

## THE NEED FOR ADULT NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

Education is meant for all irrespective of age. It is a known fact that some people due to lack of financial assistance, could not attend formal school and this necessitates adult education. Non-formal education is an organized educational activity outside the established formal school system whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity that is intended to serve identifiable learning clients and learning objectives. This paper examines the need for adult non-formal education for sustainable development in Nigeria. The concept of education, adult non-formal education in Nigeria, objective of adult non-formal education, were highlighted as well as the prospects that the nation and individuals can derive from sustained continuing education, challenges facing adult non-formal education in Nigeria. It was recommended that Adult non-formal education should be well financed, monitored among others for better result. Both public and private sectors should not be left out in the financing adult education.

Education is an act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life (Shenith. 2010). It could be a course of study in the University or Colleges of Education. It could also be a training given to adult learners or a training by which earn to develop and use their mental, moral, and physical power. It is for gaining experience. This is to say that education provides the young and old with the skills that prepare them physically, mentally and socially

for the world of work life to attain effective growth and development, quality education is required. Education is a tool that makes the world a better place to be in. This is to say that a nation that lacks education also lack development as it has been known that education brings about development of people and a nation.

Adult education is a tool that brings about changes in the social and psychological minds of adults: it makes them regain their lost hope and unbind, untie them from their preconception of seeing themselves as beings that are not capable of learning. This is in accordance with the statement of Onyenemezu 2012), that adult education awakens adult learners to become aware of their environmental (social, economic, cultural and political) and psychological potentials and hidden abilities. It also exerts enormous influence on the larger society in terms of national development. Merriam and Brockett (1997) defined adult education as activities intentionally designed for the purpose of bringing about learning among those whose age, social roles, or self-perception define them as adults.

Adult education is continued education and it starts from where the teacher in the formal school system who took his time to impart in the individual the right type of knowledge, understanding and education stops. Fasokun (2006) in (Onyenemezu, 2012) observed that: Adult education is concerned not with preparing people for life, but rather with helping/assisting people (adults) to live more successfully as useful and acceptable members of their

societies and contribute meaningfully to the development of those societies

Adult Education in Nigeria is not just about literacy or remedial education to fill a gap, rather it is what is needed and wanted by all as long as they are alive and regardless of previous education (Ugwuegbu. 2003). This position is in line with what Nasir (1979) opined that adult education includes many of the subjects learnt at school for those who never had the opportunity. Dave (1973) argued that adult education aims at providing lifelong education that prepares the individual for change and creates dynamic frame of mind in the individual. This is because the world is constantly changing in all spheres including technology, communication and industry. Human's craving for learning is thus, continuous to keep pace with the changes and innovations.

Brown and Okedara (1981) rightly described this urge for continuous learning as 'cradle to grave'. This is to say that education starts in one's life right from when born and continues till death as a result of experience, skills and knowledge acquired. Nigeria's hope for the realization of the millennium development goals that include eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/Aids, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development would be enhanced (National Policy on Education, 2004).

There are problems facing adult education in educational system and these include poor planning and implementation of the programme, poor funding and lack of infrastructure among others. Prospect is the important part of the programme which benefits could be derived from it, that is to help in promoting literacy and understanding for adult

and become self-employed in order to improve the nation. Therefore, this paper addresses the need for adult non-formal education for sustainable development in Nigeria.

### **Concept of Education**

In support of the word of Ayeni (2007), the definition of education still remains a controversial one hence there is no single universally accepted definition of education. Scholars who have tried to define the concept have been influenced to a large extent, by their social, cultural, environmental and professional background. Thus, education is a phenomenon related to societal values, and what a particular society values may be peculiar to that society alone.

Don (2011) defined education in the general sense as any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character, or physical ability of an individual. In its technical sense, education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills, and values from one generation to another. He went further to say that education is the process of becoming an educated person.

Whatever the definition or meaning given to education by different scholars, education is a tool for human and national development. Education generally, is the Adult Education in Nigeria is not just about literacy or remedial education to fill a gap, rather it is what is needed and wanted by all as long as they are alive and regardless of previous education (Ugwuegbu. 2003). This position is in line with what Nasir (1979) opined that education includes many of the subjects learnt at school for pillar on which any national development rest. It is a basis upon which individuals and national development could be measured. Through education, human empowerment and the acquisition of skills and knowledge is attained.

Education is very essential for the existence of man. Otelaja (2008) has it that no nation can develop above her educational system; that for man to create and recreate his social life and also articulate himself and achieve fullness: the formal system of knowledge acquisition cannot singularly provide all the educational opportunities for self-actualization.

Education is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights. -As an empowerment right, education is the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1999). This is to say that education is not a static commodity to be considered in isolation from its greater context: it is an ongoing process and holds its own inherent value as a human right. People have the right to receive quality education and they also have the right to be equipped with the skills and knowledge that will ensure long-term recognition and respect for all human rights.

#### **Adult Non-Formal Education**

The term adult has no universal meaning. It is culture-based as the age at which one is termed an adult differs from culture to culture. In support of this statement, UNESCO (1976) in Nzeneri (2010) defined an adult as a person regarded as such by the society to which he/she belongs. In the United State of America, adulthood starts from the age of 18. The legal definition of entering adulthood usually varies between ages 16 -21, depending on the region in question. Some cultures in Africa define adult at age 13. According to Jewish tradition, adulthood is reached at age 13. To buttress this fact, Jegede (2003) in Onyenemezu (2012) perceived an adult as a person that has attained a specific chronological age of adult hood in a particular

society and who can be regarded as mature and experienced individual with the possibility of a certain level of ageing. To Ibe (2008), an adult is one who has achieved full physical and psychological maturity, is socially, economically, politically, culturally and environmentally responsible.

Adult education is the education (formal, informal and non-formal) given to any person regarded as an adult by the society in order to socially, economically and culturally improve and empower him/her. so that the person will be able to contribute meaningfully as a useful and acceptable member of society (Onyenemezu, 2011).

Adult education is the education based on the needs of the adult. Nnazor (2005) in Adult Onyenemezu (2012) stated that adult education for personal development would provide learners guidance on how to access information regarding issues such as health, nutrition, family planning, education and career opportunities for self and children.

#### **Sustaining Adult Non-Formal Education in Nigeria**

Adult education in Nigeria is entirely about educating the adult member in the society who for one thing or the other could not attend school at early age. Government at all levels creates an enabling environment for adult education. It is done through the provision of adequate manpower, materials and facilities as required for adult education programmes such as basic literacy programme, post literacy programme, women adult education programme, distance education programme, sandwich programme and nomadic education programme were organized by the states' ministries of education, various institutions of higher education, Christian missionaries and local government councils to cater for adults and

the young who could not afford formal education.

To sustain adult education in Nigeria, to be able to get more adult to learn in an informal school, there should be continuous grassroots campaigns and seminars organized by all stakeholders in the education sector on the relevance of continuous education. This will help to sensitize the people. These campaigns will help the people to internalize the true values of life and over time, shed the vices associated with their existence. As the attitudes of the people change, external misbehaviours will also change. In addition, these seminars and campaigns will help restore the lost cherished moral values of honesty, hard work, dedication and uprightiness that hitherto characterized the Nigerian society.

The education sector in Nigeria is grossly underfunded. The inadequate funding of the adult education programmes is the reason why it has not gained the required recognition in Nigeria today. According to Onyenemezu (2012), government should provide adequate funds to take care of adult literacy including the little stipend for instructors, which constitute serious disincentive for regular attendance to adult literacy classes. He went further to write that the issue of lack of adequate instructional materials and qualified personnel to handle adult literacy centres should be addressed.

All stakeholders, politicians and other prominent members in the society should be challenged to share in the cost of education by paying some fees in order to attain and sustain a reasonable level of funding of adult literacy education in Nigeria.

#### **Objectives of Adult Non-Formal Education**

All human actions described as praxis, rational or authentic must aim at some purpose; have some guiding objectives either, formally

expressed or tacitly assumed (Muhammad, Abdullahi, and Isah. 2013). It is such objectives that constitute the motivation, the incentive and justification for undertaking such activities (Freire 1974 cited in Akinpelu 2002). Education and especially adult non-formal education are practical educational activities motivated by a variety of values. Thus all stakeholders with an interest in adult non-formal education activity have their own respective objectives for engaging in the activity -the providers, the learners, their sponsors, the public and the nation. Invariably, their objectives will overlap in many respects but and peculiar only in a few cases.

- a. To keep with the new knowledge required to perform responsibly in a chosen career.
- b. To master new conceptions of the career itself.
- c. To keep with changes in the relevant fields
- d. To prepare for changes in the personal career line.
- e. To maintain freshness of outlook on the work done
- f. To retain the power to learn
- g. To discharge effectively the social role imposed by membership in a profession (Akinpelu. 2002 cited in Muhammad, Abdullahi, and Isah, 2013).

#### **Prospects of Adult Non-Formal Education**

Adult education should be vigorously pursued as through it there would be an all round development in the nation. Adult education has been neglected by the government long ago in spite its capability of transforming this country into one of the most developed nations in the world because adult personnel constitute the productive sector. With genuine commitment and conscious effort towards adult education, the products can make the society better place for living in terms of peace, stability, poverty eradication etc.

The introduction of ICT and other new technologies into adult education programme will make Nigeria integrate into the global

economy for higher productivity. The 21<sup>st</sup> century) Nigeria, through adult education, more opportunities will open for adult to venture into areas hitherto considered difficult terrains e.g. entrepreneurship (business ownership or self employed). All classes of people, the physically challenged, volatile youths and their restive activities will be reduced. It can be said therefore that a review of adult education curriculum will provide a bridge j veritable platform through which the transformation agenda and vision 20: 2020 can be achieved.

Through the open/distance learning, adult education provides employers in different sectors of the economy with qualified and sustainable skills and manpower to service, the economy and positive basis for rewarding the adult members. Education all (EFA) objectives will be realized especially eradication of illiteracy. Among the benefiting groups are the nomads and migrants fisherman etc. Adequate funding and massive investment will increase awareness and level of participation in series of activities coordinated under the aegis of adult education. This will invariably lead to activity of high level and intermediate manpower to direct a disciplined and responsible workforce.

Essentially, adult education programme can afford and accommodate a large number of people who had no opportunity to early education especially predominantly illiterate Nigerians farmers, entrepreneurs and unskilled labour will become skillful and knowledgeable which can apply to self and national development. This will make them become more efficiency at work, foster social, economic, political and cultural re-awakening, minimize all forms of prejudice and enhance civic responsibility.

#### **Challenges of Adult Non-Formal Education**

Adult education programme is faced with numerous challenges. Among these challenges are:

#### **Poor funding**

Adult education in Nigeria does not receive appropriate or adequate funding as well as other types of education that can be given to man. This is to say that education in Nigeria is being underfunded and this is the reason why there is falling standard of education in Nigeria. Many literacy programmes have been stalled due to lack of fund for their planning and implementation.

#### **Poor Planning and Implementation**

This has been the bane of most aspects of education and adult education is no exception. Major problems here include unreliable statistics, lack of information flow and inaccessibility of official documents. In most cases, there are misconceptions.

Misinterpretations of plans, instructional objectives, non-recognition and integration of the socio-cultural and political variables of the Nigerian society.

#### **Poor Supervision and Monitoring**

This is attributable to lack of means of mobility, lack of personnel, lack of finance, inaccessibility of some adult education centres among others. All these culminate in inability to assess the extent of progress and realization of the set goals.

#### **Undue Politicization of the Programme**

This is one of the major cogs on the wheels of adult education in Nigeria as many local governments Chairmen. Governors and other government officials see it as part of the democracy dividends to be given only to political loyalists. When this is the case, the issue of where the centre is to be sited, who is to be teachers and distribution of instructional materials are purely determined by where one belongs and not who requires it. As a result, those who require it do not have it while those

who do not need it have excess provisions made for them.

### **Economic Strangulation**

Parents are exposed and compulsorily committed to personal, family and community financial needs and levies. The reason for this is that their financial sources are far too meager compared with their outstanding commitments and this makes it impossible for them to attend adult education programme.

### **Conclusion**

Nigeria like most developing countries have placed undue emphasis on formal education while apparently neglecting adult and non-formal education. Adult education, though taken by the Nigerian society to be an evening type educational system, from the point of view of return on investment, it is the most immediately productive and profitable learning for the national development. What is needed more in Nigeria today is a development-oriented non-formal education to ensure the principle of self-reliance for both national and individual development. Adult literacy and adult education are necessary to ensure an enlightened citizenry, whose activities and decisions are very vital to the achievement of national goals.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made based on views and assertions expressed by various authors. The following recommendations are made.

1. Adult education if well sponsored will help transform the lives of many of our rural dwellers who were not privileged to attend school as children in view of the positive impact of literacy
2. Non-governmental organization and other meaningful Nigerians should support financially by providing reading

materials and blocks of classroom for learning.

3. Stakeholders of adult and non formal education to provide support supervise and monitor adult education for effective programme.
4. Counselling programmes, just as in the formal system of education, counsellors should be posted to the adult education schools to assist the learners.
5. Sensitization programmes should be carried out so as to attract more adults who are not aware of the programme, adult non-formal education.
6. Professional adult education personnel should be employed in all the formations of National Commission for Mass Literacy. Adult and Non-Formal Education nationwide. This would enhance professional reorientation of activities and programmes of national and state agencies through effective needs assessment and mobilization of stake-holders in the teaching and training of adults who constitute the bulk of workers in Nigeria.

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