

# Nigeria Media Awareness Strategies for Gender Equality in Post-2015 Un-Development Agenda

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**Abstract:** *This study x-rays the social consciousness and idea of social oppression which calls for accelerated attention and implementation for gender equality essentials for post-2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals (MDGs). The research adopted mixed methods research involving a triangulation of content analysis and survey using multi-level cluster sampling technique to select 600 respondents from Nigeria's six geopolitical zones with analysis on some media organisations. The study further discovered that the UN post-2015 gender equality development agenda has not been fully reported and propagated by the media; as the level of awareness especially among women is low. The study therefore, recommended that the media should re-strategize with premium on coverage and reporting of UN Post development agenda, while Indigenous communication approaches should be adopted.*

**Keywords:** Awareness, Development, Gender, Media, Nigeria

## 1. Introduction

The effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing 1995 declaration platform for gender equality will be essential for post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) expected to sum up all major issues of global women development or progress for the next 20 years. The post-2015 development agenda which will succeed the expiring Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is expected to be adopted by heads of states and governments from every part of the world. After the historic UN summit of August-September 2015, the agenda is yet to gain propagation, sensitisation and dissemination by the media. Thus, most people especially, women are yet to be aware.

Presently, a wide range of activities are being undertaken by UN member states, the UN system, civil society organizations, the academia, research institutions and others on the priorities of the post-2015 development agenda with the panel reports which reveals that one of its utmost priority is ensuring that no person, regardless of gender amongst others, is denied basic economic opportunities and human rights. Several activities are pointers towards an attempts to scale back women's right – for example, fundamental activities in the middle-East and Africa, abduction of over 200 Nigerian school girls by Boko Haram, etc. These and other activities sum up what could be regarded as cultures of hostilities and harassment of women, discrimination and violence against women, regarding female folks as humanity inferior” (Soon-Young, 2015) cited in (Vanguard, 2015).

Majority of the participants of 2015 UN Gender Development Agenda Conference in New York, while adopting a political declaration during the 59<sup>th</sup> session of the commission on the status of women development, affirmed that progress has indeed been slow for women and girls worldwide. In 1995 when they had gathered for the fourth world conference in Beijing China, hopes were high, following the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform Action.

However, 20 years after, none of those countries has achieved the envisioned round about gender equilibrium as statistics show that women still earn less than their male counterparts in most part of the world, one-third suffer physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, gaps in reproductive rights and healthcare continue to shoot up with 800 women dying daily at childbirth worldwide.

The disappointing gap between existing commitments to gender equality and their implementation indicates a collective failure of leadership across the globe, which failed to create actions and efforts after the 1995 Beijing Conference (Agbonkhese, 2015) cited in (Vanguard, 2015). This is why, the onus lies on the media to sensitise the populace about the relevant issues discussed and promoted by the SDA as well create the accommodating atmosphere for the implementation of the ingredients of the agenda.

## 2. The Problem

In its 2013 and 2015 position papers, UN women advocated for a stand-alone goal in the post-2015 development agenda to achieve gender equilibrium, women's rights and women's empowerment, one that is grounded in human rights and tackles unequal power relations. While there has been much progress towards women's right over decades, many gaps remain. For women's rights to become a universal reality, UN women believe that it is critical to address the structural causes of gender inequality, such as violence against women, unpaid care work, limited control over assets and property, and unequal participation in private and public decision making.

Thus, the stand-alone goal identified three critical areas that are holding women back as inability to end violence against women. As one in three women is likely to experience physical and sexual violence at some point in lifetime which is the most pervasive human rights abuse in the world today, inequality expressed against women via opportunities and access to land, credit, natural resources, education, health services, decent work pay, improved infrastructures (such as water and energy) and to give

women a voice within households and in public and private decision-making spheres, for meaningful and inclusive democracy. Women's voices should be heard in all spheres, such as public and private institutions, national and local parliaments, media, civil society, families and communities (Taire, 2015).

To this end, considering the role of the media as an agenda setter, agents of social change and development, strategists and mobilisers, it became imperative to examine how the media played the awareness role with respect to gender equality and development agenda. Therefore, to what extent have the media covered and strategised the UN post-2015 gender equality agenda?

### Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

- 1) Determine the forms issues related to UN post-2015 gender equality and development agenda are covered by the media?
- 2) Determine the extent to which the media covered and strategised UN Post-2015 gender equality and development agenda
- 3) Evaluate the role played by the media in creating awareness on gender equality and development agenda;
- 4) Ascertain the level of awareness of gender inequality and UN Post-2015 development agenda among the masses.

### Research Questions

The following questions guided this study

- 1) In what form are issues related to UN post-2015 gender equality and development agenda covered by the media?
- 2) To what extent has the media covered and strategized UN Post-2015 gender equality and development agenda?
- 3) How have the media played their role in creating awareness on gender equality and development agenda?
- 4) What is the level of awareness of the UN Post-2015 gender equality add development agenda among the masses?

## 3. Literature

### Gender and Development

Gender, which is from the Latin word "*genius*" and means group; is defined as the number of classes into which nouns or pronouns can be divided as masculine, feminine or neutral. Gender gained a more popular usage in the social sciences, in the general and political science to be specific to represent the distinction between men and women, boys and girls. It is viewed as social attributes that are acquired or learned during socialisation and include activities responsibilities and needs connected to being a male or female. Gender simply refers to masculinity and femininity (Mutanga, 2006) in (Duru, 2014).

The term gender is traditionally used to designate psychological, social and cultural aspects of maleness and femaleness. It is believed to be a social construction because it is defined, supported and reinforced by social structures and institutions. It is purposively enforced by patriarchy which is supported by social institutions to create a dichotomy between sexes. Issues pertaining to gender are somehow misunderstood. As a creation of social and cultural

institutions, the position of women is largely misunderstood. No wonder, prominence is given to man. This norm is quite rooted in culture (Nwankwo, 2004). While most traditions stereotype women as illogical, passive, talkative, emotional, and easily moved to tears; men are assumed to be competent, logical and independent. These stereotypes tend to reflect men and women as belonging to opposite ends of bipolar adjectives in which men have desirable qualities while women, undesirable ones (Udegbe, 1998) cited in (Duru, 2014).

Interestingly, the term development connotes qualitative and quantitative improvement in the life of individual and nation at large. It is focused on bringing about improved life and well-being in the living standard or conditions of members of an identified society. Development is not only restricted to economic life of a nation but embraces all aspects of social values of a nation such as politics, economics, culture, education, technology among other cherished values of a given society. (Duru, 2014).

Development should actually relate to increased employment opportunities, very low rate of infant and maternal mortality, high rate of life expectancy, quality education, provision of basic infrastructures such as water and energy, low rate or reduction in violence and harmful practices against women, increased number of women in political participation and managerial or policy-making institutions (Ndu, 2004) cited in (Duru, 2014).

The experience of the 1950s and 1960s, when many developing nations did reach their economic growth targets but the levels of living of the masses of people remained, for the most part, unchanged; especially, the women and children as witnessed in many developing countries. (Torado & Smith, 2011). The questions to ask about any given country or nation's development are therefore: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been of concern. If these problems have been growing worse, it would be strange and difficult to achieve the equality and development agenda of the United Nations.

### The Central Role of Women in Post-2015 Development Agenda

In the light of the information presented so far, it should come as no surprise that development scholars generally view women as playing the central role in the development drama. Globally, women tend to be poorer than men. They are also more deprived in health and education and in freedoms in all its forms. Moreover, women have primary responsibility for child rearing and the resources that are able to bring to this task will determine whether the cycle of transmission of poverty from one generation to the other will be broken.

Children need better healthcare and education, and studies around the developing nations showed or confirmed that mothers tend to spend a significantly higher fraction of income under their control for the benefit of their children than fathers do (Torado&Smith, 2011). Thus, women need to be empowered economically and otherwise in order to stir

the UN sustainable development goals in the post-2015 development agenda, which was designed as an improvement to making substantial progress towards eradication of poverty and achieving other human development goals (adopted by UN and the 189 member countries in September 2000 as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)). However, the media as an agent of social change must champion this advocacy.

### Perspectives of Sexism and Gender Inequality

Sexism is synonymous with sex inequality. Sexism is unfair discrimination on the basis of sex. "It also connotes patriarchy, a hierarchical system of social organisation in which culture, politics, economic practices and other social values of a given society are dominated, controlled and influenced by men" (Scott & Marshal, 2005, p.596). In a core patriarchal society, men are seen as the natural heads of households and other social structures of the society which include politics, religion, economic and social relationships in which men assume a tremendous influence over women in the society. Sexism rests on the belief that one sex is innately superior to the other (Duru, 2014).

Ideological sexism is stereotype that is predicted on the assumption of prejudice and the belief that one sex is superior while the other is inferior and occupying subordinate status. This level of psychological make-up and assumption of biological differences is basic source of differential distribution of power, status and practices that produces inequality between males and females in the society. Hughes, et al (1999) asserts that the patterns of gender inequality in history and throughout the world generally involve disadvantages for women and advantages for men.

The concept of institutional sexism refers to actual translation of belief system concerning men's superiority. This is supported by social institutions in the operation of economy. Certain policies seem to reserve less challenging jobs for women. The US Census Bureau (1999) reports that women employed full time earned only 76 cents as against each dollar earned by her male counterpart (Duru, 2014).

While the theoretical perspective of gender inequality explains the concepts of gender based on the roles assigned to members of society in line with their sexes; the functionalist argues that such division of social roles predicted on sex is fundamental for survival of the society which derived its existence from biological differences. To them men are physically stronger than women (McDonnel, 2003).

### Media as Strategist Agenda Setter

In penetrating the society with the information required for the growth and sustenance of development, there is no force more viable than the power of the mass media. McQuail (2010) while explaining the categories of the functions the media render to the audience notes that the media exert power that aids in promoting national development, equality, national integration, social change and control of mass actions. The submission above supports Mackay and O'Sullivan (1999) as the capture the role of the mass media in any polity as thus:

... the mass media are different from any other industries because of the special nature of the activity and product. It is via the media that symbolic culture is communicated; through them, societal values and ways of making sense of everyday lives and culture are disseminated. Thus, as well as being a major industry in the modern economy, the media occupy a very significant role in symbolic environment as cultural institutions (p.43).

From the above statement, the media can be seen as a veritable instrument of social mobilisation and corporation, promoters of desirable socio-economic and cultural values as well as agent of equality and development. Despite the arguments raised about social irresponsibility of the mass media, the media has over the years made strong positive impact in our society by way of publicity, critical analysis, enlightenment and education etc.

Overtime, the media have creditably succeeded in setting up public agenda and ultimately determined what people think or worry about at any given time. People's actions and reactions to events and issues are powerfully shaped and directed by what the media chooses to publicise. McQuail (2000) notes that the agenda setting is a process of media influence (intended or unintended). Cohen (1963) as cited by Tejumaiye (2005) confirms the saliency and validity of the agenda setting theory as standing and this includes that the media may not always be successful in telling people what to think, but they are usually successful in telling the people what to think about. This no doubt underscores the relevance of the media in understanding of issues and opinion formation in the society.

The import of the above is that whatever the media highlights becomes what people think about and whatever they discuss becomes what they act on. By implication, this means that if the media highlight more on gender inequality and social development, the people will ultimately begin to think about it. Thus, through its agenda-setting function, the media can be at the vanguard of calling for re-orientation, re-awakening and rebirth of new thinking towards gender equality and development.

### Media as Agents of Equality and Development

According to Webster's New Encyclopaedic English Dictionary BD and L. (1995), an agent is one that acts or exerts power. Following its Etymological meaning from Latin word "agree", it could mean to drive, lead or influence. The media is a powerful agent of socialisation and socialisation is defined as a process by which we internalise the values, beliefs and norms of our culture and by so doing develop a sense of self (Croteau & Haynes, 2000). The media as an agent of social mobilisation sets and determines the process by which we internalise these norms and beliefs.

In studying the media as agent of equality and development, it is pertinent to answer the following questions raised by McQuail (2010). 'What part can the media play in major social changes?' 'Can media be applied as an engine of change in the context of development?' The answers to these questions will serve as good bases in understanding the

power of the media in beginning social change and rehabilitation.

As noted earlier, the media has powerful influence on the thought pattern of people living in the society. This clearly marks out the media as an agent of socialisation and development. Tejumaiye (2005) clearly points out that the contemporary society with its attendant technological, socio-cultural and economic advancement and has made people more individualistic and this has made the mass media act often as the bridge between people's private lives and their relation to the public world. Similarly, Ihechu et al (2016) agrees that for a needful and empowered media, it is subsequently very easy to organise any form of social change as it appears more powerful, authoritative and maker of popular opinion.

As strong agents of socialisation, there is need for balanced report on both men and women in the media. Though there seem to be a huge information gap and knowledge of gender equality in the media, it is still necessary that more effort be put in utilising the power of the media so as to get the level of awareness required, after all, there is this saying "*If it is not in the media, it does not exist*". Therefore it is vital that the media report on gender equality. The media still remain fundamental instruments for promoting UN Post-2015 gender equality and development agenda.

Although a lot of arguments are being raised about the media marginalising women in public sphere as well as being a purveyor of stereotypes of femininity and masculinity, it is also important to look at the opinions of McRobbie, 1996 and Radway, 1984, respectively as cited by McQuail (2010) "...things have changed in the media, with much more content by women and for women, with no inhibitions about female sexuality. They have also changed in media research through the 'redemption' of popular genres" (p.122).

Media's choice and interpretations still have the ability to provide a lever of change or form of resistance to women in a social situation controlled and structured by inequality. It depends on the direction feminist theory and research takes as not all are convinced about the relevance of the changes in the media and new popular cultural theory. Zoonen (2004) as cited by McQuail (2010, p.22) confirms that communities of interest that form around popular soap operas can also play a significant part in actively connecting the majority of people to public issues of the day and warns that the context is continually changing. The author also emphasised that 'the codes' that confer meaning onto the signs of femininity are culturally and historically specific and will never be completely unambiguous or consistent. These notions point out the fact that reception of media is gendered and media offer positive and supportive as well as negative role models based on how it received.

How have the media been able to perpetrate social change? The cultivation power of the media has made it possible for the media to permeate the society with social change and development. According to McQuail (2010) the effect of media operations towards minor and social change has been categorised by US media theorists as thus;

- Priming – Propagating before context
- Framing – How to prepare the message capsule
- Agenda Setting – Short term media effect on both individuals and mass audience
- Media Cultivate – Media in the long run changes individuals' behaviour and ideology; and in this manner media performs its duty to change the socio-political or socio-economic order.

These dimensions of media effect, when analysed, project the media as performing certain chronological and structured functions for every of its content and programme apart from its traditional agenda setting role. Therefore, if there must be noticeable change of thinking and development on women as purposed by UN Post-2015 gender equality and development agenda, then the role of the media as a strategist and agents of social change cannot be overemphasised.

#### 4. Theoretical Framework

The theory underlying this study is the Agenda Setting theory. Agenda-setting theory describes the "ability of news media to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda. That is, if a news item is covered frequently and prominently, the audience will regard the issue as more important. By comparing the salience of issues in news content with the public's perceptions of the most important election issue, McCombs and Shaw (1968) cited in Ihechu et al (2015) were able to determine the degree to which the media determines public opinion. Agenda-setting is the creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the news media. Two basic assumptions underlie most researches on agenda-setting:

- 1) The press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it;
- 2) Media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues.

In relation to this study, we examined how the mass media in Nigeria have been able to capture or set agenda on gender equality and sustainable development and the extent the set agenda have been able to create awareness of the issues at stake as well as inculcate adequate understanding in that regard.

#### 5. Methods

This study adopted mixed methods research involving a triangulation of content analysis and survey. First, for the collection of survey data, a sample of 600 respondents were selected from six major cities representing the six geopolitical zones Nigeria (100 from each zone) using multi-level cluster sampling technique. Further, the purposive sampling technique was used to select popular streets in the sampled cities after which the available sampling technique was used to reach the sample units. Thus, Table 1 shows the distribution of the cities studied.

**Table 1: Sample Distribution**

S/N	City	State	Zone	Sample
1	Aba	Abia	South-South	100
2	Uyo	Akwa-Ibom	South-South	100
3	Lagos	Lagos	South-West	100
4	Markurdi	Benue	North-Central	100
5	Yola	Adamawa	North-East	100
6	Zaria	Kaduna	North-West	100
Total				600

Further, content analysis was adopted to generate data (using coding sheets) from the content of three newspapers – *Daily Sun*, *The Nation*, and *Nigerian Tribune* – as well as three broadcast stations – *AIT*, *NTA* and *FRCN*. They were purposively selected based on their wide coverage, consistency in news coverage, availability and the fact that they are among the leading Nigerian media outlets which cater for all social groups.

The study considered 95 issues of each selected newspaper and daily schedule of broadcast station respectively between August 2015 and December 2016 using composite weak sampling technique, where one day is drawn every week of the month within the study period. Therefore the sample size was 570.

All the news items, editorials, features, programmes, commentaries and enlightenment campaigns on gender related issues formed the content categories of this study while the units of analyses were based on the frequency and form of coverage of issues related to the identified variables such as equality, gender, development, development goals, poverty eradication, healthcare, women empowerment, girl child, employment opportunities, etc.

After the analysis of content, the copies of questionnaire were administered on the sampled respondents through which their level of awareness of gender equality and UN post 2015 development related issues covered by the media were ascertained.

## 6. Data Presentation and Analysis

**Research Question 1: In what forms are issues related to UN post-2015 gender equality and development agenda covered by the media?**

**Table 2: Format of UN post 2015 gender equality and development contents by the newspapers**

Story form	Sun	Nation	Tribune	Total
News	61 (64.9%)	55 (57.8%)	50 (57.4%)	166
Features	21 (22.3%)	23 (24.2%)	18 (20.6%)	62
Editorials	02 (2.1%)	05 (5.2%)	06 (6.8)	13
Enlightenment campaigns	10 (10.6)	12 (12.6%)	13 (14.9%)	35
Total	94 (100%)	95 (100%)	87 (100%)	276

**Table 3: Format of UN post 2015 gender equality and development stories by the broadcast stations**

Story form	A.I.T	N.T.A	FRCN	Total
News	60 (64.5%)	69 (72.6%)	64 (68.0%)	193
Programmes	20 (21.5%)	13 (13.6%)	12 (12.7%)	45
Commentaries	04 (4.3%)	02 (2.1%)	10 (10.6%)	16
Enlightenment campaigns	09 (9.6%)	11 (11.5%)	08 (8.5%)	28
	93 (100%)	95 (100%)	94 (100%)	282

The data on Tables 2 and 3 were geared toward answering the question of the form in which gender equality and development related issues were covered by the media. Out of 570 issues identified to be related to the UN post-2015 gender equality and development agenda, 359 (62.9%) issues were reported in form of news, 62 (10.8%) were features, 13 (2.2%) were editorials, 45 (7.8%) were programmes while 63 (11.1%) were enlightenment campaigns. This findings from content analysis was also supported by the survey results which showed that 492 (82%) of 600 respondents said they heard more about gender related and UN post 2015 development agenda in the news than in other forms of media reports. Only 108 (18%) of the respondents thought otherwise.

This question brought into analysis the different strategies adopted by the media in reporting UN post-2015 gender equality and development agenda. Findings from the study show that the most adopted strategy by the media is the straight news format.

**Research Question 2: To what extent has the media covered UN post 2015 gender equality and development agenda?**

**Table 4: Number of issues with UN post 2015 gender equality and development related contents**

Category	Sun	Nation	Tribune	AIT	NTA	FRCN	Total
Issues with UN post 2015 equality & development	30 (31.5%)	32 (33.6%)	29 (30.5%)	39 (41.0%)	30 (31.5%)	37 (38.9%)	197 (34.5%)
Issues without UN post 2015 gender equality and development	65 (68.4%)	63 (66.3%)	66 (69.4%)	56 (58.9%)	65 (68.4%)	58 (61.0%)	373 (65.4%)
Total	95 (100%)	95 (100%)	95 (100%)	95 (100%)	95 (100%)	95 (100)	570 (100%)

The data in table 4 indicates that 197 (34.5%) issues out of 570 issues studied had UN post-2015 gender equality and development contents while 373 (65.4%) had no such contents. The result shows that the coverage of the issues

under study was below average. The findings show that issues concerning gender equality and development were not given adequate coverage in relation to other issues. Nevertheless, the data reveal that the broadcast media had

more reports on UN post 2015 gender equality and development agenda than the newspapers.

### Research Question 3: What is the level of awareness of UN post 2015 gender equality and development agenda among the respondents?

**Table 5:** Distribution of level of awareness of UN post-2015 gender equality and development among selected audience

Rating	Score (s)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (p)	sf	sp
Very high	5	45	8	225	40
High	4	80	15	320	60
Moderate	3	26	5	78	15
Low	2	268	50	536	100
Very Low	1	121	22	121	22
Total	N = 5	540	100	1,280	237

Rating =  $\frac{\sum sp}{N}$  (where s = score; p = percentage and N = total number of scores) = **47%**; Average Score =  $\frac{\sum sf}{\sum f}$  (where s = score and f = frequency of a score) = **2.3**

Table 6 shows the level of awareness of UN post 2015 gender equality and development agenda among the selected audience. The data indicate a 47% awareness level among the populace with a score rating of 2.3 on a 5-point scale. This shows that the level of awareness of information on gender related issues among the communities is quite low compared to other issues. However, further investigation shows that male respondents were more aware of the issues under study than female respondents. This is ironical bearing in mind that the females are mostly affected by the issues discussed.

## 7. Discussion of Findings

Based on the findings from the tables above, the study showed that the media did not give adequate attention and coverage to UN post 2015 gender equality and development agenda. For instance, out of 570 issues studied, only 197 (34.5%) had messages related to gender equality and development while 373 (65.4%) had no such reports. This is particularly important because the media have a fundamental role of informing and educating the public on any issue. Also issues emphasised more by the media tend to receive credence and prominence by the masses.

This finding negates the position of McQuail (2010) that the media exert power that aids in national development, equality, national integration and control of mass action. Similarly, the agenda setting theory of the mass media as used in this study ultimately explains the role of the mass media in setting up public agenda – determining what people think or worry about at any given time.

However, the results of the findings show that the mass media are not living up to expectation. There seem to be a huge information gap between the media and the public. Considering the extent to which the media covered UN post-2015 gender equality and development agenda, the frequency of reports on gender related issues as found in this study indicates that both newspapers and broadcast media outlets gave no prominence to gender equality and development related issues. This finding reinforces the

earlier research findings (Gupta and Sinha, 2010; Oso & Odunlami, 2008; Edeani, 1990; Weber, 1990) which show that the mass media in Nigeria often give more coverage to political issues other than pressing issues of national interest.

While it is commendable that the mass media have adopted different strategies in reporting UN post-2015 gender equality and development related issues, the result of the finding still showed that majority of the gender related issues were reported in straight news format without adequate coverage in other forms of media reportage such as interpretative and conversational approaches that can instigate proper assimilation of information and programme ideas. The dominant use of straight reports was as a result another finding this study that most reporters reported UN post-2015 gender equality and development agenda issues only when there is organised occasion or event.

In studying the extent of awareness of UN post-2015 gender equality and development agenda among the populace, results show that a very low awareness level. The finding is not out of place because the earlier finding has indicted the mass media of failing to grant adequate coverage to the issue of gender equality and development agenda. This in effect, resulted in the low exposure to the burning issues and the consequent low awareness rate. With this finding, it would be difficult to achieve the intention of the agenda because the post-2015 development agenda is expected to succeed the expiring millennium development goals (MDG's)

Meanwhile the ratio of female to male exposure to UN post 2015 gender equality and development agenda issues is another point of concern. The findings show that women who are mostly affected by this issue are not adequately informed. The level of exposure of women to gender equality and development related issues like women empowerment, women right etc is still very low. The reason is still not far-fetched. Cultural practices still relegate women to the background that in most cases they do not even care to participate in the discussion of issues that concern them.

## 8. Conclusion

Results of this study have shown that UN post 2015 gender equality and development agenda has not been fully reported. The level of awareness especially among the women who are mostly affected by it is still low. If the post-2015 sustainable development goals (SDGs) which is expected to sum up all major issues of global women development or progress for the next 20 years would be met, it then means that all stakeholders involved would have to initiate better ways of incorporating gender equality and development related issues into the affairs of the existing outlets.

No doubt, Nigerian publics would become more aware of the importance and implication of gender equilibrium, women's right, women empowerment and development etc only when the media assume their role of agenda setting. This calls for more specialised and in-depth coverage of women and development news. Interpretative and investigative journalism would be highly effective as the

media would not only involve in reporting special areas like gender equality and development, but also go beyond informing and educating to analysing and interpreting issues of gender and women development for deeper understanding.

Having said these, the researchers, based on the finding of this study conclude that the strategies adopted by the media in covering post-2015 gender equality and development agenda are not adequate to create the required awareness for proper understating of the issues at stake. This therefore, resulted to low awareness level that is detrimental to proper environment for sustainable development in Nigeria.

## 9. Recommendations

From the findings of this study, the researchers recommend the following strategies as a way forward;

- 1) Media re-strategisation and prioritisation of coverage and reporting of UN post-2015 gender equality and development agenda. More attention should be given to gender related issues in the media bearing in mind that women constitutes a greater percentage of the country's population. Thus, issues affecting them should be given prominence.
- 2) Other forms of coverage such as enlightenment campaigns, special reports, documentaries, features, editorials, commentaries should be largely adopted to facilitate the UN post 2015 gender equality and development agenda.
- 3) Specialised trainings, seminars, conferences and workshops should be organised for journalists and reporters to equip them with skills and expertise in reporting special areas like gender equality and development.
- 4) Reporters should always consult relevant bodies, agencies, experts, institutions and vulnerable group (women) etc in order to get balanced information on any gender related issue. They should not depend on canned information or biased views when reporting issues of gender.
- 5) Media practitioners should equip themselves with knowledge of the laws protecting women's rights. This will enable them perform their watchdog role in cases of infringement of women's rights.
- 6) Simplicity and accuracy would make reporting on gender equality and development more understandable and interesting to the vulnerable group especially those located in the remote areas. Therefore reports on gender related issues should be made in simple and straight language.
- 7) Indigenous communication methods such as town hall meetings, local announcements, village assembly etc should be adopted and sponsored by relevant agencies/media practitioners to reach out to the vulnerable groups who are located in the remote areas. Gender equality and development related campaigns can be packaged in their own local dialect.

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