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PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY ON COMMUNITY EDUCATION

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Introduction

Community education and adult education are form of education needed by an individual members and community as a whole in the community for betterment and enrichment. Community education all over the world is being embraced as the basic education for life in the community rather than education for mere livelihood. In this sense, Abiona (2012) submit that Community education addresses the multiple needs of individuals, families, organisations, and communities providing an array of academic recreation, health services, using the common thread of learning, to prepare people of all ages for active and healthy community. Though community education is a form of adult education, it involves the opportunity for local citizens, commonly, schools agencies, and institutions to become achieve partners addressing education and community (Akande (2012) cited in Abiona (2012).

The application of Information Communication Technology (ICT) is not only emphasized in corporative business and the industrial sector, but it is an essential part of education at all levels (Allen, 2011). The importance of information and communication technologies (ICT) span across all fields of endeavour in the contemporary world. It plays a vital role in the development of any nation. It has been an instrument for achieving social, economic, educational, scientific and technological development. ICT has greatly influenced the educational sector especially on teaching, learning and research. In the same vein, its importance cannot be overemphasized in teaching and promoting community education in the community. This is in line with the submission (Gay and Blads, 2005) that ICT encompasses the effective use of equipment and programs to access, retrieve, convert, store, organize, manipulate and present data and information.

Community education deals majorly with empowering and enriching individuals in the community with information and knowledge. Researchers like NCET, 1995; Ekinghwo, 1998 and Adekomi, 1999 have submitted that information can be seen as "idea" conceived in the human mind, while communication is the transfer of that information from the original source to the destination where it is needed with the intention to producing a change in behavior of the receiver. There is no doubt that drifts from the orthodox verbal and print media towards the more recent electronic media brought about the concept of ICT.

Similarly, Bandura (2002) views "ICT" as the science and activity of processing, storing and sending information by using computers. In other words, there is an overlap between the function of Information Technology and Communication Technology. Hence, ICT brings about new methods or ways of accessing information in the contemporary world.

According to Ewaran (2002) in Mbavai and Muahamed, (2015) community education is a process designed to enrich the lives of individuals and groups engaging people living with same geographical area or sharing common interest, to develop voluntarily a range of learning, action and reflection opportunities determined by personal social economic and political needs. There is no doubt that ICT brings about and promote new ways in which an individual can be empowered and enriched through community education.

The role of technology in teaching and learning is rapidly becoming one of the most important which does not exclude community education. Most experts in the field of education agreed that, when properly used, information and communication technology hold great promise to improve teaching and learning in addition to shaping workforce opportunities. Poole (1996) has indicated that computer illiteracy is now regarded as the new illiteracy. This has actually gingered a new and strong desire to equip schools with computer facilities and qualified personal necessary to produce technologically proficient and efficient students in developed countries of the world. There is no doubt that computer can aid the instructional process and facilitate students' learning. Many studies have found positive effect associated with technology aided instruction (Burnett, 1994, and Fitzgerald and Warner, 1996). Communication and information are at

the very heart of the educational process, consequently ICT-use in education has a long history. ICT has played an educational role in formal and non-formal settings, in programs provided by governmental agencies, public and private educational institutions, for-profit corporations and non-profit groups, and secular and religious communities.

ICT are widely used in education for collection, management, and analysis. ICT in education includes a variety of tools, such as computers, CD-ROMs, projection TVs, word processors, image graphic software, email, and Internet-based communication technology. ICT use can influence teaching and learning styles by changing the emphasis from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered style and provides opportunities to improve information-reasoning skills, communication skills, higher thinking skills, creativity, and problem solving (Shaikh and Khoja, 2011; Yusuf and Afolabi, 2010). The impact of ICT on learning is currently in relation to use of digital media, primarily computers and internet to facilitate teaching and learning by implication methods of teaching in other countries can be examine adapted to sooth our own system. There is no doubt that this will enhance and promoted community education. ICTs are the technologies used in conveying, manipulation and storage of data by electronic means, they provide an array of powerful tools that may help in transforming the present isolated teacher-centered and text-bound classrooms into rich, student-focused, interactive knowledge environments.

Concept clarifications

Concept of Community Education

Community education can be viewed from different perspectives. According to Fletcher (1980) in Abiona (2012), Community education is a process of commitment to education and leisure of all ages through local participation in setting priorities, sharing resources, and study of circumstances in such a way that the community and its educational provisions quality enhance each other. Community education as a form of education that is committed in setting priorities, sharing resources and the study of circumstances in such a way that the community and its educational provisions qualify and enhance each other Oyebamiji (2012)

The international community education Association 5th world conference held in Nairobi in Kenya in 1987 further described community education as:

'An educational process which is based on the needs, particularities and aspirations of the community and which relies on the involvement of community members in the educational process and in the planning and implementation of programmes for the community'.

Community education enables community members to identify their problems, needs and enhance their initiatives to identify and foster the resources of the community.

Anyanwu (2002) submit that the operation of the community education requires a process whereby learning can be used for individual, community and global betterment.

Concept of Information Technology

The rapid development of information and communication Technology (ICT), particularly the internet, is one of the most fascinating phenomena characterising the information Age. ICT powers our access to information, enables new forms of communication, and serves many on-line services in the spheres of entertainment and education (specifically, adult education).

Asafe (2014) asserted that information and communication Technology (ICT) is the application of computers and telecommunications equipment to store, retrieve, transmit and manipulate data, often in the context of a business or other enterprise. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are referred to as the varied collection of technological gear and resources which are made use of to communicate, generate, distribute, collect and administer information .ICT is a force that has changed many aspects of the way we live, which consists of the hardware, software, networks, and media for collection, storage, processing, transmission and presentation of information (voice, data, text, etc.), as well as related services. (Sarkar, 2012) divide ICT into two basic components namely: information and communication infrastructure (ICI) which refers to physical telecommunications systems and networks (cellular, broadcast, cable, satellite, postal) and the services that utilizes the (internet, voice, mail radio and television).In the same vein, Igwe and Ewelum (2016) says that information and Communication Technology (ICT) is an electronic technology that is used for collection, storing, processing, and transmitting information in various forms. Furthermore, Zuppo

(2012) states that the primary definition of information and communication technology revolves around the devices and infrastructures that facilitates the transfer of information through digital means. Information Communication Technology (ICT) is thus, the convergence of computer networking and telecommunications to process, store, retrieve and send information of all kinds. It is the collection, processing, storage, dissemination, retrieval and use of information for decision making, planning, operating and public enlightenment (Vikoo,2015). According to Ozowa (2014) Information Communication Technology refers to several forms of information exchange between two or more computers through any of the several methods of interconnections. These Technologies provide speedy, inexpensive and convenience means of communication.

At this juncture, Information Communication Technology in community education is simply seen as the use of electronic technology for collecting, storing, processing, transmitting, sharing information towards improving the well-being and living standard of individuals in the community.

The benefit of ICT in community education cannot be over emphasised. According to Kozma, 2005; Igwe and Ewelum 2016 ;

- It offers opportunities for more adult learner centered teaching. There is a common belief that the use of ICT in community education will contribute to more constructive learning and an increase in activity and greater responsibility of the learners in the community.
- Provides learners with new source of information and knowledge which will enhance the process of and practice of teaching adults. This is because acquisition of ICT knowledge and skills can help the individual members of the community to obtain basic knowledge.
- Help in producing ICT literates in the community who will be useful to themselves and contribute meaningfully to the community they live.
- Widen the range of opportunities for the marginalized and the disadvantaged members in the community by opening access to knowledge.
- Help in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of community education system in Nigeria.

- Encourage self-directed learning because community members will engage in personal learning using ICT facilities.

However, information and communication technology can be applied in other areas of human endeavors for the achievement of set goals. In addition, the benefits of ICT in community include the capacity to reshape and reformulate, restructure and revitalize the individual members in the community (Oni and Oluwole 2015).

Challenges of ICT usage for Community Education

The use of Information Communication Technology for community education may experience various challenges due policy issue, planning, infrastructure, learning content, capacity building and financing.(Fasakum, 2006).

ICT in Nigeria has been witnessing a substantial growth in Nigeria, Nigeria as a developing country is being faced with many bottlenecks which militate against the success and usability of ICT facilities. Among such:

- Lack and misappropriation of fund.
- Unfavorable government policies.
- The preponderance of rural communities in the country as well as the climate of the receiving communities i.e. how disposed they are to integrating ICT into their communal or social lives.
- Political challenges at national and international levels, bureaucracy in dealing with ICT matters.
- Lack of effective ICT policies.
- Implementation delay resulting in a loss of interest.
- Lack of awareness/vague understanding of the concept of ICTs.
- Scattered population in rural areas.
- The cost of financing and the availability of funds.
- Technology adaptation, etc.

However, in the last decade, ICT has witnessed a tremendous development in Nigeria-the telecommunications sector, mobile and online banking services, internet infrastructure availability, digital and satellite broadcasting, e-learning, e-commerce, and e-registration, etc. and this has created a more positive image considering the fact that ICT is now a yardstick for measuring rate of development in the world. Since education is vital to the re-integration of culture, norms and values, it is noteworthy to state that ICT is an integral tool in the development of education in Nigeria.

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is becoming an integral part of Education in many parts of the globe. Nigeria is not left behind as ICT gradually finds its way onto the Educational systems despite chronic limitations brought about by economic disadvantages. Fundamentally, education is a discipline like any other; it is a branch of human knowledge which is basically concerned with getting the young in the society prepared when they come of age. According to Gbamanja (1989), education is a process, which seeks to change the behavior of a learner. Overall, behaviorist view education as the process of changing the behavioral pattern of people. Behavior in this sense refers to the way we change the learner, his or her thinking, his or her feelings and his other overt actions (Hergenhahn and Olson, 1997). Thus education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its cultural heritage through schools, colleges, universities and other institution (Gbemanja, 1989). In other to achieve the above- mentioned purpose in education, one could argue that information and communication technology (ICT) is an essential ingredient that could help bring these gains and benefits to the fore.

Nigeria started implementing its ICT policy in April 2001 after the Federal Executive Council approved it by establishing the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), the implementing body. The Federal Government of Nigeria, in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2010), recognizes the prominent role of ICTs in the modern world, and has integrated ICTs into education in Nigeria. To actualize this goal, the document states that government will provide basic infrastructure and training at the primary school. At the basic school, computer education has been made a pre-vocational elective, and is a vocational infrastructure and training for the integration of ICTs in the school system. Outlined below are some of the objectives of Nigeria's ICT policy:

- To ensure that ICT resources are readily available to promote efficient national development
- To guarantee that the country benefits maximally, and contributes meaningfully, by providing the global solutions to the challenges of the Information Age.
- To empower Nigerians to participate in software and ICT development

- To encourage local production and manufacture of ICT components in a competitive manner
- To establish and develop ICT infrastructure and maximise its use nationwide
- To empower the youth with ICT skills and prepare them for global competitiveness
- To integrate ICT into the mainstream of education and training
- To create ICT awareness and ensure universal access in promoting ICT diffusion in all sectors of national life.
- To create an enabling environment and facilitate private sector (national and multinational) investment in the ICT sector.
- To encourage government and private sector joint venture collaboration
- To develop human capital with emphasis on creating and supporting a knowledge-base society.
- To build a mass pool of ICT literate manpower using the NYSC, NDE, and other platforms as a train-the-trainer scheme for capacity-building.

Conclusion

Based on the above discussions, this paper concludes that information and communication technology has high influence to the learning processes in adult education and community education practices. The implication is that ICT allows wider coverage across the society without boundary and limitation. This is so because Information and Communication Technology is now the modern means of improving teaching and learning.

The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), no doubt, is gaining momentum in adult education as a field of study. Once students embrace the use of ICT, learning activity would be made easier. ICT usage will facilitate development since there will be free flow of information. Therefore there is need for policy makers in the field of adult education to integrate ICT in to teaching-learning process. Also, facilitators should pay more attention to the use of ICT for teaching and learning. They should maintain the high levels of ICT usage among the learners through continuous education and promotion of the benefits attached to ICT resources. This would involve the use of seminars and training programmes as well as encouraging learners to embrace ICT and its resources.

Furthermore, there is the need for collaborations between adult education agencies and institutions to develop a clear policy that will guide the development and integration of ICT use in the improvement of teaching and learning.

Similarly, Curriculum designers must take ICT to consideration when designing the syllabus for Adult Education Program

Finally, Nigeria should join the World Links of Development (World), a program initiated by the World Bank in 1997. The program has been establishing computer laboratories and bringing Internet connectivity to secondary schools in developing countries around the world. It is also training teachers in these countries to acquire skills necessary to integrate information and communication technology into their classroom practices. The World program links secondary schools around the world in order to improve education, enhance cultural understanding, and develop requisite skills in youth which will prepare them for the job markets in the 21st century. African countries such as Uganda, Senegal and Zimbabwe are already benefiting from the World program and it has improved the accessibility and quality of basic education in those countries.

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