GENDER REPRESENTATION IN MEDIA MANAGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Few issues permeate discourse in the world today, than the issues of gender representation, portrayal and empowerment in the society. Studies on the portrayal of women, gender representation, mis-representation and under-representation abound in the media [Ikem 1996; Bammeke 1996; Signorelli 1998; and Abayomi, 2000]. ‘Findings from numerous studies have revealed that the media have direct impact on our lives, with the power to shape and mould our opinions on issues, people and events.

Thus, media organizations and its practitioners exercise control over the flow and direction of information (content, text, meanings) that is transmitted and disseminated to the mass of the people, through which they make meanings and understanding of themselves and interpretations from their environment. The media have become the strong force through which public opinion is processed, shaped and formed; the process through which identity and images are shaped and formed, and the public sphere through which issues, people and events are (re)presented - the media have become the major vehicle of representation in the society.

Wood (1996:23) posits that:

…of the many influences on how we view men and women, media are the most pervasive and one of the most powerful. Woven throughout our daily lives, media insinuate their messages into our consciousness at every turn. All forms of media communicate images of the sexes, many of which perpetuate unrealistic, stereotypical and limiting perceptions.

As the major source of information, the public sphere discourse of issues and events for people and the spectrum of access to and for ‘all’ in the world, the media is one, if not the major platform through which we interact and make meanings of other people- (race, gender, faith, age, social status...). The pervasiveness of the media enhances it ability to influence and redirect our lives Our world view and perspective of oneself and others is product of media portrayal and coverage.

The media, thus have the capacity to bring people together and the similar background orientation and upbringing and origin; through a shared-meaning of media portrayal and representation, as well as perpetuating and reinforcing stereotypical thoughts and relationship pattern through its content and coverage in the society. McQuail (2005:81) said 'the media can serve to repress as well a to liberate, to unite, as well as to fragment, to promote, as well as to hold bad change'.

There is no doubt that the nature, extent and direction of coverage, the media gives to the people,
places and issues can help to create and perpetuate stereotypes. The production and consumption of reality could be stereotypic News coverage, reporting and broadcasts have slants, which intentionally unintentionally perpetrate stereotypes. "Different kinds of media contents (and their production and use) are also associated with expression of common identity" (Ferguson, 1983, Radway, 1984, cited in McQuail, 2005:123.)

The focus of this paper is to explore, examine and explain the marginality, near absence of women in decision making (power, control and authority process in media organizations, highlighting and discussing the likely factors that are responsible for gender inequality and representation in media organization.

"The correlation between male domination (in power positions, if not always numerically) or virtually all media organization or male-oriented themes or patriarchal values offer prima facie support for the view that greater occupational equality in media would make a difference" (McQuail 2005: 302). Nigerine (1994) concludes the mass media at the heart of the process of communication through which problems are framed and discussed.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The misrepresentation, under-representation and stereotyping of gender have received attention and focus of many studies, with models, paradigms and theories postulated to explain the factors responsible for portrayal and [under]-representation in all forms of media, direction and nature of content and by extension of management of media organization. This study is anchored on two theories: the social learning theory and social structure/cultural theories.

Social Learning Theory was postulated by Bandura (1996) to explain how children and young people acquire and learn behavioural pattern from the media. McQuail (2005:493) explaining Bendura's postulation said, 'the basic idea is that we can not learn all or even much of what we need to guide our own development or behaviour from direct personal observation and experience alone. We have to learn much form indirect sources including the mass media".

Degnova and Rice (2002) averred that the theory emphasized that boys develop 'maleness' and girls 'femaleness' through exposure to scores of influences- including parents, television [mass media], schools and peers- that teach what is to be 'man' or 'woman' in the culture they are brought up They are encouraged to assume the appropriate gender identity by being rewarded ft some behaviour and punished for other (p.140).

Invariably, our conception of our identity, roles, responsibilities and expectatic are innate but are learned and acquired from the socializing agent (parents, school, media... ) in our environment. Our career choice, profession pursuit, style and sense of dressing, meaning, understanding and interpretation social reality is shaped for us by others (socializing agent). We learned fro: childhood the 'expectations' and 'sanctions' imposed on our actions are inactions by gendering, consideration and compliance through agent i socialization (media) which perpetrates stereotype in its content and portrayal.

We accept this reality and live by it. We learn from the media the "long standing cultural ideals of masculinity" and "cultural image of women as dependent ornamental object" (Wood. 1996/ p.24-25). Accordingly, our knowledge opinion, attitudes and choices are learned from media portrayal and
coverage < issues (content) which most times reiterates and, or perpetrates stereotype (Tough)
Decision making are portrayed as the exclusive preserve of men, t representation and demonstration
of 'masculinity', while dependency flexibility are representation and demonstration of 'feminity'. The
fore-going conclusion be attributed to he one if not the underlining factor for women under
representation in media management.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE/CULTURAL THEORIES OF GENDER

According to this school of thought, society supports and perpetuates gender differences and
behaviour. Gen ova and Rice (2004: 141), said "most of the differences between male and female
gender roles are established because of status, power, and division of labour found in most
societies... these power and status differences are related to the differences in the division of labour
between sexes that still exist".

The assumption of the cultural theory perspective is that the society assigns role and responsibilities
(division of labour) based on gender. In a patriarchal society like ours, 'girls' are expected to 'work' at
home with mothers, while 'boys' are expected to 'work' at the farm/yard with the fathers. House
chores (menial task; such as 'washing', 'cooking', and 'sweeping' are the exclusive preserve of girls
while 'tough task' such as 'farming, hunting and dredging' are the exclusive preserve of boys. Besides,
pursuance of academic goals and career choice are predominantly reserved for 'boys'. Society thus,
assigns traditional roles foi people based on gender.

Lipps(1997:55) concludes that:

    The way work is divided between women and men in our own society
    practically guarantees that women will have less control over
    economic resources than men do. Men's greater control over
    economic resources, achieved through better jobs with higher salaries
    and through more continuous participation in the paid labour force,
    creates the expectation that women (and children) will depend on men
    for support. Under these set of expectations, which is communicated
to children long before they understand the economic realities on
which it is based, it is little wonder that girls and boys, women and
men tend to make choices that emphasize different aspect of these
skills, aspirations and preferences. These choices lead males and
females into different types of works, and the cycle repeats itself.
Whatever its source, the division of labour by sex and the parallel
male-female difference in control over resources constitute the gender
difference in behaviour.

Therefore, it is not out of place in any given organization for board of directors and top policy
makers of any organization or institution not to consider women for top management position,
because by experience learning and societal assignment of roles, women are not designed to handle
assignment/position with top level decision making and responsibilities. These are areas reserved for
men.
EMPIRICAL REVIEW

In her study, "Women in Journalism, Ikem (1996) posits that 'Journalism started as an exclusive preserve of men', with salutation phrase of 'Gentlemen of the press' an indication of gender discrimination or exclusion. According to her, women's active involvement in journalism started with the establishment of West Africa Pilot in 1937 by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe. This era marked the foray of women into journalism in Nigeria, with a column 'Milady's Bower' carrying comments and pictures on women.

According to her, women involvement in editorial management was achieved for the first time when Adora Lilly Ulasi and later Theresa Ogunbiyi were appointed by the Sunday Times to edit a page and column devoted to women. She said the years 1950 - 1975 witnessed a proliferation of women in journalism in Nigeria.

Citing Olatunji Dare (1986), Ikem (1996: 190) said Ronke Ajayi was credited to be the first woman to serve as an editor and publisher of Daily Herald in 1931 - 1932.

The year 1980, marked the beginning of the golden era of women in journalism in Nigeria, when Dr. (Mrs.) Doyin Abiola (nee Aboaba) was appointed as the first editor of a National Newspaper, National Concord. From then on, women have made in-road into not only management (Lizzy Ikem, Modupe Ajayi, Rose Umoren, Nkche Nwankwo, Hajia Bilikisu...) and publishing of titles (May Eller Ezekiel - Classique Magazine and Chris Anyanwu - TSM, see Ikern, 199£ p193.).

In his study, 'Women in the Nigeria Media', Abayomi (2003. 41) said, Nigeria has over fourteen decades (140 years) of journalism profession (sic) practice, the first eighty years (1&59 - 1939) of this era were male dominated, for instance Ronke Ajayi was the only woman editor her time having been employed Antu

Williams (later known as Akin Fagbenro Beyioku) as the editor of the Daily Mai in 1931.

According to Abayomi, the years 1940 - 1960 marked a significant era, with the entrance of Nnamdi Azikiwe, whose West African Pilot group provided favourable setting for the emergence of women journalists. He asserted that the appointment of Alhaji Babatutie Jose, as the first Nigerian Managing Director c Daily Times, marked a golden era in the employment, training and empowering of women in journalism in Nigeria. He provided in-house training for women journalists and beneficiaries included the following: Doyin Abiola, Duj Adeogun, Adegbite Ogunsanwo, Aurey Ajose, Peggy Cole and Bisi Adebi (p.41). This era marked the beginning of the glorious era of women foray in journalism practice and management.

In a study, conducted by Akinfeleye (1996) cited in Abayomi (2000), "There 52 journalism (Mass Communication) training institutions offering various programmes from Diploma to Ph.D degree in Mass Communication in Niger; and the finding of his survey revealed that 52% of the students enrolled i female while 48% are male (See Abayomi, p.44). It is important to note that despite the increasing enrolment of women in Journalism and Ma Communication training, the ratio of men to women in Journalism practice Nigeria still remains predominantly patriarchal, dominated by men.
In the same study, Akinfeleye (1996) found out that "there are more male the female journalists in Nigeria". He supported this assertion with data and finding from his study, ‘of the 39 Daily Newspaper, 33 weeklies, 9 Native language weeklies, 39 Radio stations, 44 Television stations, 84 magazines, only on media house, The Concord Press of Nigeria has a female editor-in-chief in person of Dr. (Mrs.) Doyin Abiola. The rest do not have even any female journalist in their top 5 management positions’ (p.48).

Mills (1988) believes that if more women had positions of authority at executive levels, media would offer more positive portrayal of women (cited in Woods. 1997, p.24). The lack of women in the media is paralleled by scarcity of women in charge of media. Only about 5% of television writers, executive and producers are women (Lichter, Lichter and Rotham, 1986- cited in Woods, p.34),

Ironically, while two thirds of Journalism graduates are women, they make up of less than 2% of those in corporate management of newspapers and only about 5% of newspaper publishers (Women in Media, 1988, cited in Woods, p.24; see Akinfeleye, 1996 in Abayomi, 2003).

In a survey of five Nigerian newspapers (This Day, Vanguard, The sun, The Guardian and The Punch), used for this study, of the 13 editors for these titles 85% [11] are male while 15%[2] are female-Gabrielle Osamien[THISDAY] and Remrny Diagbere [VANGUARD] both are of Saturday editions.

One question that should stimulate further enquiry is the factor(s) that inform(s) management decision behind the assignment of Saturday's editions of both titles to women?

In the analysis of editors, of five news magazines also used for this study (Tell, Newswatch, Insider, The News and The Source) 89% [50] of the editors are male while 61% [6] are female. It is important to note that only The Source has a woman as Editor-in-Chief (Chioma Obi), who also is the publisher of the title.

Other women in editorial positions are Adekunbi Ero (Senior Associate Editor and Helen Obi (Associate Editor) in Tell, while Maureen Obigbo (General Editor) and Modupe Ogunbayo (Assistant Editor) are with Newswatch. The foregoing findings and analyses, is a reflection of the patriarchal nature of media industry in Nigeria, heavily dominated and controlled by men. Even in title published by women (The Source), the ratio of men to women is 2:1. There is four men to two women in editorial position.

GENDER REPRESENTATION IN MEDIA ORGANISATION

It has been argued by scholars, authors and media critics that the media operate within particular framework and conventions, and these framework a conventions are used to portray events, people and situation. The framework through which an individual constructs his/her reality. So our patterns of behaviour, attitude, understanding and construction of social reality are a products of the media.

It has also been argue from the political economy perspective that the inherent 'masculinity' in the media industry makes it an ideological means of reproducing and perpetuating patriarchal social relations. Accordingly, Stewart et al (2001 / .35) said 'media representation (continued to follow) certain well established patterns'. News rooms are dominated by men, both in terms of numbers and
The under-representation marginality and near-absence of women in media management could be attributed to the following factors, which are not mutual exclusive.

**OWNERSHIP**

According to McQuail (2005: 86) ‘The media are invariably related in some way to the prevailing structure of political and economic power’. Ownership se 'Breadlines of policy' (p.292) - [appointment, recruitment, promotion an-discipline] media influences the directions and operations of any media organisation. The prevailing economic and power structure within the system c ownership is a major factor, if not the determining factor in the allocation c responsibilities, definition of roles, functions, access and value, and when sue power resides with a major group (economic, political, social or gender), it used to further the interest of such group.

McQuail analysing the Marxist Theory of political economy, said the theory 'posits a direct link between economic ownership and dissemination of messages that affirms the legitimacy and value of a class society' (p. 95). The reality is that most media organisations are owned and, or controlled by "men" thus having control over mental production and construction of social reality.

Johnstone et al (1976) conclude that "in any society those in charge of mass communication tend to come from the same social strata as those in control of economic and political system" (cited in McQuail, p. 300). In nearly all aspect and strata of the society, they are predominantly owned by men. "There is no doubt that owners in a market-based media have power over content (representation) and can ask what they want to be included or left out (women) McQuail 2005: 291).

**AUDIENCE**

Another critical factor is the Audience. From the political economy^ perspective, media organisations are both cultural and economic industries, "The primary product of the media is the audience McQuail, :100) and the media 'deliver audience attention to advertisers' and shape the behaviour of media production content, representation and constitution of reality (Smythe, 1977, cited in McQuaiL2005,$). 100)

Franklin (1997) summation captures it succinctly 'the mass media are first and foremost industrial and commercial organisations which produce and distribute commodities. Consequently, the analysis of media should start from the economic organisation of media'. The composition, nature, structure, values and ideas of the audience as a major factor and influences production and distribution of content in this industry - majority of media users are mostly men, and that is why most media content are male -oriented, upholding patriarchal values. Men are the major consumers of the main media content - news, sports, entertainment, drama and advertising. They have the purchasing power for media advertisers and media organisations.

McQuaiL (Ibid) concludes that 'effort should be made at attracting more female readers to the press growing purchasing power of women will lead to 'feminizing' trends (in the media) perhaps independent of number women employed or their degree of management responsibility (p. 303).
INFLUENCE OF ADVERTISERS

Most free-market media are finely tuned to jointly maximising the needs of their advertisers and their own interest as a normal condition of operation. The 'normal' influence extends to the matching of media content patterns according to the consumption patterns of targeted audience. Media design, layout, planning and scheduling plan often reflects advertisers' interest (McQuail 2005:292-3). Men are invariably the major consumers of media products; hence they are majorly in control of the production process of the industry.

Accordingly, Baker (1994:99) cited in McQuail, (Ibid) 'there are evidence of advertisers using their market power to attempt to block particular communications that damage their interest and also of advertisers pressure that influences personnel as well as editorial decision in the media" (p.293).

The structure of most media industry in a free -market economy are subjected to control and influence of advertisers, who shaped the nature and composition of the industry indirectly through their patronage.

Wood (1997:28) concludes, 'advertisers support media, and that they exert a powerful influence on what is presented. To understand the prevalence of traditional gender roles in programming, magazine copy and other media, we need only to ask what is in the best interest of advertisers'.

CULTURAL VALUES

Cultural values are communicated to us by family, school, media and other sources constantly encourage us to believe men are superior to women and that men should dominate women, male aggression is acceptable as means of attaining what is wanted, women are passive and should defer to men' (Woods, 31).

According to Obbo (1980) cited in (Ikem, 1996:186), cultural values defined the role of women in the society... ' Ikem said the 'sexual division of labour and economic roles' determines 'access to opportunity in education, social life and jobs as well as legal standing'.

In a culture, where patriarchal values are celebrated like ours, where in actual fact the birth of a male child is highly celebrated over that of female. Women are expected to play secondary and or supporting roles to men, who are expected to dominate and control affairs.

STEREOTYPE

The media help to construct our view and images of gender, which reinforce stereotypic pattern of behaviour and beliefs on roles and responsibility based on gender. Woods (Ibid) "All forms of media communicate images of the sexes. many of which perpetuate unrealistic, stereotypical and limiting perceptions" She said, the media 'reinforce long standing cultural ideas of 'masculinity' and 'reiterate the cultural images of women as dependent ornamental object, whose primary function are to look good, please men and stay quietly on the periphery of life'. (P23 – 25).

This definition of womanhood by motherhood, her submission and dependence of man for success and self-actualization places a 'glass ceiling' on her ability to realize her fullest potential. In variably, women are seen as good subordinate, not as the head, and the best place for them is the home.
plight is further compounded by the media, because most media programmes, genre or format drew heavily on sexual themes, which perpetuate stereotype.

PROFESSIONAL STATUS

The professional status of media practitioners is in comparable to that of other professions like Accountancy, Law, Finance, and Medicine. The media industry commands the lowest welfare and remuneration package compared to these other professions. Although it commends higher social value in the public sphere, the overall welfare package that does not commensurate with the hazard of the professions makes it unattractive for women, who prefer career pursuit with high degree of professional status and growth prospect in the career ladder.

SOCIAL BACKGROUND

There are mythology as regards what should be the role of women and men in the society. These mythology were perpetuated 'transmitted by communication' and in modern times 'disseminated widely by the mass media! According to Mc Quail (2005: 348), 'Myths are pre-existing value-ladden set of ideas derived from the culture and transmitted by communication'. There are mythologies on what should be the role of women in the society, workplace and even at home. Through the media, mythology on patriarchal values inherent in our society and culture are built, perpetuated and sustained. These myths help to define social roles, and place limit on members of a culture.

Not until the 1960s, the role of women was limited to taking care of children and it was out place for women to take paid-employment. Norris (1987: 65), in her book 'Politics and Sexual equality' said, ‘In Western countries one of the most widespread and significant changes since 1960's has been the major increase in the number of women in paid labour force. . .in market economies the trends over the last twenty years have resulted in women again forming a substantial proportion of the paid labour force'

Mc Quail (Ibid) attributed this development to the advocacy and affirmative action taken on issues of equality, under-representation and mis-representation of vulnerable groups in the media on addressing these social imbalances. 'In many countries there is a legal and social pressure on the media to be more positive towards minorities of all kinds... and more sensitive to the needs of vulnerable groups (p.290)

Despite all these actions and gains of the last four decade of women liberation movement, the nature and structure of most workplace by particularly the media and its attendant values are still patriarchal and dominated by men.

There seems little doubt about the general class positions of the average media worker. It is a middle-class occupation, but less professionalized or well paid than other established profession (law, medicine, accountancy, etc) (Mc Quail 2005: .300)

The unattractive nature of the industry coupled with the patriarchal dominance of the industry at inception hinder the interest of women in the industry .thus only very few women are interested and are working in the industry. There is an empirical correlation between the relatively low numbers

CONCLUSION

The crux of thus discourse is the thrust of managerial responsibility given to women in media organization, as well as the number of women employed in media organization. Emphasis was on the composition of the labour force of editors, who have power to define news production, allocate journalistic responsibility as well as recruitment of personnel into the various department of the media industry. We asked 'would the gradual rise of women to position of power in (and or) within media organisation lead to equal treatment of women in news and proper representation in the construction of social reality and definition of meaning? McQuail 2005: 303) advised '...efforts to attract more female readers to the press' would help to address factors highlighted and serve as 'a necessary condition for more equitable treatment of women in news' and 'gradual rise of women to positions of power in media organisation'.

There is no doubt, there is an increasing rate of turnover of trained women journalist worldwide but the number of women in leadership positions and editorial positions in media organization is inversely related, while more women are being trained only very few go into media practice and out this only infinite number of them get to management position, in essence patriarchal values and gender ((men) dominance still permeates the media industry.

REFERENCES


