

## Gender Representation in Communication Education and Practice in Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT** In Nigeria, and perhaps in many countries in Africa and the world, gender may neither be equally represented nor fairly portrayed in communication education and practice. This makes finding answers to the following questions critical: What is the participation of women and men in communication training and education in Nigeria? What is the involvement of men and women in the media of mass communication? A survey of the communications training institutions and industry provides the answers. The discourse is anchored on the hegemonic masculinity theory and the agenda setting hypothesis. Its thesis is that gender sensitivity in communication scholarship and artistry is germane to the realization of human rights, alleviation of poverty, and other millennium development goals. The conclusion and position of this paper is that for communication educators and practitioners to add significant value to the ideal of gender justice in Africa, they must cast off the toga of masculine hegemony; and thereby position themselves as major change agents and advocates of gender equity.

### INTRODUCTION

Generally speaking, gender issues have for some time now become important aspects of discourse globally. The reason for the surge in interest among lay people and scholars in gender discourse has been the perceived and observable disparities, inequities, and injustice concerning the relations between the sexes in society.

In many parts of the world, discussion and debates have raged regarding gender participation in politics, economic empowerment of men and women, female reproductive rights, gender violence, sexual harassment and rape, and social integration of gender groups in society. Also, related matters tackle problems such as equal opportunity employment, dangerous cultural practices against women, male child preference, women labour and trafficking and social discrimination.

UNESCO (1981) through the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems notes that equal rights for women, and full participation for women in all spheres of social life are necessary for the holistic development of a country, the welfare of the world, and the cause of peace. Having noted this, UNESCO regrets that, "of all the violations of human rights,

the most systematic, widespread, and entrenched is the denial of equality to women" (p.189).

From the above, it is apparent that when matters of gender are discussed, we invariably slide into the domination of women by men, the injustices faced by women, and the inequities that attend women in society. UNESCO cited above, distills for us the following problems:

- There is no country in the world where women have achieved full equality.
- Women are treated as a minority group, disadvantaged, and powerless whereas they make up half of the population.
- Women bear the brunt of poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy more than do men.
- Women's access to education, social participation, and communication is impeded by traditions, prejudices instigated sometimes by social customs and religion, and discriminatory laws.
- Women are not given sufficient opportunity to achieve economic independence, social security and a proper consciousness of their own value.
- In general terms, women tend to be confined to a subordinate part in public life though a few have excelled as politicians, academics, professionals, and entrepreneurs.
- Women still find it tough in gaining acceptance for elective political posts while men continue to dominate in political parties, trade unions, institutions, and businesses.
- Media professionals who deal with impor-

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tant issues and political events are overwhelmingly men. Though increasing number of women work in media organizations, they are mostly production and continuity assistants while those who take broad decisions as proprietors, editors, directors, and managers are men.

- Public attitudes pertaining to the role of women in society mainly determine decisions on the status of women. Whereas the media exert powerful influences on these attitudes, they hardly portray women as major contributors to work, careers, and public life.
- The media pay inadequate attention to issues that are particularly significant to women. Women are portrayed in print and in broadcasting as self-deprecating and dependent, irrational, superstitious, and over-emotional. On the whole, the impact of the depiction of women in the media does worsen prejudices and stereotypes and heightens existing inequalities.

About thirty years after these research-backed observations were made, has any thing changed? We are going to attempt to situate the answer to this question in Nigeria. First, let us be clear about the objectives of this article.

### Objectives

This paper intends to meet the following objectives:

- (1) Highlight the relevant theoretical framework that underpins the discussion of gender participation in communication education and practice in Nigeria.
- (2) Review existing literature on gender, communication, and development to assist in clarifying the concepts and issues.
- (3) Show the level of gender participation and involvement in communication education and practice in Nigeria.
- (4) Determine whether there has been any significant change in the portrayal of gender in the world's media of mass communication.
- (5) Suggest a gender mainstreaming agenda in communication training and practice for the 21st Century Nigeria.

### Research Questions

In line with some of the stated objectives, particularly objectives numbers three and four,

this paper attempts to provide answers to the following research questions:

- (1) What is the involvement of men and women in communication education in Nigeria?
- (2) What is the level of participation of men and women in communication practice in Nigeria?
- (3) How are women and men currently portrayed in the media of mass communication?
- (4) Has there been any significant change in the portrayal of gender in the media of mass communication?
- (5) What suggestions can be offered to mainstream gender into communication education and practice in Nigeria?

### Literature Review

The place of gender in development is not in doubt. Lanahun (2003: 72) states that, gender is a significant social factor because it influences the interpretation of experience. She adds that, "beliefs regarding gender appropriate behaviour do not only influence how men and women perceive each other but also affect their communication behaviour."

Citing Robert (1997), Lanahun explains that gender is socially constructed, not biologically determined. Accordingly, terms like 'masculine' and 'feminine' are used to reflect social constructions of gender, while 'male' and 'female' are used as biological terms to depict sex. What this means is that gender depends not on biology but on ideology and material culture. Conceptualizing the term gendering, Lanahun (2003) states that it:

- Involves the acquisition of social characteristics of masculinity and femininity through a very intricate set of processes dealing with psychological events and enculturation from birth to adulthood.
- Goes on throughout life where children learn the roles and responsibilities expected from girls and boys and in which they are raised as feminine and masculine respectively.
- Is apparent that the masculine gender is generally more socially rated than the feminine gender. This tends to result in a situation where women experience a lower status than men. Among the Hausa, seven ululations are reportedly used to welcome a new born male while three are sufficient for the new born girl.

The summary of the above insights is that

gendering is a social phenomenon. It is learned, and that the process tilts in favour of men. Now let us turn our attention to two important aspects of development - education and communication - and see how gender issues and problems impinge on them.

### **Gender and Education**

As in many areas, gender disparities are glaring in the education sector. Bunyi (2003: 1) has documented the huge gap existing between the number of males and females who are enrolled in schools. Concentrating on higher education, she states that:

There are three dimensions to the problem of low enrolments for female students compared to that of males: overall, low enrolments; even lower enrolments at higher degree levels and in science, mathematics and technology subjects. Research studies have analyzed and documented these gender inequities in different countries.

Bunyi identifies several constraints to women's enrolment in tertiary institutions. The major ones include: inadequate qualified female candidates to join tertiary institutions, insufficient places in tertiary institutions, women unfriendly tertiary education environment (owing to lack of mechanism for dealing with sexual harassment for example). Others include: insufficient female role models, socio-cultural values, beliefs, and practices that militate against the education of girls and high rate of unemployment of tertiary education graduates.

In addressing these problems, Bunyi (2003) outlines interventions such as affirmative action through lower admission cut off points for females and remedial courses. The second interventionist measure deals with combating sexual harassment and gender violence, establishment of women/gender studies/programmes/centres/departments and increasing the number and raising the levels of women academics and administrators through development of gender equity in employment policies, establishment of equal opportunity offices and increasing the quantity and quality of women postgraduate students to increase women in faculty and university management. The third intervention deals with gender sensitization through mobilization, communication, and advocacy. The fourth intervention involves the establishment of outreach programmes. The fifth way to intervene is through

the expansion of tertiary places by putting up women only universities, private universities, and non-fee paying programmes in public universities. The sixth form of intervention deals with addressing the relevance of tertiary education programmes to make them responsive to the needs of the economy.

In furtherance of the gender and education discourse, Para-Mallam (2009) underscores the imperative of gender mainstreaming and states that it is predicated on the gender and development analytical and policy framework. Citing Mazey (2001), she defines gender mainstreaming as a multifaceted, holistic and long term strategy of integrating gender perspectives into all public policies in order to achieve equality between men and women in and beyond the workplace. Following through from this, gender mainstreaming in the educational sector, according to Para-Mallam (2009), citing Leo-Rhynie (1999), is the consistent use of a gender perspective at all stages of the development and implementation of policies, plans, programmes and projects. In the education sector, this would include not only the activities of governments, but also those of schools, colleges, and educational institutions, and where appropriate, those of NGOs and the private sector as well. Mainstreaming gender differs from previous efforts to integrate women's concerns into government activities in that rather than 'adding on' a women's component to existing policies, plans, programmes and projects, a gender perspective informs these at all stages, and in every aspect of the decision-making process gender mainstreaming may thus entail a fundamental transformation of the underlying paradigms that inform education.

To increase the likelihood of gender equity in society; budgeting, at government, non-governmental and institutional levels must be gender responsive. Nigerian government, as Para-Mallam (2008) points out, ignores gender disparities in access to socio-economic benefits and resources and disregards women and girls' unpaid work and that state agencies charged with the responsibility for promoting women's interests receive disproportionately low allocations. To illustrate the point, she states that the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs has been under-funded to the tune of between 0.02 percent and 0.08 percent of the annual national budget from 1995 to 2004.

Gender budgeting according Ityavyar (2009: 1) citing UNESCO (1997) is,

*an aspect of gender mainstreaming defined as the process of assessing the implementation for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, and programmes in any areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral part in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and social spheres so women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.*

What we have stated thus far is that gender mainstreaming is an important way of reducing the disparities between the genders in the education sector and several interventions, curriculum restructuring, and gender budgeting are necessary solutions to the problems.

### Gender and Communication

In the preceding paragraphs we have seen how gender fares in the education sector particularly higher education in Nigeria. Is the situation different in the communication sector? It does not appear so. Okunna (2002) has observed that in Nigeria men produce an overwhelming portion of mass media messages. Citing GMMP (2000), she states that a staggering 95 percent of journalists reporting the news in Nigerian organs of mass communication were male. This she adds is reflective of what is happening in the rest of the world. Quoting figures from the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP 2000) we are informed that in Africa, male reporters account for 76 percent while the females make up 24 percent. In Asia, 69 percent are men while 31 percent are women. In Europe, female reporters make up 34 percent while males constitute 66 percent. And in North America, male reporters constitute 64 percent while females make up the remaining 36 percent. These data show that female journalists hardly make up half the number of media professionals anywhere in the world.

Considering other studies conducted by Okunna and her associates, the following insights can be drawn:

- Of the 101 reporters whose by-lines appeared in 42 news magazine stories, 91 percent were male while nine percent were

female. Pate (1994) observes a similar trend much earlier in his study of the status of women in Nigerian broadcast media.

- A disproportionate 86 percent of people in the news were male while women accounted for a mere 14 percent.
- Of the 61 photographs that appeared on the covers of the news magazines studied, a mere 10 percent of photographs were those of women and of 263 photographs which accompanied full news reports, only 11 percent were photos of women.
- In product advertising, of the 95 product advertisements that used photos of women, 35 percent showed them in domestic settings while 33 percent used their photographs on the background as mere decoration.
- With regard to women in Nigerian home video films, Okunna notes that, their preoccupation is still to focus on such themes as women's quest for husbands, childlessness, polygamy, materialism, etc. to bring out the worst in women. Aghadiegwu (2008) reaches similar conclusions in his study of the portrayal of women in Nigerian television commercials.
- Turning attention to book publishing, Okunna citing Okoye (1994) concludes that research evidence shows that Nigerian children were being taught from an early age to view women as unimportant and inferior by mentioning and illustrating with more boys than girls in texts, depicting women in stereotypical roles, and by non representation of women in important and serious occupations.

As noted earlier, the marginalization of women by the media is a global problem - what Media Awareness Network (2009) calls 'a worldwide phenomenon.' The network quotes Louise Armstrong as stating that what women suffer is more insidious than invisibility. It is deliberate erasure. To buttress this assertion, Media Awareness Network (2009), points out that, firstly, most mainstream press coverage continues to rely on men as experts in the field of business, politics, and economics. Secondly, they feature women in more stories about accidents, natural disasters, or domestic violence than in stories about their professional expertise. Thirdly, women's views were solicited mainly in the framework of 'average citizen' and seldom as experts. The depictions of political and economic successes

were largely masculine. Fourthly, in a study of the news coverage of women and women issues in 70 countries, a paltry 18 percent of stories quote women and the number of women-related stories totaled a mere 10 percent. Fifth, in sports coverage, women athletes are said to be given short shrift in the media. Sports commentators (who are mostly men) are said to describe male athletes as “big”, “strong”, “aggressive” while their female counterparts are characterized as, “weary,” “fatigued,” “frustrated,” “panicked,” and “vulnerable”. Lastly, sports photographs are increasingly capturing female athletes in what is called “hyper-sexualized poses”.

Concerning gender participation in the news media, Media Awareness Network (2009: 1) reveals that a 2001 study by the International Federation of Journalists reported that 38 percent of all working journalists were women. Very significantly, other studies conducted by the Canadian Newspaper Association observe that of the 43 percent of women employees, eight percent were editors-in-chief and 12 percent publishers. Women employed in the sector are likely to work in “pink collar ghettos”. The Network observes that, “men continue to occupy approximately 75 percent of the positions of power in the mass media. And the prospects become bleaker for women as they climb the corporate ladder.”

One important aspect of this discourse that must not be overlooked is the relationship between gender and the cyberspace. In “Gendering the Internet: claims, controversies, and cultures,” Zoonen (2005: 255) poses the question: “how does gender influence internet communication, contents, and use and - the other way around - how do internet communication, contents, and use impact upon gender”.

To answer this question, Zoonen traces the evolution of thought in this area noting that feminist authors reclaimed the internet as a technology close to the core qualities of femininity. Along with other cyberfeminists, Zoonen continues to contend that the internet allowed a transgression of the dichotomous categories of male and female, constructing transgender or even genderless human identities and relations.

Zoonen’s conclusion is that interpretations of the internet as masculine, feminine or even transgender are based on limited conceptualizations of both gender and technology. He predicts that in the future, the Internet is expected to be an ordinary extension of every com-

munication technology – television, mobile phone, radio, etc. and even refrigerator, microwave, and washing machine. To him, these appliances have their own gendered use and gender codes which will lead to fresh and differed articulations of gender with the Internet.

In Nigeria, what can be said about gender use of ICT is that the dismal nature of IT infrastructure, and the deprivations women face in the areas of literacy, numeracy, education, employment, and other aspects of social and economic empowerment further restrict their ICT use (M’ Bayo et al. 2008; Uzochukwu 2008; Sanda 2009).

### Theoretical Framework

We will anchor this discourse on gender representation in communication education and practice on three related theories: the media cultural theory, the notions of hegemony and patriarchy, and the agenda setting theory.

According to McQuail (2005:121), media-cultural theory is concerned with the content of mass media, the context of production and reception, and with all the surrounding practices. McQuail adds that the themes of media-cultural theory include communication technology effects, gender and subculture ideology and hegemony among others. A critical aspect of the gender and mass media matrix is the, “part played by the media in transmitting a patriarchal ideology concerning the place of women in society.” As McQuail points out, the question of gender touches almost all aspects of the media-culture relationship - from the question of gender definition, to the struggle over the differential value attaching to masculinity and to femininity, to gendering of content. On the whole then, the relationship between gender and media leads to the conclusion that, media have marginalized women in the public sphere, media purvey stereotypes of sex roles, production and content of the media are gendered, reception of media is gendered, female alternative offers alternative criteria of quality and; that the personal is political” (McQuail 2005: 124).

Embedded in the media-cultural theory is the notion of patriarchy. To Para-Mallam (2009: 6) who cites Tobin (1985) and Aluko (1999) there is a link between patriarchy and gender inequality. The link is that,

*Patriarchy...assumes the alienation of*

women. It places the male on the centre of reality and makes the masculine normative... where patriarchy as a worldview is in operation, symbols, rituals, and laws will perpetuate fundamental inequality).

This explanation is in alignment with Leo-Rhynes' (1999) definition cited by Para-Mallam (2009: 6) that patriarchy is, "the process whereby societal power is generally rested in men and the various structures of society consistently assign inferior and/or secondary roles to women." What this means is that the under representation of women in the media, or their invisibility, the trivialization, personalization, and sensationalism in line with dominant stereotypes are reflective of patriarchal tendencies.

Also, the agenda setting theory really is a vehicle for the media promotion and reduction of gender inequities. It is a mechanism through which the media place issues of salience before the media audience through content generation, placement and dissemination. By continuing to place male-dominated content, gender justice is delayed. By placing gender equitable content, gender equity is promoted.

## METHOD

To determine gender participation in communication education and practice in Nigeria, the study elected a survey research technique to attain the objectives of the study and thus provide answers to the research questions posed. The population of the study consisted of 28 federal, state, and private universities where communication scholars are trained and where communication educators work. The intention was to find out through telephone interviews the number of male students compared to female students enrolled in the institutions. The second intention was to determine the number of female instructors compared to male instructors in the institutions. The third intention was to find out whether gender has been mainstreamed into the communication curriculum. A second set of population consisted of five major professional bodies to which media professionals belong. These included the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN), Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), and the Guild of Editors. Through telephone interviews with

officials of the bodies, the study sought data on the number of female professionals in their membership compared to their male counterparts. It also attempted to find out the gender distribution of the groups' leadership.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Gender Participation in Communication Education in Nigeria

To determine the participation of the male and female gender in communication education in Nigeria, the study conducted a census of universities where communication studies are undertaken. This consisted of 10 federal universities, 10 state universities, and eight private universities. The study did not cover polytechnics, pre degree programmes, and postgraduate studies. It limited its scope to the Nigerian Universities Commission's (NUC) regulated communication programmes in universities where data are easily obtainable. Of the 28 institutions surveyed, complete data could not be obtained from three private universities and one state university.

Table 1 shows that of the total of 11,313 communication students enrolled in the 23 universities surveyed, males accounted for 4,515 or 39.91 percent while females constituted the majority, that is, 6,798 or 60.09 percent. What that means is that there are more females studying communication in Nigerian universities. In response therefore to research question one about the involvement of men and women in communication education in Nigeria, Table 1 shows that as it concerns enrollment in communication programmes in Nigerian universities, women outnumber men by a margin of 20.18 percent or a ratio of 2:3.

Table 2 shows that of a total of 342 communication educators found in Nigerian universities, a greater number 269 or 78.65 percent are males while only 73 or 21.35 percent are females. In line with research question one which investigates the participation of men and women in communication education, the table indicates that a lot more men than women are teachers. In fact, male communication educators outstrip their female counterparts by as much as 57.3 percent. Combinations of Tables 1 and 2 show that while communication students are mostly females, their teachers are overwhelmingly males.

**Table 1: Male and female communication students in Nigerian Universities**

S. No.	Universities	Male students		Female students		Total
		No.	%	No.	%	
1	Ahmadu Bello, Zaria	231	31.91	493	68.09	724
2	Bayero, Kano	240	54.05	204	45.95	444
3	Fut Yola	480	60	320	40	800
4	Nnamdi Azikiwe, Awka	92	35.52	167	64.48	259
5	Ibadan, Ibadan	62	30.09	144	69.91	206
6	Lagos, Akoka	86	31.33	172	66.67	258
7	Nigeria, Nsukka	312	45.41	375	54.59	687
8	Maiduguri	119	39.40	183	60.60	302
9	Port Harcourt	387	40.61	566	59.39	953
10	Uyo	97	32.44	202	67.56	299
11	Anambra State, Uli	324	32.70	667	67.30	991
12	Benue State	372	47.81	406	52.19	778
13	Cross River State	337	66.73	168	33.27	505
14	Delta State	50	38.17	81	61.83	131
15	Imo State	52	20	208	80	260
16	Kogi State	88	39.46	135	60.54	223
17	Olabisi Onabanjo, Ogun	710	37.77	1170	62.23	1880
18	Lagos State	247	35.54	448	64.46	695
19	Nassarawa State	108	47.58	119	52.42	227
20	Rivers State	-	-	-	-	-
21	Ajayi Crowther	-	-	-	-	-
22	Babcock	58	20.14	230	79.86	288
23	Benson Idohosa	-	-	-	-	-
24	Bingham	22	18.49	97	81.51	119
25	Bowen	-	-	-	-	-
26	Covenant	26	11.11	208	88.89	234
27	Jubilee	15	30	35	70	50
28	Redeemer	-	-	-	-	-
Total		4,515	39.91	6,798	60.09	11,313

### Mainstreaming Gender in Communication Training in Nigeria

It is worthy of note that with regard to the issue of the communication curriculum containing components or aspects of gender studies or gender communication, the study found out that only the Department of Mass Communication, Ahmadu Bello University offered a course in Women and Media. University of Lagos reported that it embeds gender issues in a variety of courses taught at the undergraduate level. Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka on its part reported that gender communication features prominently in its postgraduate programmes. In addition to this, at the university-wide level, the University of Jos, Benue State University, University of Ibadan and the University of Lagos do have or are in the process of establishing gender policy units or gender studies centres in their universities. Besides these token efforts, universities in Nigeria are still a far cry in terms of gender mainstreaming and gender justice and equity. For instance, of the 28 universities polled, it is

only at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka that the Head of the Department of Mass Communication is female.

### Gender Participation in Communication Practice in Nigeria

Communication practitioners in Nigeria are registered and found in several professional bodies, namely, the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), Guild of Editors, Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN) and Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON). How many men and women are found in these groups? Let us examine Table 3.

Table 3 shows that out of a total of 34,872 practitioners registered to practice communication related careers in Nigeria as journalists, broadcasters, public relations people, editors, advertising professionals, and newspaper/magazine proprietors, 23,444 or 67.23 percent are males. On the other hand, 11,428 of the total number representing 32.77 percent are females.

**Table 2: Male and female communication teachers in Nigerian Universities**

S. No.	Universities	Male teachers		Female teachers		Total
		No.	%	No.	%	
1	Ahmadu Bello, Zaria	20	80	5	20	25
2	Bayero, Kano	17	80.95	4	19.05	21
3	Fut Yola	12	92.31	1	7.69	13
4	Nnamdi Azikiwe, Awka	7	58.33	5	41.67	12
5	Ibadan, Ibadan	9	64.30	5	35.70	14
6	Lagos, Akoka	8	61.54	5	38.46	13
7	Nigeria, Nsukka	13	86.67	2	13.33	15
8	Maiduguri	12	92.31	1	7.69	13
9	Port Harcourt	21	70	9	30	30
10	Uyo	15	83.33	3	16.67	18
11	Anambra State, Uli	10	90.91	1	9.09	11
12	Benue State	13	92.86	1	7.14	14
13	Cross River State	19	95	1	5	20
14	Delta State	13	86.67	2	13.33	15
15	Imo State	12	85.71	2	14.29	14
16	Kogi State	4	80	1	20	5
17	Olabisi Onabanjo, Ogun	12	80	3	20	15
18	Lagos State	19	86.36	3	13.64	22
19	Nassarawa State	6	100	0	0	6
20	Rivers State	-	-	-	-	-
21	Ajayi Crowther	-	-	-	-	-
22	Babcock	7	70	3	30	10
23	Benson Idohosa	-	-	-	-	-
24	Bingham	4	80	1	20	5
25	Bowen	3	27.27	8	72.73	11
26	Covenant	8	57.14	6	42.86	14
27	Jubilee	5	83.33	1	16.67	6
28	Redeemer	-	-	-	-	-
Total		269	78.65	73	21.35	342

**Table 3: Male and female communication practitioners in Nigeria**

Professional bodies	Male members		Female members		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
Nigeria Union of Journalists	17,000	68	8,000	32	25,000
Guild of Editors	260	77.84	78	22.16	334
Nign Inst of Public Relations	4,500	60	3,000	40	7,500
Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria	24	88.81	3	11.11	27
Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria	1,660	82.54	351	17.46	2011
Total	23,444	67.23	11,428	32.77	34,872

In other words, male practitioners outnumber their female counterparts by 12,016 or 34.46 percent margin. At the Guild of Editors where there was an 18 person strong executive, only one was a woman. In the NIPR, of the 22 member executive council only three were women. Also, in the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria with a 14 member executive, none was female. And then, at APCON with a 21 member executive council, only two were females.

These data when summed up show clearly that:

- (1) Women outnumber men as students of communication studies in Nigeria.
- (2) Men form the bulk of communication educators in Nigeria.
- (3) Communication curricular in Nigeria carried an insignificant content with regard to gender communication or gender education.
- (4) The leadership of communication academies is almost totally in the hands of men.
- (5) Men significantly outnumber women in all facets of communication practice - journalism, broadcasting, public relations, and advertising.
- (6) The leadership of professional communication bodies resides virtually with men.

- (7) The review of literature done earlier in this article shows that women are still being portrayed in less than complimentary fashion in the media.

This study relates to the one conducted by *Sacharika Samuha* (Forum of Women Communicator) in Nepal in 2006. The report noted that the participation of women as compared to men was unsatisfactory. According to Ohmynews (2006), women constituted only 7.6 percent of Nepalese media. Of these, 75 percent work in the private media whereas only 25 percent work in government media. As a way out, the study suggested that media houses become more gender sensitive from the outset, give priority to women and provide training and opportunities to enhance their capability and professionalism. Importantly, the report added that a gender friendly environment and physical infrastructure should be created, women assigned to report mainstream stories such as politics, conflict, and others and empowered with programmes to make them more competitive.

### CONCLUSION

The conclusion that can be drawn from the findings in this study is that whereas women constitute the majority of the gender of those who enroll to train as communicators, the decision pertaining to curriculum, the faculty in the training institutions, the policies guiding the gathering, collation, processing, and dissemination of information and communication knowledge in Nigeria are conceived, articulated, and predominantly implemented by men. This observation clearly appears to negate the principles of gender justice and calls for gender mainstreaming agenda appropriate for a 21st Century Nigeria.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In keeping with the ideal of promoting gender equity in the arena of communication education and practice and in line with the 21st century realities, the following suggestions distilled from Gender Links (2001) and the United Nations Documents Co-operation Circles (2009) seem imperative. The responsibility for enacting this gender communication agenda rests with a multilevel network involving the government, the media system, non-governmental organizations, media professional associations and aca-

dem institutions designated to train communication practitioners:

- (1) Institutions involved in the training of communication practitioners should within the framework of gender mainstreaming adopt and implement policies aimed at addressing the imbalance in the enrolment of students into communication studies. In the same vein, strident attempt should be made through policy engineering to correct the lopsidedness in the engagement of communication teachers.
- (2) To make significant in-roads in the area of gender communication or gender education, the absence of this important aspect of scholarship in the university and communication curricular should be addressed. Apart from instituting functional centres of gender studies and university-wide gender units; gender studies and gender communication courses should be deliberately woven into the courses taught in the universities or as stand alones. The aim is to help down play masculine hegemony, male chauvinism, and disruptive feminism and promote good gender relations, gender equity, and gender justice in society.
- (3) Governments particularly should take steps to promote women's full and equal participation in the media in the aspects of management, programming, education, training, and research. They should aim at gender balance in the appointment of women and men to all advisory, management, regulatory or monitoring bodies whether for private or state media.
- (4) To help reverse the negative portrayal of women in the media, communication stakeholders should initiate gender sensitive training for media professionals, media proprietors, and managers to engender the production and dissemination of non-stereotyped, balanced, and multiple images of women in the media.
- (5) It is very important to gender justice that governments, media firms, media non-governmental organizations, professional bodies, communication training institutions, as well as media regulators take seriously affirmative action policies, and reflect gender balance in recruitment, selection, and in the creation of gender friendly work environment with adequate sexual harassment control policy and family-friendly practices.

- (6) Communication practitioners should take extra care to align their editorial content with the tenets of gender justice especially as it concerns the gender beat, representation, context, portrayal, language, visuals, programming, advertising, and readership/listener/viewer surveys.

We believe that if these recommendations are faithfully implemented by the relevant communications stakeholders, they would be helping in very significant ways in the realization of the millennium development goals particularly goal number three which pertains to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Other researchers may wish to probe why more men work as communication educators and practitioners whereas more women enroll to study communication in Nigeria.

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