

# NIGERIA'S MASS MEDIA RESOURCES: THEIR EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION AND UTILIZATION

By

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## ABSTRACT:

*Development in Science and technology has made it possible for information to be presented in varying media giving the learner the choice of the media that facilitate learning most to him. The Nigeria's mass media - the radio and television in particular, have over the years generated information resources on the 'curricula' in Nigerian Schools which are broadcast to schools under their education programme.*

*These information resources as found with the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) Schools' Unit, have not been properly organised for effective use by the public. Having highlighted the deficiencies discovered in the organisation of the information resources of the NBC Schools' Unit the employment of the services of qualified librarians among other things, is suggested for an effective organisation and utilization of the information resources in the holdings of the mass media in Nigeria.*

## INTRODUCTION:

The mass media are all the impersonal means of communication by which visual and/or auditory messages are transmitted directly to audiences; included among which are television, radio, motion pictures, newspapers, magazines, books and billboards but such media as the special interest magazine, hard-cover book, and educational film are excluded. They are distinguished by their ability to reach all classes of a population, directly or indirectly, within a relatively brief span of time - a few days or even hours - with a message that represents the lowest common denominator of comprehension in that population.

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This article is intended to focus the attention of professional librarians and educators on the wealth of information resources being generated by the mass media in Nigeria and the valuable contribution they could make to the education of the Nigerian masses if such resources are effectively organised for public use.

#### **THE MASS MEDIA AND THEIR RESOURCES:**

The most popular of the mass media in Nigeria are the radio and television. They have been employed over the years by Governments that established them to educate the public on government policies, correct certain ills of the society, broadcast news, advertise for commercial purposes and of course entertain by means of music, drama etc. The scope of the functions of the radio and television continues to widen with time and the development of the nation. Both the radio and television give educational broadcasts to schools and the Nigerian public today.

The Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), in 1961, established the Schools' Unit whose major function is to make educational broadcasts to Schools. For this purpose, scripts on different subjects in the school curricula were solicited from knowledgeable Nigerians in the different subjects. These scripts were recorded on tapes for broadcast under the Educational Service of the NBC. In order to meet the challenge posed by the dearth of suitable information materials to teach the new curricula being introduced into Nigerian Schools through the Nigerian Educational Research Council (NERC).

In the process of developing multi-media collections for the Abadina Media Resource Centre (School Library), University of Ibadan, I visited the NBC Schools' Unit in Ibadan to select recorded information on tapes that are relevant to subjects taught in Nigerian primary schools for which the Centre provides services. The recorded tapes I found in the holdings of the NBC Schools' Unit, were not properly organised and there was no proper record of the tapes in stock thereby making retrieval of any specific recorded information very difficult. Having seen the wealth of its collection and realising the useful contribution it could make to effective education in schools, I volunteered to assist the Unit to organise the collection, the report of which is summarised in this paper.

#### **NBC SCHOOLS' UNIT INFORMATION RESOURCES:**

The organisation of the tapes collection of the NBC. Schools' Unit, was done in three stages:—

- (i) Indexing of all the tapes produced by the Schools' Unit since its inception in 1961 on catalogue 3" x 5" cards.
- (ii) Arrangement of the index cards by subject according to Dewey Decimal Classification Scheme which will serve as a guide for the grouping and arrangement of the tapes on the shelves.
- (iii) Compilation of an up-to-date classified list of the tapes for publication. This will generate public awareness of the recorded information on different subject.

The exercise started in March, 1976 and by September, 1976 work had been completed on the indexing of all the 3,401 recorded tapes in the collection and it took another three months to finish arranging the tapes by subject. By May, 1977, a list of the tapes by subject was ready for submission to the Board of Directors of the NBC Schools' Unit with the index cards and a report on the whole exercise.

The NBC Schools' Unit by September, 1976 had in its collection 3,401 recorded tapes on different subjects for different age levels. The collection covers these major groups of subjects: General, Religion, Social Sciences, Languages (English and French), pure Science, Technology, The Arts, Literature, History and Geography.

The data on the number of tapes per subject is given below:--

TABLE 1  
RECORDED TAPES IN THE NBC SCHOOLS' UNIT BY SUBJECT

<i>Subject</i>	<i>No. of Tapes</i>
General	143
Religion	10
Social Sciences	329
Languages	834
Pure Science	450
Technology	200
The Arts	129
Literature	734
History	281
Geography	291
<i>Total</i>	3,401

The number of recorded tapes varies with subjects as a result of the different sources from which the recorded information originates. In a subject where there are more qualified people readily available to write scripts for the originators, scripts are produced on a greater number of topics. Each subject has its originator that takes responsibility for the production and editing of scripts for recording.

There were by September, 1976 seven production centres for scripts: Ministries of Education, Benin City, Ibadan, Akure, Kaduna, Lagos and Enugu and the University of Lagos.

#### **SUBJECT COVERAGE OF THE COLLECTION:**

In examining the collection, it was discovered that there are pieces of information recorded on topics that are not commonly found in available printed works. Such topics include, Nigerian traditional religious festivals; Nigerian customs and traditions; Nigerian Arts discussing the individual sculptors, their crafts, the materials they use and their techniques. There are also collection of Nigerian songs, Nigeria history biographies of Nigerians and their contributions to national development as well as the "Know your country series" discussing important towns and places in Nigeria. Realising that the bulk of the authentic information materials that are now available on Nigerian cultures consists of audio-records because of the strong oral-base of the Nigerian cultures, one will be convinced that the effective organisation that would facilitate the use of these valuable resources will contribute in no small measure to the success of the new curricula introduced in our schools through the NERC and that such collections constitute valuable research materials into Nigerian cultures. The NBC Schools' Unit provides the facilities for copying any recorded information by individuals and institutions if clean tapes could be provided.

#### **PROBLEMS OF INCOMPLETE BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORDS:**

As valuable as the collection is, there are a number of deficiencies in the documentation of the recorded tapes which I observed in the process of creating index cards for the tapes, that could militate against the effective use of these resources in the education of the Nigerian masses. Many of the tapes do not carry adequate bibliographic information to distinguish the content of one tape from the other. Also there are some common omissions on the tape-labels such as (a) absence of sub-title to indicate the theme of each recorded tape when they are in a series; (b) date of production, (c) duration of the recordings, and (d) accession number to determine the order in a series. But the frequency of the omissions varies from subject to subject. More than 90% of the recorded tapes in English carry no specific title/topic on the label but carry only the series title e.g. "Let's talk English", or "Everyday

English", etc. when the correct bibliographic information should be: "Let's talk English: greetings" or "Everyday English: preparing for an outing" respectively. Table II shows how the frequency of omissions on the tape-labels varies with subject.

TABLE II.

SUBJECT TABULATION OF TAPES WITH COMPLETE AND INCOMPLETE BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Subject	Complete Bibliographic Information	Incomplete Bibliographic Information	Total
Generalities	13	130	143
Religion	10	-	10
Social Sciences	227	102	329
Languages (English & French).	74	760	834
P Pure Science	303	147	450
Technology	165	35	200
The Arts	112	17	129
Literature	339	395	734
History	209	72	281
Geography	237	54	291
Total	1689	1712	3401

In order to establish the accurate bibliographic information for the tapes with incomplete bibliographic information, they have to be played back and this consumed much of our working time on the Schools' Unit tapes collection. The recordings for some tapes were not even helpful in this regard as a

result of the deficiency in the recording and all the information one had to rely upon was what was contained in the printed programme for the week the information was broadcast.

From what has been observed concerning the information resources in the NBC Schools' Unit, one wonders whether or not a similar situation does not prevail in the information resources of sister radio and television stations in the Federation. The Nigerian Television Authority, for instance, teaches subjects by television and produces programmes on some vital topics such as "Our towns", "Belief and rituals", Agriculture, basic health talks for improving the well-being of the people, etc. A particular example of such programme is the series of lectures on "Ifa", the Yoruba god of the oracles, produced by these mass media, if properly documented for effective use, will increase the amount of valuable resource materials available for the use of the Nigerian public.

#### **SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

Having highlighted the valuable contributions the collection of the mass media could make to the education of the masses in Nigeria if the resources are utilized, the right type of atmosphere that would facilitate their effective use does not yet exist. The following, therefore, are my suggestions for creating the right type of atmosphere for the effective utilisation of the media resources.

- (i) The Nigerian Library Association should hold talks with the authorities establishing the various mass media on the need for appointing professional librarians to take charge of their recorded information whereby the professional skills required for proper documentation, organisation and dissemination of the information could be provided.
- (ii) The section 4 of the National Library Decree, 1970 which deals with deposit privileges should be extended to include the non-print media.
- (iii) All libraries in Nigeria should develop non-print media along with their collections and also provide the facilities for their use.
- (iv) The library schools in Nigeria should offer courses in audio-visual materials and organise vocation courses and workshops in the same subject for the librarians already in the profession.

## CONCLUSION:

With the developments in science and technology the records of man's achievements come now in a wide variety of forms, each equally valid, each capable of giving information in its own unique way and each complementing the others. If libraries, as organised centres for obtaining information, are to provide the information needs of the Nigerian society, the information materials must be provided in the varying forms. The information resources of our mass media if properly organised for effective use, will provide a valuable sources of information required by the Nigerian masses.

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