

THE ESTABLISHMENT, GROWTH AND CHALLENGES OF EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION BROADCASTING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study discussed the growth, development and the challenges facing Educational Television Broadcasting in Nigeria since 1959 to the present. It also identified the major development in the Broadcasting industries with factors that motivated the growth and its adoption for educational purpose. The development of television in Higher Education with specific reference to Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife was also discussed. Some of the challenges faced such as, migration from analogue to digital broadcasting, finance, epileptic power supply, wrong/ inadequate timing, and brain drain were discussed. The following recommendations were made; that there should be a rationale and policy for educational broadcasting, proper funding of education to meet the UNESCO minimum requirement of 26%. School Broadcast and Educational Broadcast should be re-established. The National Educational Technology Centre, Kaduna that has been scraped should be re-established.

Keywords: *Educational Television (ETV), Strategic Policy, Millennium Development Goals(MDGs), Universal Free Primary Education Programme(UPE), Innovation, Open and Distance Learning (O-Del).*

Introduction

The introduction and expansion of television in Nigeria was hinged on the educational factors. According to the Daily Times of November, 2nd, 1959 as quoted by Umeh (1989), the first television station in Africa was initiated because the then Government of Western Region under Chief Obafemi Awolowo was convinced that it will play major role in enhancing the quality of education and peace. Since its establishment, it has played an unprecedented role in the political, economic and social development of the country. Television has therefore become part of our culture that it is difficult to imagine a world without television. The establishment of television system in Nigeria has its own natural, technical, socio-cultural and financial challenges. It will therefore be idle to pretend that the introduction of Educational Television does not have its own militating factors. Another major challenge of television broadcasting in Nigeria today is the migration from analogue to digital broadcasting. The International Telecommunication

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Union (ITU) has set 2015 as the dead line for full transition to digital broadcasting. It is true that television broadcasting in Nigeria is 52 years old, but it still experiencing some problems. However these problems are not insurmountable provided proper planning, funding, realistic rationale and effective management is provided. It would equally be idle to expect that Educational Television (ETV) can solve all the problems caused by unprecedented expansion in the Nigerian Educational System. It is therefore the intension of the researcher to discuss the growth, challenges and prospects of educational television broadcasting in Nigeria since 1959 to date.

The Early Years of Television Broadcasting in Nigeria

Nigeria as one of the largest (923, 768KM) and the most populous county of Africa (with population estimated at 140million in 2010) and potentially one of the richest countries commenced television transmission on October 31, 1959. Egbon (1982) tracing the history of the establishment of the first television says this television station is the oldest in the whole of the African continent. Dare (2010) writing on the same say the commencement of Western Nigeria Television Service (WNTS) and the slogan “First in Africa” was not an idle claim. The growth and the rapid spread of television broadcasting industries were motivated by 2 main factors, the political and educational factors. Other reasons included the oil boom and breakthrough in modern technologies. After 1959, the Eastern Region established its own television station called Eastern Nigerian Television Service and Radio (ENTV). This was followed by Northern Region Television Service in Kaduna. In 1962 the Federal Government established its own station called Nigerian Television Service (NTS) in Lagos. Around 1962, the Western Region took the advantage of constitution provision for broadcasting as a concurrent subject. It was their intention to locate some stations at Abeokuta, Ijebu-Ode and Ikeja to transmit commercial programmes. However, the situation of things changed with the introduction of the “Universal Free Education Programme” embarked upon by the government of Western Region. There was the dare need for qualified teachers to teach the teaming population of pupils that registered for the Free Primary Education then. It was therefore decided that television and radio be used for education and instruction in schools. This then formed the birth of Educational Broadcasting in Nigeria.

Appraisal of Educational Broadcasting in Nigeria

As a result of the successful establishment of WNTV/WNBC in Ibadan, the National Broadcasting Corporation established its own Nigerian Television Station Channel 10. The Federal Government under Federal Ministry of Education (FME) began the production of two series of Educational Programmes in two subjects English Language and Science. There were some problems associated with this programme. According to the official report from Federal Ministry of Information in 1971, it was found out that the audience was too small because of unsatisfactory reception, inadequate publicity and inconvenient time-table. Another limitation to the School Broadcast was the high proportion of untrained teachers in the primary and secondary schools. Lack of space at

the Lagos Station of the NTS channel 10 also posed a serious threat to the successful development of television broadcasting. The report ended on the note that the introduction of educational broadcasting would be of great value to the educational system provided the broadcasts are of high quality, high standard reception and if it is intelligently used in the classroom. A critical examination of Educational Broadcasting after 52 years reveals that the situation is much more deplorable than in the seventies. It is true that there has been an unprecedented development in the broadcasting industries with more than 200 stations and cable channels operated by the Federal, State governments and private individuals however; educational broadcasting seems to have died a natural death.

According to Dare (2010) quoting Esan says:

The most formidable challenges of educational television in Nigeria are the paucity of technical expertise, engineers and technicians that had to learn on the job. The programmers also faced the challenge of developing local material to fill the broadcasting time.

He also cited other challenges, television sets were installed in schools to teach various subjects and able in community viewing centres to disseminate knowledge and skills in such areas as health and agriculture. According to him, the success was modest. However the project failed because of epileptic power failure, break down of generators that proved too costly to maintain. As a result, television became commercialized and as an entertaining medium. It is true that Nigeria has the largest television network in Africa with over 24 million television sets and 25 million radio sets. As at 1999, Nigeria has over 82 AM radio stations and 35 FM station. Another feather was added to the development of television, the introduction of satellite television (DSTV), cable television and the News Nigeria (NN24). Some of these television stations were in partnership with MTN Nigeria to offer a bouquet of 10 television channels. The introduction of mobile television no doubt led to the improvement and expansion of broadcasting. However good as this development is, one would have expected that it will affect educational broadcasting positively but not much attention was given to it. It is true that we have over 200 television stations in the country, but they are heavily commercialized. Only little slots are allocated to education and instructional broadcasting. In addition, most institutions that are offering course of study in television production have been strangled due to poor funding and mass exodus of experienced and qualified specialists to other countries for better pay.

Television in Higher Education

As a result of the successful use of radio and television broadcasts in the past for both formal and informal education by the Western and Mid-western (Bendel) regions in the past, some universities adopted television to solve the problem of large class course enrolment. Some universities in the country established community radio and television broadcasting. One of such universities is the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. The University shares part of the problems posed by the challenge of numbers and lack of

adequate teaching and research materials. Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, formerly known as the University of Ile-Ife was established in 1962. It began with five faculties comprising fifteen departments. The total students' enrolment then was two hundred and forty-four students. In 1972, the population rose to 4,000 students, while in 1982, it jumped to 11,481 students. By 1992, the population had risen to over 19,975. Presently the students' population is over 35,000. Staff strength rose from 94 in 1962 to over 1000 academics in the year 2003. On the increase in enrolment, Oluwansami (1980) observes that the increase in population may pose a serious threat to the quality of academic programmes. Not only this, there were mass exodus of competent lecturers to foreign countries. In order to solve these problems, many universities have adopted several measures to solve some of the problems.

The Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife in an attempt to solve some of these problems established a closed circuit television system in the Department of Educational Technology. It was the first University in Nigeria to establish a television studio and to offer courses in television production both at the undergraduate and post-graduate level. Then the television system was established primarily to handle the general studies courses with large student enrolment in medicine, social sciences, sciences, education and the humanities. Almost all the students benefited from the system. The Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife had with some degree of success used closed circuit television for instruction, research and staff training. In view of the present need for innovative approach to teaching and research, the problem of overpopulation and the need to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as it relates to education, there is need to discuss how best to plan and implement the use of television for education

Planning for Television

Proper planning is essential to the successful implementation of innovation and the MDGs. In Nigeria, most innovation dies mid-steam due to poor planning. Educational broadcasting through radio and television, the 6-3-34 system, the introduction of computer education into the school system, National Educational Technology Center (NETC) and Instructional Television programme of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) are among many innovations that have died. Ogunmilade (1975) likens television to an automobile system where the entire essential component must be present for it to function effectively. According to Ogunmilade (1981), proper planning includes: need assessment, specification of objectives, the distributive power of television, economic cost that includes, production cost, operational cost, capital cost, cost per unit student, maintenance and repair, manpower needs, training, content and method. Folarin (1985) also identified some peculiar problems with television that have to do with planning. They include: Severe diurnal and seasonal variations in radio propagation especially in the higher frequency level. Attenuation factor resulting from uneven terrain and structural congestion. Excessive man-made problem and electricity are other militating factors. Although Nigeria has blue print for education which should provide instructional television programme planners with clear guide line to work on at all levels of education,

but there is no administrative backing in terms of budgeting, finance strategic planning and development of our own indigenous technology.

Robinson (2003) explains that strategic planning should include bilateral agreement on the supply of the needed equipment and spare part for a period of years. There should also be adequate planning for regular supply of steady electricity. Robinson is also of the opinion that strategic planning should also include policy formulation on support services and staff training. In Nigeria there are many training institutions, colleges of technology and universities that offer course of study in television production. Among them are: Television College at Jos, various mass communication schools, former National Educational Technology Centre, Kaduna and Department of Education Technology, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. There are other research/planning agencies like Nigerian Education Research Centre (NERC) Centre for Educational Studies and Adaptation Center (CESAC) that may feed the planners with some necessary data. The problem with the Institutions mentioned above, is that, they are completely neglected due to poor funding. The issue of poor funding of the educational sector had been a problem between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Federal Government for the past two decades. If there is going to be development in the educational sector, proper planning must be carried out in terms of funding. No wonder then, there had been recurrent strikes in the educational sector over the past years.

The Problem of Fund

Events happening in the educational sectors show that there is a great problem facing the universities in the country. These have resulted in incessant strikes by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), part of their demands had been, the need for better finding of research and teaching. According to Kehinde (2003), infrastructure and development is slow, static and deteriorating. The funding status is declining; government funding has dropped down from 99% operational cost to 57%, while demands in student enrolment are increasing. Akinsola (2003) on the financial crisis in the university says Government subvention to the university is consistently lower than the amount requested for over the year. Over the past five years, an average of 52% of the requested fund had been released to the university. The implication of this is that the university can only pay staff emolument, while other activities like academic programmes, staff development and training have to (Fig. land 2). In order to solve the problems facing the Universities in Nigeria, different measures have been taken, some universities resort to charging fees for chemicals, practical and other miscellaneous matter. Some departments could not admit students due to lack of academic staff and mg equipment.

Perhaps it is necessary to give credit to the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife for adopting the use of postgraduate students and part-time staff to assist the Lecturers. These categories are to assist in tutorials and teaching in special electives and other core courses. It was however criticized. It was argued that this cadre of teachers lacks the professional preparation to enter into teaching at the university level. As a result, it was

advised that there should be a sort of training or orientation programme for these new entrants to be able to handle situations and problems effectively in the classroom. Today not many universities provide these services.

Fig. 1: Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife Total amount requested and total amount received from NUC 1981/82 to 2000/2001 (Recurrent Grant).

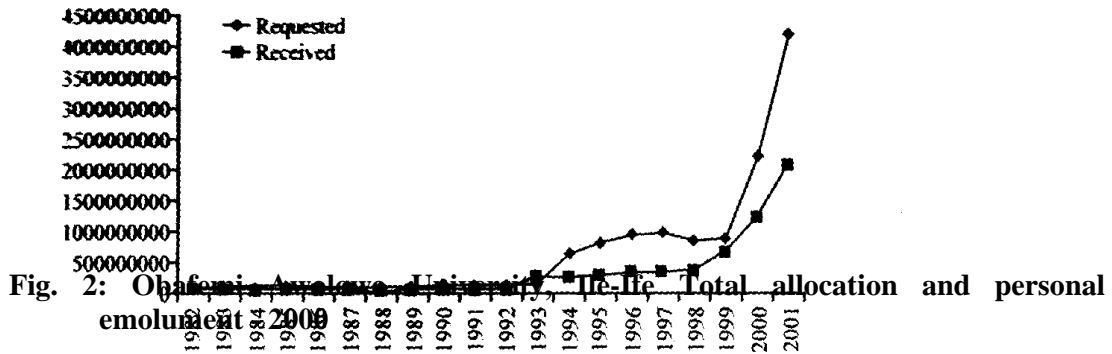
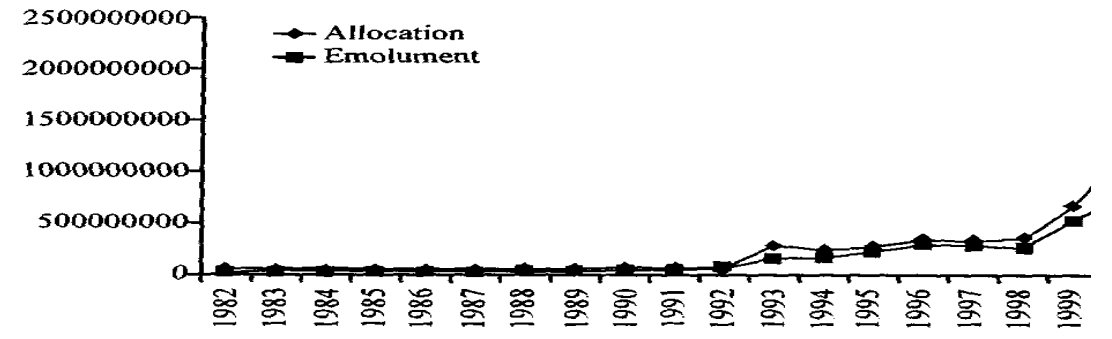


Fig. 2: Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife Total allocation and personal emolument 2000



Sources:Akinsola(1982)

Other demands of ASUU include a virile staff development programme in the universities. The widely circulated document of ASUU (2002) shows that universities in the country are grossly under funded and at the verge of collapse. Other problems facing Nigerian universities as quoted by the punch 4/10/96 includes. Gross under funding which has led to inadequacy of teaching and research facilities, dilapidated infrastructure, empty libraries and decay of hostel accommodation. Because of lack of facilities, students no longer receive adequate teaching and practical training. As a result the quality of our degree has become suspect all over the world. Although the UNESCO recommends a minimum of 15% of national budget to education, over the last decade, Nigeria has not met the UNESCO demand. In 1990 the allocation to education was 7.5% since then annually; the allocation to education has been reducing. In year 2003, the allocation was 1.5%. In addition to the problems mentioned earlier is the problem of mass exodus of competent lecturers and scholars to foreign countries. The mass exodus was attributed to poor salaries, condition of services and lack of facilities for academic activities. This had an untold hardship and problems on academic programmes in the country. Competent

specialists left the country because of poor condition of services and lack of equipment (Table 1). ASUU (2001) in a Table I show the poor salary as compared to other countries.

Since poor funding is one of the prominent limiting factors to the development and utilization of television in Nigeria and because most institutions derive its operating budgets from the Federal Government grants and state's appropriation, most institutions offering courses in television and other academic programmes are affected. (Table 2 and 3 for the fund disbursed to Universities in Nigeria).

Other limiting factor in the development and utilization of educational television is the socio-cultural and socio-economic problems, the ethno-cultural diversity and the inter-ethnic suspicions that had greatly hampered cooperation. High-poverty level and the crave for wealth have also constitute a serious problem to its development and utilization. Apart from the above, some administrators and academic staff had posed a significant barrier to its usage. Inadequate number of qualified staff (technical, administrative and academic) with competency in television production and utilization has also been a serious problem. Hence the urgent need for investment on management, capacity building, technical skill acquisition and training for all categories of staff periodically.

Table 1: Salaries of Academic Lecturers from selected Countries(N)

Country	Lecturer	Senior Lecturer	Professor
South Africa	1,230,000	2,460,00	4,510,00
Zimbabwe	825,094	937,342	1,068,624
Botswana	1,630,488	2,283,337	2,996,280
Benin Republic	611,064	671,063	762,600
Ethiopia	295,200	393,000	492,000
Kenya	295,200	369,000	492,800
Ghana	228,534	268,714	335,544
Nigeria	49,922	61,497	73,588
Nigeria (Technical Aid Corp)	787,200		

The way forward

Although a formidable hindrance has been sighted but it does not mean that they are not insurmountable. Most of these problems can be overcome through readiness to sacrifice, changes in our national development orientation and through strategic planning. Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife under the leadership of Professor R. O. Makanjuola took the giant leap to begin a strategic plan for the university in January 2002. Some of the contents that are relevant to this study are itemized below:

To harness modern technology especially ICT, modern, social, economic and financial strategies to run a cost efficient and effective academic programme and institutional management; to expand access to tertiary education in the face of unmet demand; To target an annual growth rate of 50% and stabilize at a student population of 50,000.

Table 2: The quantum of funds required to fund the universities in Nigeria

Year	Sub-Head expenditure recurrent	Amount specified in the 2001 agreement	Amount disbursed (D) to/Approved (A) for Universities by Government	Balance
2001	“	N50bn	N28.74bn (D)	N31.257bn
2002	“	N66bn	N30.645bn (D)	N35.355bn
2003	“	N138bn	(N34.757bn) (A)	N103.243bn
		Subtotal		N169.855bn
Capital expenditure				
2001	“	N20bn	N5.880bn (D)	N14.12bn
2002	“	N22bn	N2.050bn (D)	N19.95bn
2003	“	24bn	(N7.5bn) (A)	N16.5bn
		Subtotal		N50.57bn
Restoration fund				
2001	“	N18.6bn	-	N18.6bn
2002	“	N22.17bn	-	N22.17bn
2003	“	N24.4bn	-	N24.4bn
		Subtotal		N65.17bn
Stabilization fund				
2001	“	N6bn	-	N6bn
2002	“	N6bn	-	N6bn
2003	“	N6bn	-	N6bn
		Subtotal		N18bn
			Grand total	N303.595b

Source: ASUU (2003) document presented to the technical team

Table 3: Schedule of required funds for federal universities (2003-2006)

	2003 (Supplementary)	2004	2005	2006	Total
Sub Head	N billion	N billion	N billion	N billion	N billion
Recurrent	7	50	55	57.855	169.855
Capital	15	10	12	13.57	50.57
Restoration	10	15	18	22.17	65.17
Stabilization	3	5	5	5	18.00
Total	35	80	90	98.595	303.595

Source: ASUU

Strategies for achieving the above

Develop distance learning/part-time programmes to absorb up to 40% of the intakes; Run a self-financing 2-year pre-degree O.A.U. Diploma using distance education. In order to achieve these objectives, apart from the amount to be generated from the programme, linkages and transnational collaboration has been explored and established with oversea institutions such as Common Wealth of Nations, the World Bank, UNESCO, Carnegie Commission, International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE). Modern equipment has been ordered to replace the old and outdated equipments in the television studio of the Educational Technology Department. All the faculties and the Departments in the University are now linked to the Internet. At present, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife has the largest campus network in Nigeria servicing over 18,000 students and 5,000 staff. With the new strategic plan (2002) the university had upgraded the VSAT of 128kb/256kb band with. Also the previous cables that were laid many years ago had been replaced by optic fiber. While preparation and adequate planning has been made for regular and steady electricity, by upgrading the existing generator. A new transmitter had been purchased for the television studio that can get as far as Abuja. In order to meet the ITU digitalization objective, OAU Ife has employed Digital radio and television that is to be linked to the internet. The country should also judiciously utilize the new satellite (SAT2 and SATX) just launched in Russia to improve the quality of television/radio broadcasting and content production. It is hoped this will go a long way in achieving qualitative education and improvement of Open Distance Education Learning in Nigeria.

Conclusions

In this discussion, an attempt has been made to highlight the problems facing the establishment development and utilization of television in higher institutions in Nigeria. A brief chronicle of activities and achievement made in Nigeria and at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife was also examined. Bearing in mind that Nigeria has the highest number of television sets in Africa, educational television may be the panacea for ensuring promotion of quality education to the teeming educational disadvantaged candidates in

Nigeria. It has been used successfully in Niger Republic, American Samoa, India and many other countries. There is a great prospect for educational television in Nigeria especially with the introduction of mobile television and the launching of the two new Sattelite(SAT 2 and SAT X) in Russia on the 17th of August 2011. Therefore, for effective management and utilization of educational television to achieve the MDGs in education, the following recommendations are made.

Recommendations

The Federal Government should enact an ETV policy and should be backed by proper funding. If meaningful improvement is to be made in education and we are serious in achieving the MDGs by 2015, the Federal and the State Governments should yield to the demand of ASUU by providing the required fund necessary to revitalize the educational sector. In this regard, the UNESCO minimum requirement of 26% of total annual budget should be met. It is also recommended that the Federal and the State Governments should revisit the closure of the National Educational Technology Center. More attention and better slot be giving to Educational broadcasting in the broadcasting industries. So also the National Broadcasting Corporation should come up with better achievable goals and policy for the establishment of ITV services and educational broadcast in institutions of learning in Nigeria.

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