

Media Convergence and Gender, Class and Disability Inequalities in Nigeria

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Communication across the world has evolved with the help of technology and has created several avenues to voice out our needs, opinions, transfer knowledge and information globally. Recently, digitalization has brought about media convergence which is the merging of different forms of mass media. This research paper seeks to examine the relationship between media convergence and gender, class and disability inequalities in Nigeria. Specifically, the study analyses the impact of media convergence on the representation of gender, class and disabilities in Nigeria; the effect of media convergence on public discourse about inequality, the study equally explores the ways the marginalized groups use the benefit of media convergence to reduce inequalities in Nigeria. The study looks at Technological Determinism and Agenda Setting theory of the media. The study adopts the in-depth-Interview research method and nine participants were interviewed. After data collation and analysis, the researchers find out that; the respondents to some extent understand the meaning of media convergence, they equally use the potential of digital media tools to promote their public image and they face challenges such as; limited technological access, exclusion of low-income populations due to class-based constraints, and inadequate opportunities for persons with disabilities. The study concludes that media convergence can be used to increase public awareness, foster equitable society and create sustainable environment in which gender, class and disability inequalities can be tackled constructively. The study therefore recommends that all stakeholders should utilize various media platforms to represent their voice and public image and the government should help the marginalized group by providing the new technological gadgets for them and organizing training on how to utilize the benefits of media convergence.

Keywords: Media convergence, Gender, Class, Disability and Nigeria.

Introduction

The 21st century's instantaneous worldwide news flow has significantly increased innovation in emerging technologies. This demonstrates how humans have been altering communication methods since the beginning of time, and no era or decade will go by without these changes. The positive aspect of this shift, however, is that all the new developments in communication technology work in tandem to create a more powerful, quicker, and hybrid advancement rather than avoiding the use of the older ones. Buttressing this fact, Hartley (2002) attest that advances in communication

technologies have immense consequences for cultural, economic, social and political life of the people.

Media convergence is a broad term with many different interpretations. Media convergence, according to Leverage (2021), is the blending of many forms of mass media, including traditional, print, broadcast, new, and online media. According to Henry Jenkins, referenced in Future Learn (2023), media convergence represents industrial, cultural, and social paradigms that push consumers to seek out new information and draw linkages between scattered media content, going beyond a simple

technological shift. However, the researchers analyze the discourse of media convergence as the synergizing of every media outlets, that is; the old and the new ones into a big family that enables seamless and swift connection with one another. This effect gives rise to an amazing, cheap, effortless and fast news flow that has never existed before. Nicholas Negroponte, the founder of MIT Media Lab, coined the phrase "media convergence" in 1978. By understanding the activity of the various media sectors as crossing with one another in the late 1970s, Nicholas started to popularize a notion known as convergence. He claimed that the fundamental framework of media convergence is formed by contemporary gadgets, technology, social media, and the internet. Therefore, convergence refers to the merging of media, computing, and telecommunications in a digital setting.

Nowadays, this multiplication and convergence of media outlets have pave way for gender and class disabilities by presenting these groups in a light limelight. Good enough, gender, class and disability inequalities are among the seventeen (17) point vision 2030 agenda of Sustainable Development goals SDG. Goal 5 of the

SDG's is about gender equality and empowers all women and girls. One of the targets includes eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking, sexual and other types of exploitation. While goal ten (10) is to reduce inequality within and among countries. One of the targets includes that by 2030, to empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status. (SDG; 2023). However, these goals cannot be achieved without the power of the media which is seen by Wilbur Schramm (1964) as a magic multiplier. This multiplication of media outlets which leads to media convergence has without doubt enhanced the image and representation of gender and class disabilities by giving them an avenue to be heard and thus creates an enabling horizontal mode of communication that promotes sustainability in terms of mutual understanding and acceptance.

Scholars such as Benoy (2017); Ekeh (2018) found out that media convergence has not given women an equal representation in the media. It is pertinent to note that these studies were

done in the time past and the study objectives are different from the present study. Thus, the need for this study which dwells on Media Convergence: Gender, Class and Disability Inequalities in Nigeria. Generally, gender, class and disability inequalities have become a norm around the globe. Culturally, gender inequality in Nigeria has been there from time immemorial due to the belief, customs and culture of different ethnic groups in Nigeria that promotes social stratification and class distinction of male and female roles. Due to these existed norms that has prevailed for many years women and the downtrodden has been marginalized and forsaken. Despite the intervention of Universal Declaration of Human Rights and SDG vision 2030 goals which provide all human beings equal in dignity and rights. But there is hardly a country in African Continent where women and disabilities are given their full rights.

Fortunately, the innovation in digital technology which brings about media convergence gave every group equal chance to voice out their views and plight to the whole world. But the question is; if the marginalized groups utilize the potentials of media convergence to promote their image?

Having this question in mind remains the problem of this study which sort to explore “Media Convergence and Gender, Class and Disability Inequalities in Nigeria”. Specifically, the objectives of this study include to: Find out if the respondents know the meaning of media convergence. Analyse ways gender, class and disabilities use the potential of media convergence to reduce inequalities in Nigeria. And ascertain the challenges the marginalized groups face while using media convergence in promoting their public image.

Media Convergence: Definition and Types

The merging of various media platforms, technologies, and communication systems into a single digital environment where information may be created, shared, and consumed through a variety of channels is known as media convergence. With the work of Henry Jenkins, who defined convergence as the movement of media material across numerous platforms and the collaboration across multiple media industries, this idea gained widespread attention in media studies. (Jenkins, 2006). According to Hugh (2021), it is the process through which computer

networks and digitization combine previously distinct media mediums. People can now access media content that was only accessible through a particular channel at a glance. Thanks to smartphones, tablet computers, smart televisions, and even automobiles. Terry (2023) also defines media convergence as a phenomenon that involves the interconnection of information and communication technologies, computer networks, and media content. It brings together the three c's, namely, computing, communication, and content, and is a direct result of the digitization of media content and popularization of the internet. Generally, media convergence transforms established industries, services work places and enables new forms of content to emerge.

Types of Media Convergence

Technological convergence: This is the process of combining various communication technologies into one digital system or device. Through this integration, users can engage in a variety of media-related activities on a single platform, such as social network communication, internet surfing, music listening, and video recording. Flew (2023) claims that digitalization, which

transforms diverse media content into digital representations that can be sent over numerous communication networks, is what propels technological convergence. These days, a journalist can film an interview on a smartphone, edit the video, and post it to a news website or social media platform in a matter of minutes.

Media or Content Convergence:

This entails combining various media content kinds on several platforms. The same article or information may emerge concurrently in newspapers, television shows, websites, podcasts, and social media platforms in this type of convergence. In an effort to attract a larger audience, media companies are progressively modifying their content to fit various digital platforms. News companies may disseminate multimedia tales that integrate text, photos, video, music, and interactive graphics inside a single digital environment. (Pavlik, 2021). A clear illustration would be how a political news story may show up as a social media update on digital platforms, a podcast conversation online, a video report on television, or a printed article in a newspaper.

Economic or corporate convergence: This describes the cooperation, mergers, or alliances between various media firms and communication sectors. In this case, a media company may concurrently possess digital platforms, radio networks, newspapers, film studios, and television stations. According to some media analysts, industry convergence enables media companies to increase their market reach and optimize economic efficiency in the digital economy (Flew, 2023).

Another Type is Cultural Convergence:

When viewers actively engage in creating, disseminating, and analyzing media material via digital platforms like social media, blogs, and video-sharing websites, cultural convergence takes place. Jenkins (2006) observed that cultural convergence promotes a participatory culture in which viewers are active participants in the media landscape rather than passive consumers. The following are some of types of cultural convergence:

•**Acculturation:** When weaker cultures adopt traits from more dominant culture e.g Nigerians mostly speaking the English language.

•**Assimilation:** When original traits of weaker culture are completely erased and replaced by traces of more dominant culture e.g. refugees in another country no longer speak the native language.

Finally, communication convergence: Communication convergence has significantly transformed interpersonal and mass communication by blurring the boundaries between traditional media and digital communication systems. This convergence enables applications such as video conferencing platforms enable users to conduct meetings, share documents, send messages, and broadcast live content simultaneously, demonstrating how multiple communication functions can operate within one digital environment. (McQuail, 2010)

Gadgets Used in Media Convergence and Digitalization

From the 1980s until now, media technologies have undergone a phase of digitalization. Movies are increasingly being made and released digitally, and CDs and digital music formats supplanted cassettes and tapes in the 1980s and 1990s. The news is now accessible on both paper and the internet, Cable networks have been

partially digitalized, satellite television as well as digital radio has been fully established in numerous nations. Thus, this agrees with the submission of McLuhan (1964) that; ‘the world has turned to a global village’ truly, these innovation gives room for oneness and equal access to information. Nevertheless, other gadgets that aid in media convergence and digitization are as follows:

Smartphones: Smartphones are the most popular devices in media convergence since they combine communication, computation, internet access, and multimedia output into a single device. These functions allows users to immediately produce, edit, and distribute content across digital platforms. According to recent research, cellphones and mobile applications improve the accessibility and distribution of multimedia material, making them essential tools in converged media contexts. (Chellapan et al., 2024; Garba, 2024; Westlund, 2019).

Personal Computers and Laptops: These offer sophisticated multimedia editing, storage, and delivery capabilities, combining text, audio, and

video into cohesive systems. Laptopshas the ability to handle high-level media production in broadcasting, journalism, and digital publishing, because they enable sophisticated software and online distribution networks. (Li et al., 2025; Flew, 2018).

Tablets: Tablets are hybrid gadgets that combine computer capabilities with the portability of cellphones. They are frequently used to consume digital material, including streaming content, e-books, and online news. Tablets facilitate convergence by providing a single interface for touch-based interaction with various media sources. (Pavlik, 2013; Li et al., 2025).

Smart Televisions (Smart TVs): Smart TVs are an example of how internet-based media and traditional broadcasting have come together. They turn television into an interactive medium by enabling viewers to stream material, access apps, and engage with digital platforms. (Lotz, 2017; Garba, 2024). Smart TVs illustrate how convergence has blurred the boundaries between television, internet, and mobile media.

Digital Cameras and Camera Phones: In the digital age, digital

cameras and smartphone cameras are indispensable tools for producing content. They make it possible to record and disseminate multimedia content in real time, which supports the growth of citizen journalism and user-generated content. Media production methods have changed as a result of the confluence of internet, communication, and photographic technologies. (Lister et al., 2009; Westlund, 2019).

Wearable Devices (Smartwatches, AR/VR Headsets): Smartwatches and augmented/virtual reality (AR/VR) gadgets are examples of wearable technology that offer interactive and immersive media experiences. These devices, which combine digital and physical surroundings, are examples of advanced levels of convergence. (Jamalova, 2024; Wang & Zhao, 2022).

Data Storage and Cloud Devices: Storage technology like external drives and cloud computing systems are critical to the convergence of modern media. These tools make it possible to store, exchange, and access massive amounts of multimedia material on various platforms and devices. In particular, cloud-based technologies improve convergence by facilitating

media content synchronization and remote access. (Kitchin, 2014; Liu et al., 2024).

Internet of Things (IoT) Devices: Smart speakers and linked home systems are examples of IoT gadgets that facilitate connection across platforms and other devices. They help create linked digital ecosystems by enabling the smooth integration of media material across various contexts. One of the main forces behind the growth of IoT and digital communication networks is technological convergence. (Gubbi et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2024).

Wireless Communication Devices (Wi-Fi, Bluetooth Gadgets): The interconnections of converged media systems are supported by wireless technologies like Wi-Fi and Bluetooth devices, which facilitate smooth data flow between devices. By removing physical obstacles and improving digital communication mobility, these technologies increase the flexibility and ubiquity of media access. (Castells, 2010; Paiva & Paul, 2020).

Smart and Connected Media Systems (e.g., In-Vehicle Systems): Smart settings with integrated navigation, communication, and entertainment

systems, like connected cars, are examples of modern digitalization. These systems, which combine several media functions into a single interface, show how convergence is ingrained in common technologies. (Paiva & Paul, 2020; Flew, 2018).

Concept of Gender, Class and Disabilities Inequalities / Sdg Vision 2030 Goals

The concept of gender, class, and disability inequalities refers to the unequal distribution of opportunities, resources, rights, and social recognition among people or groups according to socially created characteristics including physical or mental ability, gender, and socioeconomic status. These disparities frequently show up as restricted access to resources for communication, work, healthcare, education, and political engagement. It is defined as a structural condition ingrained in cultural norms and social structures that consistently disadvantages some groups while elevating others (Giddens, 2009).

Gender inequality occurs when women and girls are denied equal access to opportunities, resources, and decision-making power compared to men. This inequality is deeply rooted in

cultural norms, patriarchal structures, and discriminatory social practices. According to United Nations (2015), gender inequality limits women's participation in education, employment, leadership, and governance across many societies. Save the Children (2023) defines gender as discrimination on the basis of sex or gender causing one sex or gender to be routinely privileged or prioritized over the other. To put it another way, gender prejudice and the ensuing gender discrimination start in childhood. Girls and boys encounter unequal gender norms as well as social norms regarding expectations and access to resources and opportunities from the moment they are born, with lifelong consequences in their homes, schools, and communities. For instance, in some parts of Nigeria, girls may face obstacles of finishing formal education because of early marriage, poverty, or cultural expectations that prioritize male education. This situation limits women's economic independence and lowers their representation in leadership roles in the media, politics, and other sectors.

Diverse Educators (2023) describes class inequality as the unequal distribution of resources within a society, usually due to norms of

allocation that reinforce particular patterns along the lines of socially defined categories of people. In other words, it is seen as disparities that arise from differences in wealth, income, education, and occupation within a society. Sociologists contend that class inequality endures because resources and opportunities are frequently concentrated among people from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Social class determines an individual's life chances, including their access to high-quality education, healthcare, and communication technologies. (Karl Marx, 1867/1976). For example, in Nigeria, people from wealthy urban families might have access to digital technologies, private schools, and reliable internet connectivity, whereas others from impoverished rural communities might not have access to these advantages. The digital divide may grow as a result of this class-based inequality, which also restricts underprivileged groups' capacity to fully engage in social and economic advancement.

Equality and Human Right commission (2023) sees Disability discrimination as when you are treated less favourably or at a disadvantage because of your disability. This can be a

one-time event, the implementation of a rule or policy, or the presence of physical or communication barriers that make it difficult or impossible to access something. However, this discrimination does not have to be deliberate to be illegal. It also refers to systemic barriers that prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in society, such as physical barriers, restricted access to assistive technologies, discrimination in the workplace, and a lack of inclusive educational systems. The social model of disability emphasizes that disability is not merely an individual medical condition but a product of societal barriers that restrict participation (Oliver, 1990). For example, a visually impaired student may struggle to access educational materials if schools do not provide Braille textbooks, screen readers, or inclusive learning environments. In Nigeria, despite policy efforts such as the Disability Act, many public institutions and media platforms still lack adequate accessibility features, which continues to marginalize persons with disabilities. It is pertinent to note that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Vision 2030, adopted by the United Nations in 2015, provide a global

framework aimed at addressing inequalities and promoting inclusive development. The SDGs consist of 17 global goals designed to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all by the year 2030. Several of these goals directly address gender, class, and disability inequalities. For instance, Goal 5 (Gender Equality) seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, while Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities) focuses on reducing income disparities and promoting social, economic, and political inclusion for all individuals regardless of age, gender, disability, race, or economic status. Similarly, Goal 4 (Quality Education) emphasizes inclusive and equitable education for all, including persons with disabilities and disadvantaged communities.

Ways the Marginalized Groups Use the Potential of Media Convergence to Reduce Gender, Class and Disabilities Inequalities.

Women, low-income groups, and people with disabilities are among the marginalized groups that have taken advantage of the opportunity presented by media convergence to confront systemic injustices in society. Through the integration of mobile technologies,

social media, online journalism, and traditional media systems, marginalized groups in Nigeria and other developing societies can mobilize networks, amplify their voices, and advocate for social inclusion. However, the following outlines and explains several keyways these groups use the potential of media convergence to reduce gender, class, and disability inequalities.

1. Digital Activism and Advocacy

Social networking sites, blogs, and online video channels are examples of converged media platforms that the marginalized groups utilize to promote equality and social justice. Women's organizations, disability activists, and grassroots groups can increase awareness of social exclusion, gender-based violence, and discrimination through digital activism. For instance, by bringing attention to issues of injustice that might otherwise go unnoticed in traditional media settings. Internet campaigns can mobilize popular support and impact legislative decisions. It is said that "networked social movements," in which group action is coordinated via online platforms and magnified by mainstream media attention, are made possible by digital communication

technology.(Castells, 2012). In Nigeria, such converged media activism has helped raise awareness about gender rights and the inclusion of persons with disabilities in public policy discussions.

2. Citizen Journalism and Alternative Media Production

Instead of being passive information consumers, marginalized people can now create content without depending on established media organizations. Nowadays, anyone can create and disseminate their own news and viewpoints using smartphones, blogs, podcasts, and social media platforms. By highlighting issues that directly affect them, this practice often referred to as citizen journalism. Gillmor (2004), noted that, citizen journalism empowers ordinary people to participate actively in the news-making process by using digital technologies to report events and share experiences. In Nigeria, community-based online media platforms have provided spaces where women and disadvantaged groups can document social injustices and advocate for social change.

3. Access to Education and Information Resources

Improved access to educational and informational resources is another way marginalized populations make use of media convergence. By combining digital libraries, online courses, educational broadcasts, and mobile learning platforms, converged media systems allow people from underprivileged backgrounds to gain knowledge and skills that can raise their socioeconomic standing. By removing obstacles relating to geography, mobility, and societal discrimination, digital technologies have enabled women and people with disabilities to access educational materials remotely. (van Dijk, 2020). In Nigeria, online learning platforms and educational media programs have contributed to improving digital literacy and empowerment among marginalized groups.

4. Economic Empowerment through Digital Platforms

By facilitating participation in online markets and digital entrepreneurship, media convergence also gives marginalized populations access to economic prospects. People, especially women and low-income groups, can advertise enterprises, sell goods, and reach new markets without

having to make large financial investments through social media platforms, mobile payment systems, and e-commerce websites. These platforms lessen conventional obstacles to employment and business ownership, such as restricted mobility and limited finance. According to research on the digital economy, internet-enabled platforms give underprivileged people new ways to engage in the economy and find employment. (Benkler, 2006). In the Nigerian context, many women entrepreneurs and persons with disabilities now use digital platforms such as social media marketplaces to generate income and achieve financial independence.

5. Accessibility and Inclusive Communication Technologies

The creation and deployment of assistive technology that enhance communication and information access for people with impairments has been made easier by media convergence. Accessibility elements including screen readers, captioning systems, voice recognition software, and text-to-speech technologies are frequently included in converged digital media platforms. These developments make it possible for those with physical,

hearing, or vision impairments to engage more completely in digital communication settings. According to World Health Organization (2022), digital assistive technologies play a crucial role in promoting social inclusion and reducing barriers faced by persons with disabilities. In Nigeria, the increasing adoption of accessible digital platforms has allowed disability advocacy groups to communicate more effectively and participate in social and political discourse.

6. Building Online Communities and Social Support Networks

Media convergence makes it possible for marginalized groups to create online communities that offer chances for cooperation, collective identity, and emotional support. People who are dealing with comparable social issues can connect, exchange stories, and plan campaigns to advance inclusion and equality. These online communities have the potential to increase social capital and promote group empowerment among underrepresented groups. Researchers point out that "networked publics," where people congregate via mediated platforms to participate in discourse and group action, are made possible by

digital communication technology. (Zizi Papacharissi, 2010). In Nigeria, online communities dedicated to women's empowerment and disability advocacy have become important spaces for information sharing, mentorship, and collective mobilization.

Challenges of Media Convergence in Nigeria

Every innovation has its share of difficulties. According to Jenkins et al. (2013), boundaries are being broken down and a new information flow is being facilitated by global convergence. Both positive and negative information are disseminated at an incredibly high rate. Nigerians encounter several difficulties as a result of media convergence, notwithstanding the quick uptake of the newest technologies. Among these difficulties are:

First and foremost, the country has a low rate of internet and computer penetration. Though internet users are on the rise, the challenge of internet access has hindered many users from exploiting the full potential of media convergence.

Second, fake news: The public now has the power to regulate public discourse, this however gave rise to the

dissemination of unverified and false stories that can harm a person's reputation. In particular, WhatsApp continues to be one of the most widely used channels for the spread of inflammatory messages and fake news that are replayed without any kind of authentication from bloggers or citizen journalist. (Inya, 2017; Jefkins, 1998).

The third problem is that of learning, unlocking, and relearning. Since media click bait is a relatively new or rather, evolving technology, many Nigerians find it challenging to adjust. In order to be competitive in the market and in society, professionals and consumers must experiment with new media like desktop publishing, be more creative, forget a specific writing style, and relearn how to write for multimedia platforms.

Another significant challenge is the economic sustainability of media organizations in a converged media environment. Established income models have been upended by the shift from print journalism and traditional broadcasters to digital media. Nigerian media companies have struggled to successfully monetize digital content while seeing a decline in advertising revenue from traditional means. Picard (2011) notes that, digital convergence

often destabilizes the economic structures of legacy media because audiences migrate online while advertising revenues become fragmented across multiple digital platforms. In Nigeria, this economic pressure has led to newsroom downsizing, job insecurity among journalists, and reduced investment in investigative reporting.

A further challenge concerns regulation and media governance in the digital age. Nigeria's media regulations are less adept at handling the challenges of digital convergence because they were primarily created for conventional print and broadcast media. The lines between citizen-generated content and professional journalism have become more hazy due to the growth of social media, blogs, and internet journalism. Regulations pertaining to disinformation, digital ethics, and accountability have been complicated by this circumstance. Scholars such as McQuail (2010) argue that media convergence complicates traditional systems of media regulation because digital platforms operate across national boundaries and involve multiple actors beyond conventional media institutions.

Other negative effects of media convergence as identified by Hugh (2021) include the following:

- Creates a divide between those with access to computer technology and those without.
- Digital content can be easily pirated and leaked.
- Music, film, television, and publishing industries have suffered economically due to copyright infringement and loss of audience.

Empirical Review

An empirical study by Aribisala (2023) examined how gender representation in Nigerian journalism has been affected by the convergence of digital media. The study looked at how digital technologies, like social media sites, online newsrooms, and mobile reporting tools, have changed how female journalists participate in Nigeria's media landscape. The study examined a number of academic publications on gender inequality in media practice using textual analysis and secondary research findings. The results showed that gender inequality still exists in Nigerian media organizations even if media convergence has lowered some structural obstacles by facilitating

online cooperation, digital publication, and distant reporting. In addition to being underrepresented in leadership roles, women frequently encounter discriminatory newsroom cultures that result in unfair assignments and few possibilities for advancement. The study concluded that media convergence provides opportunities for gender inclusion but cannot automatically eliminate entrenched patriarchal structures without institutional reforms and gender-sensitive policies in the Nigerian media industry.

Benoy Krishna Hazra (2017) *Media Convergence: Its Prospect and Role of Empowering Marginalized Rural Women in West Bengal*. This study examines how marginalized rural women use contemporary mass media, computers, mobile phones, and the internet to advance their socio-cultural, educational, health, and economic well-being. With 640 respondents, the study included both qualitative and quantitative research methods. According to the survey, rural women are not computer proficient and have limited mobility. The study also discovered that cultural norms in India make it difficult for women in rural West Bengal to interact with modern

media, which contributes to their marginalization. According to the survey, women in Bendgal should utilize the potential of new media to collaborate and communicate effectively.

Bulus, C and Lwahas, S (2020) Women and Broadcast News Presentation in Nigeria: Television as Gendered

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the performance of female news presenters in Nigeria. It concentrated on determining the elements that impact their work, the causes of older women's speech impediments, and the difficulties faced by female presenters in their roles as mentors. Five female news presenters, two female program managers, three male news presenters, and two male program managers from two chosen media organizations in Jos—the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) network and the Plateau Radio Television Corporation (prtvc)—were interviewed. Using attribution theory in order to improve the quantitative presentation of the results. The study finds out that, Nigerian women presenters demonstrate sensitivity for a larger variety of topics/problems,

bringing to the forefront the perspectives/perceptions that women are re-ligated to the back. The study recommends that; women needs more training and mentorship which should not only be encouraged but sustained.

Desmond Ekeh (2018) Media and Gender Inequality in Nigerian Politics.

This paper investigates how the media contributes to gender oppression and inequality in Nigerian politics. The study makes use of sociological theories to compare the coverage of the female presidential candidate with that of the male candidates, it looks at how the media covered Nigeria's 2015 presidential election. Two carefully chosen Nigerian national publications, This day and the Guardian, was used and the study examined data from news articles in these two publications during a specified 28-day period before to the election. It concludes that the public's perception of the female candidate was impacted or was not presented in lighter mood by the media during the period of election.

A more recent empirical investigation by Gbadebo (2025) investigated the relationship between gender and class disparities in Nigeria and media convergence via social media platforms. Regression

analysis and descriptive statistics were used in the study. Quantitative research approach was used to examine social media involvement trends among various demographic groups. According to data, equal participation in converged media environments was not ensured by having access to digital technologies alone. Nigerians' usage of social media for networking, political involvement, and knowledge was heavily influenced by socioeconomic factors like gender, income, and education. A "second-level digital divide," according to the report, occurs when underprivileged populations have access to digital platforms but lack the finances or the skills necessary to effectively utilize them. It's interesting to note that users with lower incomes occasionally exhibit more active information-seeking behavior, exhibiting adaptive tactics in spite of financial limitations. The research highlights how media convergence can reinforce class-based inequalities unless digital literacy and inclusion policies are strengthened.

Theoretical Framework

Technological Determinism and Agenda Setting Theory formed the theoretical bases of this

study. Technology Determinism theory McLuhan's (1962) assert that media technology moulds how individuals in a society think, feel and act. Marshall McLuhan maintained that the form of a medium is the message. The implication is that we learn and think the way we do because of the information we receive through an available technology. McLuhan (1964) insisted, we shape our tools, and they in turn shape us and these mediated gargets have turned the world into a global village. Though some critics might argue that; "if a new technology is invented and nothing changes" The theorist insists that as the medium changes so do society's way of communicating. In relation to this study, Technological Determinism therefore implies that, people will quickly adopt social media technologies which are in vague in today's communication as it enhances connectivity, speed interactivity and more democratic participation.

Agenda Setting Theory: Walter lippman (1992) introduced the concept of agenda setting. He said that the media was to blame for the "pictures in our heads." Cohen (1963), a decade later, fine-tunes the theory that the media isn't always effective at educating people on

what to think but rather what to think about. McCombs and shaw investigated the 1968 American presidential election in 1972 and discovered that the media has the ability to tell us issues that are important, and that the media chooses what to promote, which ultimately becomes the public interest. However, agenda setting theory is likely to be relevant to this study because consistent coverage of gender, class, and disability issues in the media will influence audience members' attitudes towards marginalized groups.

Research Design

To effectively evaluate the Media Convergence and Gender, Class and Disability Inequalities in Nigeria, qualitative research design (In-Depth Interview) was employed.

Population of Study

The population of the study consists of the population of Gender, Class and Disabilities who are registered voters in 2025 data. The population indicated 3,456. (Anambra State Data (Invictus Africa) ANAMBRA.pdf.

Sample Size

The researchers selected Nine (9) participants, taking three respondents from each group, that is; gender, class and disabilities.

Sampling Technique

To effectively investigate all the variables raised in the study, the respondents are randomly and purposively selected from the group.

Measuring Instrument

In-depth interview guide was used to generate qualitative data for this study. Open ended questions were used in designing the questionnaire. This made it easier for response categorization and analysis. Interview guide provided platform for more probing questions from respondents. Thus, gives room for follow up on issues that need more clarification.

Data Analysis

The data generated in this study was analyzed using thematic method of analyzing qualitative analysis

Findings

This section reports the summaries and recurring themes among the answers of the participants in relation to each of the questions asked

about Media Convergence and Gender, Class and Disability Inequalities in Nigeria. An overall discussion of the results of the 6 open ended questions is summarized thus:

Q1: Do you know the meaning of media convergence? Five of the participants admitted that they know the meaning of media convergence. But four respondents said that they do not have a clear meaning of what it means. The researcher then explains to them what media convergence means and some of them noticed that they have been using it in one way or the other.

Q2: When the researcher further probes the participants to itemize the gadgets used in media convergence, they were able to list most of them.

Q3: Do you think if those gadgets have impacts on the representation of gender? All of the respondents admitted that media convergence gadgets have impacts on representation of inequalities since it gives voice to the voiceless by giving them the privilege to be heard.

Q4: How can you use the gadgets to reduce inequalities in Nigeria? All the participants said that the way to reduce inequalities is by utilizing the potentials of media convergence in the war against inequality.

Q5: What are your challenges in using media convergence? Four of the participants said that they do not have some of the facilities needed for promoting their group, while others said that they do not know how to use most of those gadgets efficiently.

Q6: Way forward? The respondents call on the government to assist them in buying some of these gadgets and plead with the government to enroll them in proper training on how to use the gadgets effectively.

Discussion of Findings

The answers from the interview questions provide rich information regarding the relationship between the usage of Media Convergence and Gender, Class and Disability Inequalities in Nigeria. From the participant's reports, one can infer that people strengthen, build, and maintain relationships through social media.

RQ1: Find out if the respondents know the meaning of media convergence. In answering this question, item 1 and 2 in In-depth Interview guide was used. Five (5) out of the nine (9) participants admitted that they know the meaning of media convergence. But four (4) respondents said that they do not have a clear

meaning of what it means. The researcher then explains to them what media convergence means and some of them noticed that they have been using it in one way or the other without knowing. When the researcher further probes the participants to itemize the gadgets used in media convergence. All the participants were able to list most of them. The implication of this finding is that, most of the participants are using one or two gadgets used in media convergence knowing or unknowingly. These findings are in line with the theoretical conception of Technological Determinism theory that believes that technological revolution helps us to transfers messages, changes human and the society in the way that it unites people, motivate participation, broaden the scale of impact and enhance engagement at a very low price.

RQ2: Analyse ways gender, class and disabilities use the potential of media convergence to reduce inequalities in Nigeria. In answering this question, item 3 and 4 in In-depth Interview guide was used. All of the respondents admitted that media convergence gadgets have impacts on representation of inequalities since they give voice to the voiceless by giving them the privilege of the world to hear

their plight. When asked the 4th question that is; how can you use the gadgets to reduce inequalities in Nigeria? All the participants said that the way to reduce inequalities is by utilizing the potentials of media convergence such as opening web sites, blogging, opening Facebook account, twitter account, YouTube account and synergizing both the online and offline media such as the newspapers, magazines, and traditional media in the war against inequality. This submission is in line with the findings of Aribisala (2023) who concluded that media convergence provides opportunities for gender inclusion. Similarly, the theoretical conception of Agenda Setting theory which believes that the media has the ability to tell us issues that are important and the media choose what to publicize which ultimately becomes the public agenda supports the findings of this study. Since the public after watching media content unconsciously develop their argument based on media agenda. Thus, media agenda develops a spiral of silence that affects public perception over issues.

RQ3: Ascertain challenges the marginalized groups face while using media convergence in promoting their public image. In answering this

question, item 5 in In-depth Interview guide was used. Four of the participants said that they do not have some of the facilities needed for promoting their group, while others said that they do not know how to use most of those gadgets efficiently. The finding is in line with the outcome of Benoy (2017) the study found that Women in rural west Bengal are marginalized partly due to inability to communicate with the new media due to cultural norms in India. Also, the findings of Bulus, C and Lwahas, S (2020) concluded that, Women are also in need of more training and mentorship which should not only be encouraged but sustained.

Conclusion

Despite the recent progress by the world power such as initiating the Sustainable Goals vision 2030 in equalizing the rights of women, class and disabilities inequalities, there is no country in the world, more especially African Continents where women, the poor and the disabled have fully achieved equality. However, with the world turning to a global village, the marginalized can use the potentials of media convergence to let their plights known to the whole world. Media Convergence has come to stay and have

proven beneficial for small and large businesses as well providing rapid accessibility and availability of information and content at the touch of our screen. Media convergence has digitalized and unified the society through communication, though it has resulted to addiction to our devices and low network has been a hindrance for full utilization of these gadgets, but the truth is that; world without media convergence is said to be stagnated and backward.

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