

Survey of the Literacy by Radio Project as an Innovation in Literacy Promotion in Nigeria

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Abstract : The National Commission for Adult and Non Formal Education (NMEC) in Nigeria is charged with the reduction of illiteracy rate through the development, monitoring, and supervision of literacy programmes in Nigeria. In spite of various efforts by NMEC to reduce illiteracy, literature still shows that the illiteracy rate is still high. According to NMEC/UNICEF, about 60 million Nigerians are non-literate, and nearly two thirds of them are women. This situation forced the government to search for innovative and better approaches to literacy promotion and delivery. The literacy by radio project was adopted as an innovative intervention to literacy delivery in Nigeria because the radio is the cheapest and most easily affordable medium for non-literates. The project aimed at widening access to literacy programmes for the non-literate marginalized and disadvantaged groups in Nigeria by taking literacy programmes to their door steps. The literacy by radio has worked perfectly well in non-literacy reduction in Cuba. This innovative intervention of literacy by radio is anchored on the diffusion of innovation theory by Rogers. The literacy by radio has been going on for fifteen years and the efficacy and contributions of this innovation need to be investigated. Thus, the purpose of this research is to review the contributions of the literacy by radio in Nigeria. The researcher adopted the survey research design for the study. The population for the study consisted of 2,706 participants and 47 facilitators of the literacy by radio programme in the 10 pilot states in Nigeria. A sample of four states made up of 302 participants and eight facilitators were used for the study. Information was collected through Focus Group Discussion (FGD), interviews and content analysis of official documents. The data were analysed qualitatively to review the contributions of literacy by radio project and determine the efficacy of this innovative approach in facilitating literacy in Nigeria. Results from the field experience showed, among others, that more non-literates have better access to literacy programmes through this innovative approach. The pilot project was 88% successful; not less than 2,110 adults were made literate through the literacy by radio project in 2017. However, lack of enthusiasm and commitment on the part of the technical committee and facilitators due to non-payment of honorarium, poor signals from radio stations, interruption of lectures with adverts, low community involvement in decision making in the project are challenges to the success rate of the project. The researcher acknowledges the need to customize all materials and broadcasts in all the dialects of the participants and the inclusion of more civil rights, environmental protection and agricultural skills into the project. The study recommends among others, improved and timely funding of the project by the Federal Government to enable NMEC to fulfill her obligations towards the greater success of the programme, setting up of independent radio stations for airing the programmes and proper monitoring and evaluation of the project by NMEC and State Agencies for greater effectiveness. In an era of the knowledge-driven economy, no one should be allowed to get saddled with the weight of illiteracy.

Keywords : innovative approach, literacy, project, radio, survey

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