

# **WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY RADIO IN NIGERIA: TOWARDS MARGINALIZATION OR EXCLUSION? ANALYSIS OF SELECTED CAMPUS COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS**

*Ifeoma Vivian Dunu, PhD*

Mass Communication Department, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

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## **Abstract**

The development of community radio in many countries has significantly transformed the media landscapes and communication discourses, introducing and enabling the inclusion of marginalized sectors of the public in the public sphere. Given the recent foray of Nigeria in this new media, it becomes imperative to examine the extent this fledgling sector in the country is enabling as well as engendering the participation of women in public discourses of the various communities where these community radios are operational. This work used content analysis as the research methodology to determine the level of women inclusion in the development of programme content and their level of participation in the running and operations of these stations. The study sampled various community campus radios in South East Nigeria. The samples include Madonna University community campus radio Okija, University of Nigeria Lion Fm Nsukka, UNIZIK Fm Awka and Caritas Fm Enugu. It was found that the programme contents of these stations are tailored towards entertainment and are male- oriented in nature. The number of males working in these stations was proportionately higher than that of the females, thus corroborating the findings of earlier studies on women and the media which suggest that as yet, there is no significant shift in women's participation in the media. However, the study argues that the disparity may be as a result of the dominant socio-cultural practices that still reflect within state ideological apparatus and also the alignment of these emerging stations to dominant male-centric practices in media terrain in Nigeria.

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**Keywords:** Campus Community Radio, Women Participation, Marginalization and Exclusion

## **Contextual Background**

Community radio emerged in the Nigerian media landscape with the initial licensing of twelve campus community radio stations in tertiary institutions in the country in 2007 and another twenty seven in 2012. The advent of these initial community radio stations signaled in part the democratization of the media landscape in Nigeria. Development scholars have long theorized that community radio allows for the democratization of the media, which implies inclusion of a broad spectrum of opinions in programme contents and debates. This paradigmatic shift towards participatory discourses and democratization of media by small scale media platform of community radio as argued by some, appears to offer the prospects of giving everyone who has a stake 'a voice and a choice', such that within small communities found in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, campus community radio stations will provide a local public sphere where issues concerning the academic environment are discoursed and deliberated on. This paper, examines the extent this recent liberalization in radio broadcasting are increasing women's (female undergraduate students) participation in the broadcast media. This is important when we consider the reality of Nigerian patriarchal society, with its legacy of entrenched notions of gender inequality and the ideology of male domination in mainstream media.

The Nigerian society as widely documented (see, Okunna, 1996; Ezigbo, 1996; Ilika, 2005; Madumer, 2014) is a patriarchal society. Patriarchy in Nigeria, promotes conservative cultures that repose women in traditional role restricted to the private sphere and family network, while men occupy the public sphere. As stated by Hafkin & Taggart (2001), due to confinement to the private sphere and a lack of access to ICTs, women are more likely to be passive receivers of technology than producers. This often means that women's needs, interests, and priorities are marginalized by male dominated media production structures (Fortune & Chungong, 2013). In Nigeria, this seems to be the case with the mainstream media. However, with the emergence of community media within small communities such as tertiary institutions, we examine the extent the more democratic medium of community radio is able to include the voice of women in the public sphere. Writing on the situation in Africa in general, scholars have argued that the education system in Africa favours male uptake of new technologies and that a lack of education is a significant obstacle to women's capacity to access technologies and to understand and articulate themselves in public debates (Myers, 2004; Fortune & Chungong, 2013). In the South eastern part of the country with its high latitude for women education, what Khan & Ghadijally (2009) suggest may still marginalize women participation in the media as they state that even in more affluent settings where women have

opportunities to become educated, it is men who are encouraged to learn and use technology, giving them a distinct advantage in a knowledge-based society.

Interestingly, majority of undergraduate students offering mass communication where these campus community radio stations are domiciled in most Nigerian universities are female students. Given this statistics, it would be argued that a majority of the volunteer workers in these campus radio stations would be young female students; but are they? That is why this work through case studies of selected campus community radio stations in South-East Nigeria, explores the use of democratized communication spaces of campus community media by female students for participation in local public sphere as counter-hegemony to the patriarchal structures of the mainstream media.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This work is a contribution to gender and community media within campus radio intersectional perspective, which highlights regional specificities, and the extent emerging campus community radio stations in Nigeria advance female voices and highlight women's issues. It also provides evidence-based information on gender and emerging community radio landscape in Nigeria to help inform appropriate policy formulation and adoption of suitable community radio model that will best enhance community development in the country. In view of this, the study sought to find out the following:

1. The extent of female students' participation in these fledgling campus community radio stations;
2. Female students' status in the station and their involvement in the management and decision making of the station which has initiated a process of instrument of power relationship for women;
3. Whether campus community radio helped in amplifying the voices of women and served as a platform for expression of alternative ideas.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The Democratic Participant Media Theory underpins this study. McQuail (1987) described democratic participant media as small- scale, formed by groups, organizations and local communities as interactive and participative in contrast to large-scale, one way professionalized media (p.123).

The theory challenged the dominance of centralized media (McQuail, 2000, p.160) and is perceived as a reaction to the commercialization and monopolization of the commercial media and the centralism and bureaucratization of public service media. Significantly, the theory advocates

for citizens ownership of the media for community expression, dialogue and development. According to the tenets espoused by this theory, community ownership and participation is the distinguishing characteristic of community media.

McQuail's interpretation of the democratic participant media theory therefore serves as the basis for providing a rationale in the discourse of community radio broadcasting. For instance, using the Democratic Participant Media approach as a theoretical framework for his study, Lewis (1993, p.13) points to McQuail's summary of the principles of the theory as directly related to community radio and democracy of the airwaves.

Most of the principles highlighted in this theory can be used to describe the typical role such a phenomenon like community radio broadcasting could play in the society. The normative framework published in McQuail (1987, p.109), serves to illustrate the points of variance between commercial, public service and participatory media, particularly in their underlining assumptions of participatory communication and democracy.

It is pertinent to underscore the fact that McQuail's position in the theory seems to be referring to the 'centrifugal' tendencies of the media which focus on diversity, plurality, change, etc (McQuail, 1987, p.94-96). Democratic Participant Media theory stipulates that small scale media (community radio), in contrast to mainstream media must be spearheaded by active participation of members of the community, and that the process of communication (radio) is decentralized to include community expression that leads to development. This is also related to the basic stipulation contained in the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) Code (2006).

The Democratic Participant Media theory though recognizing the possibilities of using small scale media such as community radio to ensure public participation, has been criticized for failing to situate these media within the context of civil society. It has also been criticized for failing to recognize the challenges of the media situation in African countries where the media are structured in a way to be used primarily for development. Some critics contend that the theory is only superficially lined and not fully developed (Atton, 2001). Further, this theory has been critiqued on the issue of deregulation of the media in small scales that might still privilege the agenda of the dominant group. Another problem with the ideal structures of community radio as espoused in this theory is that it failed to recognize the inherent constraints of funding of such a radio stations through collective effort and the fluid definition of the parameters of the community ownership. In case of campus community radio station, most people in the station are mostly students and face economic and time limitations. These students have much to do responding to their major occupation- studying- rather than spend their time on programming issues, which they may see as not affecting

their academic development directly. And many may feel that programming should be the sole responsibility of professionals or those who have experiences.

However, the participatory element of community broadcasting which embodies its founding principles as also embedded in the theory is the ability to use volunteers drawn from the community in developing and administering the policy of the station, and also in producing and presenting programmes. The gender distribution and status of the volunteers employed in campus radios will demonstrate the extent the community media have gone in engendering popular participation of various members of the community. Have campus community media helped in creating new mediated discourses that amplify the voices and concerns of women and serve as a platform for expression of alternative views as is the contention of this theory? But then let's take a quick look at Nigerian broadcast terrain generally, to see the dominant model of broadcasting in the country.

### **Radio Broadcasting in Nigeria: An Overview**

Radio broadcasting started in Nigeria in 1932, about seventy six years after the print media. The development of Radio broadcasting in Nigeria could be categorized under three distinct periods: the colonial era, the post colonial era and the liberalized era. During the colonial era, radio operated under a vertical structure of communication where it was used primarily as a tool to foster the ideologies and enforce the policies of the colonial government and for catering to the needs of the elites in colonized Nigeria. According to Ansah (1985), colonial –style radio was meant to “provide information, cultural and entertainment needs of the political and educated elite who consisted of European settlers, colonial administrators and the small group of educated Africans”.

For the post colonial period radio was a means used by the national broadcasting system for national administration, unity and development without necessarily responding to local information needs which would enable the people at the grass-roots to participate in development. The national broadcasting system under this era still retained the public service model patterned after the British Broadcasting Service adapted after the cultural norm of the European cultural style. This period was also characterized with the establishment of national radio stations located at the state capitals that still maintained the top-down approach to communication. Primarily radio was a tool for communicating national development information and government activities. It is noteworthy; to point out that at this period radio became a popular medium for reaching the public especially the rural poor. As articulated by scholars (eg. Okunna & Omenugha, 2013) the reasons include; it's affordability, availability, portability, independence

from electricity and use of vernacular language in its transmissions. It then became the most popular medium 'for reaching the people but not of the people'. Important signpost of this period includes the creation of state radio service alongside federal radio stations. Yet these proliferations failed to decentralize radio service. The management, structure and ownership of radio stations were strictly under the control and monopoly of government.

Fifty seven years after the entry of radio broadcasting in Nigeria, government monopoly was broken and the Nigerian airwaves became liberalized with the promulgation of decree 38 of 1992. This development ushered in private participation in radio broadcasting in form of commercial private radio stations. As many media critics contend, this liberalization still fall short of decentralizing radio service and producing a pluralistic radio broadcasting landscape. Like the public service radio system earlier mentioned, the commercial radios were urban-centered, primarily profit oriented, remained in the hands of the rich and provided services purely for financial gains. It was not until the fourth quarter of 2003 that the historic journey to actualize a pro-poor, pluralistic broadcasting environment and the development of community radio started in Nigeria. Two international organizations, the Panos Institute West Africa (PIWA) and the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), in partnership with the Institute for Media and Society (IMS-Nigeria), launched an initiative on Building Community Radio in Nigeria. In 2004, the University of Lagos became the first campus community radio to be licensed and started operation. Now more than 40 tertiary institutions in the country are licensed and also operate campus stations.

It is the operations of these campus community radio stations that this study explored, to determine the extent of female participation in all aspects of running the station. It is instructive to note that Nigerian government probably used these campus community radio stations as a form of litmus test whose successful operations in the citadels of learning will encourage the opening up of the wider community radio broadcast terrain as is tenable in other parts of the globe. This, points to the significance of these campus radio stations in the democratization of broadcasting in the country and in the establishment of other community radios along the principles and structures of participatory communication. It points to the need to determine how different genders are represented in these stations and how these representations influence programming content. So that as these stations become part of the broadcast media terrain in Nigerian and also act as a reference point for other upcoming community radio stations now licensed, we should be able to determine whether and the extent gender sensitive considerations as expressed by the Nigerian community radio coalition are part of the policies of these stations and also determine the extent these

community radio stations exist as models of community radios or as adaptations of mainstream radio stations dominant in the country.

Compared to film, television and the press, radio has been identified as the most ubiquitous media of communication especially for developing nations like Nigeria. Gumucio (2001) summarized the advantages of radio over other forms of the media as he documents:

As a tool for social change and participatory communication, radio has several comparative advantages over the other media. First, it is cost-efficient in terms of investment – both for those that run the station and for the audience. Second, it is pertinent in terms of language and content – ideal for the huge illiterate population that still remains marginalized especially in rural areas of the Third World. Third, it is relevant to local practices, traditions and culture. Fourth, once the initial investment in equipment is made, sustainability is feasible, though dependent on the level of community participation. Fifth, in terms of outreach and geographic coverage, radio has a strong advantage over other media. Last but not least, the convergence between radio and the Internet is providing new strength to community radio and has enormously increased networking opportunities (p.30)

Even with its several advantages, radio has been widely recognized as a relatively under researched and undervalued area of the media. Radio has also only recently established itself as an area where theory is argued about and contested. It could be argued that as a form of cultural production, radio is marginalized. Women and radio as an area of research within radio studies is also undervalued and under researched. Research shows that feminist radio studies have a fragmented research history with no single theoretical umbrella. This work therefore, is a contribution to fill in the gaps in this area. Since community radio is an evolving phenomenon in Nigeria this study will also help in detailing its emergence and the predominant model during its embryonic era.

Research evidence indicates that radio broadcasting in Nigeria has always been male dominated in the area of management, programme content development and programming. Studies also demonstrate that as in other media, women in radio broadcasting in Nigeria are relatively invisible. However, the only area where majority of women feature in radio broadcasting in Nigeria, is in the area of programme presentation. As Okunna and Dunu (2006) rightly observed;

Another worrisome aspect of visibility is that women when they are visible in media content are used as objects of decoration rather than substance. This objectification of women in the media has led to a large number of women being employed in the media as programme presenters and announcers-roles in which their beauty is taken advantage of by the media. In the case of community radio, there is need to ascertain whether there are notable changes.

In a typical radio broadcasting scenario in Nigeria, what is tenable is a situation like this: programme planner= male, Director = male, Subject matter = male, Spokesperson = female, Interviewer = male (Okunna & Dunu, 2006). Another major area of women marginalization and under representation in radio is the quantity of programme contents on issues relating to women. Evidence demonstrates that in this as in other cases, women are completely invisible. Could there be any difference with what is tenable within the campus community radio stations today?

Looking through the programming schedule of most radio stations in the country especially government radio stations, it becomes evident that women are not really considered important in the scheme of things. Programme experts often argue that programming is a professional issue and that programme subjects and genres are constructed based on prevalent societal ideologies which tend to marginalize women. The arguments tend to justify women's invisibility on the bases of societal hierarchical hegemonic practice that continues to undermine and subjugate women, treating them as appendages.

In contrast, community radio because it is participatory and inclusive are expected to create diversity in radio broadcasting by ensuring that those who determine the programming and programme content should now be the 'community' which include women. In fact, the programming staff and volunteers are the driving force behind the programming decisions of the station. Community stations can contribute to programme diversity with real alternatives of scope and genre only if members of the community directly influence the programming content (Rhodes Journal, 2005). As such the notion of democratizing the airwaves which is the major principle of community radio should ensure the inclusion of women's voices in determining programme selection and programme content. For as scholars have observed; it is community's participation in the selection and provision of programming that underpins the democratic values of community radio. This aspect of participation as contended by others is not just through letters, phone-ins, musical requests, on-air competitions, greetings and dedications and simple conversations, but the involvement and participation of

community members in the actual design, implementation and evaluation of stations' programming schedules. It is the participation of community members in programming decisions that upholds community radio as a locus of a truly democratic media (Rhodes Journal, 2005, p.46). How does campus community radio stations in Nigeria, ensure community participation?

### **Community Radio and Community Participation**

As stated by radio scholars, community participation in the selection and production of programming is the most distinguishing characteristic of community radio, where community members control the medium technically, culturally and politically, and are involved in programming decisions at their stations. Community radio stations in Nigeria are mandated by the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) to provide members of the community access to participate in the airwaves and to offer them diversified programming that reflects their interests and needs. According to NBC's regulations, members of the community have to participate at all levels of the community broadcast entity (NBC, Code, 2010). Even with the mandate to facilitate methods that ensure community participation in programming and running of the station, many people still believe that programming should be sole responsibility of professionals. Others are still not aware of their rights to develop and produce programmes and generally participate in the stations.

Further, people's participation in the station is still in traditional form where people tend to assume that their role in terms of participation is limited to phone-ins or talk programmes, dedications and greetings, and music requests (Rhodes Journal, 2005, p.46). Another challenge to participation is that even if a community does want to participate in a development project, they may simply lack the skills, resources or time (Brett, 2003; Moser, 1993 cited in Michener 1998). Again the emphasis on volunteerism or meetings -which means time away from work or other duties at none or minimal pay, with no guarantee of a positive outcome- is also a constraint. For women, especially young women found in the Nigerian tertiary institutions, the dominant socio-cultural ideologies operational in schools that are an extension of family/societal structures may yet inhibit their participation. Despite these constraints, community participation is deliverable and significant in community radio stations because community stations can contribute to programme diversity with real alternatives of scope and genre only if members of the community directly influence the programming content. Roman and Colle, (2002) call for a "conscientious attention to participation" (p. 12) because it "conveys a sense of community ownership; it provides indigenous wisdom; it helps reflect community values and needs; it provides important resources, such as volunteers or technical expertise, at a favourable cost" (p. 13).

The vital question today is not whether community members participate in the campus community radio stations and other emerging community radio stations; but, to what extent are the different genders represented and are involved in programming decisions at their stations? This will help to establish whether participation in these campus stations are still understood and exercised within the framework of the established dominant gendered media practice that privileges men over women, found in the public and private media in the country (see, GMMP, 2010; Ukozor2005; Okunna, 2005), or whether the notion of participatory communication that engenders female participation in all aspects of station management and operations is dominant in these stations. It will also detail the opportunities that campus community radio sector in Nigeria might offer women as an alternative site of media practice, which promote feminist ideas and counteract what Tuchman (1979) calls the symbolic annihilation of women by the mass media, caused by under or misrepresentations of women. Within the concept of participatory media, we considered the extent the emerging community radio environment in Nigeria create a gendered space within the local public sphere provided by community radios that enables female students to produce programmes and meanings that transcend some of the more limiting constructions of their views.

### **Methodology**

The study employed content analysis and observation research design. In this study the manifest content of the different programme schedules of selected campus community radio stations were content analyzed to determine the preponderance or paucity of programmes on women. The stations workers' nominal registers were surveyed to determine the number of men and women that participate in the running of the stations as well as establish the different positions that they occupy in this emerging radio stations. The researchers made use of Observation methodology as a complement in this study, by developing and using what we call Stations Observation Form for a period of two weeks in each station studied. This was done for two primary purposes: to observe the radio stations programming model and; to monitor overall operational activities of these stations, including interactions with audiences. The intention was to help the researchers gain insight in the nature of the programming activities and also determine the broadcasting model adopted in these stations.

## Data Presentation and Analysis

Table:1 Selected Campus Radio Stations

STATE	CAMPUS RADIO	FREQUENCY
Anambra	Madonna FM	93.7 FM
Enugu	Caritas FM	98.7FM
Enugu	Lion FM	91.1FM
Anambra	Unizk FM	94.1 FM

The table above depicts the various campus radio stations studied, their locations and frequencies. Four campus radio stations as is illustrated from the table were randomly selected from the South-eastern part of the country which is the focus of the research. All the selected stations have been in operations for the past five years thus justifying their selection. The subsequent data for the study were culled from these stations.

Table 2: Staff Distribution of the Selected Stations

Stations	Unizik 94.1Fm	Madonna 93.7 Fm	Caritas 98.7 Fm	Lion 91.1 Fm
Male	31 (56.4%)	8 (61.5%)	12 (70.6%)	8 (72.7%)
Female	24 (43.6%)	5 (38.5%)	5 (29.4%)	3 (27.3%)
Total	100 (n=55)	100 (n=13)	100 (n=17)	100 (n=11)

Table two above illustrates the staff strength and gender status of volunteers working in the stations sampled. From the data we found that staff strength in all the stations studied are skewed in favour of men. In Unizik Fm for instance 56% of the workers are male while 43.6% are female. In other stations the disparity in gender status was more prominent. Exemplifying this Madonna Fm had 61.5% male volunteers while the female volunteers were 38.5%. Caritas Fm has 70.6% male and 29.4% female .This was repeated in Lion Fm where the male volunteers and permanent staff were 72.7% and female 27.3%. The data demonstrate that male volunteers were in an overwhelming majority across all the campus stations studied. The finding in this study is significant since it correlates with male domination in gender status found in other Nigerian media generally (GMMP, 2010). This supports Fortune & Chungong (2013) findings that community radio in West Africa is male dominated.

Table 3: Heads of Units of the Various Stations Studied

Station	Manager	Head Of Engineering	Head Of Programmes	Head Of News
Madonna Fm	Male	Male	Female	Male
Unizik Fm	Female	Male	Male	Female
Caritas Fm	Male	Male	Female	Male
Lion Fm	Male	Male	Male	Male

To further understand the gender distribution in these stations the study assessed the gender distribution of the heads of the various units in the

stations. These data were gathered from station managers of the station. Data from the table show that out of the four stations studied, only one station has a female as the station manager while the others were male. All the unit heads in the engineering section were male no female at all. In the programmes unit we have parity with two females and two males as heads of unit in the four stations. In the news section there was clear disparity as only in Unizik Fm did we have a female heading the news section while the other stations were male dominated. What the data here show is similar to what we had in gender distribution of staff in the previous table. Male dominated.

Data from content analysis were also used to ascertain the quantity of programmes in these stations and the preponderance or otherwise of women programmes. With this we can establish whether these campus stations provide windows of opportunity for young women to participate in the public sphere, if at all given a space or whether they are still restricted within the domain of private sphere.

Table: 4 Programme Content Distributions of Selected Campus Stations

Subject Categories	UNIZIK FM	CARITAS FM	MADONNA FM	LION FM
News/Current Affairs	20%	6%	27%	13%
Drama/Features	7%	24%	5%	13%
Music	43%	17%	23%	20%
Education	10%	17%	18%	13%
Quiz	-	-	-	-
Development	3%	15%	16%	17%
Sports	7%	6%	2%	4%
Religion	7%	12%	9%	20%
Others	3%	3%	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(n=61)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(n=34)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(n=44)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(n=24)</b>

First, we content analyzed the quantity of programmes offered by each station and programme genre distribution. From the data we found that Unizik Fm has the highest number of programming content (61%) followed by Madonna Fm with (44%), Caritas with 34% and Lion Fm 24%. Looking at programme genres we found that music had the highest frequency across the stations at 43% in Unizik Fm; 17% in Caritas Fm; 23% and 20% in Madonna and Lion Fm respectively. While Drama/Features genre seems to have the lowest frequency across all the stations. What the data show is that music is the most popular programme in these stations while Drama/Feature programmes appear to account for the least programme types. This is understandable when we recall that the campus stations are youth oriented and dominated even though they are also an academic station.

Table:5 Gender Programmes in the Stations Studied

	<b>Unizik Fm</b>	<b>Lion Fm</b>	<b>Madonna Fm</b>	<b>Caritas Fm</b>
<b>Gender Issues</b>	<b>7.1%</b>	-	-	-
<b>Everyday Woman</b>	-	<b>4.2%</b>	-	-
<b>Women and Healthy Living</b>	-	-	-	<b>8%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>(n=42)</b>	<b>(n=24)</b>	<b>(n=44)</b>	<b>(n=25)</b>

The data from the content analysis of the stations programmes schedule illustrate near absence of women's issues in the local public sphere of discourse in these tertiary institutions. In Madonna Fm for instance, there was no programme on gender or issues discussing women at all. In other stations, what we have is 'tokenism', where women issues were merely appendages to the programming content. What we have here is similar to what we find in the other media sector in Nigeria, which tends to be a male dominated programme structures with token women programmes and participation. This also corroborates findings from other West African countries where Fortune & Chungong (2013) argues that even community radio in Africa as a public forum, remains dominated by male voices and interests.

### **Discussion of Findings**

From the data generated from the sampled campus community radios, programmes that are predominant seem to be entertainment programmes as against educational programmes as stipulated in the Nigerian Broadcasting Code (NBC) 2006 which states that 'community radio is a participatory medium which is primarily designed to serve as an educational instrument for the campus community'. Majority of the programme contents in most of the stations do not have issues about women. This aligns with the prevalent invisibility of women in the mainstream media. This seems to indicate that though this new media in principles advocate equitable representation of all sectors of the community; in practice, it is still a challenge.

The data also reveal that women do not occupy positions of authority in these stations. As evident from the data, it is only in Unizik Fm that we have female station manager. Other stations' heads were male. This corroborates earlier research on media and gender which demonstrates that women have always occupied less important positions in the media industry and also play decorative roles where their beauty is taken advantage of instead of occupying position in decision- making where media contents are developed (Gallagher; 2001, Bruin, 2000; Okunna, 2005; Okunna & Dunu, 2006).

Based on observation and interactions with stations as a complement to other research method used, we found that students have high level of access to the stations by students including female students. Overall, it was discovered that males dominate in the operations of these stations than females, with a relative high level of participation in operations and activities of the stations. Repetitively, we observed that even though female students do come to the stations often times; they are mere observers than participants, seeming to occupy the fringes of stations operations and activities.

It was also observed that female students appear to be generally more interested and inclined to the non-technical aspect of the stations' operations. The relatively high level participation in non- technical aspect can be attributed to the dominant socio- cultural practice that grooms and points women in Nigeria towards less technical areas. It is also important to point out that the young women found in these stations appear not to be bothered about the non inclusion of women issues in the programming content seeming to take it as normal. It would also appear that in programming and operations these campus stations indirectly use self censorship in ensuring that their structures align to the dominant trend in other media sectors in the country. The result of this study points to dominance of male personnel and male-interests programmes in the stations studied.

## **Conclusion**

Community radio as has been argued is meant to serve listeners in a way that is distinct from public or commercial broadcasting. Sadly, this work has demonstrated that in programme content and demographic status, this distinction is lacking. Furthermore, community radio challenges the existing traditional media in terms of ownership, structure, operations and relevance. At the heart of these challenges are the questions of access, participation and further democratization of the information sphere. In the Nigeria situation the new radio typology are yet to meet these challenges. Women's voices are yet to be included in the local public sphere of the various communities where community radios are operational.

## **Recommendations**

As many feminist scholars have advocated, there is need for the inclusion of women in the decision making sectors of these new radios in such a way that is distinct. There should be a specific quota for women in the management of these stations. Secondly, female volunteers in these stations should be encouraged to participate in the production section of the stations by school management authorities. This to a great extent will extend women participation and guarantee their access to all the operations and running of

the station. Moreover, there is need for the stations to deliberately set out specific number of programmes on women issues. As has been argued by radio scholars in Nigeria, there is need for the inclusion of gender sensitive policies regarding community radio operations as is the practice in other countries. Emerging community radio stations in Nigeria as observed by scholars elsewhere, can allow women become better informed members of the society and empower them to speak on issues previously limited to them by providing a space for them.

One other basic measure community radio sector in Nigeria can consider is to increase the number of women community radio stations that will operate in the country. This becomes urgent in the light of the recent granting of license by the Federal Government to Seventeen new community radio stations across the six Geo political zones in the country. Related to this is also the need to de-stereotype women's programmes by diversifying women's programmes and not limiting it to feminine and children issues. Participatory communication for development as espoused by development scholars, envisages democratized and decentralized media systems as key agents of empowerment for those who have been socially, culturally, economically and politically marginalized with gender as a significant dimension. The Nigerian community radio sector should recognize and include this as part of community radio sectoral policy framework.

Feminist associations, Government and Civil Society, can promote the use of community radio in Nigeria for women as an arena to talk about their issues and concerns and to advance their developmental activities. As Bau, (2009) rightly observed, community media help build women's capacities for discursive interaction and also their media competencies. Women's media production competencies help them to develop their skills as socio-political actors and to become locally relevant which in turn promotes their capacities to engender development activities.

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