**TRANSACTIONAL COMMUNICATION AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN AKWA IBOM STATE**

**(A STUDY OF THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE MEDIA)**

**BY**

**SIMON, INIUWANA SATURDAY**

**UCP/H2014/MC/055**

**TO**

**THE DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION**

**UYO CITY POLYTECHNIC, UYO**

**AKWA IBOM STATE**

**SEPTEMBER 2016**

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**AKWA IBOM STATE**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMA (HND) IN MASS COMMUNICATION**

**SEPTEMBER 2016**

**CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this work was carried out by Simon, Iniuwana Saturday with registration Number **UCP/H2014/MC/055** of the Department of Mass Communication under the supervision of:

Miss Philomena Umoren …………………..

 (Supervisor) Signature/Date

Pastor George Udoh (Ph.D) ……………………

(Head of department) Signature/Date

**DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to the Almighty God, the giver of life, knowledge and ability to do all things

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to my Project supervisor Ms. Philomena Umoren for roe in supervising this research project.

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**ABSTRACT**

This study, “Transactional Communication and Women Empowerment - The Role of Media Women in the Media” was set out to ascertain the roles of media women in assisting their counterparts women folk towards achieving their desired goals and the communication strategies used. The subjects for this study were purposively chosen from among selected Local Government Areas residents. The questionnaire was employed as the instrument for gathering data while analysis was done by frequency count and simple percentage method. After the analysis, one striking finding was that 75(94%) out of the 80 respondents sampled agreed that women now have the support of the entire public, seeing them as strong and that so far the media women have contributed to their having transactional power through creating columns and programmes which project women and their concerns. It was also discovered what the people of the state see women generally as portraying the image of sincerity and foresightedness. Factors that influenced the perception of media women were also discovered. These were their output, attitude to work and roles they sometimes play in the society. To improve public impressions of media women, it was suggested that good training, ethical compliance, good attitude towards duty and serving the interest of women rather than their-media outfit should always be considered. Women were also advised not to mix up “empowerment” with “opportunity”.

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**CHAPTER ONE**

**THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING**

* 1. **Introduction**

The growth of agencies of Mass Communication such as newspapers, magazines, journals, radio and television, has created for the first time the possibility of confronting ignorance with knowledge on a scale hitherto not imagined. Although the list of the evil to which the media have been employed within this century is extensive, one of the remarkable failures of the information age has been the reluctance of the mass media to assail age old prejudices against women.

As stated in the Beijing platform for Action, “print and electronic media in most countries do not provide a balanced picture of women’s diverse lines and contributions to society in a changing world”. The typical image of the woman depicted by the mass media is therefore that of a sex object and an interior partner of man. The media, like critical social spheres, are still not dominated. Both in personnel and in the portrayal of the world, the mass media are still largely a reflection of the super image of men.

Despite the generally disadvantaged positions of women in the media, however, some improvements have been recorded in terms of reportage of women’s concern in national and international media since the United Nations Federation of the decade for women 1975-1985.

Regular commentaries, news features and documentaries are carried concerning women in the electronic and print media. In Nigeria, though stilled in the electronic and print media. In Nigeria, though stilled in the minority, compared to men, many women have joined the media world, and have been promoting women issues through columns and features in the print media, and through talk, shows, panel discussions, interviews and documentaries on radio and television.

The activities of numerous non-governmental organizations, human rights and women activists have painstakingly pushed the campaign for gender equality to the forefront of National discourse in the last decade. Organizations such as, the National Council of Women Societies (NCWS) and Women in Nigeria (WIN), to mention just two, have through workshops, seminars, studies and publications compelled the Nigerian media to focus on gender issues.

In Akwa Ibom State, non-governmental bodies such as the Federation of Akwa Ibom Women Association (FAIWA) and Women Agenda for Democracy and Development (WADD), have also fought relentless for the course of women. But these modest gains are hampered by several obstacles which must be overcome if the lofty goal of women empowerment is to be realized. They include a largely illiterate population of the media and the absence of a co-ordinate communication strategy towards assailing the impediments of gender equality in the socio-economic and political spheres.

The question now is: what do women really want? This question is better answer by women themselves and they have done so in several conferences in all parts of the world in the past decades. What women generally want as reflected in the document such as the Nairobi Forward Looking strategies and the Beijing Declaration and platform for action is to be accepted as equal and able human beings who can take their own decisions and make their own choices; to be given equal opportunities with their male counterparts in education, in employment, in social life and in politics to enable them develop their full potentials and contributes their very best to the development and social progress of society. They are not asking for privileges over men despites the critical roles they play as mothers and spouse in making all men what they are.

Akwa Ibom women like all others, only want men to do away with the cultural, social, legal and political obstacles men have erected to hold women over the years. Women want men to appreciate what society loses when pressing women down. The society had often lost remarkable potentials and contributions of women to development. Men refuse women access to education and employment, society shouts out half of human kind potentials to transform the world. Women want men to remember that the two sexes are the co-inheritors of the world and are destined by nature to be each other keepers if the human species is to continue to be part of the universe.

The greatest happiness is possible for men, as for women, only if two sexes work in cooperation, mutual respect and love. Even in the animal kingdom, the ants, lions, the birds of the sky and the species of the oceans tend to have foe better appreciation of the imperative of gender equality than supposedly superior humans. The male lion does not restrict the female lion from joining him on hunting expeditions. The closeness of all these animals is so admirable. The concept of that we humans live up to our presumed superior intellect by eliminating gender prejudices which hamper the full realization of the potentials of the human species.

Finally, women want to meet men half way in the school on the farm, in the home, on the factory floor, at the market place and in government, so together they can lend a supportive hand to each other and attain their collective potentials and fulfill the dream of sustainable development and full self actualization and happiness for all.

**1.1 Statement of the Problem**

 Despite the tremendous growth in communication technology, and the mass media in the country, women remain highly disadvantaged in terms of access to the means of information and self expression. This level of participation by women in the mainstream media is a result of their disadvantaged position in society which is attributed to their stereotyped images. There is that inadequate development and less use of alternative and appropriate media for greater involvement of rural women in the development process.

 Even though women have line up of needs, the high illiteracy and poverty rates among women further retard their access to information and their appreciation of communication as an instrument for development and empowerment. The exclusion of women from policy organs and processed of society has rendered them powerless in decision: that affect their lives.

**1.3 Objectives of the Study**

This study therefore sets out to:

1. Ascertain in the roles at media women play in involving the womenfolk in the scheme of power and governance in the state.
2. Find out the communication strategies the media women use to mobilize their counterparts towards achieving their goals.
3. Assess the effectiveness of the communication strategies in term of reach, frequency, accessibility, media/modes used, in achieving transactional (participatory) approach to women empowerment in Akwa Ibom State.

**1.4 Research Questions**

The research questions are;

1. What is or are the roles of media women towards women empowerment in Akwa Ibom State?
2. What communication strategies are used in mobilizing the entire womenfolk towards achieving this goal?
3. How effective have the strategies been in fulfilling the much needed transactional power control in Akwa Ibom State?

**1.5 Significance of the Study**

 This study will serve as a pointer in identifying the roles of the media not only as an important instrument of communication but also as an effective approach to empowerment. To this end, they will be able to create general awareness and resourcefulness in the minds of all.

 The work will analyze the constraints which militate against the under-represented in the media, in having access to the benefits of development. By mapping out effective strategies, a study of this nature will help establish the important linkage between communication and empowerment.

**1.6 Limitation of the study**

 Due to time and financial constraints, this research project is limited to Akwa Ibom State women and to women in the print and electronic media.

**1.7 Definition of Terms**

**Participatory:** This is defined in an active sense of having a say in how things are done and in how resources are allocated. Therefore the word is used to denote an essential aspect of empowerment.

**Communication:** This refers to a means of establishing commonness with oneself and others; the process of creating, transmitting ala sharing meaning with oneself and or with others.

**Gender Issues:** This refers to an instance where unequal treatment is recognized as undesirable or unjust.

**Gender Quality:** This means that there is no discrimination on grounds of a person’s sex in the allocation of resources or benefits, or in the access to services.

**Stereotype:** Stereotype here is seen as that which is fixed in form; used repeatedly without any change.

**Access:** This is the means or right to obtain services, products or commodities.

**Empowerment:** Empowerment is an important element of development, being the process by which people take control and action in order to overcome obstacles. In this context, women empowerment is the process by which women mobilize to understand, identify and overcome gender discrimination, so as to achieve equal access to the benefit of development.