THE IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) TO WOMEN EDUCATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Women education and national development is a part of focus that ICT has been useful towards the enhancement of womanhood and development of nations. The paper therefore, emphasized on the concept of ICT, women education and national development; ICT and Education in Nigeria, women and computer education, the importance of ICT to national development and women education were discussed. Also discussed were the internet, ICT and the Nigerian society. However, the following recommendations were made: that government agencies, corporate organizations and well meaning Nigerians should join hands towards improving the learning standard of women education in an efforts to realize the importance of ICT to national development and that every woman in their respective homes should be encourage to strife harder in their bid to acquiring education through ICT.

INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a veritable tool for individual and national development which cannot be over emphasized. However, the type of development envisaged is determined by the type of education an individual is to acquire. Fafunwa (2004) noted that in the past before the Nigerian independence in the 1960, Nigeria realized the non-functionality of her educational system tilted towards more adult education, non-formal education and the liberation of women education. This was deliberately to meet the objectives of the colonial masters on the need to broaden education to accommodate all. Because of the attainment of independent in 1960, a lot of education reforms were introduced and the need to strengthen the educational system was

made to embrace both men and women alike to enable them eradicate from the system the principle of gender inequality which has been a tool for the discouragement of women towards full participation in educational empowerment, national building and development (federal Republic of Nigeria. 2004).

In realizing the good intentions and the objectives of the founding fathers, the existence of women towards taking her right place in the scheme of things became more cardinal as time went on, the need to strengthen women education in Nigeria and the world to attract attention from both government and corporate entities at local and international levels. Though, the attitude of women in line with the provision of the assess or support and the level playing ground for them to embrace the available opportunities is not encouraging because of the inability of women to assess information that is needed for them to be encouraged and be enlightened by agents on the ways of attending to programs of government and activities of the environment by where they can find themselves useful for this noble advantage. Also, individuals whose purpose and role is to enlighten women on the need to embrace education either formal or informal process are not really doing what they are expected to do to assist women to uplift their educational standard. Though, recently awareness is gradually increasing because of the new government policies on the needs to emancipate women and women education in Nigeria. According to Yaradua (2006), the national act on women enlightenment, emancipation and empowerment programmes, was introduced and enforced by successive government of Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan anchored and domiciled in the office of the first lady, Dame Patience Jonathan. This is seriously been invigorated to increase awareness and empowerment of women through direct or indirect participation in education by granting the women subsidy or scholarship to enable women access and acquaint themselves on the need to embrace education, which will also enable them to acquire knowledge on how to read and write as was reported by This-Day newspaper on the 25th October, 2007. Indeed, this is the first step towards the realization of the importance of information communication technology (ICT) on women education and national development.

The Concept of ICT, Women Education and National Development

ICT in the context is the manipulation of automated machine designed to accept data as input, processed and output as information in a retrieval system via communication interface or signals from communication ports. In view of this, Owolabi (2000), asserted that ICT is the use of various modern electronic and digital infrastructures to deliver information with ease to various audience and correspondence. In broad details he said, it is formally known as information communication technology ICT. Above all, it combines with the functional capability of the computer as a machine or system unit and the synchronization that takes place when signals are emitted from the communication ports via Boolen or complementary process using both high and low-level codes in binary codes decimal mode which centers its operations with zero digit, one and operands or machine code.

According to Nwogu, Ogbu & Elizabeth (2008), ICT is an acronym that stands for information communication technology. However, they further stated that apart from explaining an acronym, there is no universally accepted definition of ICT. Why? Because the concepts, methods and application involved in ICT are constantly evolving in an almost daily basis. It is difficult to keep up with changes. They happen so fast. A good way to think about ICT is to consider all the uses of digital technology that already exist to help individuals, business and organization use information. For instance, in business, ICT is often categorized into two broad types of products:
   a. Traditional computer based technology and
   b. The mere recent and fast growing range of digital communication technologies (www.tutor2unet/termasp).

Here the facts still remains that ICT plays a major role in all human endeavous and women education in particular.
On the part of women education are the female folk among human creatures: they are called girls at their age are opposite to male folk called boys at their childhood or youthful age. Most times, women are referred to as weaker vessel but population in general has it that men and women are engaged with the processes, products and effects of

technology on a day to day basis. This is in recognition of the need for action by the international community in securing the advancement of women and the elimination of gender-based discrimination, particularly in the field of education and employment which will drive home the importance of ICT to women education and national development. Therefore women education is a type of education whether formal, informal or non-formal that is giving to the girl child for her mental, social and economic wellbeing to bring about national development.

Considering the fact of development, it is multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional. According to Ani-Ogbolu (2008), quoting Rowstow (1967), said in order to buttress ones points, development can be seen as the increase in production per capacity investment. Development also, he said is the ability of man to conquer his environment, using every necessary tools at his disposal to utilize the environment to his advantage. Nwogu (2011), in his view therefore declared development as that is which goes beyond increase in economic indices. He went on to say that development is a kind of qualitative and quantitative changes that takes place both in the structure, composition and the performance of the forces of production which will stimulate and enhance a national development and women education in particular. Indeed, there has to be adequate ICT facilities for the training of the Nigeria citizens who lives in the rural and urban communities, for ICT to play its important role in women education and national development

ICT and Education in Nigeria

Education is important to the development of human mind, this means that if the mind is developed then eventually development will definitely set in, in other words education is the imbibing of moral standards, cultural affiliation, technical ideals or knowledge towards the development of man and his environment etc. in the plights of Fafunwa (2004), the emergence of ICT as a tool that supports almost all shares of life has stood to enhance the existing of education in Nigeria. Although, the lack of supporting educational communication infrastructure has brought a lot of setback to ICT compliance in the Nigeria secondary schools, especially girls' secondary school and colleges were the female

children are not allowed to keep in their possession mobile telephone handset from which they can also access the internet during the school period. Source: a visit to Female Unity School (that is, F.G.G.C. Abuloma, Port-Harcourt). In another development, Obeta (2008) in his view observed that the internet can be accessed through telephone lines requiring that all school have at least one line. In the opinion of Nwogu (2011) adequate provision of supporting communication infrastructure in Nigeria will play a key role in terms of national development. Basic infrastructure such as electric power, appropriate school building equipment, tools, workshop, laboratories, textbooks, internet facilities and telephone lines or networks, mobile phones, etc are still needed in many parts of the country to fast track development.

Women and Concept Education

Based on the increase awareness on women in recent time, empowerment programmes were drawn by women coordinators at various state of the federation by the instruction of the federal government to enable them implement government policies on the need for women to receive education training/empowerment at centers close them. In view of this, majority of women are engaged as a Matter of choice on computer education ICT training which is the current edge on information need, the effective way of been able to coordinate and manage things all over the world. Adewale and Amoo (2008), in their study, observed that there is a significant difference between the male and female students (women) performances in the study of computer education (i.e. Computer studies). Although, when the performance of females which is 24, 22 on the group compared with that of male (male) which are 24.73, the mean values for the two group looked very close, a clear statistic significant difference was noticed, hence, the importance of ICT to women education and national development cannot be over emphasized. The lack of computer knowledge on the part of women will in turn, increase their risk of social and political exclusion as increasingly more economic and democratic activities go on-line. A research on gender and technology according to Tec Sarvy (2000), in Faleye and Rhmon (2011) indicates that in United States, women are lacking behind when it comes to advancing in the field of technology. Women presently

constitute 20% of information technology (IT) professional in the United States. The report goes further that each year the proportion of woman receiving Bachelor's degree increase in all discipline except computer science, as few as 10% of associate professors and 6% of full computer science professors are female, less than 33% of high school computer science students are female, the number of female enrolled in advanced computer classes in high school and college are failing. According to Hutchinson and Weaver (2004), far fewer women than men are studying information technology (IT) at tertiary level in New Zealand as well as in Nigeria and many other countries of the world. In spite of many intervention programmes over the years and a higher growth in female tertiary education enrolments generally, women participation rate in such courses has not greatly improved, particularly in comparison with other discipline such as medicine and law. It all implies that women choose to enroll in greater proportion in arts, humanities and social science than they do in mathematics, science and technology, the world over. The origin of this under representation of women has been largely structural, created in and through the social structure of institution and the segmentation of the labour market, internalized in value and belief about appropriate roles and expectation. These factors are manifested in a host of barrier to women's participation both general and specifics in the technological domains through the role of ICT to national development.

The Importance of ICT to National Development and Women Education

The importance of ICT is relative to all spheres of life, which education is not left out. The need for ICT towards the emancipation of women education is a welcome development since it has simplified the process of knowledge acquitting general in the field of education, which has been towards the development of standard and quality in the world over. Therefore, the importance of ICT to national development and women education cannot be over emphasized. According to Ani-Ogbolu (2008), the realization of the importance of information ICT by man i.e. male and female to him/her as the information accumulation ability is taking a new dimension with the development of highly sophisticated

accumulation information for use. In an information society, all people, women inclusive should have the right to information which can enhance their lives although large components can only be available to people with more money. Distance education in our view has a very important role in women's development. Women have constraints of time, space, resources and socio-economic disabilities. Distance education can help them with its outreach to their homes. It enables them to learn at their own pace and take up vocations and skills for economic and individual development. It gives them a second chance to step into the main system of education, including higher education, enabling them at the same time to earn and learn as well as to fulfilling family responsibilities through the help of the internet.

The Internet
Internet is the worldwide communication access or link all over the world. Internet is the link that enhances the largest data storage and communication network in the world know as www which implies worldwide and it is still standing as the best for educational advancement as a tool for learning standard in all fields of endeavor. According to Owolabi (2000), internet is a worldwide system of computer networks through which sharing of information is made easy and possible. The importance of the internet is that it is a global technology network that holds smaller units of contributing network access towards advancing teaching and learning, educational enhancement and improving educational management via the use of information communication technological tools. Through computer education, women will be able to appreciate the use of internet and also realize the importance of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in their overall educational and national development within and outside the Nigerian society.

ICT and the Nigeria Society
The perception of the Nigerian Society towards the acquisition of ICT knowledge is oval as this may mean that the emergence of ICT was a welcomed development and was accepted by the entire society due to its importance to humanity and her environment, which includes easy

access to information data generation processing, output of processed data towards a stabilized data base system in actualizing the needs of the Nigerian society. Information Communication Technology (ICT) to the Nigerian society has brought a lot of changes in our homes, schools, industries, hospitals and other public places to case life and make it more meaningful. According to Nwogu (2011) the use of ICT has been a major challenge faced by the Nigerian populace in their day to day activities on like the developed countries for example United State of America where ICT is a tradition. However, Nwogu (2011) also went on to say that in the Nigerian society, traditional ICT tools have been there in our radio, television, cine projectors and recorders for over forty five years in the secondary school schools, universities, broadcasting industries and among the mass communication scholars. Obeta (2008) observed that in an effort to boost ICT and broaden its area of coverage, the Federal Government of Nigeria launched her first satellite in 2005 and the second in May, 2007 fore the purpose of bringing the ICT facilities to the reach of Nigerians. Surpass it to say, that one of the reasons for launching the satellite in the Nigeria society is to enhance the quality of ICT in our educational system among others.

CONCLUSION

The existence of ICT towards the stability of organization is in line with the current realities in advancing the activities of women and woman education to bring about national development in Nigeria and the world at large which has a great influence in our society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ICT in women education plays a very important role to women and national development. The constraint of time, space, resources and socio-economic disabilities which confronts women and their education has posed a lot of threat to National development. Distance education therefore, can help them with its outreach to their homes. It also enables them to learn at their own pace and take up vocations and skills for economic and individual development. However, the following recommendations were made:

- That government agency corporate organizations and well meaning Nigeria should join hands towards improving the learning standard of women education in realizing the importance ICT to national development.
- That every woman in their respective homes should be encouraged to strife harder in their bid to acquiring education through ICT.
- That every woman should see ICT as the life wire for technological advancement and the enhancement of knowledge throughout the world.
- Finally, the effort of women in meeting the challenges of the 21st century places a demand on the relevant agencies and stakeholders to provide the logistics and make available ICT enters for women to access educational advancement and contribute towards national development in an ICT driven economy.

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