THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN THE DELIVERY OF ADULT EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

We live in a global world where everyone is interconnected. Investment in the education of adults which will eventually lead to skills development, information and communication technologies, and capital formation at the grassroots level through the mass media cannot be understated. The main thing that separates developed from underdeveloped countries is a gap in knowledge. This is why investment in adult education through the mass media becomes important. This paper explored the concepts of mass media and adult education with the intention of showing the role mass media can play in the promotion of adult education delivery for national development in our society. Medium as a concept has many definitions ranging from a particular form of communication as in %print versus video+ to %the industry that provides news and entertainment+. Media, in this paper will be seen as %all the means of communication, whatever its format+ which include symbol system as diverse as print, graphics animating, audio and motion pictures.

The concept of Mass Media

Media according to Akanmu and Akinsanya (2004) is the channels through which messages, information, ideas and knowledge are conveyed and or disseminated. They are the tools or instruments through which stimulus can be passed out or obtained. They further stressed that when media are used for educational purposes, they are regarded as educational media.

The most comprehensive definition of the term media today was that given by the Commission of Definition and Terminology. To that body, educational media are those which are manipulated, seen, heard and talked about plus the instruments, which facilitate such activities (Akanmu and Akinsanya 2004). There are inexhaustible list of media that are used and can be used in education for the purpose of enhancing the effectiveness of instruction. There are again, many ways of categorizing the different types of educational media viz projected and non-projected aids.

Akinyemi (1986) classified them, first into locally produced and commercially produced

Media materials. He further subdivided it into locally produced materials and into expensive and inexpensive materials. The division according to him is guided by cost, the nature of use and magnitude of resources required to support the use of media. Agun (1988) classified media into two main groups: that is print and non-print media. The non-print media are subdivided into electronic media and others, the so called low cost aids. The electronic media are further divided into software and hardware. In support of the above definition, Ogunmilade (1984) agreed that media could be divided into broad categories: the print media and the electronic media. The print media include printed paper, textbook, reference book, workbook, chats and so on. Electronic media was further divided into two viz: big media and the small media. The big media include complex and expensive media such as the television, sound film, and computer assisted instruction. The small media are the least expensive and the simpler type of media such as slides, slide films, transparences, radio and programmed texts.

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The Concept of Adult Education

Adult education, in all its ramifications accommodates all forms of education whether formal, non-formal and informal aspects of education. It may be viewed as the all embracing base of activities related to meeting specific community needs. Its ultimate goal is to develop the process by which members of a community may learn to work together to identify problems and to seek out solutions to such problems.

Fletcher (1980) portrays adult education as a process of commitment to the education and leisure of all ages of people through local participation in the setting of priorities, sharing resources and the study of circumstance. By implication, adult education transcends all levels of education and concerns itself with everything that affects the well-being of all citizens within any given community. This explains why Howard and Voorhees (1969) are of the opinion that its role extend from the rather traditional idea of teaching children to the broader concept of identifying the needs, problems and wants of a community, and development facilities and programmes for the improvement of the whole community.

No wonder when a comprehensive definition of adult education by UNESCO (1976) becomes relevant for National development. Adult education according to UNESCO in Bown and Tomori (1979: 269) denotes: the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content level, and methods, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replaces initial education in schools, colleges, and universities, as well as in apprenticeship whereby person regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical qualifications, or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviours in two-fold perspective of full-personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic, and cultural development.

Adult education fosters the extension of provision of educational services to non-traditional students. This means that it promotes the extension of opportunities for education and training of young people and adult after the completion of their fulltime programmes, or following their withdrawal from such programmes. It lays emphasis on flexible rather than the traditional procedure of educational provision. Through such provision, individuals may upgrade themselves, retrain themselves, or acquire knowledge in specific occupation or vocation. This explains why adult education is usually provided by special schools, centers or institutes which promote flexible methodologies for imparting education provision.

Adult education embodies a wide range of educational alternatives which accommodate planned programmes, often for adults, but also for school age that left the formal school system so early in life. The greatest advantage of this variety of educational alternative lies in the fact that it tends to satisfy the imbalances created by the singularity of the formal provision. For example, the formal school system excludes from its services a wide range of people, i.e. farmers, business men, traders, artisans, apprentices. Education is invoked to reach a wider audience and hence the use of a wider media for the dissemination of such aspect of education. This consideration reveals adult education as a diversifying educational facet which does not necessarily require or commitedly involve the enrolment or registration of learners. Hence it is essentially a non-formal education component which can be creditably harnessed for maximum contribution to the development effort (Fordham, 1980 and Oyebamiji, 2006). Adult education also accommodates the informal education input, which involves a lifelong process whereby individuals acquire attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from the daily experiences, influences and resources in their environment (Anyanwu, 1985).

The nature, content, scope and programmes of adult education are clearly stated in Nyerere's (1976) assertion that, adult education incorporates anything which enlarges men's understanding, activates them; help them to make their own decisions, and to implement those decisions for themselves. Adult education to him includes "training, yet it is much more than training". It includes organization and mobilization, but to him, "to goes beyond them to make them purposeful". He saw it as being highly political and politicians being fully aware of this "will not always welcome real adult education" (Nzeneri 2005:11).

Adult education programmes are all embracing and includes adult basic education, literacy and numeracy (3RS). Adult education handles constitutional and trade union activities, awareness education, liberal education, extension and mass education programme, aesthetic, moral and cultural education.

The Purpose of Adult Education

Adult Education's purpose centered on individual, group, and society needs, interests and aspirations. These educational needs, interests and purposes border in the areas of liberating people from ignorance, restraints, poverty, malnutrition, poor health, idleness, social and economic ills and assist them to advance towards improvement of self and others (Nzeneri 2005). The purpose of adult education according to Nyerere (1973) is to encourage the development in each citizen of three things viz: an enquiring mind, an ability to learn from what others do, and basic confidence in his own position as a free and equal member of a society who values others and is valued by them for what he does and not for what he obtains.

Coles (1978) went further to state that the primary aim of adult education is to help individual man, woman and youth make the best of life. This is while the Nigeria's National Policy on Education (2004) states the following as the basic purpose for which adult education should pursue:

i) to provide functional literacy education for adults who have never had the advantage of any formal education;

ii) to provide functional and remedial education for those young people who prematurely dropped out of the formal school system;

iii) to provide further education for different categories of completers of the formal education system in order to improve their basic knowledge and skills;

iv) to provide in-service, on-the-job vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skills; and

v) to give the adult citizens of the country necessary aesthetic, cultural, and civil education for public enlightenment.

Looking at each of the noble objectives of adult education as stated in the national policy on education, and the eight Millennium Development Goals i.e. eradication of extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender and empowering women; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability and developing global partnership for development, adult education has a lot of grounds to cover. Adult education is an instrument per excellence in the attainment of the noble ideas. The use of a multi-varite or multi-dimensional strategy in its attainment cannot be understated. Thus, the need for the use of mass-media technologies in the delivery system of adult education so as to reach the nooks and crannies of Nigeria as a nation for improved development becomes imperative.

The Mass-Media and Adult Education

The primary purpose of any media is to attract the biggest possible audience through the quality of information, education and entertainment it disseminates. Put succinctly, programming objective is to broaden the horizon of the listeners, acquaint them with national and international issues and familiarize them with the cultural environment and technological development. For the services to be acceptable, its content must be relevant to the society, it must be related to the lives of the listeners/viewers, and must show a considerable understanding of their hopes and fears, their living conditions, and their political, social and cultural environment. From the above, it is not out of place to say that mass-media serves as the most obvious as well as most effective means of information dissemination. Its impact is immediate and enduring especially in the current trend of world's globalization. Mass- media occupies a front-line position in the task of nation building. Mass-media should therefore be regarded as a national undertaking of the highest importance and an indispensable element for public motivation.

The need to examine the state of education especially that of adult and non-formal education in Nigeria so as to place appropriately the mass-media for its delivery and promotion cannot be over emphasized. Governmental efforts in adult and non-formal education are aimed at providing education to all Nigerians irrespective of age, sex, race, religion, occupation, and location. At independence in 1960, Nigeria became a member of international organizations such as the United Nations Organization (UNO) and its Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). These bodies have targets for the development of adult and primary education. For example, UNESCO, had in 1990, set the year 2000 A.D. as

the year for achieving Education for All (EFA) with a focus on primary and basic education.

It is to be noted that with all the efforts by the various tiers of government and individuals, Nigeria¢ literacy rate is currently estimated to be about 57.1%. Data from the Federal Ministry of Education (1996) shows that only 14.8 million children of school going are enrolled in primary school out of the 21million children of school going age. UNDP (1998) notes that only 40% of all heads of households in Nigeria had any education at all, 21% had only primary education, 14% had up to secondary education. The above picture shows in an unmistakable term that if the goals of education for all and that of the Millennium Development Goals are to be accomplished, the current formal approach to adult education should be complimented with other strategies.

In an attempt to achieve the noble objectives of adult education as stated in the National Policy on Education (2004) and that of the Millennium Development Goals, the need to exploit the potentials of the mass-media for effective delivery of adult education cannot be over-emphasized. The mass-media are vital ingredients for mobilizing strong national political commitment and resources for enhanced grassroots popular participation.This is because what separates developed from less developed countries is not a gap in resources but a gap in knowledge. Investment in adult education through the mass media will enhance its effective delivery (Kigoni, 2011). The use of educational media in adult education encourages the adoption of innovative approaches in education. Such innovative strategies like individualization of instruction, resource based learning, renewed interest in problem solving method, learning how to learn, team learning/teaching and so on cannot be meaningfully and successfully implemented without the adequate provision and use of wide range and varieties of educational media.

Mass-media has varieties of organs which include: radio, television, cinema, newspapers and Information Communication Technology (ICT) which has become very vital instrument to the modern social process. They broaden our knowledge and understanding of the world around us. By bringing information to us, they help to stimulate our individual and group responses to issues. Mass- media in society can be summarized as that of information, entertainment, persuasion and education. Let us examine the role that some of the organs of the

mass-media play in transmitting adult education programmes to the mass majority of the populace.

The Radio

One major instrument of transmitting adult education programmes to the masses and was found useful is the radio. The radio has some qualities which make it a suitable medium for the promotion of basic and functional adult education on a mass scale. They are:

i) The main strength of the radio lies in the fact that ability to read and write is not required for one to take advantage of the benefits offered by this media (Adeku, 1992 and Solomon, Maud, Samuel & Nana 2001).

ii) Accessibility and affordability of the radio is another advantage. The low cost of purchasing radio sets and batteries makes it affordable to all groups.

According to the 1999 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS), over 62 percent of households in Nigeria own radio sets (NPC 2000). In addition, people do have access to listening to radio belonging to friends, relations and sets at work places and casual places and like taxi cabs, lorries and at market places (Oyero, 2003). The availability of sets also seems to motivate people to listen to programmes that are broadcast. This means that education can be rest assured that their messages are accessible to almost everyone, provided such message are interesting, relevant and transmitted at appropriate time (Umar, 1994).

iii) Radio has the ability to overcome barriers especially those of distance and time. Its ability to overcome these barriers means that educational messages can reach the whole nation simultaneously.

iv) Radio set are not affected by power failures since they can be operated with batteries.

Television

Another media which has the greater pulling power than radio is the television due to its magical power of combining sound with vision (audio-visual) it is a potent instrument for communication. Its efficacy in promoting adult education programmes cannot be understated. Television can and has been playing important role in adult education through the broadcast of special adult education programmes for the mass

consumption of the populace. Television with the presence of motion pictures, messages and pictures is a media tool that can facilitate adult teaching and learning since the viewers has the opportunity of seen the transmitter of the adult education programmes through a personal monitor (Yahaya, 2003). The use of this media by the providers of adult education nationwide will assist in lifting the status of adult education. Television programmes, by their entertainment, or public enlightenment aimed at educating the people on issues affecting their life and national development could be packaged by the adult education providers.

Newspapers

The skill of reading and ability to write is required before this media can be effectively utilized.   However, some of the newspapers written in the local language of the people have encouraged many adults to wish to enroll in literacy programmes or to further their learning i.e. 'Irohin Yoruba' of the South West, 'Gaskiya Ta Fi Kobo', 'Albishere' and 'Alfijiri' of the northern Nigeria and the 'Eastern Pilot' of the South Eastern Nigeria, the 'Hard truth' and 'Niger Delta Today' in the South South.   This is because these papers can feature articles targeting the elites with the aim of mobilizing political will for adult education programme i.e. "each one to teach one or finance the education of one". All relevant agencies in adult education should go into partnership with publishing houses in their domain to make effective utilization of the newspapers in their domain.

Other forms of print materials such as posters, bill-boards, pamphlets, hand bills and stickers, expertly designed and produced are also capable of being effectively used in educating adults in certain aspects of their life and mobilizing them to participate and be involved in adult education programmes for improved nation building.

Cinema or Motion Pictures

This is another important mass communication media.   It is accessible to all walks of society, to all ages, from the school boy to the aged.   Films can work directly on the motions in a more powerful way than other medium. Films combine drama, sound, colour, music, action, and emotion to exert a strong impact on an audience (Ezenwilo, 1982 and Halladu 2005) assert that cinema operated by the Native Authorities (N.A.S), Ministries of Health,

Information and Agriculture play major role in educating and enlightening people especially in the rural areas.

Information Communication Technology (ICT)

The greatest potentiality of ICT is in its ability to serve as a tool to circulate information and to induce a qualitative change in the life of a man. In education, ICT is significant due to its enormous potential in reducing the percentage of illiteracy, according educational opportunities to people living in otherwise inaccessible areas, updating existing knowledge and finally enriching knowledgeable minds (Vasudeva Rao 2006). ICT have the power to change the way we practice development throughout the world and how knowledge is diffused to people. Communication technologies of the recent past include satellite based television; broadcasting and long-distance telephone, video cassette recorders and computer based interactive technologies such as electronic mail system through the net; computer bulletin boards, teletext and videotext. Internet is best described as a network of networks. It is a loose connection of thousand of smaller networks in different countries around the globe through the World Wide Web. It links hundreds of thousands of academic, government, military, and public computer systems together enabling literally millions of people from diverse cultures to share information and other resources (Osunade and Ajayi 2003).

With the advent of information Communication Technology (ICT), the world has changed into a "Global Village". This technology has also brought about inevitable changes in the field of education. The Internet which is widely used has made the world a global village where one can sit in one's apartment and find out what is going on around the whole world minute by minute.

Based on the explication of some mass-media for improved delivery of adult education to the populace, its shortcomings cannot be under-estimated.   Some of its shortcomings include: mass poverty, which may hinder individual's ability to possess any of the mass media already mentioned. Where an ordinary radio which even if the commonest is given free, ability to purchase the battery for its use may become difficult.

Phillips (1997) submits that only about 34 percent of Nigeria households have access to electricity. Even where there is electricity, it is epileptic in nature. This really plays down the

usefulness of the television for promoting adult education.

Finally, the rising costs of equipment, vehicles and generating plants or sets make them unaffordable for the masses. However, the above limitations notwithstanding can be effectively curtailed if our government can come up with formidable policies that will enhance national development.

Adult Educator's Role in Mass Media for Proper Delivery of Adult Education

Adult educator in every sense of the word is a communicator. His/her success in effecting a significant change in the behaviour of adult learners depends, to great extent upon the efficiency and effectiveness of his/her skills as communicator. It is a known fact that he/she select the many tasks/experience to which adult learners is exposed. He/she selects a method, media and strategy by which the learning tasks and experience will be presented to the learners and by which an active and meaningful participation of the learners in instruction can be encouraged. Adult educators have to synthesize themselves with the following so that the media implication will be felt in the proper delivery of adult education.

(i) adult educator have to familiarize themselves with different media materials that are available for information dissemination;

(ii) develop appropriate skills in making appropriate selection of media materials with regards to curriculum needs, objectives of instruction, characteristics of the adult learners and condition of instruction;

(iii) must possess a good knowledge of the content of instruction or information to be disseminated to the target audience, and

(iv) adult educator must give appropriate consideration to timing of any programme or information to be disseminated to the adults based on their nature of work and environment.

CONCLUSION

An attempt has been made to highlight the meaning of mass-media, adult education and its scope. It has also been established that adult education is an instrument per excellence for the total re-engineering of the nation. To make adult education accessible to all, no matter where they live, whether rural or urban, the mass media will

go a long way in destroying the barrier to benefiting from purposive education. Adult education is an all embracing education which caters for the learning needs of adults. It seeks to ensure the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning. In the effort to enlighten and enlist the cooperation, participation and positive contribution of the adults, the mass media cannot be left out. The need to make our media stations functional for this noble course cannot be over-emphasized.

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