Chapter 8

Potentials of Indigenous Media Campaign Against HIV/AIDS

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ABSTRACT

HIV/AIDS has become a challenge to every society all over the world. The indigenous media could serve as channels through which information dissemination about knowledge; prevention and treatment are used as weapons to curtail its devastating effect. Despite the advancement in media technologies, information about HIV/AIDS is still limited in the rural areas, as they seemed marginalized because of their socio-economic status as well as their literacy level. Therefore, this chapter examines how the grassroot media can be utilized effectively to reach the indigenous people in a way that their cultural values will reflect in all media campaign against HIV/AIDS. It was observed that health messages about HIV/AIDS could be disseminated effectively using the various indigenous media. Health message designers are therefore implored to take advantage of these indigenous media to generate local contents which could consequently be disseminated through the mediums of radio and television for wider reach.

INTRODUCTION

Information plays an important role in addressing social problems through various mass media such as radio, television, magazines, books, newspapers, billboards and internet. These media have been proven to be effective in disseminating health messages that are beneficial to the sustenance and development of every society.

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These media are commonly relied on in the urban area for information transmission while indigenous media are common in the rural area. The indigenous media are the type of media that belong to the people. There unique feature is that they are entrenched in the culture of the people within the community where it is domiciled. Indigenous media could be described as the media that are locally owned and operated and regularly producing contents in the local language. According to Edet, Akpan & Isaac (2015) indigenous media can be used interchangeably with folk media, oramedia, traditional media, local media and informal media. Indigenous media are seen to be effective because they bring information closer to the people and messages are mostly in their local language. Before the advent of media technologies, people disseminate information using the folk media. The folk media is as old as language because it constituted part of the entertainment segment enjoyed by the people who own it. Examples of folk media utilized for information, entertainment and behaviour change are puppet shows, folk drama, storytelling, proverb, visual arts, concerts, gong beating, dirges, and songs, drumming and dancing (Edet, I., Akpan, B., & Isaac, O. (2015). However, the advancement in technology has in a way replaced some of the examples of the folk media associated with indigenous media. Radio, television, newspapers, magazines, books, billboards have taken over the functions that are hitherto performed by the folk media.

These various media are employed to perform specific functions among which are to sensitize, create awareness, inform, educate, entertain, social mobilization, persuade, dissuade, warn, and so on, in order to bring about positive change in behaviour against a social problem of which HIV/AIDS is one. This change in behaviour is important in response to the growing HIV and AIDS epidemic in Nigeria. According to The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) (2017) report, Nigeria is the second largest country with HIV epidemic with 3.1 million living with HIV infection. The campaign against the prevention of HIV and AIDS have been on for over three decades, despite this, it is estimated that around two-thirds of new HIV infections in West and Central Africa in 2017 occurred in Nigeria (UNAIDS, 2017).

As part of the growing concern on the rate of new infections and deaths recorded annually, various bodies are involved in the campaign against this growing menace like the Government, Non-governmental organizations and the media. These bodies are saddled with the responsibility to sensitize the society about the dangers and to increase the quality of life of infected persons with the use of anti-retroviral drugs. However, since the effort to get a cure for HIV is almost impossible, one of the many ways by which the HIV and AIDS pandemic can be reduced especially in the rural areas is through the indigenous media. Therefore, this chapter is interested in the potentials of the indigenous media in the control of HIV and AIDS.
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