

## **RADIO BROADCAST AND POLITICAL EDUCATION: AN APPRAISAL OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS IN IMO STATE**

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**ABSTRACT:** The study is on radio broadcast and political education: An appraisal of women participation in politics in Imo State. The objectives of this study were to: find out Imo State women's level of awareness about Heartland FM "Politics and Women" radio programme; ascertain Imo State women's knowledge level of political participation through radio programme; and find out the influence of Heartland FM "Politics and Women" radio programme in the political participation of women in Imo State. The study was anchored on agenda setting theory. Sequential explanatory research method was used for this study. A sample size of 385 was drawn from the population of 2,534,468, using Australian calculator. Multi-stage sampling technique was used in this study. Questionnaire and focus group discussion guide were used for data collection. Findings revealed that Imo State women's level of awareness of Heartland FM "Politics and Women" programme is minimal at 49%. Also, it was found that exposure to radio has positively influenced Imo State women's participation in the political processes at 84.7%. The researchers recommended that political stakeholders should pay attention to radio programmes that encourage women participation in the political process by sponsoring such programmes.

**Keywords:** Politics, Political Education, Political Participation, Radio Broadcast, Women

### **INTRODUCTION**

It is evident that the development of any country involves the participation of both men and women. In modern democratic governance, gender equality is deemed most important in political participation by given men and women equal rights and opportunities to engage fully in all ramifications and at all strata of political processes. The question of women in politics and decision making has been an issue of public importance since independence. This is because women were not given any active role to play in the decision process during that period. The imposition of military rule, an era that followed this period from 1966 did not foster women participation in politics and very little was heard of women in politics and decision making (Samuel & Segun, 2012).

To ensure effective and equitable representation of women in politics, women need to actively take part in the political process of the nation. Abubakar (2011) opines that political participation is the involvement of people (not necessarily active) in any political process, before a collective decision is arrived at. Political participation entails citizens' engagement in the discourse of socio-political and economic issues which serve as yardsticks for choosing would-be leaders. It may also include assessing the capabilities of the incumbencies and

advocating ways of ameliorating societal ills for a more prosperous country (Okoro & Nwafor, 2013). One of the ways of achieving this is through the mass media.

Uwakwe (2010), cited in Anyanwu (2018), observes that the media have contributed to complicating the political scenario after independence by taking sides and sometimes playing the ostrich. As a dominant instrument for the dissemination of information, messages, ideas, beliefs and ideologies, the mass media have unarguably constituted irreplaceable tools for the propagation of political opinions, view-points and perception. The media are robust and efficacious instruments at the disposal of politicians, political parties, political activists, policy makers, bureaucrats, non-governmental organizations, volunteers and numerous others for conveying political messages to the electorate and the general public (Aliede & Afam, 2015). Ansah (as cited in Ityough, 2010, p.4) was of the view that radio can be used to motivate a country politically towards national unity, or to arouse the public against a common external enemy, or to motivate a group towards a self-development activity. Given the ability of radio to overcome the barriers of distance and illiteracy, it is a very powerful medium for promoting national integration using national anthem, slogan and campaign. This means that radio can be used to motivate, encourage and mobilize the women for participation in the political process. Little wonder Heartland FM aired programme on political enlightenment entitled “Politics and Women”. This is a 30 minutes duration programme, aired every Tuesday by 1: 30pm by Faith Mbaleme. It aimed to motivate women to participate in politics; disabuse the negative mind of people seeing women on politics as prostitute; empower women in politics and encourage women and give them voice to come and participate. Therefore, this study will examine whether Heartland FM “Politics and Women” programmes influenced the participation of Imo State women in political activities.

It is believed that the most potent weapon against political apathy among women is information. This is because through Heartland FM programme “Politics and Women” most women in Imo State appear to have been adequately exposed to messages on political participation. The radio station sees the programme as part of their social responsibility to create awareness on the importance of women participating in political activities. It is, therefore, necessary to ascertain the level of awareness created by the radio political programmes among women and whether exposure to Heartland FM “Politics and Women” influences women’s engagement and participation in political activities.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of this study were to:

1. Find out Imo State women’s level of awareness about Heartland FM “Politics and Women” radio programme.
2. Ascertain Imo State women’s knowledge level of political participation through the radio programme “Politics and Women”
3. Find out the influence of Heartland FM “Politics and Women” radio programme on the political participation of women in Imo State.

### **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is Imo State women level of awareness about Heartland FM “politics and women” radio programme?
2. What is Imo State women level of knowledge of political participation through radio programme?
3. What influence has Heartland FM “Politics and Women” on the political participation of Imo State women?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Political Participation**

Political participation entails the involvement of the people in the series of political events, programmes or activities within their environment. These political activities may be initiated by the people themselves or their political leadership, representatives of institution. It is the involvement of the people in the political process. In other words, it involves citizen’s engagement in the discourse of socio-political and economic issues which serve as yardstick for choosing would-be leaders (Nwafor et al, 2013). Since the political process and activities directly or indirectly affect the lives of the people, these citizens are always keen to influence those decision, actions and policies of the politicians or political institutions. Political participation goes beyond involvement or political institutions. Political participation goes beyond involvement or participation in the electoral process; and because of greater awareness; mobilization and better facilities, people are now getting more involved in political activities within and outside their immediate environment. Abubakar (2011) sees it as the involvement of people, (not necessarily active) in any political process, before a collective decision is arrived. In other words, political participation entails citizens, engagement in the discourse of socio-political and economic issues which serves as yardsticks for choosing would be leaders. It may also include assessing the capabilities of the incumbencies and advocating ways of ameliorating societal ills for a more prosperous country (Okoro & Nwafor, 2013).

### **Women and Politics in Nigeria**

This is in realization that until a significant proportion of women holds public offices and are given the opportunity to initiate, mould and execute public policy and legislation, they cannot effectively tackle the other problems they are bedevilled with. Women themselves have responded to these opportunities at all levels with more women associations taking advantage of the new political opening to assert their roles and advance their course it is regrettable that although women constitute the greater number of registered voters in any of the elections held in Nigeria, they are yet to experience full representative positions (Okoronkwo-Chukwu, 2013). The role women play during the electioneering campaign and voting processes therefore demands that they take preeminent positions in governance considering their sacrifices to the success of the various political parties in each round of election.

In 1999, women participation in politics and decision making witnessed an improvement over previous experience, but generally the scorecard remained very poor. The general elections saw only 181 position won by women out of the 11,881 available positions throughout the country (Samuel & Segun, 2012). In 2003, in states like Adamawa, Cross River, Ebonyi, Jigawa, Kano Katsina, kebbi, Nasarawa, Oyo, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara, no women was elected as member of the House of Assembly. In states where women were elected as

members of the House of Assembly, they were very few (Agbalajobi, 2010). At the April 2007 elections, there were total 1200 women aspirants to 1532 offices. Out of this, only 660 of these aspirants won their primaries (Asaju & Adagba, 2013).

In spite of the poor performance of women in the 2011 National Assembly elections, there is an improvement in the number of women political appointees as reflected in the number of women in the current Federal Executive Council (FEC) led by President Goodluck Jonathan. Out of the 42 ministers appointed before the 13<sup>th</sup> September 2013 cabinet reshuffle, 12 are women, representing 31.0 percent. Similarly, there are 11 female permanent secretaries out of 43 constitutes 25 percent, and 5 female advisers out of 13 representing 38 percent. Also, another important milestone recorded by women under the past regime was the appointment of female ministers to manage key ministries hitherto managed by men, e.g. petroleum and aviation Ministries. However, despite the above achievements, a UNDP report concludes that women participation in politics and decision making is still inadequate (Asaju & Adagba, 2013). The British Council (2012) report indicates that Nigeria currently stand at 118 position out of 192 countries in terms of gender parity thereby lacking far behind African countries like South Africa (43%) and Rwanda (65%). It could be recalled that during President Goodluck Jonathan administration, women occupied 33 percent of cabinet positions. But this has decreased to 19 percent in President Muhammad Buhari administration. In the 2015 elections, the number further decreased to 7 in senate (6.4%) and 19 in House of Representative (5.2%).

It is interesting to note that women have occupied important and key administrative and political positions since 1999. In most instances, these women have performed creditably well thereby leaving no doubt about the ability and capability of women to perform when saddled with responsibilities at all levels. The performance of such women as Ndi Okereke Onyiuka, former Managing Director of the Nigerian Stock Exchange; Prof. Dora Akumnyili, former Director General, National Agency for Food and Drug Control (NAFDAC); Dr. Obiageli Ezekweseli, former Senior Special Assistant to former President Obasanjo on Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (otherwise known as Due Process Unit); Mrs. Evelyn Oputu, Managing Director of Nigerian Bank of Industry; Prof. (Mrs.) Rugayyatu Ahmend Rufai, former Minister of Education; Mrs. Ifueko Omoigui Okauru, Immediate past Executive Chair Federal Inland Revenue Service; Prof. (Mrs.) Grace Alele Williams, former Vice Chancellor, University of Benin; and Dr. Okonjo Iwela who as Minister of Finance during Obasanjo's administration worked indefatigably and secured a reprieve for Nigeria's external debt among others. The role of these women has no doubt lifted the pedigree and profile of Nigeria women as hard working, disciplined, thorough, creative, enterprising and productive. Their enormous contribution to national development is gradually engineering re-evaluation of the role, and capabilities in positive light. Despite this feat, plethora of challenges still beset effective women participation in politics and decision making even though there are also great prospects.

### **Radio and Women Participation in the Political Process**

Radio is a mobilization and awareness creating tool. In Africa where majority of its population are illiterates who reside in the rural communities there is little or no access to other media of mass communication, the radio becomes the easiest and cheapest means of mass education and mass mobilization. Radio as a tool for mass mobilization breaks educational and class barriers because programmes are produced in both indigenous and

foreign language enabling effective comprehension of the tending listeners, as a result, it can play an important mobilizing role in developing countries. (Julius-Adeoye, 2014,p.2).

Ansah (1991) cited in Ityough (2010, p. 9) corroborates that radio can be used to motivate a country politically towards national unity, or to arouse the public against a common external enemy, or to motivate a group towards a self-development activity. Given the ability of radio to overcome the barriers of distance and illiteracy, it is a very powerful medium for promoting national integration by fostering national anthem, slogan and campaign. This means that radio can be used to motivate, encourage and mobilize the people for political participation. To buttress this, Ugwu (2010) opines that in a democratic rule, the broadcast media also undertakes an important role of mobilization. The media mobilizes the masses through persuasive communication to join forces with government, by way of getting committed to, as well as being involved in the prosecution of development programmes for which their participation is imperative. This is mostly achieved through programmes broadcast on radio and television stations aimed at eliciting audience participation and support.

### **Empirical Review**

Agishi (2015) examined women participation in party politics in Nigeria.. Observation from past and present practices reveals that women participation in party politics in Nigeria has been marginal, especially when marched against their numerical strength. Historically, women have held powerful political positions as exemplified by the lives of Madam Tinubu of Lagos, Queen Amina of Zaria, Margaret Ekpo of Calabar and Funmilayo Kutu. However, there is need to move from history and improve as well as increase women participation so as to ensure equitable power sharing among the genders in the Nigerian polity

Adekoya, Akintayo and Adegoke, (2015), examined the lowrate of female participation in politics compared to that of their male counterparts in Nigeria created the need to examine the situation in this study; the role of role in mobilizing women for political participation in Nigeria. The study examined the importance of women's participation in politics and how the radio has been used to facilitate or improve participation. The survey research design was adopted and questionnaire was used as data collection instrument. Data collected from the field was analyzed, using simple frequency percentage table and charts.

Fayomi, (2014) in his study examined the significant factors affecting women political participation in Nigeria; evaluate the impact of women participation in politics in Nigeria and determine the effect of education on Nigeria women political empowerments. The method adopted in data collection involves direct interviews, observations and use of questionnaire instrument. One hundred respondents were randomly selected a cross section of the surveyed respondents were randomly selected a cross section of the surveyed local government constituencies within the municipal areas of Ado-Odo Ota and Ewekoro and Local Government Areas of Ogun State. The findings indicated that cultural influences, significantly affects women participation in Nigeria politics; the more politically the women are empowered the higher their positive impact in the democratic process of decision making and education, plays the most significant role in women participation in politics.

Adebola and Ayodeji (2015) evaluated the communication strategies that are use in political campaign to mobilize women for political participation and also determine if these



communication strategies are useful for effective mobilization of women for participation in development programmes. In depth interview method was used for this study. To achieve this, some of the respondents were recruited as interviewers. A total of 230 women were selected from 10 wards with the multi-stage cluster sampling approach. The researchers concluded that the productive political participation of women at the rural level for further development of the women-folk is weak; the productive participation of women at the rural level for the immediate gratification of their economic needs is overwhelmingly high; the capacity of television to induce political participation of women is weak; the capacity of radio to induce political participation of women is high; the capacity of venue oriented channels like the market to induce political participation of women is high; the capacity of venue-oriented channels like the market to induce political participation is overwhelmingly high; the capacity of interpersonal channels to induce political participation of women in the rural areas is high and cultural indices abound as part of the resistance women face in participation in politics.

Onyenadum (2018), investigated the influence of radio political messages on women participation in politics: An appraisal of audience education In Imo State. Survey research method was used for this study. A sample size of 400 respondents was drawn from a population of 1,803,030 voters in Imo State. The researcher found that radio political education programmes encouraged Imo State electorates' participation in the 2015 general election. This study revealed that exposure to radio political education programmes influenced Imo State electorates' participation in the 2015 general election. The researcher also, discovered that influence from relatives, party membership and loyalties, candidates charisma, popularity/fame, religion and zoning were other factors that influenced Imo State electorates.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study was anchored on agenda setting theory. Agenda setting theory emerged from communications studies and focuses on mass media influence on setting political agenda, as presented in the seminar article by McCombs and Shaw (1972), which through content analysis of a local election documented a high correlation between media agenda and the public agenda. Their 1972 article coined the phrase "agenda setting (Ekeanyanwu, & Olaniyan, 2010, p. 83). It could be recalled that early communication studies had shown a mixed picture about the ability of media to influence opinions on a given issue. Agenda setting theory advocates that audiences not only learn about public issues and other matters through the media they also learn about how much importance to attach to an issue or topic from the emphasis the mass media place on it. For instance, in reflecting what candidates are saying during a campaign, the mass media set the "agenda" of the campaign. This ability to effect cognitive change among individuals is one of the most important aspects of the power of mass communication (McQuail & Windfall, 1993, cited in Ekeanyanwu, & Olaniyan, 2010, p. 84). Therefore, agenda setting theory can help to create awareness, educate, enlighten and mobilize the people to participate in the political process of the state, by the kind of reportage given to it by the media. The extent of Nigerian mass media's power of the media even during electioneering campaigns in Nigeria as it has been very successful in not only telling the people who should be their favourable candidate (what to think) but frequently telling them who to vote for (what to think about). The extent of Nigerian mass media's power have made it very possible for them to attract and direct the public will be deserving of their attention of their targeted electorates, present them with issues that they will be deserving of their

attention and persistently make these issues the focus of public consideration. This great influence of the media on their targeted audience has resulted in their ability to choose what type of political stories, images and of course political agenda that they may consider newsworthy.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Sequential explanatory mixed research design was adopted for this study. This approach offered the researchers opportunity to use both qualitative and quantitative aspects of the research exercise. This means that it allowed the use of questionnaire and interview guide for focus group as instrument for data collection. This method helped the researcher obtain opinion and views of Imo State women on radio programmes and women participation in politics. The data generated from the quantitative and qualitative methods were used to complement each other in providing better result for solving the research problem. The projected population of women was 2,564,438. Using the Australian online calculator, the sample size of 385 was derived. For the focus group discussion, 21 women leaders were purposively selected from the 3 senatorial districts. Multi-stage sampling technique was used. The questionnaire and focus group discussion guide were used to collect data from the respondents. To establish the reliability of the instrument, the researcher carried out a test-retest method. The result showed coefficient correlation of .82 using Cronbach's Alpha statistical formula.

## **RESULTS**

Out of the 385 copies of the questionnaire that was administered to three hundred and eighty-five (385) respondents, only three hundred and fifty-four (354) copies were found usable while thirty-one (31) copies were invalid. It means that 92% of the usable copies were greater than 8% copies that were invalid.

### **What is Imo State women level of awareness about Heartland FM "politics and women" radio programme?**

In responding to the research question above, items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 were analyzed for this purpose.

**Table 1: Respondents access to radio**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	321	90.7%
No	33	9.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2019*

This result shows that 90.7% or majority of the respondents confirmed that they used radio as medium of information. It means that the respondents owned radio sets.

**Table 2: Respondents view on whether they listen to Heartland FM radio programmes**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	290	81.9%
No	64	18.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Field survey, 2019*

According to the table above, 81.9% representing majority of the respondents believed that they listened to Heartland FM programmes. The implication is that a good number of the respondents who had radio set mostly listened to Heartland FM programmes.

**Table 3: Respondents' view on whether they listen to Heartland FM "politics and women" programme**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	254	71.8%
No	70	19.8%
Can't remember	30	8.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Field survey, 2019*

This indicates that majority of the respondents' at 71.8% agreed that they listened to Heartland FM "Politics and Women" programme. It means that a great number of the respondents who listened to Heartland FM programmes were equally aware of "Politics and Women" through their listenership of the programme.

**Table 4: Respondents' view on whether they are aware that Heartland FM "Politics and Women" is a political enlightenment programme for women**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	241	68.1%
No	43	12.1%
Can't say	70	19.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2019*

The obtained data above reveals that a good number of the respondents at 68.1% concurred that Heartland FM "Politics and Women" is a political enlightenment programme for women.

**Table 5: Respondents' level awareness about Heartland FM "Politics and Women" programme**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	86	24%
High	172	49%
Low	46	13%
Very low	50	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Field survey, 2019*



The result obtained in the above data indicates that 49% or majority of the respondents' level of awareness about Heartland FM "Politics and Women" programme is high. The implication is that majority of the respondents bring out their time to listen to this programme.

**What is Imo State women level of knowledge of political participation through radio programme?**

In answering the stated research question above, items 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 were used for this study.

**Table 6: Respondents' view on whether the National Gender Policy has formulated a 35% Affirmative Action in Nigeria since 2006**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	126	36%
Agree	183	52%
Disagree	30	8%
Strongly disagree	15	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Field survey, 2019*

This indicates that majority of the respondents' at 88% strongly agreed and agreed that National Gender Policy has formulated a 30% Affirmative Action in Nigeria since 2006. This is clear indication that majority of the respondents understood what the advocacy for women participation in politics based on their exposure to Heartland FM "politics and women" programme.

**Table 7: Respondents' view on whether the policy demands 35 percent involvement of women in all the governance processes**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	145	41%
Agree	166	47%
Disagree	30	9%
Strongly disagree	15	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2019*

The result from the data above showed that 88% strongly agreed and agreed that the policy demands 35 percent involvement of women in all the governance processes. This simply means that exposure to this programme informed the decision of the respondents to know their right as women on the need to take 35 percent of all the political position.

**Table 8: Respondents' view on whether Heartland FM "politics and women" programme is to reduce political apathy among women**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	95	27%
Agree	189	53%
Disagree	45	13%
Strongly disagree	25	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Field survey, 2019*

This indicates that majority of the respondents' strongly agreed and agreed that Heartland FM "politics and women" programme is to reduce political apathy among women 80%. Based on the knowledge of this programme the respondents became knowledgeable of the fact that the programme was aimed to reduce political apathy among the women.

**Table 9: Respondents' view on whether voter registration and actual voting in an election is one of the ways of achieving women participation in politics**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	86	24%
Agree	210	59%
Disagree	31	9%
Strongly disagree	27	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Field survey, 2019*

This indicates that majority of the respondents' strongly agreed and agreed that voter registration and actual voting in an election is one of the ways of achieving women participation in politics at 83%. Through this programme the respondents became aware of the fact voter registration and actual voting during election is one the means of ensuring women participation in the political processes.

**Table 10: Respondents' view on whether their knowledge level of political participation is high**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	98	28%
Agree	181	51%
Disagree	55	16%
Strongly disagree	20	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Field survey, 2019*

The data above shows that 79% strongly agreed and agreed that their knowledge level of political participation is high. There is a clear indication that women are politically conscious of their rights and issues about political participation.

**What influence has Heartland FM “Politics and Women” on the political participation of Imo State women?**

In answering the research question stated above, items 11 and 12 were used for this purpose.

**Table 11: Respondents’ view on whether Heartland FM “politics and women” programme influence their participation in politics**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	145	41%
Agree	179	50.6%
Disagree	22	6.2%
Strongly disagree	8	2.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Field survey, 2019*

It means that majority of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that Heartland FM “politics and women” programme influenced their participation in politics at 91.6%. The implication is that those of the respondents who listened to radio programmes on political enlightenment tend to participate more in politics those who do not.

**Table 12 Respondents’ view on whether Heartland FM “politics and women” programme has increases their participation in politics**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	79	22%
Agree	230	65%
Disagree	30	9%
Strongly disagree	15	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Field Survey, 2019*

It means that majority of the respondents believed that Heartland FM “politics and women” programme had increased their participation in the political processes at 87%. Exposure to this radio programmes on political participation has increased the level of their participation in political unlike before now.

## **Discussion of Findings**

### **Imo State women level of awareness about Heartland FM “Politics and Women” radio programme**

The finding indicated that the level of awareness about Heartland FM “Politics and Women” programme is high at 49%. This revealed that majority of the respondents’ at 81.9% agreed that they listened to Heartland FM “Politics and Women” programme. It was revealed that a good number of the respondents at 68.1% strongly agreed and agreed that Heartland FM “Politics and Women” is a political enlightenment programme for women. According to them they listened to Heartland FM programmes at 71.8%. Again, it was revealed that 90.7% or majority of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they had used radio as medium of

information. It means that the respondents owned radio sets. The implication is that majority of the respondents bring out their time to listen to this programme. This is because the respondents listened to the programme as such were to know the time of airing the programme. It means that a great number of the respondents who listened to Heartland FM programmes were equally aware of “Politics and Women” through their listenership of the programme. This is because a good number of the respondents who had radio set mostly listened to Heartland FM programmes.

Further analysis revealed that the Focus Group discussion (FGD) discussants were agreed that they listened to Heartland FM “Politics and Women” radio programme on the average. Today, people especially women have access to radio either through their phones or having a radio set.

### **Imo State women level of knowledge of political participation through Heartland FM “Politics and Women” radio programme**

The findings from above showed the level of the respondents’ knowledge on political participation is based on exposure to Heartland FM “politics and women” programme as follows: (a) 88% strongly agreed and agreed that National Gender Policy has formulated a 30% Affirmative Action in Nigeria since 2006; (b) 88% strongly agreed and agreed that the policy demands 35 percent involvement of women in all the governance processes; (c) 80% strongly agreed and agreed that Heartland FM “politics and women” programme is to reduce political apathy among women; and (d) 83% strongly agreed and agreed that voter registration and actual voting in an election is one of the ways of achieving women participation in politics.

Also, data revealed that a good number of the FDG discussants believed that their exposure to this programme have increased their knowledge about political participation as follows: National Gender Policy has formulated a 35% Affirmative Action in Nigeria since 2006; the policy demands 35 percent involvement of women in all the governance processes; and voter registration and actual voting in an election is one of the ways of achieving women participation in politics. It implies that most women have actually known where to register for their voters’ card and the need to collect their PVC.

This is clear indication that majority of the respondents understood what the advocacy for women participation in politics based on their exposure to Heartland FM “politics and women” programme. This simply means that exposure to this programme informed the decision of the respondents to know their right as women on the need to take 35 percent of all the political position. Based on the knowledge of this programme the respondents became knowledgeable of the fact that this programme is aimed to reduce political apathy among the women. Through this programme the respondents became aware of the fact that voter registration and actual voting during election is one the means of ensuring women participation in the political processes.

### **Influence of Heartland FM “Politics and Women” radio programme on the political participation of Imo State women**

The finding indicated that majority of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that Heartland FM “politics and women” programme influenced their participation in politics at

91.6% and 87% believed that Heartland FM “politics and women” programme had increased their participation in the political processes. The implication is that those of the respondents who listened to radio programmes on political enlightenment tend to participate more in politics those who do not. Exposure to this radio programmes on political participation has increased the level of their participation in political unlike before now. Further analysis from the FGD discussants revealed that exposure to this programme had increased their political awareness and participation. This programme had positively influenced their participation.

### **Conclusion**

Political education messages had and will continue to be a dominant issue on radio stations in Imo State given the fact that, it encouraged cross fertilization of political ideas as well as increased women engagement in the political activities. Exposure to radio plays an invaluable role in encouraging, educating, persuading and mobilising women in their participation in politics by providing them with information about voters’ card and candidates standing for elective positions, as well as the need for them to vote out bad government through by maximizing the large population. It means that the constant coverage or report of political development in the country and constant exposure to these messages significantly influenced women participation in politics.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the above finding, the following recommendations are made:

1. There is need for the establishment of special radio programme on women participation in politics as this would help to broaden their knowledge more on political participation and various ways these can be achieved.
2. To influence the participation of women in political processes, politicians, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), political parties, National Orientation Agency (NOA), Ministry of Women Affairs/Social Development, women groups, female politicians and traditional rulers attention should pay attention to radio programmes that encourage women participation in the political process by sponsoring such programmes.
3. There is need for workshops, seminars and symposiums on political participation to be carried out from time to time among women Imo State in order to change their psyche about politics and encourage them by making political process less expensive.

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