

ANALYZING THE ROLE OF NEW MEDIA IN ERADICATING ILLITERACY IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

In today's modern world, the quality of information we acquire immensely determines all our choices and activities that we indulge in including our capacity to enjoy fundamental freedoms and the ability for self-determination and development. Spearheaded by technological developments in information technology and telecommunications, there is a proliferation of media and other information providers through which vast amounts of information and knowledge are accessed and shared by citizens.

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers." . In order for these provisions to generate transformative change the critical requirement of information literacy has to be addressed. However, Africa has for many years grappled with the scourge of illiteracy. Political oppression, civil strife, economic exploitation, corruption, poor governance, disease epidemics, and widespread poverty have greatly played part in the low levels of literacy in Africa. This places a significant constraint on effective participation in societal progress and economic growth by most of the region's rapidly growing population. The advent of new media has seen remarkable strides in the education sector. New Media is increasingly important as a source of information, a forum for deliberation and a channel of unlimited access to knowledge. The following excerpt will look at how new media has broadened the access to information and help alleviate the scourge of illiteracy. The researcher intends to employ the Uses and Gratifications theory that attempts to explain the uses and functions of the media in the society. The study will be based in Nakuru County and will attempt to explain how the society uses new media in its quest for knowledge and information.