

## MEDIA, WOMEN AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

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### INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, with a reported population of about one hundred million is yet to get rid of street trading, destitution and solid waste management, while approaching the twenty first century. As the population continues to grow, environmental threats have continued to increase. This is why enlightened Nigerians have to get worried about finding relevant solution to the persistent environmental problems (Guardian Sept. 29, 1997).

One of the ways by which awareness can be intensified is through the use of educational media, with due consideration to women education.

Unfortunately, a large proportion of Nigerian women cannot read, or write. This is why the educational technology approach should be imbibed. Nigerians will listen to news that relate to their immediate problems. Nigerians will pay to watch a mediated instructional designed film, drama and programmes that could solve their environmental as well as socio-economic problems. The approach to enlightenment through posters, bill-board advertisement, picture, organized seminars and workshops could see Nigeria through some of the problems bedevilling our environment. However, Nigerian women perhaps have distinct role to play.

Women are the educators of the young, but they constitute most of the illiterates of the world. UNESCO; 2nd medium Term Plan 1984/1989, (Daodu. Concord, 28 December, 1990). Moreover, it is clear that when you educate a woman you enlighten a nation. (Babangida Mariam, Daily Times Sept. 22, 1988). In Africa, (UNECA, 1973) report that women carry out 70 percent of marketing, 90 percent of water supply, and 80 percent of fuel. If they get properly educated they could do more with less effort. Women are those who toil for the purpose of bringing about useful development to man. Their roles as mothers, nurturers and preservers of social

norms should be encouraged further through proper education. If premium is placed on women's proper education, Nigeria will have a sustainable national development, because as at present, what women generally have as basic education is the non-formal education which prepares them for motherhood and house keeping. It is true that women have multifaceted problems.

Mowoe(1987) maintains that women occupy a disadvantaged position, as a result of perpetual domination of men over women. They work two thirds of all working hours but receive only one tenth of the world income. They own less than one percent of world property, yet women represent 50 percent of the world adult population. (United Nations Decade for Women 1987). But women appear to be unaware of themselves, they have not been able to identify their problems. This is why educational media should be used to communicate to the women folk. The use of educational materials for enlightenment will have a vital influence on the way men and women perceive their roles. One way of solving the Nigerian womens problem is to give them proper education through the mass media, in a way that they would understand, in order to feel adequate and capable of improving themselves.

Fafunwa (1977) comments on societal attitudes regarding the negative value of women education. Parents still do not want to invest in girls as profitable human resource development. This perception can be changed using relevant media for propaganda on girls education.

Mowoe(1987) further states that Nigerian constitution does not discriminate against women. It is the aspects of the traditions and unwritten norms that put women at a disadvantaged position. This problem of culture that tend to stress on male domineering force can be corrected through the use of media; radio jingles, pictures and posters could do this. Adeganju (1991) stressed the importance of the use of cheap instructional materials for educating learners at the elementary school level. But the same cheap materials that are locally made with due consideration to our culture can also serve in the education of adults.

Gadabui (1997) puts it that certain negative cultural practices like "Trokosi" or enslavement of the girl-child or young woman to the shrine (priestess) is practiced by the Ewes and Ga-Adangbe tribes in Ghana. Women also suffer genital and facial mutilations, as in the upper Eastern Region of Ghana, while young girls are often betrothed to men older than them. All of these vices on women folk is a result of lack of enough education, and these practices are considered as criminal acts against women rights in developing countries.

Women often times are made to play surrogate roles in television programmes, in drama and in folk tales. This also affects the attitude of women to living properly envisaged life. Since technology is a powerful force that shapes the

environment, women should be given a chance for proper education. No nation can make a meaningful impact in the world today without investing on women education.

Chessman (1977) sees development as the process of economic and social transformation of a community. In order for Nigeria to realise its potentiality, build self confidence and lead lives of dignity and fulfillment, the women folk must be properly educated on issues that affect them, their environment, and the world at large.

There is need for the inclusion of environmental consciousness in the education of children, men, and women. This is necessary because low level of awareness has led to indiscriminate dumping of refuse, and of human waste products, leading to spread of diseases, like dysentery, diarrhoea; cough, and some other serious, but avoidable ailments. In Nigeria, there is the problem of air, water, land and noise pollution. Unfriendly chemicals have consistently been dumped in the Atlantic Ocean. There is uncontrollable smoke from factories in cities; noise and smoke from unserviceable equipment and vehicles; thereby products of these ultimately have detrimental effect on man.

Education should be geared to the development of the total personality of the individual in our society. It should form a positive step through which the right to knowledge can freely be attained by every child-male and female. The purpose of this study was two folds: To ascertain the perception of female graduate teachers on women education and national development. And to find out how graduate teachers perceive the use of educational materials in communicating issues on women education and environmental problems.

### RESEARCH QUESTION

Three research questions guided this research.

1. Will education provide women with relevant knowledge on environmental issues?
2. Will subjects of the study teach creatively with media?
3. Will media improve the perception of women on environmental issues?

### METHODOLOGY

One hundred and twenty five (125) graduate teachers with not less than a first degree and have taught for more than five years in a secondary school setting comprised subjects of the study. The stratified randomization procedure was used to select subjects from colleges, spanning Osogbo, Ilesa, Ile-Ife Central, East, and North Local government areas of Osun State. Three criterion were used for the selection.

They are sex, years of teaching, and leadership responsibility, in their various colleges.

Before subjects of the study were served with a 15 item questionnaire on MEWOED). A team of experts in the field of educational technology and researchers on women education moderated the questionnaire items, for their relevance. Both content face and construct validity of the questionnaire were made before the instrument was used for data collection.

Two hundred questionnaire, were distributed, but only a hundred and forty were returned. After carefully verifying the administered questionnaires, only the ones found adequate were utilize for the purpose of analysis. The content of the questionnaire which are in three sections addressed issues on women education and development. The use of audio and visual materials for bringing about awareness on environmental matters; and the last section treated the improvement of women education and their environment through the use of low cost media.

Subjects of study were to either respond positively or negatively or neutral to the items in the section one of the questionnaire. The pattern of response in the second section relates to subjects agreeing to the use of medium of instruction and deciding as to whether the choice was creative or normal. The last section elicited information on low cost educational materials that could be used to inform on environmental problems.

As earlier stated, only 125 questionnaires were completed properly and were found adequate for the analysis in this study. The returned questionnaire that were found useful represents 89.28 percent. The result of the analysed data are presented on the tables, using simple percentage.

The research question one states:

RQ1: Will education provide women with relevant knowledge on environmental issues? Result is as presented in the Table 13.1.

TABLE 13.1 RESPONSES OF SUBJECTS TO QUESTIONNAIRE ON WOMEN EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

N = 125

	Item	Agree Response	Disagree	Undecided
1	Women education will improve their environment	125(100.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)
2	Education will improve her social and health life	125(100.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)
3	When you educate women on environment matters you educate a nation	125(100.00)	0(0.00)	0(0.00)
4	An Educated woman would play leadership role if given the chance	107(85.6)	07(5.6)	11(8.88)
5	Women are eager to get educated in present times	110(88.00)	0(0.00)	15(12.00)

From the analysed data, a hundred percent of participants responses were positive in terms of women improvement and environmental awareness. 88 percent of the responses indicate that women are eager to get educated in present times. And for leadership role, 85.6 percent of respondent indicated willingness. Meaning that education of women will provide them with useful knowledge, including those of environmental problems. Therefore the research question one which asks whether education will equip women with relevant knowledge on environmental issue is found tenable.

The research question 2 states:

Will subjects of study teach creatively with media?

Result is as presented on table 13.2

Response of subjects to questionnaire on creative use of media for teaching environmental issues.

TABLE 13.2  
N = 125

	Item.	Res. Very Creative	Creative	Normal Total
1	Teach without visuals	08(6.4)	25(20.00)	92(73.6)125
2	Teach without audio	08(6.4)	21(16.8)	96(76.8) 125
3	Teach with Drama	82(65.60)	0(0.00)	43(34.40)125
4	Teach with talk and chalk	49(39.2)	38(30.4)	43(30.4) 125
5	Combine Teaching with audio and drama	14(11.20)	100(80.00)	11(8.80)125

Result form the analysed data shows that 73.6 percent of participants considered teaching without visual as normal. 76.8 percent considers teaching without audio as normal, while 65.60 percent found teaching through the medium of drama as very creative. However, 80 percent of respondents, considered that combined teaching with visual audio and drama was a creative approach to teaching environmental issues to learners. The research question two that asks if subjects of study could teach creatively with media remains acceptable. It is acceptable because 80 percent as well as 65.60 percent of respondents considered combine modes of teaching with audio and drama, and also teaching using the medium of drama as very creative. meaning that environmental problems would be better communicated to learners through drama. The presentation may however be made through radio, television or life programme.

Research question 3 states:

Will media improve the perception of women on environmental issues?

Results is as presented in the Table 13.3

Perception of respondents toward improving women education and their environment through media

**TABLE 13.3**  
N = 125

	Item	Responses Possible	Not possible	Total
1	Pictures and illustrations will communicate problems of the environment better	125(100.00)	0.(0.00)	125
2	Women empowerment can be carried through posters	125(100.00)	0(0.00)	125
3	Flip chart can be use to educate learners on environmental pollution	125(100.00)	0.(0.00)	125
4	Issues about family life can be communicated through flash cards and illustrations	100(80.00)	25(20.00)	125
5	Women can contribute to a sustainable national development.	125(100.00)	0(0.00)	125

The analysed data in table 13.3, show that media of posters and illustration can be used to educate the society about women education, their environment and sustainable national development. 100 percent of responses indicate the opinion. Posters and flip charts were also considered as good educational materials for communicating issues relating to family life, women empowerment and environmental pollution. One hundred percent responses were positive of the use of posters and eighty percent attested to the potency of flash cards and illustration for communicating purpose.

### DISCUSSION

Arising from the findings of the analysed data, respondents perception of the need to educate the women folk in our society is positive. Thus, the more a woman gets enlightened the better will her perception of self, her social as well as her health life will be. It is necessary to state that an educated woman, if given the chance, could play leadership role in national development. But societal attitudes regarding the negative value of women education need a change. Fafunwa (1977) Mowoe (1987) and Daodu (1990) reminisced on the disadvantaged position which women occupy in our society, and concluded that it is a result of prejudice.

The issue of what educational medium female participants could use creatively to teach, indicated that drama, with (65.60) responses, was very creative. Teaching with visual, audio and drama were not considered creative, only 11.43 percent felt it to be creative. Whereas, combined methods of teaching strategy is considered to

give better opportunity for learning and teaching of issues relating to women education, environmental problems and development of a nation. The result obtained is considered to be a result of inability of most teachers to try new methods of teaching. Simply put, it is felt that most teachers don't have enough time to design learning packages. Hence, teaching with visual aids, audio as well as organizing drama sessions is considered energy saving for female teachers. The obtained result is at variance with the popular opinion held by educational technologist. The popular belief is that the more senses of the learner the teacher can appeal to, the better chance the learner has. Involvement of educational technology materials permits learners physical, psychological and emotional involvement. Even then, self-directed learning is the ultimate goal of all instruction and teaching. Finding also showed that 73.56 percent as well as 76.80 percent of all respondents considered teaching with visual material as well as video tapes as normal. They however failed to see their use as creative in the dissemination of information.

Result from the data analysed with respect to improving education of women and their environment showed that cheap instructional material can be very effective in instructing learners on issues of women education, environmental problems, other personal matters, as well as issues on national development. The findings therefore corroborate (Adeyanjus 1987) opinion on the need to intensify efforts at using posters, flashcards, flip charts and drama as media for teaching learners on environmental issues, women education and National Development.

### CONCLUSION

The education of girls generally will reduce the number of illiterates in Nigeria. These girls will eventually take up the role of family menders. They will take up leadership roles in the socio-economic activities of the nation. The need to expose them (women) to scientific knowledge and technology will lead to an increase in the number of educated women in Nigeria.

As found in the outcome of this study, the use of relevant educational materials will ease the problem of instructing learners on environmental education.

### RECOMMENDATION

The ability to read and write should be a priority for every woman because the analytical skills and knowledge they acquired will bring about better family planning and organization. Women education will improve the standard of family living, leading to better developed and sustainable economic life. The media, like posters, flip charts illustrated programmes, and dramatic play should be created towards self improvement of both men and women, leading to better educational awareness about Nigerians poor environmental problems. Environmental campaign



should therefore include a house to house environmental education. There will be need to encourage the creative method of waste recycling re-use. Most importantly, the government should encourage educational technology experts, artists and seasoned educators to write programmes leading to the teaching of environmental education, beginning from the elementary level through the secondary and tertiary institutions. It is expected that local environmental protection committee need be set up in all the states/local government areas of the federation. This will help in the implementation of such decisions made on environmental problems in Nigeria.

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