

## **Post-Literacy Programmes: A Strategy for Sensitizing Adult Learners towards Adult Education**

**Victoria Afoma Ifeanacho & Nwabugwu Sybil Ndubuaku**

### **Abstract**

The consequence of irrelevant education is the increase number of unemployed and unemployable adults and youths roaming about in search of non-existent jobs. The problem of people roaming about unemployed and poverty stricken is as a result of illiteracy and being unskilled. The type of education to the people should be one needed for self and immediate community development and the nation as a whole. Adult literacy and post-literacy education programmes target adults and youth-illiterates, semi-literates and the unskilled to train them in occupation-oriented skills. These programmes are aimed at helping the target audience to extract themselves from conditions causing ignorance, poverty, hunger, social crisis, illness and premature deaths through access to knowledge and information.

**Keywords:** Adult Education, Post-literacy, Learning

### **Introduction**

Education is a fundamental human right enshrined in all major national and international agenda. The development of the mind is vital for the survival of mankind. This development is effected through the process of education. The foundation on which a nation is built is the education of its people (Eboiyihu, 2001).

Education is a process by which people are prepared to live effectively and efficiently in their own environment. Before the colonial era, every community has ways of training their children and youths to become useful in their communities. The traditional and system of education has no room for unemployment because it is aimed at acquisition of skills, abilities, attitudes and behavior patterns necessary and desirable for effective life in the society. The western form of education of 19<sup>th</sup> century emphasized 3Rs – reading, writing and arithmetic. This helped them to train interpreters and clerks who assisted them to carry out their missions and businesses. Then this western education later led us to the quest for white-collar jobs. As the population of our country grew rapidly and out-number employment opportunities, unemployment sets in. Some people who were educated did not acquire the necessary skills needed in our society and thereby remain unemployable. Therefore the need for alternative education based on self-

development in necessary skill acquisition for economic, social, and political empowerment brought about Adult Education.

### **What is Adult Education?**

This is the type of education programme undertaken by matured men, women and youths outside the formal schooling system to acquire functional skills. The notion of adult education is often used interchangeably with other notions such as adult literacy, adult basic education, lifelong learning, continuing education etc. Adult education in its ramifications accommodates all forms of education – formal, non-formal and informal. It is for self and national development, for cultural awareness and integration, for conscientization and group dynamism (Nzeneri, 2010).

Adult education has two major phases thus: basic literacy and post-literacy programmes. Basic literacy programme avails the illiterates the opportunity to learn how to read and write, while post-literacy helps them to perfect the work of basic literacy by upgrading the acquired skills and make them functional. Adult education emphasizes functional skills for immediate usage. It is also a voluntary quest for acquisition of knowledge and skills in line with the dynamic world. Adults and youths needing assistance with reading, writing, numeracy, English Language skills or computer and internet skills can turn to a range of adult education providers, including school system, community colleges, business centres, faith-based organizations, volunteer organizations. Some programmes can be funded by the federal or state governments while some are by Non-governmental organizations as well as corporate bodies.

Adult education is meant for youths and adults (stark illiterates, semi-literates and literates); and their programme ranges from basic literacy, remedial, continuing and lifelong education. Continuing education is for the semi-literates who have attained certain level of literacy but wants to remedy their educational inadequacies for self-fulfilment and active participation in the social, economic and political life of their societies. Then lifelong education is not limited to adult basic education but for literate adults who have special needs to upgrade their occupational and professional skills for purposes of innovation. It avails people opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills through one's life span (Ai, 2010).

In this era of scarce job opportunities, one can engage in lifelong learning to become professional in several fields for self-employment or being marketable in diverse areas of job. Pre-retirement trainers emphasizes on lifelong learning for potential retirees to help them in the transition from

*Ifeanacho & Ndubuaku*      *Post-Literacy Programmes: A Strategy for Sensitizing Adult Learners ...*  
employee to self-reliant. The researchers intend to X-ray the activities of post-literacy programme and its impact to the adult learners.

### **Post-Literacy Programmes**

These are supplementary measures for consolidation of the knowledge of the neo-literates as a safeguard against regression into illiteracy. Post-literacy can mean anything taken up after the literacy phase but in practice, it is continuation of the literacy phase of adult education. Clement (1985) in Ndubuaku (2007) described post-literacy as the third stage in an educational continuum. This on its own helps to sustain literacy skill so that the beneficiaries remain literate. Herbert (1996) in Ndubuaku (2009), stated that there are many theories about literacy and approaches to its implementation, but there is not enough interest on how to sustain it so that those who become literate continue to be literate and build on the skills learnt. Indeed, post-literacy activities are designed to sustain interest of the beneficiaries in the literacy programme and to enable them build on the skill learnt. It is provided for adult literacy participants in order to attain permanent literacy and learn occupational or professional skills (Akinde, 1999). The policy objectives of the Nigerian government regarding post-literacy education as stated in the National Policy on Education (2004) are as follows:

1. To provide functional follow-up programmes to literacy.
  2. To accredited education equivalent to primary education.
- Two other phases followed as post-literacy education include:
1. Vocational and technical education for adults.
  2. Accredited education equivalent to secondary school.
  3. Lifelong education for on-the-job or in-service training.

The overriding objective of adult education is the structuring of social processes for the purpose of addressing the myriads of social issues and concerns which have emerged as a result of changed and changing circumstances. Changes in the life situations of people in the economic, social, cultural and political spheres are presenting a number of challenges and opportunities to adult educators. As a change agent, adult educators from time to time change in a number of ways; including perception, methods, modes of operation and organizational culture, humanizing and empowering interactions. Changes in the “rules of engagement” with the so-called beneficiaries, partners are desirable in the context of people-centred development and sustainable partners. To learn is to change and learning at any level brings about change at individual/personal, organizational, structural and environmental levels. Individuals or organizations which refuse to learn periodically must be living in the past.

Adult Education and Development, <http://www.iiz-dvv-de/index.php?article-id=469&clang=1>.

### **Post-Literacy Programme as a Strategy for sensitizing Adult Learners towards adult Education**

This programme targets on economic, educational, social, political, religious, agricultural and health reforms. It helps the neo-literates to be educated and equipped with life skills that may not be transmitted through formal schooling. Life skills involves technical and manual that are required to secure gainful employment, enable people to feed their families, keep them healthy, protect them from illness and promote peaceful co-existence.

Post-literacy programme in its context provides solutions to problem situations facing our country Nigeria. Some of the problems include unemployment, exorbitant health services and poor healthy living practices, multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual. To impart intercultural skills, farmers need knowledge on how to profitably produce and market their products, religious organizations need this level literacy education to checkmate moral decadence, citizenship education is required to address issues of human right, individual and communal clashes; gender education is needed to reduce cases of gender discriminations. One can through post-literacy programmes become professional in different fields of occupation; hence versatile professional. Therefore post-literacy programme is indispensable tool for us in this dynamic world where job mobility is permissible (Obiozor & Obidiegwu, 2013).

The adult and non-formal education strategy has been developed through intensive and consultative processes in order to respond to the strength, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis and recommendations of the status. Report on Adult and Non-formal Education (2002). Post-literacy programmes helps to x-ray the status of the adult learners on the former literacy programme which will serve as a starting point for a new level of programme. It is observed that living in Nigeria is becoming more and more difficult not because of inflation, armed robbery, new political system we are experiencing but mainly because of the individual Nigerian does not understand himself adequately well and as a result he does not understand his fellowmen. For Nigerians to move meaningfully forward in its economic, social, cultural and political development, its adult population must be educated on the issues at stake such as rudiments to achieve economic, social, cultural and political development. Also healthy living and nutritional information should be

*Ifeanacho & Ndubuaku*      *Post-Literacy Programmes: A Strategy for Sensitizing Adult Learners ...*  
provided to the adult learners to keep them alert and be helped to be literate.

Post-literacy/follow-up programmes are designed to upgrade the quality of the populace in conformity with the environmental situations. Many adults do not participate or drop-out from adult education classes for reasons that are personal reasons. Some do enroll and remain because the qualities of the programmes match their need and aspirations. Adults who make personal investment in learning deserve a broad array of high-quality programme options that best match their needs. Adult education and training is voluntary and a choice and participants often make considerable sacrifices to attend. If some feel that the programme is not helping them achieve their specific needs, they may decide the personal sacrifice is not worth it and drop out but if the reverse is the case, it will arouse their interest and ego and stir up the interest of the non-participants to join in the programme.

To ensure increase in the enrolment in adult education classes, quality and suitable post-literacy programmes are highly needed. The curriculum should be designed to empower people through the development of appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitudes to improve their living conditions; create conditions and facilities for lifelong education. Development of curriculum should be a cooperative activity among the stakeholders and any innovation in the curriculum, therefore, should take into account the views of the target population. This practice makes the programme participatory and flexible.

### **Impact of Post-Literacy activities to the Adult Learners**

It has been noted that adult education are of two phases: basic literacy and post-literacy. The researchers observed that much attention is given to the former while the later receive no or very little attention. Ndubuaku (2000) noted that one of the mistakes which most sponsors of adult literacy projects make is to provide the actual teaching component of the project and then totally neglect the post-literacy component. In this case, the result has always been a fruitless exercise because the new-literates easily relapse.

Quane (1989) emphasized that post-literacy, which is a segment along the continuum of life-long education plays a pivotal role in whether or not the learners continue to learn and attain independence. Post-literacy therefore serves various roles to the adult learners, among them are:  
Remediation: Post-literacy programmes help the slow adult learners to still catch-up with the learning exercise.

**Retention:** With the help of post-literacy programmes, the adult learners continue to hold and keep up whatever is taught. It helps them to master the skills thereafter.

**Stabilization:** Post-literacy programme helps the adult learners to be firmly established as well as the lesson to be durable after the exercise.

**Diversification:** The post-literacy programme enables the adult learners to make investments with what they learned so as to reduce the risk of losing them.

**Application:** Post-literacy programme gives the adult learners the ability to put to use what they are taught with regards to real life problems.

Post-literacy programmes are all those activities, materials and structures which make the adult learning worthwhile. They include: rural libraries, village newspapers, bulletins printed released by ministries such as Health, Agriculture, National Orientation Agency (NOA), Information, Sunday Bulletin etc. They also include various educational games which can be used directly in teaching adults, gainful employment of the beneficiaries or sponsoring them to work in order to practice the literacy skills they have acquired in adult classes. Also establishing study circles, farm forums and other community fora which can bring the adult learners together for purposes of self development, capacity building and group learning.

### **Conclusion/Recommendation**

Post-literacy programme is that which will enable the literacy efforts in any nation to be fruitful. It will reduce the illiteracy level in the country as UNESCO has set

out to wipe out illiteracy among the member countries. This can be realizable through post-literacy programmes. This calls for a reform in our adult education/literacy activities by the implementation of lasting post-literacy programmes among the adult learners.

Based on this, the paper makes the following recommendations:

- Much emphasis should not be paid only on basic literacy but also on post-literacy programmes too.
- Post-literacy activities, materials and structures are to be provided to the adult learners to sustain and retain the basic literacy.
- Beneficiaries of adult education should be helped to practice whatever skill they have acquired in life to prevent them from going to secondary illiteracy.

## **References**

- Akande, C.O. (1999) "Why post-literacy programme in D.U. Egeonu,  
*Approaches To Adult Literacy*. Onitsha: Meks Publishers Ltd.
- Ani, R.O. (2010). An introductory approach to the study of adult education.  
Enugu: Ekumax Company Ltd.
- Dave, R.H., Perera, I., & Quan, E. (2001) (ed). Learning strategies for post-literacy and continuing education in Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania and United Kingdom. Unescodoc.
- UNESCO.org/image/0008/000814/03149eo.pdf. Adult education and development: Dvv international publication. [www.112dvv.de/index.php?Article-Idd222](http://www.112dvv.de/index.php?Article-Idd222) Change=1.Http://www.istor.or/stable/44403358.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) *National policy on education* (Revised). Lagos: NERDC Press.
- Ndubuaku, N.S. (2009). Reforming adult education in Nigeria through post-literacy programmes in Ogalanya, G.A.O. and Okafor, A.A. (eds) *Current reforms and the Nigerian education system*.
- Nzeneri, I.S. (1999). *Handbook on adult education: principles and practices*. Onitsha: Good way Printing Press Ltd.
- Obiozor, W.E. and Obidiegwu, U.J. (2013). Globalization of adult education: theories and strategies for instructions. Awka: One Street Books.
- Quane, A. (1989). Handbooks on learning strategies for post-literacy and continuing education. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education.