long way to influence women to participate in politics. The next by rank also shows that women tend to have so much information on political activities through indigenous communication. This implies that indigenous communication is a good platform for political activities, especially for women. Opinion leaders are significant here. They serve to convince women on the importance of participating in politics. Opinion leaders are generally seen as advisers, translators, interpreters and mediators in any community. The religious beliefs of all the communities visited confirmed that religious practices do not in any way stand as a hinderance to women's participation in politics.

The result is at variance with the views of Millet and Gerald (2007) that religious doctrines militate against the active participation of women in politics. However, it should be noted that in some parts of the country, religious heritage can militate against the participation of women in politics. Millet and Gerald (2007) have reasoned that "patriarchy has God on its side" that is, Christianity portrays Eve as an after-thought produced from Adam's spare rib. Furthermore, it is held that the origin of gender discrimination began with sins. Islamic doctrines strictly bar women from some political activities – public speaking etc. – that can facilitate their political ambitions. Through series of enlightenment, emancipation and consciousness raising of groups on women movement, women's subordination in politics has been reduced to an extent. Women, through several of these platforms, have played influential roles and this has further spurred more women to go into politics.

In an interview, the woman leader of Iju community had this to say on the level of women's participation in politics:

Women do participate in politics in the community. Young women are more vibrant and active. Their level of participation is high. They attend meetings, they are members of political parties and many of them vote during elections. Many of them also belong to one female association or the other. The truth is that only very few of them are aspirants. Though they participate actively, they hardly contest for elections.

Interviewees (ID1) agreed that women are participating in politics but more needs to be done as, for example, the traditional ruler of Ilogbo community,

the Onilogbo of Ilogboland explained, to support elected women and improve their ability to influence policies: *“Generally, I would say efforts are being made to increase women's participation in leadership ...but a lot remains to be done in building the elected women's capacity and increasing the quality of their participation and voice to influence policies and actions in favor of women.”* Another participant reasoned that the participation of women in leadership at the local level is not enough; women at all levels must be empowered especially the young ones. Local level participation *“must be accompanied by a comprehensive consciousness-raising campaign, and civil and political education that would allow women to know their rights.”* Both of these strategies –training elected women at the local level and conducting civil and political education at the grassroots level– will be important complementary efforts to increase the number of women aspirants.

Table 3: Ways in which indigenous communication provides women with knowledge on political activities

Ways	Percentage
Party ideology	7.4%
Political programmes	10.4%
Election activities	60.2%
Information about contestants	22.0%
Total	100% n=394

In answering the third research question, the data in table 3, reveal that four ways of provision of knowledge to women on political activities through indigenous communication were identified. These were informing women about various party ideologies, informing women about political programmes, informing them on electoral activities and informing women about various people contesting for political posts. The findings, therefore, revealed that a higher percentage of respondents are of the view that indigenous communication provides them knowledge on election activities. This implies that indigenous communication play an important role during elections.

Table 4: Respondents who have contested for elective position

Responses	Percentage
Contested	10%
Never contested	90%
Total	100% n=394

In table 4, only 10% of the respondents have ever contested for elective positions. This implies that indigenous communication though influence women to participate in politics as voters, attend political meetings, rallies, etc. It does not influence them to participate in politics.

During the interview session, the interviewees were of the opinion that funding, violence, godfatherism, marginalization of women, indigeneity, serve as factors militating against the participation of women in politics as candidates for election. For instance, the woman leader of Ilogbo community said that: Money has assumed an unhealthy priority in determining who wins elections in the country. Electoral offices are occupied by the highest bidder. Politics has become an enterprise for spineless investors who promptly recoup their investment after the polls. Politicians borrow money to contest & resort to extra-legal means to repay Political godfathers, electoral party officials or voters demand money from aspirants and candidates. Candidates spend money bribing party chairmen, other ‘kingmakers’ voters, security agents, electoral officers e. t. c. When the political process is monetised and the cost of contesting elections is prohibitive, it hinders the entry of honest and hardworking people into politics. Honest and credible politicians motivated by public service are blocked from offering service.

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses raised in this study were tested and the findings are presented below:

Hypothesis 1

Exposure to indigenous communication does not determine participation of women in political activities

Table 5: Summary of Chi-Square

	Participation in Political Activities									X ²	Df	Sig
	High		Average		Low		No		Total			
	Obs	Exp	Obs	Exp	Obs	Exp	Obs	Exp				
Exposure	16	10	105	18	75	41	76	98	319	301	3	<0.05
Non-Exposure	0	16	4	33	2	33.2	116	49	75			
Total	16		109		77		192		394			

*Significant **Not-significant

The exposure of women to indigenous communication was compared with their participation in political activities. This was classified into two categories; exposure and non-exposure. The findings revealed that 319 women were exposed to indigenous communication, while 75 women were not exposed to indigenous communication. The chi-square statistical tool was used to test the significance whether exposure to indigenous communication determines participation of women in political activities. The findings revealed a difference in participation of women in political activities as a result of exposure to indigenous communication at $X^2=301$, degree of freedom = 3 and p value <0.05. The first null hypothesis which states that exposure to indigenous communication does not determine participation of women in political activities therefore rejected.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between exposure to politics through indigenous communication and women’s knowledge of political activities

Table 5: Summary of Chi-Square

	Knowledge of Political Activities				Total	X^2	Df	Sig
	Knowledgeable		Not Knowledgeable					
	Obs	Exp	Obs	Exp				
Exposure	268	90	16	32	306	314	1	<0.05
Non-Exposure	46		64	22	88			
Total	314		80		394			

The exposure of women to indigenous communication was compared with the knowledge of political activities. The exposure aspect was classified into two categories; exposure or non-exposure. The findings revealed that 306 women were exposed to indigenous communication, while 88 women were not exposed to indigenous communication. The chi-square statistical tool was used to test the significant relationship between exposure to politics through indigenous communication and women’s knowledge of political activities. The findings revealed a difference in knowledge of political activities of women as a result of exposure to indigenous communication at $X^2=314$, degree of freedom = 1 and p value <0.05. The second null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between exposure to politics through indigenous communication and women’s knowledge of political activities is therefore rejected.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant relationship between exposure to politics through indigenous communication and women’s interest in elective political offices.

Table 6: Summary of Chi-Square

Variations	women’s interest in elective political offices					X ²	Df	Sig
	Interested		Not Interested		Total	0.75	1	>0.05
	Obs	Exp	Obs	Exp				
Exposure	27	10.2	316	317	301			
Non-Exposure	11	1.6	40		93			
Total	38		356		394			

The influence of exposure of women to indigenous communication on women’s interest in elective political offices was determined. The findings revealed that 301 women were exposed to indigenous communication, while 93 women were not exposed to indigenous communication. The chi-square statistical tool was used to test whether exposure to indigenous communication influences women’s interest in elective political offices or not at X²=0.75, degree of freedom = 1 and p value >0.05. The third null hypothesis is therefore retained. This implies that there is no significant relationship between exposure to politics through indigenous communication and women’s interest in elective political offices.

Discussion of findings

1. Women’s perception on the role of indigenous communication in the society

Five forms of indigenous communication were identified as being used by women for political activities. These are: Language, political meetings, family network, neighbourhood network and political symbols. According to a British philosopher, Whitehead cited in Mede (1998), symbols are metaphors that include written and spoken language as well as visual objects, standing for some quality of reality that is enhanced in importance or value by the process of symbolising itself. This means that they are not languages, but the means by which ideas too obscure, dangerous or inconvenient to articulate in common languages are transmitted among a people who have common ways. It entails the use of writing or representation. They are usually limited to a particular cultural milieu where they are used. Understanding any symbol comes from being part of the culture. “It is the use of certain objects or situations to symbolize something and elicit a particular response from whoever beholds the [sign or] object.

It therefore depends on the ability of the beholder to ascertain the true meaning of the symbol before he can respond appropriately. (Ibagere, 1994, p.88). Symbol includes such devices as placing objects in a particulate way to convey meaning. Nigeria has political parties with different political symbols. For instance, ACN-broom, ANPP-corn or maize, APGA-chicken, CPC-pen, NCP-pair of eyes PDP-umbrella, etc. It is very important for party members to know their party symbols. Language is an important aspect of political campaigns and an interesting vessel of post-election communication. Language used for communication during political process must be understood by the community. Women who are members of political parties tend to attend meetings where different political views are shared. Family network is another form of indigenous communication were family members encourage themselves on political activities especially during elections on the candidate to vote for.

2. Exposure to indigenous communication and motivation of women to contest for elective political office

Women are motivated to participate and contest for political offices through indigenous communication, yet many of them run away from contesting as candidates for elections. There are many factors that could be responsible for this. Lack of adequate finance is a crucial hindrance to effective female participation in politics in Nigeria. Adedeji (2009) is of the view that a large portion of the Nigerian female population is not as financially strong as their male counterparts. Family responsibilities and childbearing also hinder women from participating effectively in partisan political activities. During a sizeable part of their adult lives, most women are involved not only in child bearing, but also in child rearing. Thus, much of the time they may have wished to devote to politics is taken up by their maternal challenges and obligations.

Another factor that could be responsible for women not contesting as candidates for political office is godfatherism. Olutola (2009) argues that political parties in Nigeria are far from democratic but revolve around godfathers, who sponsor candidates and fund parties. It was revealed that most of the godfathers, Adedibu for example, actually received a lot of money from candidates before throwing their weight behind such contestants. Can there be a return to true party discipline? It is pertinent to discourage the present politics that celebrates loyalty to godfathers. Godfathers should face the reality of a slight shift in the extreme allegiance

of the godsons after election. A state executive is responsible for the performance of government; he should be given a free hand to choose his cabinet, and allocate resources for the benefits of the people. Democracy is a means to an end: the end is greater happiness for the people. However, in Nigeria, very few political elites, godfathers and their thugs enjoy the dividends of democracy, while the downwardly mobile masses are kept gaping and scrambling for survival in the midst of enormous Nigeria's wealth.

3. Attitude of men to women's participation in politics

During the interview session with community leaders, the participants were of the view that male dominated political parties have a male perspective on issues of national importance that disillusions women as their perspective is often ignored and not reflected in the politics of their parties. Also women are usually not elected at the position of power within party structures because of gender biases of male leadership. Meetings of councils or parliamentary sessions are held at odd timings conflicting with women's domestic responsibilities.

It was also pointed out during an interview session that, what is often highlighted is men's role in politics. For example, elections seem to be a male domain. Women are in the house, cooking, taking care of the children. Even if they have roles in the community, the political parties have so far not demonstrated any inclination to introduce mechanisms for equal representation within the party executives besides the creation of the post of the Women Leader, most parties have not adopted any other system to increase the number of women holding party offices. Men dominate even in traditional communities, in the indigenous forms of politics, in the council of leaders. Women are regarded as weaker sexes are social constructs owing to social value, norms and beliefs, which have neglected their meaningful contributions and have placed them in a subordinate position to men in the nation's political system.

The participants were of the general view that societal value assumes that political activities are masculine and this makes it worse as financiers and sponsors of politicians prefer male candidates to female ones, since they believe they stand a better chance. Most success achieved by women in politics has been through women movements that sponsor women political aspirations financially and otherwise. Women dependence on men financially made manifest through wife's dependence on their husbands in families

reveals the extent of financial incapacitation of women in Nigerian politics. As a result, women political aspirations have been grossly hampered by lack of financial base to sustain their quest.

Akingbulu & Menkiti, (2008,p.35) note that: “Men are the major determinants of political actions and inactions generally concerned with the perpetuation of power of the state. When women compete with men for access to political power, they do so on the terms already established by men for competition among themselves. The success of women in politics like that of any group cannot be achieved within a system without displacing or replacing the existing elite. And a change in values which cannot occur independently in the socio-economic as well as political relations, without clear involvement of women in the political process through holding of various offices (positions) and make known their own ambition through consciousness and effective involvement in the political scene a condition which if absent allows or facilitates the political elites dominated by and govern women remain the same”. It is certain that the male predominated political environment has preconditioned the environment that their female counterparts compete with them in. Consciousness and involvement of women changes the values to enable a freer-for-the-women political environment.

4. Women in support of one another

The lack of support from fellow women for those women in office is another factor that contributes to the small number of women participation in electoral politics. More than often, the women in political power, the first lady for example, are quick to forget the other women as soon as they get in power. Those who are not in power seldom encourage the ones in authority and give almost no support to those aspiring to participate in the national governance. Ajayi (2007) suggests that although women have the advantage of higher demographic and electoral strength than men, they have not been able to gain political strength as their male counterparts because they do not vote for female candidates. This attitude has been psychologically instilled in the political culture.

Conclusion

Though indigenous communication had influenced women to participate in politics, it did not significantly influence women to contest for elective positions. Multiple forms of indigenous communication were adopted in most communities and this influenced most women to participate in politics.

A combination of two or more indigenous communication channels enabled women to participate in politics. The interviewees during the interview session were of the opinion that funding, violence, godfatherism, marginalization of women, indigeneity, serve as factors militating against the participation of women in politics as candidates for election.

Recommendations

The study has shown that indigenous communication is a traditional means of communicating within rural communities especially for political participation. Having examined the relationship between women's perception and the role of indigenous communication, the following recommendations are made:

1. Female politicians, need strong backing from NGOs and even women's NGOs in order both to get elected and to sustain their mandates, exert pressure on political parties to put up female candidates for elections; set up networks to support women wishing to be elected into political offices.
2. Since indigenous communication is available in local communities, it should be used for sustained advocacy and mass mobilization of women for women's rights, and by logical extension, women's participation in politics, especially for purposes of seeking elective political positions.
3. Elected women should come together, regardless of their political party affiliation, to work on issues of common concern to women. Women's caucuses can also be focal points for training, communication, and other logistic support to women parliamentarians. This group can make women more effective, individually as legislators, and collectively in order to act on women's issues.
4. Men should encourage women to participate in election and support them adequately, financially and morally. Men need to be oriented on the need to allow their wives, mothers, sisters, daughters not only to participate in politics but also to run for elective offices.
5. Though indigenous communications can be important channels for facilitating learning, behavioural change, people's participation and dialogue for development purposes, it can be integrated with other media such as radio, television, video and audiocassettes, etc for effectiveness and impact on the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of women for sustained national development.

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