



**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**Adoption of Radio-Based Literacy Programme in the Teaching of Adult Learners in Nigeria**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Activities in the whole world are moving faster than ever before because of the proliferation of information and communication technology (ICT) devices. To achieve the goals of Education for All (EFA), ICT tools such as radio devices are required. These have made the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC) to seek a means of making many more Nigerians literate within a very short time. The use of "Radio-Based Literacy" will make Adult learners have access to literacy skills that would empower and sustain them in the society. The paper therefore x-rays the method of using radio-based literacy adopted from Cuba. In addition, the concepts of adult education, literacy, benefits of Radio Based literacy, and the challenges facing the effective use of Radio Based literacy are discussed. The paper concludes with the possible solutions to make adult literacy more effective in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Literacy, radio, adult education, information and communication technology, non-formal education.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Adult Education can be defined according to National Commission for Mass Education (NCME), (2012) as the training of Adult Learners in science and technology, crafts and sometimes in the humanities. Adult education would assist adults in the task of the application of knowledge and skills to existing resources and in the promotion of civic awareness through political discussion. Adult education is meant for men and women, young and old who have need to be literate in order to improve their societies through functional literacy, where their vocational skills, knowledge are geared towards empowerment and self-sustenance (NCME, 2012).

In identifying an adult, the following universal criteria are used: Age or chronological criterion, Biological criterion, mental criterion, Psychological criterion, Social criterion and Political criterion. Various methods has been introduced for the teaching of adult learners in Nigeria and the common among all the methods is the use of face-to-face interaction, where the learners will converge in a place and the facilitators would teach them. Aderinoye, Ojokheta and Olojede, (2007) revealed that this method was ineffective because it was characterized by the facilitators dominating the class and the learners remained passive and therefore lead to poor attitude towards learning.

Ajidagba, Yusuf and Olumorin (2009), also observed that adult learners were not able to attend classes regularly, getting easily discouraged and losing interest when face-to-face method of teaching are adopted. Therefore, the radio broadcast was introduced by the Federal Republic of Nigeria to supplement the face-to-face interaction. Adult learners were to listen to radio twice in a week and meet at a specific time and location with specially designed prime that used pictures and signs to guide learners in learning. The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) is spending huge amount of money to provide radio sets for Adult learners in Nigeria to enable them benefit from the programme. Hence, it is called Radio-Based Literacy.

**CONCEPT OF RADIO EDUCATION**

The tendency that an adult is easily exposed to the radio is high in many situations. Radio could be assessed in the car, in the public cab/bus, at place of work, through the mobile phone and so on. Radio has been found most appropriate media for disseminating instructions to adult learners in Nigeria (Idebi, 2008). Radio has the following teaching qualities according to Onabanjo (2000),

which are absent in other media, whether its programmes are pre-recorded or transmitted live: Immediacy, Realism, the conquest of space and time, emotional impact, authenticity and cost.

### **PURPOSE OF ADULT EDUCATION**

The purpose of Adult Education and non-formal education of the Nigerian National policy on Education include the following:

To produce functional literacy education for adults who have never had the advantage of any formal education or dropouts. These include the nomads, migrants' families, the disable and the disadvantaged gender, provide functional and remedial education for those who did not complete secondary education, present education for different categories of computers of the formal education system in order to improve their basic knowledge and skills, provide in-services, on-the-job, vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professional in order to improve their skills.

Finally, it should give the adult citizens of the country necessary aesthetic, cultural and civic education for public enlighten. (FRG, 2009)

### **CONCEPT OF LITERACY**

The term literacy does not have specific definition because of the interdisciplinary, complexity and diverse nature it possesses. Literacy means the ability to read and write, to understand information, and to express ideas both concretely (Olojede, 2012). The assumption of this is that to read and write means to read and write text. Also, media literacy is defined as the ability to understand how television and film are manipulated by viewers. Computer literacy is generally defined as the skills to use a computer to perform various tasks such as accessing the web (Olojede, 2012).

Literacy can be defined as the ability of a person to code and decode with understanding, living and growing system of symbolic transformations of reality, including words, numbers, notations schemata, diagrammatic representations and other marks, inscribed on a paper or other two dimensional (Olojede&Oladitan,2013). All of these have become part of the visual language of people and have been collectively and democratically shared by both the specialist and the non-specialist (such ability have become part of the current social, economic, political and cultural demand system of a society ( Olojede & Oladitan, 2013).

Adults literacy are used for many purposes and can be acquired in many ways such as to improve their literacy skills when they start a new job, when their children starts school and want to be assisted in doing assignments, when a relationship ends, or when they lose their employment. Societal changes demanding new skills in literacy and numeracy in areas such as economic or forced migration, industrialization and the passing of subsistence economies and traditional forms of labour, social and economic development, and deepening of democracy. All these and other reasons could assist reshaping Adult Learners' life and the need to participate effectively in adult literacy programme (Olojede & Oladitan, 2013).

### **THE ADOPTION OF RADIO-BASED LITERACY IN NIGERIA**

In Nigeria it was observed that there were large numbers of non-literate citizens, and the Government institution as National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC) has been charged with the responsibility of eradicating illiteracy in Nigeria. NMEC felt the need to look for other means of reaching non-literates citizen through the mass media. Radio was found to be the cheapest and most easily affordable medium for non-literates citizen (NMEC, 2004).

"Radio-Based Literacy" is the process of promoting the learning of reading, writing and computing through the use of radio and it is the method for effective delivery of basic education to a large geographical area. Also, Radio-Based Literacy is a socialization process as it gives learners the opportunity to improve culturally and socially in the society (NMEC, 2004). It promotes behavioural changes among facilitators and learners. Literacy by Radio project is one example of an implementation step toward the attainment of Education for All by 2015. The project was

inaugurated in 2014 by the Federal Government of Nigeria in collaboration with UNESCO through the NMEC with technical input from Cuba.(NMEC,2012)

Through the radio, one facilitator can reach many learners at the same time. The adult learners can learn anywhere they are (bedroom, place of work, farm and so on.) using their own radios (NMEC, 2004). This method reduces the number of facilitators and other professionals for the programme and no school or study centre are required for learners by radio. Radio-Based Literacy keeps the families together in that the whole family, young and old come together to learn and support each other in the learning process (Ofolue, 2010).

This method is done in any language but mostly the mother tongue. Facilitators and learners gather at an agreed meeting point, to discuss and practice the lessons the learners were taught on radio. NMEC received a boost when additional funds were released for the continual airing of the Radio-Based Literacy programme and the supply of 100 radio sets to each of the 774 local government areas in the country and the training of 1,800 facilitators (Ofolue, 2011). The radio distributed either solar system or batteries for source of energy so as to perform effectively (Olojede, 2012).

### **THE DELIVERY METHODOLOGY IN RADIO-BASED LITERACY**

Radio-Based Literacy is now becoming popular in Nigeria, this was adopted from the Cuban method (NMEC, 2004). The Cuban method is a mixed method because ideas and elements from different methods of literacy were brought together. Cuban method also recognized that education should not be separated from the culture of the people, since culture and education are together. Therefore, it adapts its techniques to the culture of any country where it is practiced.

The Cuban method of learning, reading and writing through the radio is carried out in two ways, namely: the radio listening session and the face-to-face session (NMEC, 2005).

In Nigeria, when learners listen to three lessons, they are expected to go for the contact sessions know as face-to-face meeting at a place and time agreed upon by both facilitator and learners (Olojede, 2012). The contact session is an opportunity for facilitator and learners to meet together face-to-face and during this session, the facilitator and learners solve the problems that may arise in the course of learning.

### **CUBAN METHOD (RADIO-BASED LITERACY)**

Cuban method started from the main topic on adult learners' needs and motivation. The topic should also be closely related to the main picture on the page of the primer. From the picture, sentences are made. From the sentence, we have the key word. The keyword includes the vowels or letters to be taught in each lesson. The vowels or letters must correspond with the number it has with the alphabets.

The guide table at the back page of the primer where the letters appear and its number on the alphabets as shown helps to establish relationship easily. There is no pagination on the primer, different symbols well known by the learners, are to be used instead. Every state in the country has its own symbol. For example in Ogun State: drawing of Adire material (tie and dye), Oyo State: Drawing of talking drum, Ondo State: Drawing of three cocoa pods hanging on a cocoa tree, Osun State: Arodudu, Lagos State: Drawing of Eyo Masquerade, Kwara State: Drawing of a bale woven Aso-oke and Edo State: Drawing of bronze head and so on (NMEC, 2005).

In the Cuban method, symbols in literacy by radio are used to demarcate each page in the radio primer, as well as representing each state.

Logos are very important because they lead learners to the main activities, which they can easily understand on their own without the assistance of the facilitator. The facilitator and the learners identify the logos. Table 1 shows some of the logos used in radio programmes.








### **BENEFITS OF RADIO-BASED LITERACY BY ADULT LEARNERS IN NIGERIA**

The method of literacy by Radio has found accepted throughout the country. The method has become more popular among the adult learners in Nigeria.

Some of the benefits are as follows: it makes learners becoming literate; it raises the learners' aspiration for higher achievement; learners have a higher sense of self-esteem. it allows learners to

expose to information about states other than their own; The use of mother tongue has increased the communities' invest in the project; Learners' knowledge and practice have been improved in health and nutrition, vocational and life skills; It makes learners aware of HIV/AIDS, civic education, entrepreneurship skills while acquiring literacy and it unifies the families as members of the families come together to listen to the radio programme and support each other in the learning process.

**Table 1: Logos**

Logo	Type	Function
	Eyes	For seeing and for observation, meaning that learners should look at the picture next to it,
	Ears	For listening to radio lessons
	Mouth	Makes learners repeat after radio facilitator
	Book	Meaning the learners should read after the radio facilitator or by themselves in advanced lessons.
	Hand with a Pencil	Meaning the learners should write following the instructions from the radio.
	Eye and Ear	It means that they should look at the picture next to it and listen to the radio facilitator.
	Eye and a Mouth	It means learners should look at the picture and repeat.

Source: NMEC, 2005

### CHALLENGES OF RADIO-BASED LITERACY AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS IN NIGERIA

There are number of challenges that were encountered with Radio -Based Literacy. The challenges included the lack of states and local governments support for the method is still low and this hinders the project. In fact the state and local governments should sponsored literacy by radio by paying the airtime and provide radio sets for the adult learners. Also the technical committee in the states is not yet to functioning effectively. The monitoring and evaluation measures are not carried out as expected .The facilitators lack commitment because of poor incentives.

In order for the Radio-Based Literacy to be successful, it will require effective, adequate, regular monitoring and evaluation to be carried out to be able to meet the objectives of adult education and non-formal as stipulated in National Policy of education. Another challenge is that, adequate incentives should be given to the facilitators to be able to perform their duties effectively. Many facilitators trained in the field were moved to either better office within a programme implementation period. This has affected many study centres and thrown learner into confusion as backups are not available. The facilitators training should be retained in order to do the job effectively rather than given them another job. Also, the facilitators should be employed on permanent basis not part time for effective delivery of the lesson.

The Radio-Based Literacy has not been extended to the post literacy. This method should be extended to post literacy to enable the adult learners to benefit from the method. Awareness and training of adult learners to the radio learning should be included in the programme. The radio-based literacy scale up requires a comprehensive national report from 36 states and Abuja before justice can be done in any publication on the project. Facts and data need to be collected for informed and well-grounded knowledge generation was not available. This problem could be solved, if government at the three tiers provides materials, facilities and adequate funds for the

monitoring of the project. Above all there should be quality assurance to make the project more effective by all adult learners in the programme.

### CONCLUSION

Radio-Based Literacy is a method of passing information across the adult learners irrespective of their locations. This paper discusses the need and the concept of adult learners, radio education, and purpose of adult education and concept of literacy. Adequate discussions were made on the concept of Radio-Based Literacy and the delivery methodology using Cuban method of Radio-Based Literacy. Challenges and possible solutions were indicated and provided to bring about effective use of Radio-Based Literacy in Nigeria.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations could be considered in order to be made the Radio-Based Literacy project more functional and effective use in Nigeria. Adequate funds should be allocated for Radio-Based Literacy. The governments at all levels should make adequate payment for airtime. Furthermore, independent monitoring units should ensure the States and Federal Capital Territory (FCT) are in place. It is important that the development of primers in at least one new language per state be introduced to enhance the scale-up. It is crucial that the Radio sets are provided for the Adult learners to enable them to have to regardless of their locations.

Philanthropists should support literacy by Radio by supporting and sponsoring the project all its ramifications. Private public partnership should involve in the implementation of Radio-Based Literacy by providing public awareness to adult learners and citizenry. The (NMEC, 2004) should apply for license to have their own Radio network to effectively cut costs of broadcast.

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