

THE ROLE OF ADULT EDUCATION IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

The right to education is recognized by most state constitution and national laws and is inherent in the right to education and is reflected in the various international declaration and treaties, these include the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights of children,, woman, minorities, indigents, indigenous people with disabilities also have proclaimed the right to education of the target group of these international laws. Education is the bedrock of individual and national development. It is a process whereby skills, knowledge, values, norms and culture are transmitted from generation to generation for the sustenance of the society.

Okafor (1992) define education as the process of acculturation through which the individual is helped to attain the maximum of his potentials towards nation building. Jarvis (1990) view education as any planned series of incidents having a humanistic basis, directed towards the participants learning and understanding. Education as seen from the above views equips both men and women with the necessary knowledge and skills required for the growth and development of the empowering women with the knowledge and skills they require for effective adjustment and functioning in the society. Education is what makes individuals to function and be relevant not only to themselves but to their society irrespective of place, time and circumstance and empowerment. Thus, the importance of functional education including adult education in any society cannot be overemphasized.

Adult education is any form of education (formal, informal or non-formal) given to adults based on their felt social, economic, political and cultural needs to enable them adjust fully to life challenges (Nzeneri, 2008). Adult education is one of the fields of academic endeavour that is saddled with the responsibility of solving soci-economic, cultural, political and environmental problems. Adult education occupies a pivotal position in the societal scheme of affairs. It centers on individual, group and societal needs, interest and aspirations. These educational needs and purpose border on the area of liberating people from ignorance, restraints, poverty, malnutrition, poor health, towards improvement of self and others. There is positive association between adult education programmes and increased levels of self-esteem and high levels of knowledge and skills which thereby

encourage positive and active engagement of people in their own development (Umar, Eshak, Bichi, & Aujara, 2010).

The purpose of adult education is to encourage the development of three things in each citizen: an enquiring mind, an ability to learn from what others do, and basic confidence in one's own position as a free and equal member of a society who values others and is valued by them what he does and not what he obtains (Nyerere, 1973). The goal of human development is to improve the well-being and condition of life of the people. Human development is all about enlarging freedoms so that all human beings can pursue choice that they value.

Such freedoms have two fundamental aspects-----freedom of well-being, represented by functioning and capabilities, and freedom of agency, represented by voice and autonomy. Human development is a process enlarging people choice. But human development is also objective, so it is both a process and outcome. Human development implies that people must influence the processes that shape their lives in all this; economic growth is an important means to human development, but not the end. Human development is the development of the people through building human capabilities, by the people through active participation in the process that shape their lives and for the people by improving their lives.

According to Obidiegwu and Obiozor (2014) the idea of human development is predicated on the premise that human life can be enhanced by improving people's choice and freedom. It places people at the centre of development and is concerned with eliminating barriers, constraints or impediments that leave people with limited choices, freedom and opportunities. It emphasizes the importance of investing in people in order to ensure sustainable and viable outcome. Human development recognizes that people are the wealth and builder of every nation. It put people at the centre of development and emphasizes that for sustainable development to be achieved, potentials of people must be developed without constraints, and lives of individuals fulfilled without barrier or limitation. It sees people as an input and beneficiary in the development process Obidiegwu and Obiozor (2014).

Measure of America (2013) defined human development as the process of enlarging people's freedom and opportunities and improving their well-being. Human development is about the real freedom ordinary people have to decide who to be, what to do, how to live. Human development gives people the opportunity to choose and

pursue those things they value because of preference rather than lack of opportunities. It concerns with widening the freedom, choice and opportunities of not the only the present generation but also the future generation for more sustainable development. This is necessary so that the national wealth is preserved and exhaustion prevented in the interest of the future generation Obidiegwu and Obiozor (2014). What this implies, is that the people must influence and be part of the processes that shape their lives.

The basic tenet of development is to increase people choice and opportunities that why according to Haq as cited in About Human Development (2013); The basic purpose of development is to enlarge people's choices. In principle, this choice can be infinite and can change over time. People often value achievement that does not show up at all, or not immediately, in income, or growth figures; greater access to knowledge better nutrition and health service, or secure livelihoods, security against crime and physical violence, satisfying leisure hours, political and cultural freedoms and sense of participation in community activities. The objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. These means that human development encompasses more than growth in the national income, but human development is concerned with increasing and enlarging people choices as it relates to their state of health, level of knowledge, skills and accessibility to resources needed by them to afford a decent standard of living and total well-being.

The Concept of Adult Education

The concept of adult education is difficult to define because people define it from different perspectives. However, scholars agreed that it is an education that has adult as its clientele. This brings us to another concept of who is an adult? Different parameters used in defining an adulthood amongst which are Biological, Chronological, Historical, Psychological, Economical, Political and Social amongst others. Nzeneri (2002) define an adult as one who is physically and psychologically matured and is socially, economically and politically responsible. According to Adesanya (2002) the term adult is difficult to define because it varies from one society to another and has changed over time. The boundaries that determine who is considered an adult can depend on action (i.e legal age to fight war, drive a car and vote amongst others), activities (ie, age that one can begin to work) and /or responsibilities (i.e, marriage age, age to beginning supporting family). UNESCO (1976) gives a recommendation of who an adult is: it is a person regarded by the as such the society to which he/she belongs.

An article in the CONFINTEA V document on adult education denotes the entire body of ongoing learning processes, formal or otherwise where by people regard as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their direction to meet their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in new direction to meet their own needs and those of their society (UNESCO, 2009.)

Unesco (1976) cited in Nzeneri (2010) define adult education as: The entire body of organized educational process, whatever the content, level and method, formal or otherwise whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges, universities as well as in apprenticeship, where by persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualification and bring about changes in their attitude or behavior in the two fold perspectives of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development. The above definition is encompassing in that it has not only define adult education, but has gone to the extent of talking about its scope and content. Adult education is usually referred to any form of learning undertaken by or provided for mature men and women outside the formal schooling system (Seya, 2005). The main targets are specifically defined as youths (girls and boys over 15 years of age, but sometimes younger) as well as women and men, generally poor or socially disadvantaged.

According to Seya (2005) adult education is seen as a transmission of process of general, technical or vocational knowledge as well as skills, values and attitudes, which takes place out of the formal education system with a view of remedying early education inadequate of mature people or equipping them with knowledge and cultural elements required for their self-fulfillment and active participation in the social, economic and political life of their societies. Adult education deals with adult human materials and it gives joy, fascination and enthusiasm. However, working with adults' education established confidence and impressions which allows the learners to realize their dreams. The fact that formal schooling is an unquestionable priority in the education sector does not justify adult education being left out. To make children compete with their parents in the education process is dangerous as it may create a break between two entities that are mutually dependent. A child's schooling performance is largely determined by the level of education of his or her parents. As long as poverty remains a distinctive feature in Nigeria, adult education will impose itself as an unavoidable ingredient of development process (Seya, 2005).

The Challenges of Adult Education

The following are the major challenges facing adult education delivery in Nigeria according to policy issues and practice (2010)

1. Failure of the UBE act to give adequate recognition to Adult and Non-Formal
2. Accessibility in the world of rapid change, adult education should be established at the door steps of the interested adult learners so as to avail the opportunity for learning. However, all citizens should have the opportunity to develop themselves throughout their life at whatever age, to acquire knowledge and know-how to better pilot their life transition, to improve their quality of life, to develop their potential, to experience the joy of learning. In that perspective, no area should be let in that context; the rise of fees to attend evening courses is becoming a huge issue all over the country.
3. Inadequate funding: the budgetary allocation to adult education at all level s of government is grossly inadequate especially when compared to the formal education sector. More importantly Non-Formal Education is excluded in the share of two percent Consolidated Fund meant for Basic Education in spite of policy provision. However, it is noted that there is problem of accountability and transparency in management of funds allocated to Non-formal education sectors.
4. Lack of mobilization: many interesting learners are not aware of the existence of the adult education centres and even the programme they are supposed to enroll. This affects seriously efforts to achieve Education for All. Even there are some philanthropists who are willing to contribute their own quota but to lack of advocacy and mobilization they cannot do so.
5. Lack or inadequate numbers of literacy instructors or personnel who poses Information and Communication Technology skills is a serious challenge to Nigeria's desire of becoming a key player in the information age. Lack of personnel with information and Communication Technology for Non-formal Education delivery in country.
6. There is the dearth of skilled manpower in the area of monitoring and evaluation. Lack of trained monitoring and evaluation personnel in the Non-formal education sector is a serious problem to the development of the sector since monitoring is a sine qua non to a successful adult and Non-formal education programmes. It involves the management of a large database. Monitoring is vital ingredient for successful implementation of NFE as such it should be integrated in the programme action plan. Adequate funds are not provided and required information about the status of the programme is not available. Due to lack of

proper monitoring and evaluation in the Non-formal education has resulted in variations in the types of programmes available and offered across the states of the federation.

7. Poor remuneration of facilitators: most states and local Government Areas do not pay the facilitators regularly; the 7500 naira stipend in the benchmark meant for the remuneration of the facilitators cannot be paid by almost all the states. In some even facilitators are not being paid for so many months.
8. Inadequate numbers of qualified facilitators: appointment of non-professional and untrained facilitators who do not understand the use of andragogical techniques, primary school teachers and even school certificate holders are usually appointed as facilitators. \According to NMEC(2008) Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) should be the minimum teaching qualification in compliance with the provision of National Policy on Education to ensures the quality delivery in Adult and Non-Formal Education . Statistics revealed that there are still Grade II teachers and even less qualified personnel teaching in the Non-Formal Education centres and are not fully trained in the andragogical methods.
9. Poor record keeping: there is a problem of record keeping in NFE. This has seriously affected the database needed for adequate planning and implementation of Non-Formal Education intervention programmes. This also affects the tracking of learner's performance and transition from one level to the other.
10. Poor attitude of the target group: yearly statistics of NMEC have shown that most of the targeted groups have not really embraced the NFE programme. It is on record that an average of 1.7 million learners out of over 44 million projected learners had only embraced the programme.
11. There should be proper mobilization of all stakeholders to come and embrace adult education programmes so as to achieve the desired results.

Suggested Solutions to the Problems

In view of the foregoing suggestions are made.

1. The Universal Basic Education act should be reviewed to accommodate Adult and Non-formal education as this would bring about the much-desired changes in Adult and Non-formal education practice in Nigeria.
2. Establishment of more centres of adult education in the country should be embarked upon so that everybody will have easy access to education and thus become more functional on the job performance and makes them affordable to all interesting adult learners or in some programmes like the Basic and Post

- Literacy programmes to free at all the states of the Federation and the programmes should be based on the learners' needs and aspirations.
3. Upward review of Facilitators' remuneration (allowance): payment of facilitators should be accordance with the minimum benchmark as set by the Non-Formal Education blue print that facilitators should be paid minimum wage as their remuneration or allowance.
 4. Recruitment of adequate and qualified facilitators: persons with Nigeria Certificate in Education and specialization in adult education should be employed as facilitators in the Non-Formal Education centres.
 5. There should be intensified and sustained advocacy, sensitization and mobilization of all stake holders to come and support Adult and Non-Formal Education in the country.
 6. More capacity building programmes (pre-service, in-service and on-the-job-training for Adult and Non-Formal Education personnel at all levels should be put in place. Effective programming and implementation would require appropriately qualified personnel with definite schedules of duty.
 7. Employment of adequate number of staff at all levels to meet the ever increasing demand of Adult and Non-Formal Education in the country. Adult and Non-Formal Education should be staffed with people with proven abilities so as to strengthened the system and helps in the development of Adult and Non- Formal Education in the country.
 8. Regular and effective monitoring of programmes at all levels. It is essential to train and re-train manpower to manage Monitoring and Evaluation activities in the Non-Formal Education. There should be capacity building for monitoring and evaluation of officers through short, medium, and long-term training programmes, workshops, conferences amongst others.

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Relationship between Human Development and Adult Education

According to Obidiegwu and Obiozor (2014) Adult education can be explain in a narrow and a wider sense. In a narrow sense, it can be seen as a discipline, a course or an area of study which can take place in a community or literacy centre, school, college or university, which one goes through in order to acquire some knowledge, skills attitude within a stipulated period of time (foundation for lifelong learning) necessary for employment but not enough for continuous adaptation and fulfillment in life.

In a wider sense adult education can be seen as a continuous process for acquisition of wide-range of experiences in and out-of-school in all facets of life, a process of continuing inquiry and continuing acquisitions of skill, knowledge and competences essential for necessary adaptation in the life and improvement of one's standard and quality of life for the whole improvement of one's standard and quality of life for the whole lifespan. This definition shows clearly that adult education is a lifelong process (coterminous with life) which embraced formal, informal and non-formal processes, necessary for continuous enhancement of the capabilities of individuals for self-fulfillment through life (Obidiegwu and Obiozor (2014).

The 21st century is a time of unprecedented change and requires that people are continuously reformed and equipped to deal with the challenges of time. The century demands that society translate from the education system they have, to the one that they truly need. It demands that people are helped to develop love for learning and requires people to become lifelong learners and in order to cope with the requirements of the rapidly changing society.

Adult education provides flexibility in learning which is needed for the acquisition of the skill required for the 21st century by using different methods, techniques, approaches and strategies as suitable to different target groups. Through its various programmes, such as remedial, recurrent and distance education, it provides access to continuing learning and development of capabilities which are not time and place bound.

The core value of human development are long, useful and health life, access to knowledge, skill and decent standard of living. Adult education is seen as the essential ingredient that enhances the achievement of these values by all groups and ages without any limitation throughout adult education programmes enable people to grapple with

the enormous global challenges of the 21st century. Adult education recognized that for sustainable development to be achieved, education should not be seen as a knowledge fountain which can supply an individual with all the quantity and quality of knowledge valid for the whole lifespan (Richmond, 1979). Faure et al.(1972) rightly noted that the fundamental aims of education is the physical , intellectual, emotional and ethical integration into a complete man. This cannot be achieved through any type of education that last for a period of time except adult and non-formal education.

Adult education is geared toward providing variety of continuing education opportunities which equip learners with essential competencies necessary to improve their lives as individuals, as well as community members. It offers more freedom and choices for individuals to develop their capabilities.

According to Obiozor and Obidiegwu (2013), this means that An individual has a choice to the programme of adult education that will solve his immediate, pressing and life problems and also be able to fit study around work, social and family commitments for better adaptation, participation in issues affecting one's life and continuing education throughout life. With adult education, there is no barrier to education because most of the programmes are economical and flexible. They are also learners -centered, practical and participatory. It gives opportunity for autonomy and self-directedness in learning (p.71).

Furthermore, Obidiegwu (2013) Adult education is used to mobilize men and women to enable them understand development constraints such as poverty, ignorance, diseases and exploitation. It is used to give a great number of people access to education from which they had previously been excluded by the formal system, this results in increased participation in development processes, improved living conditions and quality of life. (P.20). It is fundamental aspect of the right to education which facilitates the exercise of the right to participate in the global economic, political, cultural, artistic and scientific life. It expands horizons and bridges the gap between generations. It helps people to be the best they can be, have higher self-esteem and stronger feeling of confidence throughout life (p. 22).

The idea by Obidiegwu is that adult education programmes if adequately implemented are the panacea to meeting the global challenges of the century and achieving sustainable human development. Adult education programmes enable an individual to pursue various life parts and build his or her capabilities in different areas of his or her interest. By so doing, he or she is exposed to enlarge choice and opportunities which enable him

or her to build a worthy destiny, long, useful and healthy life, and access to resources and social services needed for a decent standard of living. Sustainable human development for all groups in any population is therefore, tied to continuous development of human capabilities by developing the whole man through adult education programmes in the 21st century.

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