# Chapter 7
# In Search of Women–Supportive Media for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

**Tunde Musibau Akanni**
*Lagos State University, Nigeria*

## ABSTRACT

*As women all over the world keep advocating for the advancement of women's rights and allied matters, it becomes imperative to undertake relevant reviews. In line with this thought, this chapter investigated the likelihood of women-supportive media's coverage on two incidents: The Ugborodo women's protest of 2002 in the Niger Delta as well as the anniversary of International Women's Day in 2015. Interestingly, women from all over the world chose the same year to resolve on Planet 50-50 as a landmark commemoration of the Beijing Platform for Action, BPFA of 1995. Guided by the social responsibility theory of the media, the research methods used were both qualitative content analysis and in-depth interview. For content analysis, two national newspapers currently edited by women, The Sunday Punch and Saturday Punch newspapers were examined to ascertain the selected titles' reckoning for women's issues. Interviews were also conducted with women in the media, academia and civil society groups. The findings revealed that the selected newspapers, though edited by women, still needed some support to ensure inclusivity as it concerned women*

## INTRODUCTION

One of the most striking weaknesses of the public sphere of the medieval period in Europe was the conspicuous absence of the female voices. That phenomenon had come as a most relevant intervention in the political process of the society. It availed all city residents, irrespective of their social standing, equal pedestal to volunteer comments on issues of common interest (Habermas, 1989) The mass media today as a marketplace of ideas have been reckoned with as the contemporary equivalent of the public sphere of the old.

Interestingly, as was the case in the medieval Europe so has it remained through ages in different parts of the world. To tackle the seemingly intractable anomaly, national and international conferences have been convened. Of particular importance to this paper is the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, BPFA, of 1995. That global congregation identified Twelve Critical Areas deserving attention to ensure desirable development for women all over the world. Some of these are media, education, employment, poverty, health and conflict. For each of these thematic areas, the Beijing meeting had done a broad review of the situation prevailing until then. It therefore came up with suggestions on the various interventions that could help address the existing challenges. There were roles envisaged for governments while there were roles deemed doable for the civil society groups

The mass media constitute one sector of the human society that has been changing continuously, courtesy of technology and yet has been increasingly impactful as much as it has been increasingly liberalized for access by the audiences. This has enhanced its relevance to various activities of states and citizens around the world including Nigeria.

As for Nigeria, the year 2015 appeared to be of great historical importance to the women and the rest citizens. Two acclaimed national newspapers, *Saturday Punch* and *Sunday Punch* had women as their editors. Also, the country organized another round of general elections, which in the nation's history appeared to have unprecedented participation of women. This election even featured a woman as a governorship candidate in the otherwise conservative northern part of the country. Globally, it marked some kind of apogee in the struggle for women's emancipation with the concept of Planet 50-50. This is a consensual women's position to the effect that women and men should be accorded equal opportunity worldwide by 2030. As has been the case in other parts of the world, the mass media in Nigeria, including those selected for study, have reported all affairs including women's affairs with their respective fervor and preference.

This study has also considered it germane to look at the media's coverage of a typical engendered struggle (Ikelegbe, 2005) in the oil rich Niger State. It was the Ugborodo women's campaign of 2002 against the exploitative activities of oil companies.

Otherwise called Aruntan-Ugborodo, Ugborodo is an Itsekiri community of Delta state, Nigeria. The people are predominantly fishermen and petty traders. It is the closest community to a Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) Tank Farm in the area. Ugborodo is made up of several small communities that include Aruntan, Madanwo and Ijala. The community is 90 minutes away by speedboat ride from Warri. In 2002, some 2,000 women and other youths invaded the Chevron Tank Farm. It was a protest against the oil multinational's indifference to the plight of its host community, Ugborodo. Perhaps a much stronger reason was the marginalization of the local women from the visible benefits from the burgeoning oil production activities in the only neighbourhood they could call theirs. Not only did they feel deprived, they agonised over the fact that their children, younger men and women, are inexcusably denied employment by the oil industry. It was a major manifestation of what has been described as the engendering of the Niger Delta conflicts (Ikelegbe, 2005). The strong-willed, unarmed protesters had demanded jobs for their sons as well as investment in the impoverished communities. They prevented aircrafts from landing and boats from docking at the terminal surrounded by swamps, creeks and the Atlantic Ocean. The protesters persisted on their campaign until Chevron agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding with them on the eleventh day (Akiyode-Afolabi and Iyare, 2005). The agreement, this researcher wishes to note is an indictment for the oil giant. It concerns three areas namely, employment, infrastructural support and economic empowerment for local people who have been neglected by successive governments and multinational oil companies since production began some forty years earlier.

22 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/in-search-of-women-supportive-media-for-sustainable-development-in-nigeria/187924

# Related Content

### Strategic Fundamentals of Knowledge and Information Management for Social and Economic Growth in Sub-Saharan African Countries
Nathaniel O. Agola (2018). *International Journal of ICT Research in Africa and the Middle East (pp. 1-18).*
www.irma-international.org/article/strategic-fundamentals-of-knowledge-and-information-management-for-social-and-economic-growth-in-sub-saharan-african-countries/193914

### Hybrid Method for Exploring Efficacy of Indigenous Management of Common Cold through African Therapy
David Mphuthiand Abel Jacobus Pienaar (2017). *Handbook of Research on Theoretical Perspectives on Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Developing Countries (pp. 359-374).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/hybrid-method-for-exploring-efficacy-of-indigenous-management-of-common-cold-through-african-therapy/165752

### Impact of Technology on University Leadership Effectiveness Among Academic Staff of Some Selected Private Universities in Ghana
Benjamin Ghansahand Ben-Bright Benuwa (2021). *International Journal of ICT Research in Africa and the Middle East (pp. 15-29).*
www.irma-international.org/article/impact-of-technology-on-university-leadership-effectiveness-among-academic-staff-of-some-selected-private-universities-in-ghana/290834

### Searching Objects in a Video Footage: Dropping Frames and Object Detection Approach
Tapiwanashe Miranda Sanyanga, Munyaradzi Sydney Chinzvende, Tatenda Duncan Kavuand John Batani (2019). *International Journal of ICT Research in Africa and the Middle East (pp. 18-31).*
www.irma-international.org/article/searching-objects-in-a-video-footage/231626

### Measuring E-Learning System Adoption in Universities in Tanzania: An Integration of Trust, Environmental Factors, and University Readiness Into an IS Success Model
Deogratius Mathew Lashayo (2020). *International Journal of ICT Research in Africa and the Middle East (pp. 1-18).*
www.irma-international.org/article/measuring-e-learning-system-adoption-in-universities-in-tanzania/259885