

**Original Article**

## **INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND TECNOLOGY A CHANNEL IN IMPROVING WOMEN EDUCATION IN NIGERIA.**

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**Abstract**

There has been increasing interest in introducing innovations such as information, communication and technology in teaching and learning in Nigeria, Women Education is inclusive. This work therefore covers the role of Information, Communication and Technologies (ICTs) in women education. The researchers defined education, women education and ICT, roles of women education was mentioned, approaches to women education was also discussed, and the ways in which the women can be encouraged was enumerated while Importance of women education was not left out. The role of ICT in women education was also mentioned Recommendations on how to promote the educational motivation of women was suggested.

**Keyword:** Education, Women Education, Innovations and ICT's.

### **Introduction**

It is a general belief world over that information communication and technology (ICTS) has become an 'important part of modern society because ICT has turned the globe into a village as well as made information flow, acquisition and dissemination of information very easy among all ages, races and gives information about many nations with different socio-economic background. This has aroused the urgent need for a systematic approach and supporting the usage of ICT in all facets of this country particularly in education. The educational needs of an individual sometimes motivates such a person towards seeking for ways of improving oneself either through the use of ICTS or other means. Education, therefore, is known to be a channel to human development. It is a channel

towards acquiring knowledge, skills, character, values and attitudes. Education exposes one to acquire knowledge about one's surrounding environment so as to know the causes of variation in a person, or persons, groups, and also to sustenance of way of life, accommodation and adaptation to innovations as the world is developing technologically (Eze, 2018 i) Therefore, the introduction of ICTS as technology or innovation is a very good one in education. This means that ICT as an innovation is a very good tool that can be useful in women education centres so that they will acquire both knowledge and the skills they will require to succeed in carrying out their daily activities towards achieving self actualization.

To support the above statement, Okafor (2016) put education as a process of acculturation through

which the individual is helped to attain the development of his potentialities, and their maximum activation when necessary according to right reason which often leads to perfect Self-fulfillment. That is, when women in the learning centres are supported with ICTS, they will be helped to develop potentials necessary to sustain themselves, their family and even promote the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS). ICTS are any devices, tools or applications that permits data exchange through interaction or transmission (Okafor & Enwere, 2016). ICTs in this article refers to the computer and internet connections used to handle and communicate information for learning purposes. The accessibility, affordability and adaptability of these technologies have increased rapidly, hence women education with ICT will give room to achieving the benefits of education (Okoli & Olawuyi, 2016).

Women education is the educational opportunity provided for women in order to improve their standard and level in society. This is imperative to the advancement and development of their family, the community and the country at large. It makes the woman a role model to the younger ones, promotes empowerment as well as contributes to solving national challenges alongside the men and also lowers infant mortality, promotes improvement in quality of life, alleviation of poverty level and other unmentioned benefits. It will be worthwhile to mention that to eradicate illiteracy in Nigeria can be achieved only through education as it is known that illiteracy goes with poverty, hardship and poor economic growth of a Nation (Abdulrazq, 2014, Ebirim, 2008, & Ukwuaba, 2008).

United Nations Educational, Scientific and cultural organization UNESCO 2003 cited in Murtala; Babangida, Usman and Auwalu (2013) estimated that the illiteracy rate in Nigeria is about 84.4% to

buttress the above statement, Illiteracy according to oxford dictionary (2022) is the inability to know how to read and write by an individual. As far as the world illiteracy status is concerned, Africa continues to be the highest affected region of the world with the women mostly affected.

Omolewa (2006) stated that if the country wants to conquer or reduce poverty, ignorance and disease, the first step is to conquer or eradicate illiteracy because illiteracy is the most serious handicap for economic, political, social an individual development. According to Murtala et al (2013) women are behind in educational pursuits and therefore it is necessary that women since most of them are married and grownups be exposed to learning. It is said that education is the fundamental right of any child, adult or youth of any decent society. Meanwhile, most women cannot afford attending formal education in order to be educated. This led to the high level of out-of-school, and those who couldn't attend formal school at all but are in the society. Those women need to be exposed to learning in one way or the other with supported ICT programmes if illiteracy must be eradicated. ICT provide access to information through telecommunication either by the internet, wireless networks, cell phone, and other communication mediums.

Access to ICT education for women is an important aspect that should be looked into. There are a number of barriers to using ICT for women education (such as, lack of ICT materials, lack instructors of ICTS, poor conditions of the learning centres and others). Improving women's education requires women friendly information society which comprises developing content that speaks about women's concerns and reflects their knowledge, language and cultural contexts. Thus, it is known that education is the most powerful instrument which

one can use to change the world. on the other hand, ICTs are closely linked to power and the ability to effect change in the society. Therefore, women education supported with ICTs are emerging as a powerful weapon for women development and empowerment in developing Nations. It is a tool that is very helpful in empowering women in various areas of life. T.C.T can be termed as a tool for enhancing w0men's education opportunities, providing new educational and professional opportunities for them in the new technologies.

Information, communications and Technology (ICTs) covers any product that will store, retrieve, manipulate, transmit or receive information electronically on a digital form e,g personal computers, digital television, email, robots etc. ICT in education means teaching and learning with ICT. It is used in education to provide prospects and trends of integrating information and communication technology (ICT) into the general educational activities. It is also used to give learners access to information, promote interaction and communication, and enhance digital literacy skills. ICTs is known for their ability to provide access to internet, wireless networks, cellphones, and other communication mediums (Chinedu, 2016).

The field of education has been affected favorably by ICTs, this is because it improved teaching and learning and even enhanced research. ICTS have the potential to accelerate, enrich and deepen skills, to motivate and engage students, to help relate school experience to work practices, create economic viability for t0morrow's workers, as well as strengthening teaching and learning. Thus, there is need for ICT application in learning centres.

The ability to use computers effectively has become essential factor in Nigeria. Skills such as bookkeeping, clerical and administrative work, stocktaking, record keeping of computerized

practices that form the core IT skills package. Such as Access, spreadsheet, word processors and databases. Also some employers requires that job seekers must be computer literate before you can be given the job. ICT also give students (women) the opportunity to learn individually (Adomi and Kpangban, 2010). According to Westoff & Bankole, 2003, cited in Odenigbo (2016) ,using ICT in education, especially in learning centre is important for women education because it will expose the women to the use of the media, this will make them to be interacting with people throughout the world. Adesina (2008), opined that ICTs makes learning easy as individuals will always have access to the medium and its content, can serve multiple teaching functions and diverse audios i.e. useful in drill and practice, to help diagnose and solve problems, for assessing information and knowledge about various related issues.

Before going further, it is better to explain who the woman is. Women are female human being created by God. They are also known as mothers. Women according to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2022) are adult female human beings the opposite sex created by nature in addition to men. Alonge Claire (2012) stated that women are file disadvantaged group who do not have equal rights as their male counterparts. The implication of the above statement is that women have not been able to contribute their quota to bringing about peace and justice for sustainable development in the nation (Omoruiyi and Orusanye, 2015). This is so because in most developing countries including Nigeria, women were still marginalized, vilified, dominated, discriminated against, exploited and excluded from participating in major public policy formulation and development programmes (Ebirin, 2008).

Women are known for their contribution in development in developing countries' economy, yet

their vital contributions to society is overlooked, under estimated or ignored by economic planners and policy makers. Breaking the barriers means that they would need to be empowered educationally, economically, socially, psychologically and culturally. It is the only way they can possess the knowledge to transform the world to their advantage (Yusuf, 2013). In line with this, successive governments in Nigeria have been showing commitment to provide functional education for women through establishment of various women education and vocational centres (Omoruyi and Orsanye, 2015) such as women education unit, in the Ministry of Education, but some of the units are not really effective to the level of bringing women education to limelight in Nigeria.

Education could be used as a tool for building capacity of women to enhance their livelihood and improve their quality of life, exposing women to access and manage resources, expand their options for sustainable livelihood and enable them to participate actively in community development (Zuofa, 2008). This implies that women need education and training to efficiently play diverse roles in their community. This can be achieved if women education is encouraged through NFE programmes non formal education because married women, young and old who could not afford formal school system can be reached easily.

### **Roles of women in the society**

When women are exposed to education in the society, there will be a massive improvement in development and empowerment in that society. According to Ngwu (2003) cited in Ukwuaba (2008), the goal of women education is for development through functional skills, literacy skills, numeracy skills, the development of occupational skills, which lead to an increase in income and the development of critical consciousness and professional competence

so that women initiate, create and manage social institutions and provide requisite services in the environment for their growth, development and stability. Women play important roles as farmers, traders and entrepreneurs in addition to their reproductive and community managing roles. They earn money to meet their social as well as economic needs and to accumulate their own independent stores of Wealth. They always had to support their children and husband (Mbara, Anurugwo and Alatare, 2015).

Towards developing agricultural sector which leads to enough food production in the society, women play the highest role in it. They engage in bush clearing, planting of crops, weeding, harvesting and transporting it to the market. Nigerian women also actively participate in the labour force, the majority of urban Women are sales workers, teachers, nurses, secretaries, typists among others (Ekpiken, 1990 cited in Obetta 2013, Murtala, 2010, Obidiegwu & Obiozor, 2014). In the area of trading. Nigerian women find solace in trading to make up for their disadvantaged position educationally. Hence, the majority of Women are involved in trading activities such as lack of education is not a barrier. Trading which permits self employment which can be carried out with or without shops is carried out by some of the women. With the above explanations, it can be deduced that if women can do all these to maintain their family, how much more if they are given equal opportunity to be educated or if they can be encouraged to participate in learning activities. They will surely go miles in helping in the development of the country. It is through the learning they will continue to experience lifelong education because it is through the learn a particular thing today, tomorrow, they will proceed to learn other things, they will continuously learn because the facilities are

there, the avenue to acquire it are there and it is neither stressful nor costly

Advantages of women education according to Ukwuaba (2008), Madu, 2014, Abdulrazaq, 2014, and Aoho, Ezeora, & Rita 2015

Future educated generations - an African proverb says, "If boy is educated, one person is educated, If a girl is educated, a whole family is educated and a whole nation in all will be educated." By sending a girl to school, the girl is far more likely to ensure that the children around also receive an education. As many claim, investing in a girl's education is investing in a nation.

**Decrease Infant Mortality:** Children of educated women are less likely to die before their first birthday. Girls who receive an education are less likely to Contract HIV & AIDS, and thus, less likely to pass it onto their children. Primary education alone helps reduce infant mortality significantly, and secondary education helps even more.

**Decrease Maternal Mortality:** Educated women (with greater knowledge of health care and fewer pregnancies) are less likely to die during pregnancy, childbirth, or during the postpartum period. Increased education of women/girls also leads to more female health care providers to assist with prenatal medical care, labor and delivery, delivery complications and emergencies, and follow-up care.

**Decrease child marriage:** Child marriage - in some cases involving girls as young as 6 or 8 - almost always results in the end of a girl's schooling. The result is illiterate or barely literate young mothers without adequate tools to build healthy, educated families. Educated women/girls typically marry later, when they are better able to bear and care for their children.

**Decrease Population Explosion:** Educated women tend to have fewer (and healthier) babies. A 2000 study in Brazil found that literate women had an

average of 2 children while illiterate women had an average of six children.

**Increase Involvement In Political Process:** Educated women are more likely to participate in political discussions, meetings, and decision-making, which in turn promotes a more representative, effective government.

**Decrease Domestic & Sexual Violence:** Educated girls and women are less likely to be victims of domestic and sexual violence or to tolerate it in their families because they will marry an enlightened man who knows how to care for women.

**Decrease Support For Militancy:** As women become more educated, they are less likely to support militancy and terrorism than similarly educated men. They will educate their children on the dangers of it.

**Improve Socio-economic Growth:** Educated women have a greater chance of escaping poverty, leading healthier and more productive lives, and raising the standard of living for their children, families, and communities. These and many more are some of the valuable reasons why everyone should all support education enhanced with ICTs for women. Approaches to women education according to Madu (2014) and Obetta (2013).

In order to help the poor women towards attending women education, the following can be useful.

Parental and community involvement -- Families and communities must be important partners with schools in developing curriculum and managing women's education. Low-cost and flexible timetables -- Basic education should be free or cost Very little.

In the same way, women education should be free with flexible time table Also, school hours should be flexible so that girls/women can help at home and still attend classes.



Schools close to home, with women teachers if possible: Many parents worry about girls/women travelling long distances on their own. Many parents also prefer to have girls/women taught by women. Preparation for school - Girls do best when they receive early childhood care, which enhances their self-esteem and prepares them for school. Relevant curricula « Learning materials should be relevant to the girls women's background and be in the local language. They Should also avoid reproducing gender stereotypes.

Roles of ICTs in women education according to Maduewesi (2014), Okoli & OlaWuyi,(2016) and Okafor & Enwere (2016)

A good education aims at the development of an individual intellectually, physically and morally. Therefore, women education supported with ICTs is not an exception. Women education supported with ICTs will perform the following roles.

- social status: it provides the women with information and opportunity to fit anywhere towards economic empowerment. Women can carry out business anywhere in order to survive and even carry the family along in many developmental activities. This the Woman can do because of their social status.

- economic development: an educated woman supported with ICTS' knowledge will gain job in a good industry or company. With the money realized, they will support national economic development by helping in training the children in school and also supports the husband in other developmental activities.

- political awareness: with education enhanced with ICTs skills, the women will be exposed to information about how to know their rights and participate in politics. The awareness of the political right will make the woman to develop desire to participate in the election.

- Information and knowledge from the ICTs classes will help the women to realize the importance of children's education, makes the women (mothers) to be more aware and careful in their responsibilities to their children. Children of educated mothers learn better and 'faster than the children of illiterate mothers. This is because the educated mother knows what the child requires and provides it at the appropriate time.

Women education supported with ICTs skills and knowledge will enable them to contribute to human life, fill the gap of those who dropped out of school, help to prepare young ones and adults to be able to cope with domestic work and family life, helped to develop in the women's folk, social, economic and political ability to understand and participate in life activities.

### **Conclusion**

The use of ICTs can serve as a good channel towards encouraging women education. When women education is encouraged, it will bring in development and also support the achievement of sustainable development goals, This is because educating women coupled with ICTs knowledge will open doors of personal development which will then open doors of inner desires that will be hampered without education. The use of ICTs in women education will pave way for practicing of equal rights can be achieved with the information that will be exposed on that aspect. Women will also be able to realize the importance of children, the importance of balanced diet and nutrition, how to improve in postnatal and antenatal clinics and other things that make life easy. Therefore, women education supported with ICTS knowledge and skills is "if great importance to the society

### **Recommendation**

1. National policy on education should institutionalize the use of ICTs within national education system.
2. Government should fund the adult learning centres in order to be able to solve the academic needs of

illiterate women and out-of-school children and also achieve development and economic growth in our nation.

3. Women should be motivated towards pursuing education rather than going into early marriage or allowing themselves to be deceived to having unwanted pregnancy at teenage age.

4. Government should ensure that ICT education is introduced in all learning centres.

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