

Effectiveness of Non-Formal Education Through the Use of Instructional Media

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ABSTRACT

The use of instructional media in non-formal education is appreciated all over the world. Non-formal education as an alternate of formal system is the demand of developing countries. To make its use more effective various instructional media are used. Different roles of some of the instructional media are highlighted in this paper. It was pointed out how to make the use of instructional media in non-formal education more effective.

INTRODUCTION

Doubtless to say that the neglect functional non-formal educational programmes is a greatest mistake done by a nation. Such mistake has been identified by countries who had fallen victim to it as being grievous and costly. For instance, it was observed by several educators such as Dave.R.H.et.al. eds. (1986, p.4) in considering learning strategies for post-literacy and continuing education in China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand, Vietnam and Pakistan that "... for a long time non-formal approaches to adult education have been neglected, as well as informal

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education. As a consequence of this neglect, it has been very difficult in recent years to organize the education of the working people into a widespread mass movement."

Non-formal education covers every aspect of our educational enterprise which is neither confined to a classroom situation nor subject to organized strategies, curricula, etc. It is the type of education that is free from rigidity with regards to curriculum, learning materials, methodology, venue, duration or the length an individual takes to complete a particular instructional session.

Because of its non-formality non-formal education is very necessary in the third world countries where the level of illiteracy is still very high, and the high rate of school drop-out is prevalent as a result of poverty, wars, ignorance, cultural values, carelessness, etc.

Besides the fact that a neglect is grievous the approach used for conveying what is taught also matters. Even in formal education, the strategy and instructional materials used for teaching are extremely important. For instance, Kindler (1973) asserts that learners comprehend and retain more of what they are taught when adequate and appropriate instructional media is employed. Learners are said to remember ninety per cent of what they say as they do a thing as against only twenty percent of what they hear.

If this assertion is correct and if instructional materials play a great role in making learning effective in formal education, then it is more needful and inevitable for non-formal education because non-formal education covers a wider range of people who are more delicate or complex to handle while teaching. For instance, the following are usually the target groups:

1) Unschooled Children

Children of school age who are unfortunate because they cannot be enlisted in a formal educational system due to poverty, ignorance, inability to cope with formal education as a result of drop-out, etc.

2) Illiterate youths and adults

These are the people who have never had the opportunity of formal education or its equivalent.

3) Rural dwellers

Majority of the Pakistan population of rural Sindh and Baluchistan who live far away from urban areas or locations where formal education is accessible.

4) Nomads

People who have to move from place to place in search of "greener pastures" either for their herds or farmlands. As a result, a meaningful and consistent formal education is not usually considered necessary.

The achievement of the non-formal education as stated in the National Policy of Education will also be better enhanced through the utilization of instructional media as it is done in the formal educational system; The following are the objectives of policy (1998-2010, p.20):

1. To achieve the global objective of Education for All and All for Education.
2. To complement and supplement the formal system to achieve the target of Universal Primary Education (UPE) through community involvement in the shortest possible time.
3. To impart functional literacy for adolescents (10-14) who missed out the chance of primary education.
4. To provide lasting functional literacy and income generation skills for rural women of 15 to 25 age group.
5. To provide the basic educational facilities of working children and reduce child labour.
6. To expend the facilities and services of middle level education through community involvement and non-formal means.

From the above policy statements on education, it is certain that both formal and non formal educational systems have a common aim of making learners literate and thereby helping them to be fruitful citizens of the country so that they can contribute meaningfully to the social, economic, political sectors of public at large. The ultimate achievement of these goals is largely anchored on the technological advancement of the society and the application of technological and scientific approaches to all our educational enterprises. The main focus of this paper, therefore, is to bring to the limelight the needed emphasis on the importance of instructional media in making non-formal education functional and more effective.

General Background

According to Dave et al, eds. (1986, p.63), "illiteracy is a serious impediment to the individuals' growth and the country's socio-economic progress." This is a true statement of any country whose illiteracy level remains high. When the level of illiteracy is high in any society, that society will remain backward, antisocial with all barbaric behaviors and actions.

Non-formal education dates back to the colonial era when colonial masters exposed their "servants" or "maids" to some basic non-formal learning. For instance, cooking, dress making or knitting, handwork, housekeeping and the teaching of English language for easy communication were among the common features of informal ways the colonial masters used. This type of education was successful and indirectly executed informally during the free or leisure periods of the colonial house helps or maids;

Advantages of non-formal Education

Non-formal education, in general, is an effective way of liberating the individuals in any society from ignorance, poverty, antisocial activities, etc. According to Visocchi (1978, p.3) education is seen as "that process of liberation whereby man free himself from whatever obstructs him from thinking capacity"

Liberating the individual is the main focus of any form of education. Non-formal education, therefore, helps the rural man to become more human, more of a person and to acquire a higher level in his thinking ability that provides the liberation he truly needs. This type of freedom which a man needs cannot be acquired for him by others no matter how intelligent they are. Man's liberation actually comes from the continued development and evolution of his ability that can enable him to think or reflect and question what goes on in his environment as opposed to total submission to authority and human exploitation.

Non-formal education also provides alternatives to complement or supplement the incompleteness or inadequacies of the formal educational system. Non-formal education further helps the learners to develop and practice self-help activities rather than mere theories. Research confirms that positive results from non-formal education (especially adult education) come as a result of practice of professional skills (Knowles. 1980; Freire, 1985; Freire and Macedo. 1987; etc). The acquisition and practice of skills boost the self-image self-reliance and confidence of the individual. This is very necessary especially for those who had dropped out from formal education or schooling.

The roles of Instructional Media in Non-formal Education

The application of instructional media in non-formal education is extremely essential for effectiveness. Besides helping students to comprehend, retain and recall concepts, principles or theories, instructional media also helps them to acquire professional skills which is the main core of the non-formal education. The use of instructional media increases flexibility in learning. For instance, learning programmes which are highly individualized and self-evaluated (such as programmed instruction) increase capacities for self-learning and also opportunities for inter-learning. According to Dave, et al.eds. (1982, p.314) "Technology also provides multiple learning opportunities through a variety of places at a variety of times". This according to him, helps to save cost in the long run.

The following are the examples of specific contribution of instructional materials or media to non-formal education.

a) Eradication of illiteracy

The use of instructional media in non-formal education reduces and or totally eradicates illiteracy when the participants are adequately and appropriately exposed. For instance, developed countries such as the U.S.A., U.K., etc.. where about 80-85 per cent is said to be the literate, it is largely due to their technological advancement which helps them to be able to make use of educational technology or instructional media such as television, satellite, slides, film strips, audio materials, etc. Actually, the use of instructional materials is the surest means of combating illiteracy especially at the rural level and for bridging the gap between the formal and non-formal learning.

b) Change in social and cultural biases

The application of instructional media in teaching has the potential of breaking social as well as cultural barriers. It is possible for a group of learners to detest certain people or some of their teachers on the ground that they are not from their locality. But most people especially fully illiterates and semi illiterates regard instructional materials such as the television, radio, films, etc as mere independent and innocent channels of information. As a result, some undesirable cultural habits and antisocial behaviors can be modified without necessarily hurting the people involved. Negative or wrong views about education can also be corrected with the utilization of instructional media.

c) Equal opportunities to education

The use of instructional materials will bridge the gap between the formal and non-formal systems of education. The use of instructional materials help learners whether rich or poor normal or handicapped, from rural or urban areas to be equally exposed to about the same learning experiences. This can be possible if the same instructional materials such as flip charts, posters, flash cards, television,

etc are used for education. Technological advancement has also made instructional materials accessible and has removed all limitations that could hamper this through mobility and portability. Instructional Media take technologically or scientifically based instruction experienced in formal system of education to non-formal system of education as well.

d. Individualized instruction

The application of instructional media provides enough varieties of resources which are capable of helping learners proceed according to their abilities, interest, speed and convenience, etc. This is particularly significant when considering the fact that non-formal education should be made relevant to the individual's aspirations, interest, convenience, abilities and timing. The individuals can learn at their own speed and ability while avoiding unnecessary rushing or speed that normally occur in formal education. It is further possible to do self-appraisal or assessment with the use of instructional materials such as programmed instruction, slides, teaching machines, etc. For instance, after teaching the primer, the learner can have further drilling with whatever instructional media is made available and to be able to assess his own mastery of what he is learning.

e. Scientifically based instruction

There is a tendency to want to believe that non-formal education does not have to be scientifically based. This is a great error that needs to be corrected. Since the success of the nation's literacy programme is anchored largely on how effective every facet of the nation's educational system including the non-formal system of education is, it is necessary to make non-formal education scientifically based through the use of instructional media. When this is done, learners will be more creative, innovative and generally successful in their learning.

f) Flexibility in learning

The use of instructional media makes learning programmes and strategies flexible in that they can be adapted to suit individual needs, capabilities, convenience, etc. Flexibility in learning is particularly important in non-formal education. All confinements, restrictions, and formalities experienced in the formal education may not work in non-formal education. Thus, flexibility, which is capable of making learners feel at home, while learning is made more desirable. Flexibility makes non-formal learning truly formal and this is desirable because of the learners' specific needs.

g) Mass education

Instructional materials such as films, television, radio and posters are effective means for mass literacy campaign. They help to bring proper awareness to the public on the importance of education, where and when they can attend literacy classes, etc. Many of the instructional materials can also be used to teach or give information to a large group, especially where there is shortage of instructors.

Instructional Media and acquisition of some specific skills

The acquisition of skills requires a step-by-step teaching, demonstrating and exposing the learners to such skills. Even though the learners are often taught Urdu language, the knowledge of many of the participants is not usually adequate to help them understand the instructions given on the procedures necessary for acquiring some skills. While it is desirable and unavoidable that learners are taught the basic rudiments of reading and writing, the use of instructional media provides an alternative or solution to learners who are not yet capable of handling the written instructions or procedures for acquiring a particular skill.

Utilization of Instructional Media in Non-formal Education

a) Instructional radio and television programmes

RADIO

The importance of radio in these days of education, technology can hardly be over-stressed. It is a powerful audio-aid. Pupils of remote places have been benefitted by radio lessons. Lectures by educationists are broadcast for imparting useful information. The concerned teachers must have beforehand information about such lesson programmes. (Bhatt,et. A1(2007, p.99).There are two types of radio broadcasts i.e. ordinary broadcast and educational broadcast.

Use of Radio in Teaching

- a) First of all, (ie teacher must gather information about radio lessons and study the same. This type of study includes time table and list of programmes.
- b) He should carefully plan on the basis of information collected earlier and by establishing its relevance for the subject to be taught.
- c) He should motivate the pupils mentally so that they learn to listen attentively.
- d) Physical conditions i.e. seating arrangement, light and air, silence, etc., should be well-organized.
- e) Follow-up should also be done after listening to the radio. Discussion should be held on the radio-lesson. Pupils should get opportunity to remove their doubts. They should take note's while listening to the broadcast lesson and thereafter they should get time to complete their notes. They should be asked not to put questions during the broadcast lesson. They should be instructed to note down all the questions they want to ask when the broadcast is over.rashid,m.(1993,pp.18-19)

Advantages of Radio

- (i) Radio gives opportunity for listening to lectures of famous educationists and thinkers which is otherwise not possible for each and every pupil and teacher.
- (ii) Radio broadcast helps the teacher in achievement of teaching objectives.
- (iii) They also provide entertainment in addition to serious learning.
- (iv) Radio is very helpful for remote areas where teaching facilities are not adequately available.
- (v) It is less costly and even common people can make use of it.
- (vi) The teacher also learns much about latest concepts and principles.
- (vii) In view of the increasing population, radio ^roadcasts have acquired much importance.

EDUCATIONAL TELEVISION

Through a television programme the audience not only hears but also sees an event taking place. Television is both audio and visual. It is a great improvement upon radio broadcast. It is fast becoming an integral part of school education; invention of television has brought a great revolution in the world of education. Today it is considered to be really an important means for effective education. It is a powerful medium of communication through auditory as well as visual channels. It helps the students to listen and directly see the lesson on the television screen ensuring teaching learning to be durable and everlasting. (Das, R.C. 1993, p.24)

Role of television in education

Use of television has fascinating and tremendous opportunities for the world of education. Television as an instructional tool, is being used in a variety of ways: for direct teaching, for supplementary or enriching the work of schools and colleges, for eradicating illiteracy, for adult education and teacher training etc. At

school level, different countries are using this powerful medium in different ways in solving their immediate problems. For instance Italy made use of it to meet lack of middle school facilities in rural areas by imparting complete course of instruction normally given in middle schools. In France television has been greatly utilized as part of a vast effort to modernize teaching techniques.

Rashid, M (2001, pp.207-8) has stated that:

- a) Television teaching provides greater equality of opportunities of receiving education for all pupils. We know education is the most important single factor in achieving rapid economic development and for creating a democratic order. Television acts as a mass medium of education and is really a very powerful tool to provide qualitative expansion of education at all levels.
- b) Television teaching creates initiative and inquisitiveness in students. Tele-lessons open a lot of avenues for the students for new creative activities by encouraging model making, experimenting with home made apparatus and becoming keen observers.
- c) The impact of television on teachers is in no way less. It is evident that tele-lessons put greater demands upon teacher's time because they have to make intensive preparations for these lessons. Naturally this pressure for better preparation will result in better classroom teaching. Thus television is of great help in professional in developing a teacher's capacities.
- d) Through television, the whole teaching process is undergoing a change for the better. Teachers are giving more thought to what topics needed to be included in the syllabus. Television programmes prove helpful in upgrading the curriculum and enriching the educational programme more easily and economically. Students are learning better with television.
- e) Television can display the world of reality and students can see a host of other things in the classroom through its screen which serves to widen the horizons of children, something that is not within the reach of a common student.
- f) Television as a medium of education has helped in making school a centre for

community welfare and education.

- g) Television can help the teachers and the students in the realization of various teaching and learning objectives, its use has improved attendance in high schools. In two shift schools, in view of less time at the disposal of teachers, television helps in completing the prescribed course in time. As an educational device it has helped in overcoming problems of shortage of good teachers, classrooms, audio and visual aids and other resources.
- h) Television can serve as a vehicle of excellence to the students. They can view and hear about the works and thoughts of eminent educationists, renowned teachers and scholars, creative scientists and excellent musicians and artists. Various discussions, which are shown on television, are based on the latest researches and innovations, and by listening to these and by seeing these experts on the television screen students and teachers get due inspiration and motivation and enrich their knowledge. By viewing the visit to Pakistan of foreign Presidents and other dignitaries and foreign visits of our national leaders and their welcome in foreign countries, children feel excited and it gives them the feeling as if they are also visiting foreign countries with their national leaders.
- i) Television has played perhaps the greatest role in promoting international understanding. Recently all over the world a great emphasis has been laid on education in international understanding.
- j) The usefulness of television for social education cannot be under estimated. Various programmes covering topics like traffic and road sense, community health, adulteration in food, child marriage, good manners, encroachment of public property relating to social education can be put out for the welfare of the people. Experience shows that television teaching has greatly spread social education in underdeveloped countries having high illiteracy rates.
- k) Television is a very useful device and not a means of luxury. Things that are

listened are not as effective as the things seen by one's own eyes. The younger generation feels more impressed by seeing a person on T.V. The main reason for the popularity of dramas and films is due to their hold on growing minds.

- l) With the help of television celebration of various national days, for example independence Day, birthday of Quaid-i-Azam, Pakistan Day, Army parade, Eids, Muharram etc, can be shown. Thus television helps in inculcating in students feelings of nationalism, patriotism and brotherhood.
- m) With the help of television, the students can be made aware of the progress and events of the nation and of foreign countries. While in school they can see the events taking place in any part of the world. They can also know about the educational system and structure of different countries.
- n) Television's contribution in the field of sports too is appreciable. Telecast of various games and matches of cricket, hockey, badminton, table tennis, etc, which are played the world over, created interest among children for games and sports. It also motivates children to participate in sporting activities;
- o) Television teaching can contribute a great deal in promoting general education like art, humanities, science, music, agriculture languages, health education, yoga, home administration, etc. These' programmes help children in learning about the modern techniques used in above mentioned disciplines. These programmes will develop basic skills and stimulate the students' interest in a variety of subjects. Such programmes can also introduce the students to Pakistan crafts and rich cultural background, the meaning of citizenship and the interpretation of current affairs.

Consequently, we can say that television holds vast opportunities and great potentialities for the world of education.

RECORD PLAYERS

The oldest form of record player was the hand operated gramophones. It played discs. The electric version was used to play discs which taught correct pronunciation of languages called lingua phone records. English teachers of good schools still use these records in their day-to-day teaching. At times, records are also available about sound effects.

Teachers can use these records in various teaching learning situations. Records of speeches of leaders can be well integrated with classroom teaching activities.

TAPE RECORDER

This equipment records sound. It has three parts: -

- a) Implement for sound input called microphone.
- b) Amplifier
- c) Reproducer.

There are two main functions of this equipment. Recording and reproducing. An ordinary person can operate it. There are clear-cut instructions on every button of all the tape recorders regarding its operation. For example, the word 'Play' is written on the button meant for starting the operation of the tape recorder. In the same way 'stop' is written on the button required for halting the recorder.

According to Romiszowski, A.J. (1974, p.163). Tape recorder is useful for imparting training of music, language, drama, etc. It can also be used to correct defects of speech and pronunciation. It is also useful in microteaching, reinforcement of general teaching and its evaluation, in preparing commentary with film slides. Lectures for educational importance and other programmes can also be recorded and reproduced at any time.

VIDEO CASSETTE RECORDER

Audio-video technology has emerged as an important tool in imparting

knowledge for a distance learner. Unlike traditional student, the distance learner need not travel to school or college. The audio-video cassettes can be played and replayed at his own will. He can stop a particular tape at a point where more details are necessary and can play on slow motion to understand a difficult point. He need not get up early in the morning or late in the night for radio and TV broadcasts. Audio-video cassettes produced for each course by AIOU are kept at Model Study Centres and Regional Offices established all over the country.

Potential exists for providing the basis for learning a wide range of motor, intellectual and cognitive and interpersonal skills, as well as affective aspects. These are important aspects which printed materials cannot deal with adequately.

In some countries as a way of regionalizing a centrally produced programme, video cassette programmes are being built round the study centre concept, a location where several video machines are available to which students bring their study notes. The students run the programmes as individuals. Sometimes study centre provides for groups sessions during which videocassettes are played. (Samanta, R.K. 1991, p.37)

In other countries some institutions assume that students can gain access to such equipment and make programmes which will be used on an individual basis as either supplementary learning material or integral to the teaching programme.

VIDEO DISCS

Video text involves the transmission of display text and graphics and their reception to an adopted television set. A videotext system would be useful in disseminating general information about course and programme available through distance education.

However, videotext system can be useful in distribution of texts and diagrams to accompany educational broadcast and the teletext to distribute

computer programmes. (Rashid, M, (2001, p.311).

The disadvantages of videodiscs are: (i) the high cost of producing the master laser disc (this is in addition to producing a videotape master): (ii) the high cost of players; and (iii) the fact that it is a 'play only device that cannot record.

While a great deal of research and money have gone into videotex in equipment and software development it is fair to say that as yet it is in its infancy. (Rashid, M. 1998, p.109)

LANGUAGE LABORATORY

The purpose of the language laboratory is to develop listening and speaking skills in foreign languages. The system employs individual study carrels (booths) and the use of audiotape equipment and headphones in combination with other materials. For reasons of convenience, these facilities are housed in one place, as opposed to being portable or mobile. The maintenance of the complicated electronic components is a highly skilled job, requiring an appropriately skilled staff.

Printed Media

Printed materials are instructions or information written down for the benefit of the learner or reader. They are various types but the ones specifically recommended for non-formal education are as pointed out by Lalit Kishore (1989, p.101)

- (i) Books-printed books such as the primer and other available texts
- (ii) Newspapers, magazines, journals or periodicals. These are educative and have been used to reach the neo-literates or semi literates in particular.
- (iii) Generally, textbooks are not easy to come by these days because of their exorbitant cost. Besides, illiterates place little or no value on the purchase of textbooks.
- (iv) Handouts/handbills - even though these are not widely used for non-formal education, there is a need to use handouts to teach.

Integration of Instructional Media into Non-formal Education System

It is very imperative to fully integrate instructional media into the non-formal educational system, especially considering the above-mentioned roles instructional media have been playing and can play in making teaching more effective even in non-formal education. There are possible hurdles, as listed below that needed to be removed before full integration can be achieved.

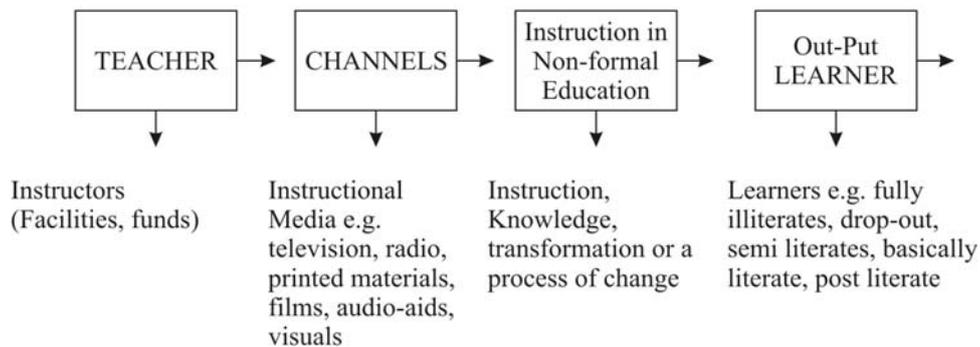
- 1) Ignorance and lack of knowledge in the design, production and utilization of instructional media
- 2) Assumption by instructors that learners can assimilate fully without employing all the senses in the process of learning
- 3) Technological backwardness and insensitivity. such as failure to follow technological advancement or computer based instructions like other nations
- 4) Lack of conscious efforts by instructors to integrate instructional media into their instruction
- 5) Non-availability of funds
- 6) Lack of expertise to assist instructors where possible
- 7) Lack of innovation and creativity on the part of the instructors
- 8) Non availability of basic instructional materials to be provided by the government
- 9) Lack of incentives and proper remuneration by the various forms of government

Despite all the problems enumerated above, the teachers of non-formal education should have been convinced by now that they will be more effective when they consciously design, produce and utilize instructional media while teaching.

A step towards aiding the instructors or teachers in integrating instructional media into the non-formal education system is summarized in the

table below:

Table I
Integration of Instructional Media into the
Non-formal Education system



The table represents an approach through which instructional media can be integrated into the non-formal education system. The instructor, (with adequate facilities and funds) is the traditional transmitter of knowledge. If the teacher must succeed, the transition, instruction or information should go through appropriate channels such as television, radio, films, books, etc. This results in an effective or functional education that gives the learner the necessary knowledge or instruction that brings a desirable change or transformation.

The more appropriate and adequate the channel (or instructional media) for transmitting information, the more effective the learning is likely to be. The channel enables the teacher to concretely establish a dialogue with the learner. This sharpens the ability of the learner to assimilate and comprehend the information given, and to analyze and interpret the information in terms of the learners' social, environmental or societal dispositions. The integration of instructional media is not only desirable in the formal education as always heralded by educators but much more desirable for non-formal education, considering the caliber of learners.

CONCLUSION

Instructional media is a channel through which instructors or teachers in non-formal education can make their instruction more scientifically based and more effective. It is capable of increasing the effectiveness of their communication skills and hence resulting an effective teaching and learning process. The need to improve the effectiveness of non-formal education has been the emphasis in this paper. Pakistan is currently passing through an important stage of her educational development, a stage in which one can safely conclude that the nation's formal educational system is inadequate. This stage is also witnessing a rather increasing rate of children's dropout from the formal educational systems. More and more adults are withdrawing from formal education into business and professional skills because of dissatisfaction and the craze for wealth. All these (inexhaustible) reasons place a strong force behind the need for integrating instructional media into the non-formal educational system which, in turn, will make non-formal education more effective. To achieve this a deliberate plan to design, produce, utilize and integrate instructional media in the learning and teaching processes should be employed.

Finally, according to Quane (1989, p.32), since it is not conclusive that education can be acquired only through the formal system of education, but also through non-formal education, informal learning opportunities should be provided through instructional media, both modern and traditional, so that the total learning continuum is integrated into the learners' social and vocational domains of life. Non-formal education programmes embody a great richness of experience corresponding at least partially to the idea of basic education. Thus, the emphasis in this paper is that non-formal education can be made as effective as the formal system of education, if the media used in teaching can be as scientifically oriented as those used in formal education.

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