

Promoting Gender Parity in Families in Enugu State through Media Campaigns

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Abstract

This study investigated ways media campaigns can be used to promote gender parity in families in Enugu State. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Three research questions guided the study. The population of the study was, 368 respondents made up of 322 registered journalists and 46 mass communication lecturers in Enugu state. The population of the study was small and could easily be managed. There was no sampling. Questionnaire was used to collect data. Mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis. Results showed that existing media that can be used to promote gender parity in families include: radio, television, facebook, twitter, among others. The approaches media campaign can adopt to promote gender parity in families include: jingles; advertisements, and drama, while the campaign will address areas of sexuality, girl child education and rights, among others. Recommendations include journalists should make effective use of available media and use contents that are persuasive and educative to promote gender parity in families.

Keywords: Campaigns, Gender, Media, Parity, Inequality

Introduction

Promoting gender parity in families is one of the issues that have received attention in literature among researchers of sociology, media studies and special education. Scholars such as Arpita, (2013); Khan (2013) and Shastri

(2014) agree that there exists various forms of gender disparity in families. Gender describes roles a particular culture assigns to a persons' biological sex. The American Psychological Association (2011) describes gender as the attitudes, feelings, and behaviours

that a given culture associates with a person's biological sex. Gender refers to the socially and culturally constructed roles, qualities, behaviours, among others, that are ascribed to men and women by different societies (UNESCO, 1997). Gender therefore, is a social construct that is highly influenced by societal values. In most cases, the societal values often influence the social construction of gender in a manner that does not leave room for gender parity. Reeve and Baden (2000) posit that gender parity denotes women having the same opportunities in life as men, including the ability to participate in the public sphere. Unfortunately, the attainment of gender parity especially in families has remained a challenge globally.

In many African societies, male chauvinism is accepted as part of cultural values. The man is regarded as the head of the family and owns everything including the wife. The woman's decisions must receive approval from the man but the man has the freedom to take decisions without seeking the approval of the wife. Haralambos and Holborn, (2013) opine that women produce children, they are mothers and wives, they do the cooking, cleaning, sewing and washing, take care of men and yet they are subordinate to male authority.

In Enugu state specifically, there are societal attitudes and values which discriminate against women based on gender. Gender disparity starts at the instance of the birth of a child. When a child is born, the first question people ask is, "is it a boy or a girl?" The birth

of a male child is often heralded with greater joy than that of a female child. Ejikeme (2001) reports that the male child is often the preferred child in many Nigerian cultures. In some cases, couples go to the extent of consulting oracles to ensure that they will give birth to a male child. In line with the above assertion UNESCO, (1997) noted that preference for sons operates at all levels of the society-rich or poor, rural or urban. Shankar Rao (2015) states that male preference and female negligence has almost become a working policy especially in the rural areas. In the rural areas of Enugu state for example, a boy's education is taken very seriously while investment in education of girls is not considered to yield adequate returns. The girl child may be enrolled in school, but when her work is needed at home to help in house work, to mind younger siblings or do domestic chores, she is kept back from school (Nam 2004). Serving as domestic labour, undertaking family responsibilities such as taking care of members of the family and engaging in household chores are viewed as the responsibilities of women unlike their male counterparts (Beleeza, 2003). Yet, in terms of sharing the family assets such as land the women are discriminated against.

The issue of gender disparity in families is more pronounced among women with disabilities. Females with disability experience dual challenge of being a woman and having a disability. According to Beleeza (2003) there are difficulties women encounter in society and disability in women significantly compound the difficulties. The

disability therefore, further serves as a basis for greater discrimination based on their gender. In the family, women with disabilities are usually looked down upon; they are more prone to domestic violence, physical and sexual abuse as well as neglect (Dutta, 2015). Most of these violence have negative effects on the upbringing of the children. Abbas, Akram and Manzoor (2015) reported that battering cause many psychological problems such as psychological stress, fear and humiliation in the entire family. The gender disparity in families could be addressed through the media.

The media, being the watch dog of the society have a role to play in promoting gender parity within their immediate environment. Research findings indicate that the media have a responsibility to plan and execute campaigns aimed at enhancing gender parity (Ajibua, Oladitan, Oyerinde, & Bewaji, 2013;Trolan 2013; Popa & Gavriiliu 2015; Ashong & Batta, Nwabuzor & Gever 2015). The findings are consistent with the social responsibility theory (Nerone, 1995). According to the tenets of the theory, freedom carries with it a corresponding responsibility which the media must not compromise. (Beleeza, 2003) suggested that the television and cinema are important media that play significant roles in constructing positive image of women with disabilities. Beleeza also suggested that media campaign in form of advertisement and jingles can be used to create awareness and bridge the gender gaps in the family.

Media campaigns are coordinated media efforts geared towards achieving a particular goal. Media campaigns could assume advocacy dimension wherein the audience are persuaded to take a particular action with promised benefits. Gever and Nwabuzor (2014) describe media campaign as strategically planned and coordinated media activities aimed at changing behaviour. Sandman in Day and Monroe (2000), posits that campaigns are designed to increase awareness, inform or change behaviour in target audience. Beleeza (2003) noted that media campaign could be in such areas as education, employment, social policy, participation and access to decision making, sexuality, prejudices and social representation, motherhood, family life and violence. In recognition of the discriminatory practices against women the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006) called for state measures that will safeguard women's full enjoyments of their rights and freedom such as right to education, employment, health care, and a personal life, free of torture, exploitation and violence. These could be achieved through media campaigns. Bragt (2004) holds that media campaigns should focus on the following: how to use the types of media available, how to use existing media in such a way that will give the campaign the maximum effect and how to make best message best suitable. The findings of this study will provide a framework on how the media can enhance gender parity in families in Enugu State. Such a

framework could also be found useful for other countries, especially where there are high cases of gender disparity.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to investigate ways gender parity can be promoted through media campaigns in Enugu State. The study determined:

1. existing media that can be used to promote gender parity in families.
2. approaches media campaign can adopt to promote gender parity in families.
3. areas media campaign should address in order to promote gender parity in families.

Research Questions

This study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the existing media that can be used to promote gender parity in families in Enugu State?
2. What approaches could media campaign adopt to promote gender parity in families in Enugu state?
3. What are the areas media campaigns should address in order to promote gender parity in families?

Methodology

Design of the study: This study adopted descriptive survey research design. A descriptive survey design aims at collecting data on, and describing in a systematic manner, the characteristics, features or facts about a given population. The design was considered suitable and appropriate for the study because it allowed the collection of data from the respondents

on the available media that can be used to promote gender parity in families, the approaches the media campaign can adopt and the areas media campaign should address in order to promote gender parity in the families.

Area of the Study: The study was conducted in Enugu State, Nigeria. The state is among the five states in South East Nigeria. It has 17 Local Government Areas and three senatorial zones. The area shares borders with Abia State and Imo State to the south, Ebonyi State to the east, Benue State to the northeast, Kogi State to the northwest and Anambra State to the west. The state places so much value on male children. A man without male children is considered not to have a future and they would prefer to train a man rather than a woman especially where the resources are meager.

Population of the study: The population of this study was 368 respondents comprising all the registered journalists and lecturers of mass communication in Enugu State. The population of registered journalists in Enugu State is 322 (Enugu Chapel of Nigerian Union of Journalists, 2016). Journalists in Enugu State work in media houses like radio, television, newspapers and magazines. Most of them also studied mass communication at first degree. Journalists in Enugu State are mostly men.

The population of mass communication lecturers in Enugu State was 46 at the time of data collection. These were distributed in the tertiary institutions as follows University of Nigeria Nsukka,

(UNN) 26, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), 10 and Godfrey Okoye University 10 (Academic Planning Unit of the various institutions, 2016). Mass communication lecturers in Enugu State are mostly of Igbo origin. Most of them have higher degrees ranging from masters to doctoral. The population for this study was small and could easily be managed. Therefore, there was no sampling.

Instrument for Data Collection: Questionnaire was used to collect data. it was developed based on the purpose of the study and available literature. It was divided into three sections. Section A focused on existing media that can be used to promote gender parity, section B dealt with approaches the media campaign can take , while Section C focused on areas the media campaign should address in order to promote gender parity in families. The response format was a 4- point rating scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA, 4 points), Agree (A, 3 points) Disagree (D, 2 points) and strongly Disagree (SD,

1 point). The questionnaire was face-validated by five experts in Mass Communication, Sociology of Education and Special Education . The coefficient of internal consistency .78 .87 and 0.89 for Sections A, B and C respectively using Cronbach Alpha. These results show that the instrument was reliable.

Method of Data Collection: A total of 368 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents by hand. Only 322 copies were distributed to the journalists while 46 copies were given to lecturers. Journalists returned 284 copies while lecturers returned 41 copies totaling 325 copies. This represents 88% return rate.

Method of Data analysis: Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. An item with a mean response of 2.50 and above was accepted while an item below 2.50 was rejected.

Results

The results of this study are presented below.

Table 1: Mean Responses on Existing Media that could be Used to Promote Gender Parity in Families in Enugu State

| S/No | Existing Media | \bar{x}_j | SD _j | \bar{x}_L | SD _L | Remarks |
|------|-------------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|---------|
| 1 | Radio | 3.12 | 0.72 | 3.25 | 0.62 | Agree |
| 2 | Television | 3.25 | 0.67 | 3.54 | 0.67 | Agree |
| 3 | Newspaper | 2.71 | 0.66 | 3.72 | 0.96 | Agree |
| 4 | Magazine | 3.54 | 0.93 | 3.45 | 0.56 | Agree |
| 5 | Facebook | 3.68 | 0.73 | 3.37 | 0.86 | Agree |
| 6 | Twitter | 2.77 | 0.61 | 2.61 | 0.61 | Agree |
| 7 | Blogs | 2.83 | 1.02 | 2.99 | 1.03 | Agree |
| 8 | WhattsApp | 3.67 | 1.23 | 3.58 | 1.25 | Agree |
| 9 | Instagram | 2.62 | 0.65 | 2.84 | 0.75 | Agree |
| | Grand Mean | 3.01 | | 2.71 | | |

\bar{x}_j - Journalist's mean responses; SD_j - Journalist's standard deviation; \bar{x}_L - Lecturer's mean responses; SD_L - Lecturer's standard deviation

Table I reveals that the respondents agreed on the items presented in the table above on the available media that can be used to promote gender parity in families in Enugu State. This is because all the items had mean scores of 2.5 and above.

Table 2: Mean Responses on Approaches Media Campaign Can Adopt To Promote Gender Parity in Families in Enugu State.

| S/No | Approaches | \bar{x}_j | SD _j | \bar{x}_L | SD _L | Remarks |
|------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|---------|
| 1 | Jingles | 2.91 | 0.94 | 3.05 | 0.27 | Agree |
| 2 | Children's programmes | 3.17 | 0.76 | 3.94 | 0.86 | Agree |
| 3 | Interviews | 3.27 | 0.49 | 2.68 | 0.68 | Agree |
| 4 | Advertisements | 3.18 | 0.93 | 3.28 | 0.81 | Agree |
| 5 | Caller tunes | 3.37 | 0.54 | 3.57 | 0.74 | Agree |
| 6 | Cartoons | 3.59 | 0.76 | 2.69 | 0.36 | Agree |
| 7 | Illustrations | 3.22 | 0.75 | 2.63 | 0.95 | Agree |
| 8 | Discussions | 2.76 | 0.67 | 2.96 | 0.57 | Agree |
| 9 | Films | 2.78 | 0.67 | 2.91 | 0.88 | Agree |
| 10 | Drama | 2.67 | 0.59 | 3.54 | 0.77 | Agree |
| | Grand Mean | 2.82 | | 3.13 | | |

\bar{x}_j - Journalist's mean responses; SD_j - Journalist's standard deviation; \bar{x}_L - Lecturer's mean responses; SD_L - Lecturer's standard deviation

Table 2 indicates that the respondents agree that jingles, children's programme, interviews, advertisements, Caller tunes, Illustrations, discussions, films and drama are approaches that media campaign can adopt to promote gender parity in families. All the items have mean ratings above 2.50.

Table 3: Areas Media campaign should address in order to promote gender parity in families

| S/No | Media campaign should | \bar{x}_j | SD _j | \bar{x}_L | SD _L | Remarks |
|------|---|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|---------|
| 1 | Promote sex education to empower girls to make wise decisions in sexual matters | 2.38 | 0.91 | 3.15 | 0.92 | Agree |
| 2 | Discourage all forms of neglect against women including those with disabilities | 3.23 | 0.71 | 3.42 | 0.76 | Agree |
| 3 | Educate the public on the benefits of gender parity in family | 2.77 | 0.99 | 2.66 | 0.89 | Agree |
| 4 | Project the rights of women in the families | 3.52 | 0.83 | 3.34 | 0.63 | Agree |
| 5 | Discourage all forms of abuse against women including those with disabilities | 3.73 | 0.84 | 3.57 | 0.94 | Agree |
| 6 | Discourage negative cultural practices against women like denial of rights to inheritance | 3.78 | 0.66 | 2.85 | 0.96 | Agree |
| 7 | Portray positive image of women with disabilities and not just the problem surrounding their disabilities | 2.92 | 0.55 | 2.53 | 0.65 | Agree |
| 8 | Participation and access to decision making by women in the family | 2.74 | 0.67 | 2.95 | 0.67 | Agree |
| 9 | Display the achievements of women with disabilities | 2.63 | 0.67 | 2.98 | 0.69 | Agree |
| | Grand Mean | 2.86 | | 2.94 | | |

\bar{x}_j - Journalist's mean responses; SD_j - Journalist's standard deviation; \bar{x}_L - Lecturer's mean responses; SD_L - Lecturer's standard deviation

Table 3 reveals that the areas media campaign should adopt to promote gender parity in families. The respondents agree that the media campaign should address areas such as girl child education, sexuality. Participation and access to decision making in families, sexuality, abuse of women. All the items had mean scores that was up to 2.5 which is within the acceptable benchmark for the study.

Discussion of Findings

The result of this study revealed the existing media that can be used to promote gender parity in families. These include the use of radio, television, newspaper, magazines, face book, twitter , blogs, whatsapp and instagram. The findings of this study is similar to some previous studies (Ajibua, Oladitan, Oyerinde, & Bewaji, 2013;Trolan 2013; Popa & Gavriiliu 2015; Ashong & Batta, Nwabuzor & Gever, 2015) that have reported that the media occupy a central place in promoting gender parity generally. Rousso (2003) also noted that the media can be used to change cultural and parental attitudes towards girls especially those with disabilities. They noted that in India the media has been used to successfully portray positive images of women with disabilities. In other countries such as Egypt and Lebanon the use of media in promoting gender parity is also practiced (Nagata, 2003). In line with the above, Beleeza (2003) found that television and cinema are important media outfits that can be used to promote gender parity. Dutta (2015)

also views the media as a good platform for creating awareness of the general public on the various challenges and discriminations against women with disability on the grounds of gender and disability. Thus Dutta asserts that the media can do this through visual representations, arts, advertisements and language. The media will create a platform to discourage all forms of gender disparity in the Nigerian society and particularly Enugu State while making a case for gender parity and mainstreaming. Meekosha, (2004) noted that in families women with disabilities are more likely to be divorced, more likely not to be married, more likely to experience sexual violence and are more likely to be seen as hypersexual. These are issues the media will address. Gever (2016) argues that good combination of the existing media is a vibrant strategy for successful media campaigns.

The result further showed that in order to promote gender parity in the families in Enugu State the media campaign can adopt the following approaches jingles, children's programme, interviews, advertisements, callertunes, cartoons, illustrations, discussion, films and drama. The result of this study is in consonance with the findings of Beleeza (2003) who found that the media can use approaches such as advertisements and jingles to promote gender parity in families. Beleeza further stressed that the media is an important tool that can disseminate information and create awareness programmes on gender

parity and convey the message that women with disabilities are in charge of their own lives and they have abilities irrespective of their disabilities. Through television and radio discussion programmes as well as drama the rights of women in families can be discussed. Through drama also, violence, and neglect of women including those with disabilities can be criticized and cultural practices which are discriminatory tackled. These approaches would create awareness on those cultural practices that promote gender disparity in families and through these avenues people's attitude can be less discriminatory especially in families. The result of this study is also consistent with that of Dutta, (2015) who reported that illustrations and other media contents are capable of promoting gender parity.

The results also showed that the media campaign should address sex education, all forms of abuse and neglect against women, benefits of gender parity in homes, rights of women in families, negative cultural practices against women. It should also portray positive image of women with disabilities, their participation and access to decision making and the achievements of women including those with disabilities. This finding is in line with most of the areas Beleeza (2003) outlined as crucial areas for the status of women. Beleeza outlined such areas as education, employment, social policy, participation and access to decision making, sexuality, prejudices and social representation, motherhood, family and domestic life and violence.

This finding is also in conformity with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006) which call for measures that will safeguard women's full enjoyments of their rights and freedom such as right to education, employment, health care, and a personal life, free of torture, exploitation and violence. Addressing these areas could change the values and belief systems of the people and transform gender disparity, addressing such issues such as education, violence and safety, abuse and neglect and sexuality.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that the media can promote gender parity in families to a large extent. The media can play a major role in promoting gender parity and discouraging families from discriminating among themselves on the basis of gender. The society is advancing and more and more people are clamoring for gender equality as party of human rights. People should therefore, not be discriminated against on the basis of their gender. People should be perceived first, as human being born equal and with all the rights and privileges irrespective of any form of disability. The basic contribution of this study is that it has provided practical steps on ways the media can promote gender parity in families. This guide, when implemented could help reduce cases of gender disparity in families with its attendant negative consequences.

Recommendations

based on the findings of this study the following recommendations:

1. The media should ensure that some of their programmes address issues that promote gender parity in families
2. Media messages on promotion of gender parity in families should be persuasive and educating enough to achieve the intended aim.
3. The social media should be used to promote gender parity in homes

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