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**APPRAISAL OF DIAMOND FM'S "LÁWÙJÒ OBÌNRIN" PROGRAMME
IN ENHANCING WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT IN ECONOMIC
ACTIVITIES IN OSUN STATE**

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ABSTRACT

This study on "Appraisal of Diamond FM's 'Láwùjò Obìnrin' programme in Enhancing Women's Participation in Economic Activities in Osogbo, Osun State seeks to investigate the extent of exposure to 'Láwùjò Obìnrin' programme, its influence among women in Osogbo and identify factors that impinge on their participation in economic activities. The study was anchored on Uses and Gratification Theory. The survey research was adopted and a sample of 235 was drawn across ten markets in Osogbo. The sample size was calculated using the Survey Monkey online calculator. A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted, including purposive, stratified, and systematic sampling techniques. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents. The data were analysed using descriptive statistical tools. The study found out that there was a high level of awareness and listenership of 'Láwùjò Obìnrin' among respondents. It also revealed that the programme has influenced their participation in economic activities. However, the study recommended that media organisations should increase the awareness of the programmes that hold a significant benefit for the audience's socio-economic life, and more programmes should be developed to focus on delivering practical and actionable content.

Key Words: *Radio, Economic Activities, Women Empowerment, Socio-Economic, Participation.*

INTRODUCTION

"Lawujo Obinrin" (meaning Women's Community) is a popular magazine radio programme on Diamond FM radio, Ilesha, Osun State. This weekly programme, targeted at women in Osun State, is aired in Yoruba language every Tuesday from 11:15 am to 11:55 am. The programme focuses on female matters and socio-economic, political, and cultural issues affecting the womenfolk. The Yoruba broadcast programme is aimed at empowering women in areas such as social roles, education, health, and economic opportunities. It serves as a platform where women can express themselves, share experiences, learn about new developments, and maximize available resources. Through interactions with resource persons and diverse individuals, women gain knowledge and insights to inform, sensitise, and proffer solutions to identified problems facing women in society.

The main objective of the "Lawujo Obinrin" programme is to enhance women's active participation in economic, social, cultural, and political matters, empowering them and promoting gender equality. Through its interactive segments, the programme facilitates community engagement, giving voices to women of diverse age groups and social backgrounds. The programme has become an influential medium for driving social change for women in Osun State, connecting well with its target audience culturally in a relatable way.

Economic development is seen as the essential propeller of development, which provides the resources and opportunities necessary for social growth. Social change and development of a society is solely dependent on the strength of communication network, reaching all audiences who are in need of development. Communication is a major factor that drives societal growth. Socio-economic development can be determined through a society's growth in the gross domestic product (GDP), increase in employment rate, equal income distribution and infrastructural enhancement. Furthermore, empowering women is crucial to social development as they contribute significantly to economic growth, especially in food production (Jira, 2020; Hasiya, Gutachew & Demelash, 2023).

Gender is a significant dimension in development and social change; and feminist researchers have proved that women contribute significantly to the economic development of society (Asogwa, 2012; Ubong-Abasi, 2021). Economic development is strengthened when gender equality is sustained. The role of every individual in the society is invaluable for economic growth and social change, irrespective of gender, age, background or culture.

In most societies, including Nigeria, women are seen as inferior to men and they contribute little to leadership in the society. This notion has been invalidated in Asogwa (2012), who provided a biblical reference from Genesis 1 verse 27, noting that God created both male and female and did not identify one as superior or dominant over the other. This shows that both men and women have equal economic rights and access to resources, and participate in all levels of social economic growth and development.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) call for relevant and achievable goals for women as part of what drives the social development of a society. The SDG advocates for greater funding, equal access to productive resources, sharing of unpaid care work, and accountability to boost women's economic empowerment (UN, 2019). The media have been crucial in empowering women by providing them with relevant information and education on economic activities in the society.

Obviously, the mass media, especially radio, have played crucial roles in economic development and social change by conceptualizing, planning, producing, and packaging

developmental information, education, and entertainment messages that are capable of widening the scope of knowledge and facilitating active economic participation among the public through enhanced mobilisation, and empowering programme. The mass media have also developed strategic measures, especially through framing techniques and agenda setting, serving as a whistle-blower on discrepancies or irregularities in the economic sector. Similarly, the media have played major roles in creating sustained awareness, consciousness, and participation through widened enlightenment and mobilisation, empowering marginalised audiences and rural populations (Hasiya *et al.*, 2023).

Specifically, radio has been a powerful tool for communication and information dissemination, typically in developing countries where there is limited or no access to other media. In Nigeria, radio is a popular medium of communication with a large audience. It has been utilised to empower the audience by creating awareness through information, education, and enlightening programme. It provides and broadens knowledge, facilitates socio-economic growth, promotes skills development, and other information that are relevant to the lives of the audience (Githaiga, 2022). These radio programmes conceptualize, plan, produce, package, and disseminate information on rights, privileges, and opportunities available to a social group. Radio has gained momentum around the group for promoting women's rights and empowerment.

According to Bala (2025), the media, including radio, play an essential role in inspiring positive changes and empowering women. It is a platform that creates awareness of individual rights, advocates for marginalised voices, and helps the public form and shape their opinions, social attitudes, and behaviour (Hasiya *et al.*, 2023). Through radio programme like Diamond FM's "*Lawujo Obinrin*" programme in Osun State, societal challenges can be resolved by raising awareness and providing an avenue for the public to suggest possible solutions.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Socio-economic development of nations is not gender-based. It requires collaborative efforts from every citizen, irrespective of their age, gender, color, height, background, or culture. In Nigeria, every citizen has an equal right to participate in economic activities under the guidance of law. However, it appears that most women are less participatory in business or economic activities surrendering to the male counterpart.

The media can help to broaden knowledge, facilitate social change, promote skills development, and give support to economic empowerment among women. It has the capability to shape views, conceptualise, and disseminate information on opportunities available to a social group. Despite the media's consistent efforts in empowering women through educative and enlightening programmes, women in Osun State still face critical challenges in accessing the right information, opportunities and resources that can enhance their engagement in businesses or economic activities. Radio, specifically, has gained momentum for promoting women's rights and activities, having the potential to bridge the identified gap in this study. However, the impact of radio on women's participation in economic activities remains uncertain. This is why the study seeks to assess the role of '*Lawujo Obinrin*' FM's programme in promoting women's economic engagement and addressing the challenges encountered by women in Osogbo, Osun State.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives were to:

1. determine the extent of exposure to 'Lawujo Obinrin' programme among women in Osogbo, Osun State.
2. ascertain the influence of the 'Lawujo Obinrin' programme on women's participation in economic activities in Osogbo, Osun State.
3. identify factors impinging on women participation in economic activities in Osogbo, Osun State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guide the study:

1. What is the extent of exposure to 'Lawujo Obinrin' programme among Osogbo women?
2. What is the influence of the 'Lawujo Obinrin' programme on women's participation in economic activities in Osogbo, Osun State?
3. What factors impinged on women participation in economic activities in Osogbo, Osun State?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Women Economic Empowerment

As part of the global agenda of Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved in 2030, policymakers and development stakeholders have placed women's empowerment at the heart of the development agenda, with so much emphasis on women's inclusion in the economic decision-making process and safeguarding their rights (Ferrante & Thim, 2019). Many scholars have intensified research on how women's inclusion in economic activities and labour force participation can drive sustainable and inclusive growth and social change. Addressing discrimination against women in all sectors and institutions, including education, government and politics, health, technology, law, and justice in society, could enhance the global economy. This was stressed by Asogwa (2012, p.19): "It therefore follows that denying the woman folk an inevitable position of equality in the podium of national development will leave a very negative imprint on the part of the nation's growth."

Dunu *et al.* (2017) noted that despite the presence of colossal mineral and human resources, Nigeria, among other African countries, is still striving to attain a level of sustainable development. This is a result of a high level of discrimination, poverty, and corruption in every sector of the nation; inadequate infrastructural facilities, increased unemployment rate, high mortality rate, insecurity of lives and property, climate change, and political instability. Empowering women is a vital aspect of achieving gender equality, sustainable development of the economy, and social change. Women empowerment creates opportunities for women to participate fully and equally in the decision-making of society, making informed choices that can impact lives and livelihoods.

Women's economic empowerment better supports them and their families, contributes to their communities, and breaks the cycle of poverty. Empowering women economically helps them to accept control and make informed decisions about their financial lives and how they utilise resources and access market services, which later translates to a boost in economic growth (Heywood, 2020). Women's economic empowerment is viewed as a

multiplier that increases individual economic benefits, as well as the economic benefits to their families, communities, and society at large. Sustained women's economic participation enhances their resilience, confidence, and autonomy in decision-making processes, which can lead to rapid economic growth and development in the health and education sector and also lead to a decrease in abject poverty, unemployment, and inequality. However, strengthening women's participation in economic activities is a breakthrough to gender discrimination and inequality, as well as a means of their financial independence.

Media Roles in Empowerment

Mass media play a vital role in provoking development and social change. They are significant tools in empowering individuals and communities and fostering social, economic, political, and cultural benefits for the nation at large. The media enhance strategic communication of development programmes that help individuals make informed decisions. The mass media have become crucial in shaping the present society. The general population relies on media to stay informed of social occurrences, educate them on social issues, keep them informed, and help them shape their opinion (Hasiya *et al.*, 2023). Adams (2024) further emphasized that media are generally seen as significant machinery that promotes and creates awareness and facilitates public behavioural change in society.

The media have been utilised as a potent tool for mass education and training, traversing the barricaded frontiers of nationality, reaching all homes and minds, and influencing thoughts and feelings (Asogwa, 2012). They are also used to convey empowerment programme to the target audience. These empowerment messages can be sponsored by a change agent or stakeholder, which could be the government or its agencies, non-governmental organisations, philanthropists, or a famous and wealthy individual who seeks behavioural changes and the development of society. The media are crucial for both communication and attitudinal change. The media can also act as a development catalyst for positive societal change by providing timely and relevant information that helps share people's opinions and inspire positive attitudes in them (Hasiya *et al.*, 2023).

The mass media, which include different channels like radio, television, newspapers, and magazines, among others, have helped to promote the social and economic status of its audience through the provision of quality and verified information that could help them live a more comfortable life. Among the mass media channels for development, the radio has emerged as the most recognised choice because of its accessibility and affordability, especially in rural communities (Bala, 2025). Today, it is accessible and affordable to many, including residents in rural and urban areas.

RADIO AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN NIGERIA

The radio has been a crucial tool for engaging women's participation in economic activities in Nigeria, provides a platform for advocating for women, making their voices heard, and challenging unfavourable societal norms (Rimmer, 2021; Tijani-Adenle, 2022; Marcus & Somji, 2024). Radio, with its accessibility and broad reach, has been a crucial tool for representing the voices of women, promoting education and gender equality, and enhancing their participation in economic development. Furthermore, radio has been utilised to promote and share women's experiences, discuss issues affecting them, and give them access to information on health, politics, education, and available economic activities. The radio has helped break the silence around sensitive topics such as domestic violence and women's

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reproductive health, giving voices to marginalised ones. Radio is very effective in reaching people in rural areas and marginalised groups because of its local content and wide coverage compared to other media. Prasad and Deepak (2019) cited Lingela (2008) that the advantage of radio for women empowerment is strengthened in its ability to overcome communication barriers, produce localised content, and be cost-effective for rural people. The capacity of radio to disseminate informative and educative content and to raise consciousness has been effective in enhancing women's engagement in economic activities, empowering the youth, and amplifying marginalised voices.

In addition, Radio provides a platform for women to engage in public discourse, participate in decision-making processes, and hold leadership positions. Media, through women-centric programmes like phone-in programmes, talk-shows, interview programmes, discussion programmes, panel discussions, public service announcements, and radio drama, among others, provide a platform through which women can ask questions, express their opinions, and contribute to issues in discuss (Ubong-Abasi, 2021). Consistency in these programme helps to increase women's participation in economic activities and inclusive and equitable policies.

Radio programme not only educates women on their rights and provide them with information on laws and policies protecting them but also provide them with information on economic opportunities. The radio empowerment programme contributes to women's engagement by fostering self-reliance, self-confidence, and resilience, promoting their active participation in collective actions. These foster capacity-building and promote self-esteem among women (Heywood, 2020). Radio, through its education function, teaches skills that can promote women's financial independence, self-confidence, and reliance, empowering them to take responsibility for their lives and make informed decisions about their financial freedom and well-being. Radio educates women on a variety of topics, including financial literacy, stress management, entrepreneurship skills, childcare and parenting tips, balancing work and family (Oriola *et al.*, n.d.), time management, communication and negotiation skills, success habits, first aid and emergency response in business, customer relations, vocational skills such as tailoring, knitting, baking and crafting. These can be made possible when the audience engages in radio programmes such as interviews with experts, phone-in programmes, radio workshops, and seminars.

Radio also educates women on how to start and manage their businesses and enhance their financial literacy and independence, thereby giving a boost to their participation in economic activities. Similarly, through information function, the radio promotes women's access to knowledge and resources that will enable them to thrive in the competitive market (Heywood, 2020). It provides them with necessary market information, such as prices of goods and new trends, enabling them to make informed and beneficial decisions about their economic activities. Also, radio embraces women's exposure to advertisements supporting the economic empowerment of women or keeping them informed on job opportunities that could be from the government or NGO empowerment schemes, such as training, grants and subsidized loans, sponsorships, and tips or information to start growing businesses.

In addition, radio women-centric programmes enlighten them on how to manage economic challenges such as hikes or falls in the price of goods and the availability of products in the market. It also enlightens women to challenge societal norms and stereotypes that hinder their participation in economic activities, promoting positive attitudes and behaviours toward women's economic empowerment.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is hinged on the Uses and Gratification theory. This theory was propounded by Blumer Jay, Elihu Katz, and Micheal Gurevitchin 1973. The theory suggests that media audiences are goal oriented, seeking out specific content that satisfies their desires. This theory explains how the audience uses the media and the satisfactions they get from using it rather than the effect or influence the media has on them. They rely on the media for information, education, and entertainment (Hajdarmataj & Paksoy, 2022). It further emphasized that individuals have the power to decide on what media content to be exposed to. Hence, media audiences are selective, as they determine their exposure, attention, retention, and perception of media content. According to uses and gratification theory, the audiences are presented as a key or active participant in the communication process.

The uses and gratification theory explains that despite the radio's effort in promoting and sustaining socio-economic growth and development, the audiences still have the superior power to decide on whether or not to get exposed to and pay attention to the media messages. People turn to radio for development information, education, entertainment, and motivational messages they get from it. This applies to the current research in the sense that women make choices based on the kind of radio programme they listen to, considering the benefit they will gain from exposing themselves rather than the effect the radio programme will have on them. Radio programme that focuses on women empowerment for economic participation can serve as a catalyst for social change and development by educating women on norms, cultural practices, beliefs, discriminations, and policies that restrict them from fully contributing to economic development in the society.

METHOD

The survey design was adopted since the study requires gathering opinions and other relevant information from women in Osogbo, Osun State, relating to their listenership to "Lawujo Obinrin" programme, participation in economic activities, and challenges hindering their participation. The population of the study includes all women in the Osogbo local government area, Osun state. The multi-stage sampling technique was employed, including purposive sampling, stratified sampling, and systematic sampling techniques to select the respondents for this study. The purposive sampling was used to select ten major markets where women in Osogbo mostly carry out their economic activities. The stratified sampling technique was used to divide the women in each of these markets into different associations they belong to, while the systematic sampling was used to systematically select the respondents at an interval of three. Survey Monkey online calculator was used to select 235 respondents. The data were collected using a well-structured questionnaire. The variables were coded appropriately and presented using frequency tables and percentages. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to analyse the data gathered.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Table 1: Awareness Level of "Láwùjọ Obìnrin" programme

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Very high	68	28
High	89	41
Undecided	14	5
Low	42	17
Very low	22	9
Total	235	100

Field Survey, 2024.

A large majority of respondents reflect strong awareness of *Láwùjọ Obìnrin* programme. This indicates that the programme has a broad reach among women in Osogbo, Osun State.

Table 2: Frequency of Respondents Listenership "Láwùjọ Obìnrin" programme

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Never	18	8
Rarely (once in a while)	42	18
Often (2-3 times in a month)	142	60
Very often (Every episode)	33	14
Total	235	100

Field Survey, 2024.

From the Table above, majority of the respondents often listen to the programme, which implies the audience are committed and engaged with the programme. Only a small percentage rarely or never tune in, suggesting that the programme has built a loyal listener base.

Table 3: Respondents' Preferred Time to Listen to "Láwùjọ Obìnrin" programme

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Morning	68	29
Afternoon	39	17
Evening	98	42
Anytime	22	9
Undecided	8	3
Total	235	100

Field Survey, 2024.

Most respondents prefer listening to the programme in the evening. This finding may guide scheduling decisions for greater reach and engagement and effect on the audience.

Influence of "Láwùjọ Obìnrin" programme on women's participation in economic activities in Osogbo, Osun State

Table 4: Relevance of Topics Discussed on "*Láwùjọ Obìnrin*" programme

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Yes, very relevant	177	75
Yes, somewhat relevant	45	19
Not relevant at all	13	6
Total	235	100

Field Survey, 2024.

The majority of the respondents claimed that the topics discussed on "*Láwùjọ Obìnrin*" programme are very relevant to their daily lives and their participation in economic activities, which implies that the programme's content resonates with its target audience and is effectively satisfying their informational needs.

Table 5: Application of Economic or Business Advice from "*Láwùjọ Obìnrin*" Programme.

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Yes, successfully	161	69
Yes, but not effective	17	7
No, I haven't applied any advice	57	24
Total	235	100

Field Survey, 2024.

A significant number of the respondents ascertained that they have successfully applied the business advice received through the programme, while very few of them struggle with effective implementation. This implies that the audience of the programme are actively engaged and are benefitting from listening to it.

Table 6: Influence of "*Láwùjọ Obìnrin*" programme on Respondents' Participation in Economic Activities

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Increased awareness of economic opportunities	88	37
New knowledge of business strategies	43	18
Financial literacy	52	22
Enhanced decision-making ability	18	8
Increased capital/income	16	7
Social network/connection business partners	7	3
Others	4	2
No influence	7	3
Total	235	100

Field Survey, 2024.

The majority of the respondents claimed that the programme has greatly increased their awareness of economic opportunities. This implies that "*Láwùjọ Obinrin*" programme exposes listeners to economic opportunities such as access to business loan, fast-growing business environment, new products and other relevant information.

Table 7: Challenges Facing Respondents in Accessing "*Láwùjọ Obinrin*" programme

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Poor radio signal	56	23
Lack of interest	18	8
Inconvenient programme schedule	98	42
Lack of access to a radio	43	18
Other	20	9
Total	235	100

Field Survey, 2024.

The Table above shows that the primary challenges facing respondents in accessing the programme is inconvenient programme schedule and poor radio signal. This implies that the programme's reach has been limited by poor timing and radio signal.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The data gathered from this study revealed that women in Osogbo were highly exposed to the "*Lawujo Obinrin*" programme on Diamond FM radio. This was ascertained by the majority of the respondents, who claimed that they are highly aware of the programme and they often listen to it two or three times a month. Although their time preference may differ, the majority prefer listening to the programme in the evening rather than in the morning. Adams (2024) supported this finding when he noted that the media are seen as a crucial tool for creating and promoting awareness and facilitating behavioural change. The finding also corroborates with the study of Heywood (2020) which confirmed that radio, through its information and education functions, provides women with access to knowledge and resources that will help them thrive in their businesses. This further lends credence to the Uses and Gratification Theory's postulation that women listen to the radio for the benefit they enjoy. In other words, the radio is used for self-development through its education and information functions. This was why the women attached relevance to the programme, as indicated on Table 4. Hence, they get exposed to information that can benefit them.

Further, analysis of the data shows that such high exposure to the "*Lawujo Obinrin*" programme has, to a large extent, positively influenced Osogbo women's engagement in economic activities. Table 4 showed that the topics often discussed on the programme were very relevant to the women in economic activities. Table 5 also revealed that most of the women have successfully applied business knowledge or tips gained from the programme. They further emphasised that the programme not only increased their awareness of economic opportunities but also enhanced their financial literacy, boosts their capital and income, supports their decision-making ability, and also gain new knowledge for business strategies. This demonstrates that the "*Lawujo Obinrin*" programme not only raises awareness about economic opportunities but also motivates women to take action. Supporting this finding, Oriola *et al.*, (n.d.) emphasised that radio educates women on a variety of topics, which

include financial literacy, work-life balance, entrepreneurship skills, and stress management. Similarly, it aligns with the study of Hasiya *et al.* (2023) which stated that radio plays a crucial role in empowering women in the social and economic sectors through its information and education functions. Further, Heywood (2020) gives credence to this finding by stating that empowering women through radio helps them make informed decisions about their financial lives, learn to utilize resources, and access market services. This implies that radio as a catalyst for social change and development is capable of influencing women to make informed decisions about participating in economic activities, thereby contributing to the growth of the society.

Lastly, the study also found that the primary factors impinging on women's access to the "Lawujo Obinrin" programme include inconvenient programme schedules and poor radio signals. This was revealed in Table 7 through their varying degrees of agreement. This finding is in tandem with the findings of Antwi-Boateng *et al.*, (2023), which revealed that radio listenership was disproportionate because of the poor timing of programme. The current time slot of the programme could likely not align with the schedule of the other few women who are not influenced by the programme and struggle with effectively implementing the information provided. This implies that Diamond FM could consider researching the targeted audience to determine the most suitable time for broadcasting the programme.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how radio programmes influence women's economic participation in Osogbo, Osun State. The findings show that respondents, to a large extent, are aware of and exposed to the 'Lawujo Obinrin' programme to seek information on economic opportunities, including access to loans, government empowerment projects. The findings further revealed that the programme has increased their awareness of economic opportunities and equipped them with financial literacy. The study concludes that the 'Lawujo Obinrin' programme on Diamond FM has a significant influence on Osogbo women participation in economic activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Media organisation should increase the awareness of programmes that hold a significant benefit for the audience's socio-economic life. More programmes should be developed to transform the living standard of the audience.
2. To further empower women to participating in economic activities, more programmes should be developed to focus on delivering practical and actionable content. Success stories and interactive sessions with business moguls or experts in the business field could serve as inspiration to others.
3. Media outlets should always consider conducting a baseline survey to identify some factors that could affect the engagement and effectiveness of the programme. A survey can be conducted on the target audience to determine their convenient time and programme type preference.

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