

Educational Broadcasting in Nigeria: A Historical Development Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This work takes a look at the historical perspective of educational broadcasting in Nigeria. It traces the origin and development of the concept in Nigeria with the sole aim of evaluating its application to education. The work highlights among others, the importance of educational broadcasting to teaching and learning as encouraging a greater understanding of the subject matter because its presentation is done in clear, straight forward and simple language. However, some problems that hinder the effective utilization of educational broadcasting as observed include among others personal, power supply, equipment, storage, etc. Hence the work recommends among others others that in view of the usefulness of educational broadcasting, the Nigeria government both at the federal and state levels should embrace educational broadcasting and fund it very well. The government should ensure that experts on educational broadcasting are trained and employed in schools so as to ensure that the problem of manpower in the field of educational broadcasting is solved.

Keyword: *Educational broadcasting, communication, educational development.*

INTRODUCTION

Broadcasting is the mode of spreading information widely by sound and or vision to a group of people either in their homes or at the listening or viewing centres and in schools through electronic devices of several kinds (Ogunmilade, 1988). Broadcasting, according to Agun and Imoggie (1988) when primarily concerned with educating a set of people or audience be it in the formal or non-formal setting, is known as educational broadcasting. The intention of Educational broadcasting is to encourage greater understanding or a change of attitude among sections of the general audience as well as the listeners through informative, enlightenment and entertainment programmes. Broadcasting engages two important media of communication which according to Onesanya (2008), are radio and television. Radio appears to be more commonly used in developing countries of the world because of its low cost, easy operation/manipulation and cheap availability. There is no place according to Babalola (2005) where radio cannot receive transmission unlike the television which can only receive signals where there is electricity supply. Nevertheless, there are some features which radio and television share in common. The most outstanding among both is that they are broadcast media that are able to reach a lot of people at the same time and are capable of disseminating large volumes of education information to the target listeners

or viewers. It should be noted however that while the radio appeals to the sense of hearing alone because of its audio nature, the television is an audio-visual medium that appeals to both the senses of sight and hearing. In the light of the above, this study takes a look at educational broadcasting in Nigeria from the historical development perspective. The aim is to evaluate the application of the concept in educational processes in Nigeria.

DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL BROADCASTING IN NIGERIA

The year 1932 according to Ogunranti (1988) marked the emergence of educational broadcasting in Nigeria because the first radio receiving station began transmission in Lagos that year. This had a great influence on education in Nigeria particularly due to the educational broadcast that were available to teachers and pupils. The first educational radio programmes were for English language and were broadcast once a week in the early forties by the Radio Distribution Service (RDS) under the Post and Telegraphs Department (P & T). The Nigeria Broadcasting Service (NBS) which was established in 1951 inherited limited educational programmes. This was the situation until 1957 when the Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation was established. Another significant year in the history of broadcasting in Nigeria is 1959. According to Olushola (1979), television in this country and indeed in the whole of Africa was introduced in that year by the then western regional government under the Leadership of Chief Obafemi Awolowo.

The government in western Nigeria realized that the television was a better medium than radio which could be used to educate the masses. To back it up, it was written in the charter establishing the Nigerian Television Authority, a provision for fixed amount of time per week for educational television broadcast. Furthermore, Olushola (1979) observes that about fifty percent of all the TV programmes then was devoted to education and television sets were distributed to the existing schools and colleges. The Eastern and Northern governments also followed suit a few years later by establishing their own television and radio stations. The programmes from the North which was based in Kaduna were the most widely based educational programmes. In 1969, according to Agun and Imogie (1988), the Northern schools broadcasting unit which was responsible for the production of this programmes was taken over by the Federal Schools Broadcast Unit (FSBU) in Kaduna.

The direct involvement of the Federal Government of Nigeria in educational broadcasting, according to Agun and Imogie (1988) began in 1964 when Schools Broadcast Unit (SBU) was established for the production of television programmes for schools in the Federal Capital Territory of Lagos. However, the introduction of the Nigerian third development plan 1975 - 1980 necessitated a change from the name Federal Schools Broadcast Unit to Federal Schools Broadcast and Audio-visual Aid Development Centre. This name according to Agun and Imogie (1988) was later changed in 1977 to National Educational Technology Centre, Kaduna. In modern times, many individuals have emerged with private radio and television stations. These stations support the activities of public organized radio and television stations to propagate educational programmes. For instance, it is through such programmes that awareness on the deadly disease called HIV/AIDs are

disseminated. This has gone a long way in educating members of the public on the existence of the scourge and the possible ways of avoiding coming in contact with it.

The Importance of Educational Broadcasting: Educational broadcasting according to Babalola (2005), plays vital roles in the education process by:

- i Encouraging a greater understanding of the subject matter because its presentation is done in clear, straight forward and simple language.
- ii Promoting individualized learning because the listener or viewer can learn on his or her own by listening to and or viewing the lesson personally without having to come in contact with the real teacher.
- iii Disseminating large volumes of educational and informative messages to the audience.
- iv Checking schools' population explosion because it takes care of learners both young and old that could not be readily accommodated by the regular school programme (Kolade-Oje and Babalola, 2004).
- v Promoting equal access to educational opportunity for all learners because the mode of presentation is the same and in uniform, no matter the number of times the presentation is done.
- vi Assisting in population enlightenment programmes because of its coverage of a very wide area at a time. Moreso, that the beneficiaries could easily be reached at their various locations without being assembled at a point for such an exercise.

PROBLEMS OF EDUCATIONAL BROADCASTING

Educational broadcasting as it is practised in Nigeria is beset with a barrage of problems just as it is in other developing countries of the world. Some of the problems according to Kolade-Oje and Babalola (2004) are:

Finance: A lot of money is expended on the planning and execution of educational broadcasting. Huge sums of money would have to be spent on purchasing the equipment as well as paying for the required man power need. The huge sum of money involved cannot be readily afforded by most developing countries in general and Nigeria in particular where most inhabitants live below the poverty line.

Personnel: Lack of qualified and experienced personnel in educational broadcasting as a relatively new field of study in Nigeria has constituted a serious problem in the educational sector. For now, there are not enough personnel on educational broadcasting that could readily meet up with the demands of the teeming population.

Equipment: The equipment that are being utilized in educational broadcasting are not available locally. They are mostly imported. This may pose a threat to educational broadcasting now that there is a global economic recession, the foreign exchange earning that might be required might be difficult to get.

Storage: This is another problem that is confronting educational broadcasting in Nigeria. This problem of storage is prominent in the tropics because most of the gadgets are better stored under cool temperature. But here we are in the tropics where the weather is hot and harsh. This is not conducive for educational broadcasting equipment which is mostly designed to be operated in the temperate region.

Distance: Another problem that hinders educational broadcasting is the distance of the listening and viewing centres to the broadcasting station. There might be some problems along with communication pathway which might hinder the reception of the educational broadcast messages let alone those that might originate from both the encoding and decoding points of the message and lesson.

Power Supply: Regular power supply cannot be vouched for at the various listening and viewing centres across the country. In most third world countries, Nigeria inclusive, regular power supply cannot be guaranteed hence the need arises for educational broadcasting planners to make alternative arrangement for power supply to the listening and viewing centres in a bid to ensuring hitch-free educational broadcasts.

Maintenance: The problem of maintenance of the old equipment that are used for educational broadcasting calls for urgent attention. The malfunctioning of these equipment hinders the transmission of educational broadcast lessons. This is due largely to the fact that the technicians who know how to maintain these equipment are not available locally. More often than not, foreign experts are relied upon to repair the equipment whenever the need arises. Even when the services of the foreign experts are sought, their financial demands constitute another problem as there may not be sufficient funds to meet up with their financial demand.

Climatic Condition: The climatic condition of the tropical region to which Nigeria belongs is not favourable to some extent for the educational broadcasting equipment. Unless such equipment are designed to suit the tropical climatic condition, they would breakdown easily and regularly thus hampering hitch-free educational broadcasting.

Level of literacy: The differences in the level of literacy from person to person and from State to State makes educational broadcasting “a nightmare” on one hand and “a reality” on the other hand. Hence, for it to achieve the desired goal the level of literacy of the audience should be improved upon. Differences in language, value system, culture, economy and social standing also affect educational broadcasting. They must all be addressed so that educational broadcasting would achieve the desired goals.

Corruption: Another heart breaking problem bedeviling educational broadcasting in Nigeria is corruption which seems to be a house hold name in all sectors of the Nigerian economy. Because of corruption, public and private office holders find it extremely difficult to make proper accountability of resources entrusted to them. By implication, funds that are earmarked for the running of educational broadcast sometimes are misappropriated or circumvented into personal use while the main issue at hand suffers the consequence.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From all that have been discussed on educational broadcasting, it is no exaggeration stating that educational broadcasting if well utilized in the teaching and learning process in Nigeria will go a long way in solving some of the problems that might crop up in education. Educational broadcasting can assist in the areas of distance learning, adult education, checking of schools population explosion, checking of shortage of teachers as well as in promoting self or individualized instruction on the part of the learners. All these are pointers to the fact that educational broadcasting is a veritable tool for combating educational problems. In view of the usefulness of educational broadcasting, the Nigeria government both at the federal and state levels should embrace educational broadcasting and effectively fund it. The government should ensure that experts on educational broadcasting are employed and trained in schools so as to ensure that the problem of manpower in the field of educational broadcasting is solved.

The government should make sure that the equipment that are purchased for educational broadcasting are genuine enough so as to be able to have a wide coverage and at the same time last long. The government should after purchasing them, ensure that routine maintenance is carried out on the equipment. This will increase the value of the equipment as well as save the cost of procuring a new one. Equipment upgrading and replacement/maintenance should be adopted as at when it is absolutely necessary. The government should also ensure that the equipment are stored under the proper condition. At the same time, the government should ensure that there is constant supply of electricity so as to make a success of educational broadcasting and where there is no main supply of electricity, electric generators should be provided. To crown it all, teachers should be encouraged and mobilized to embrace and utilize educational broadcasting judiciously.

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