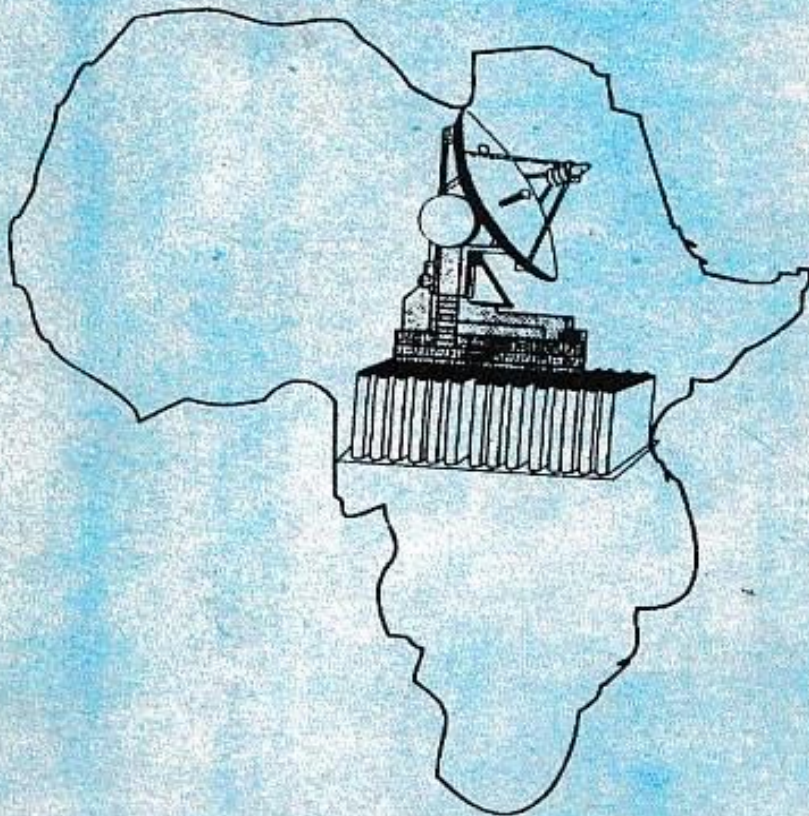


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**SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF THE  
BROADCAST PROGRAMMES  
IN SECONDARY EDUCATION**

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**Abstract**

The effectiveness of broadcast media in an educational system depends so much on the quality of programmes aired but more so on the skills employed by the users. Pervical And Ellington looking into the future of secondary education at the end of last century maintained that there will probably be much less emphasis on conventional face-to-face teaching than is the case currently. Pupils are expected to spend a large proportion of their time carrying out individualised study, which hopefully will be media-based. If one can go by Pervical and Ellington's predictions, then the potentials of the powerful broadcast media – the television and radio must be fully realised and exploited for instructional use. This paper justifies the need to use the broadcast media and looks into progressive methods of utilizing these media effectively in secondary education in developing nation like Nigeria.

## **INTRODUCTION**

A major problem facing developing nation like Nigeria is the lack of an educational infrastructure to support the quantity and quality of educational programmes (Kerr, 1982). In considering the teeming population eager to receive formal education, the available learning resources are inadequate and may likely remain so for sometimes to come. On the other hand, broadcasting is quite considerable. It is infact growing at a fast rate. Many states in Nigeria have established new television channels and new local radio stations have also sprung up. For instance, within a period of three years the twin states of Cross River and Akwa Ibom have established two Frequency Modulation (FM) stations, and an independent television channel widely received in at least seven states of Nigeria and the neighbouring Cameroun Republic. Various instructional programmes are aired daily from these electronic media stations.

An over-view of available instructional materials in Nigerian secondary schools have revealed that only media of low-cost technology (largely in print format) were universally widespread (Ekpo 1990).

Having such an imbalanced collection poses a likely problem of "abusing" the print media especially with teachers who tend to select materials for their availability (Ibe-Bassey, 1988). Hence, the broadcast programmes which are already available should be made accessible, and should be full integrated into the secondary school curriculum for improved learning output.

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## **POTENTIALS OF BROADCAST MEDIA**

Broadcast programmes are powerful organs that could promote the quantity and quality of education provided at the secondary school level. Broadcast appears to have a unique capacity for innovation. There is hardly any other means open to educators for putting new knowledge and ideas across to a large number of people fast enough to keep pace with the societal/educational changes. A broadcast medium like the television is a powerful tool in stimulating learning. It has a strong impact for change especially among the youth. It attracts the youth naturally to itself such that its mere use in any learning situation provides the learners with the initial learning stimulus. In the developed countries it has been successfully used to arrest the problem of crowded classrooms and lack of qualified/competent teachers.

Despite these, educational broadcast in Nigeria is operating below its potential and is not making the expected contributions.

## **JUSTIFICATION FOR THE USE OF BROADCAST PROGRAMMES AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL**

The mass media generally have tremendous impact on the way of life and attitudes of people especially the youth. Broadcasting in particular has become a vital force in their daily lives. In a study conducted by Schramm (1977) with a sample of United States children, it was reported that the average child spent as much time watching television as attending school. Malcolm, and Levie (1978) noted that an average of 15,000 hours has been estimated to be used in watching television programmes by children by the time they are sixteen years old. Broadcasting has a good image among the 11-16 year olds. It is more trusted, enjoyed and respected than the class teachers.

Freeman (1982) observed that while teachers may be seen as remote, hostile and unhelpful especially with the less motivated learners, the broadcast media are seen as helpful companion to every learner not just the swots.

Similarly, the broadcast media are gradually gaining prominence among Nigerian youths. It is common scene to find young boys going about with pocket transistor radios and crowding round public television sets to watch exciting programmes. Since the viewing/listening habits have been formed among these group of learners, the channels could be successfully used for instructional purposes.

Besides, in Nigeria as in many other developing countries, Western forms of education are seen as a means of growth and equality and there is an ever-growing demand for it. Thus, any government that is unable to meet such demands tends to be unpopular. It was such national pressure which prompted the introduction of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) Scheme. With the nation wide launching of the UPE in 1976, Nigerian youths have certain constitutional obligations to attend formal school system between the age of 6-11 years.

Based on the school age population of 44% - 48% (Johnson, 1987). It means Nigerian secondary schools are bursting with children eager to learn and be taught. Even maintaining the existing level of school quality for a larger

enrolment base requires a substantial increase in the country's public spending. This increasing number of students at the secondary level has made whatever amount the government could have allotted for education to seem negligible. There is therefore, that inability on the part of the government to provide for them adequately because of the general economic recession in the country. This has resulted in lack of fund to provide schools with requisite educational materials/facilities and competently trained teachers to handle these learners. Yet according to Percival and Ellington (1988), secondary school education at the end of this century may be adopting largely an individualized approach. There is hardly any successful individualized learning system without a variety of media resources.

Although scholars like Martin et al (1982) see conventional schooling system as the most favoured approach, there is need to expand qualitative education so that it can reach Nigeria's growing or unattended population. To achieve this various means of reducing cost, increasing the number of students served as well as decreasing the number of teachers needed must be employed.

Nelly (1982) in his reviews consistently stressed the fact that educational technologies, especially the broadcast media and self-instructional modules are effective in producing student learning and can result in student cost being much lower than those incurred by the regular schools.

The recommendation to use the broadcast media at this level is not altogether alien to the system. Akpan (1987) noted that a number of institutions in the country have been experimenting with educational television though it may be difficult to assess their successes due to some constraints. The National Educational Technology Centre (NETC) at Kaduna also produces graphic materials, radio and television broadcast programmes for dissemination to both primary and secondary schools (Dada, 1984). In addition to the national programmes the state broadcasting co-operations like the Akwa Ibom Broadcasting Co-operation (AKBC), Imo State Television etc. regularly air varieties of instructional television programmes aimed at the secondary school learners. Broadcast technology is acknowledged as being the cheapest and most cost effective of educational media since the production and transmission costs do not relate to audience size. For instance, Nelly (1982) while analysing the cost of the ETV in El-Salvador observed that if the modest number of 30,000 students participated in the programme, cost per student would range between US \$62 and 73 as compared with US \$52 for the standard non - ETV programme and that if the programme reached 130,000

students, then the cost would be lowered to between US \$42 and US \$49. Thus, if the secondary schools were encouraged or even compelled to utilize the Kaduna transmission provided that the programme quality was high and widely received, this would be a very efficient way of delivering low cost learning resources to the schools. Such lower cost alternatives if used along with the existing traditional school system could introduce quality into the mass education offered at this level especially since after the reception of such signals does of course presume the capital cost of reception equipment but this is a good investment since it ensures the low cost delivery of well designed learning materials on a national basis, thereby reducing the existing educational imbalance in the country. The transmission of such programmes also afford class teachers the opportunity of listening to/seeing trained and experienced teachers as they impart instruction to the audience. This by itself is a form of training exposure to the inadequately trained teachers and a better way of ensuring that the pupils received some systematically designed and delivered instruction on a regular basis.

#### **UTILIZING SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR MAXIMUM RESULT**

Certain support systems are essential if existing broadcast programmes must be effectively utilized. These are, the referral systems which can link viewers/listeners to other learning opportunities and availability of the local liaison components like libraries and resource centres to ensure that the local organizations can link their activities to broadcast programmes.

A critical evaluation of some of the broadcast programmes reveals that the education content is just fair coupled with the ephemeral nature of all broadcasts. Thus, relying solely on broadcast to promote either changes or learning will be expecting too much from these media. It can start the learning process by providing the stimulus but it cannot usually get much further. The follow-up attempts are essential and as much as possible, this should be made as participatory as possible.

Friend (1989) reports on three interactive radio programmes:

- The Radio Language Arts Project of Kenya
- The Radio Mathematics Project of Nicaragua
- The Radio Science Project of Papua New Guinea.

These projects make use of planned lessons using "conversational styles" between the learner and the radio with carefully timed pauses to encourage students' full participation. The Nicaraguan project aimed specifically at providing a full course of instruction combining radio tutoring with classroom teachers to make a teaching team. Each lesson is presented in two parts: the broadcast radio portion handled by a trained competent teacher giving the instruction, followed by a post broadcast portion conducted by the classroom teacher who follows a detailed guide provided by the project organizers. Similar strategy has characterised Hong Kong's and EL-SALVADOR'S success in their television projects. In these countries the sine-qua-non of their ETV planning was the close interaction of television lessons with existing syllabuses and school timetables actually in use.

In Nigeria the broadcast activities are aired without such integration. The class teachers are not provided with detailed follow up guides nor the broadcast schedule and as a result the programmes are poorly utilized. This is an economic waste in a country where most schools are without teachers (trained or untrained). Thus, for an effective utilization of the available broadcast programmes in the country (be they the NETC or the various state ETV programmes) referral systems are essential and strongly advocated.

The referral systems on the other hand can hardly function without the local liaison components. There should be in each local government area, a resource library as well as the school media resource collection to link their activities to the broadcast programmes and to ensure that these programmes are recorded for future use. During a survey of some British High/Comprehensive schools, Ekpo (1989) noted that a high percentage (75%) of the broadcast programmes used by the class teachers are the post recorded ITV school broadcast programmes. Provision of such support system is essential in Nigerian secondary schools to maximize the potential of the broadcasting media.

To provide a worthwhile support system for a progressive use of the broadcast media in Nigeria, there must be a definite government involvement in the development, resource provision and use. Probably the crucial factor in the development of El-Salvador's and the British ITV schemes was the support they received from the highest levels of their governments which our highly placed educationists also in position to give if they chose to.



A policy statement establishing the minimum standard of media provision in all secondary schools has to be officially made by both the Federal and State Ministries of Education. This has to be followed up practically by the two authorities to ensure that all secondary schools under their controls are provided with the detailed broadcast guide, print media support, broadcast schedule, the required graphics, cassette tape recorders, video tape recorders, television monitors and radio receivers. One of the major problems with the NETC broadcast guide is lack of effective dissemination machinery (Dada, '984). For instance during the last quarter of 1989/90, NETC aired series of television programmes in Chemistry, Biology, Integrated Science, English language, Oral English, French and Physical Geography but these were received in Kaduna and Kano areas mainly.

If <sup>m</sup>any secondary schools are encouraged to join the LGA resource library cluster as earlier on proposed (Ekpo, 1991). Effective information dissemination among the schools could be ensured because information/resources sharing will be possible.

For secondary school students in Nigeria to be able to face the future challenges as predicted by Percival and Ellington, then the potentials of the powerful broadcast media must e fully realized and effectively utilized. Radio has been successfully adopted in English Language classes to cope with linguistic diversity in a developing country like Kenya, and in Nicaragua with its multigrade classroom organization. Television has been used effectively in Hong Kong and El-Salvador to cope with large/mixed ability classes. Nigeria is in a position to use both.

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